

Botanic Garden of the Jagiellonian University, Cracow (Ogród Botaniczny Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego)



Ornamental beds along the main path

Founded in 1783 the Botanic Garden of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow is the oldest in Poland. Initially it was an auxiliary unit of the department of chemistry and natural history. Jan Jaśkiewicz (1749-1809) was the first professor of natural history and the director of the garden. When first established the Garden covered an area of about 2.4 ha and was organised as a baroque park with geometrical arrangements of plants. In the glasshouses, built in 1786-1787, tropical plants were grown. In 1809, Alojzy Estreicher (1786-1852) became the new director. The plant collection consisted of more than four thousand species and varieties. Among many investments the enlargement of the Garden area to 3.6 ha (1819-1825) the construction of new glasshouses and the establishment of many new collections were the most important. In the 1860s the Cracow Garden was among the richest in plants among European gardens. Ignacy Rafał Czerwiakowski (1808-1882) was its director, and Józef Warszewicz (1812-1866), a distinguished traveller and plant collector, its inspector (i.e. chief gardener). He brought many thousands of plants from his expeditions to South and Central America. *Catalogus plantarum*, issued in 1864, contained 9470 species and varieties, including 3779 glasshouse plants.

In 1878, Józef Rostafiński (1850-1928), a specialist on algae and myxomycetes as well as historian of botany, accepted the post of the head of the Department of Botany and the Botanic Garden. He developed a botanical laboratory and in 1882 a new iron-and-glass palm house was constructed. In the years 1912-1917 Marian Raciborski (1863-1917), one of the most distinguished Polish botanists, accepted the post, and after him Władysław Szafer (1886-1970) became the director of the Garden in 1918 and kept the post for the following 42 years. The present shape of the Garden is the result of Szafer's activity - new modern glasshouses were built, long-term efforts resulted in joining new territories to the Garden and in the 1960s it reached its present area of 9.6 ha.



Botanic Garden Museum – display of cycads

In 1983 a Botanic Garden Museum was organised and opened to public. The collection amounts to about 5000 items, including exotic fruits, seeds, wood, fossil plants, old didactic equipment. The materials on the history of Polish botany are gathered in the archive section.

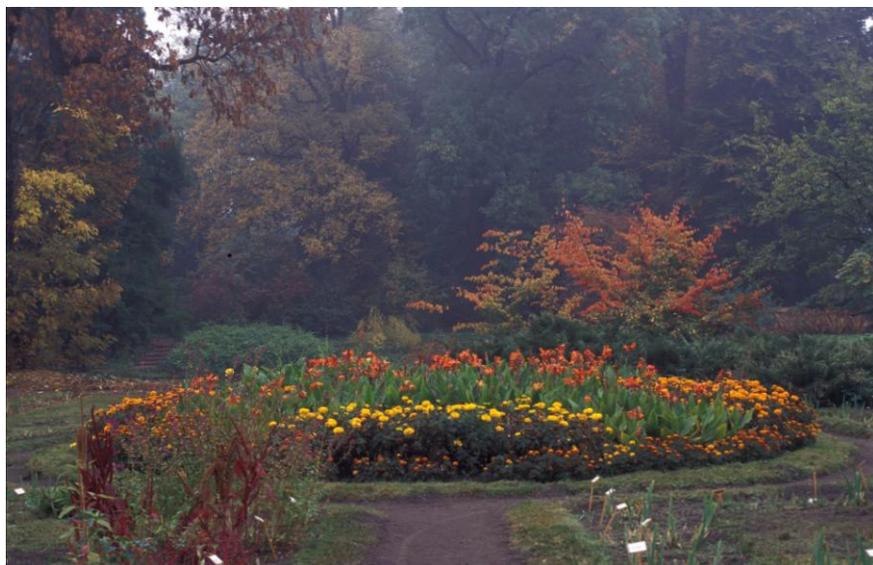
The Botanic Garden is one of the departments of the Institute of Botany, at the Jagiellonian University. The staff consists of research workers, technicians, gardeners and servicemen. The research work is closely connected to the scientific programme of the Institute and comprises taxonomy, plant geography, ecology, history of botany, and studies on protected and endangered plants, especially from the territory of the Carpathians. However, the didactic activity remains the basic function of the Garden. There are lectures and classes prepared for students of the University and other academic schools as well as for pupils from primary and secondary schools.

The territory of the Botanic Garden is divided into several sections. The main aim of the **plant taxonomy section** is to show natural relations among plant species and the general divisions of the plant kingdom. The group of **protected and endangered plants** of Polish flora includes plant species which need special protection in natural conditions. The **section on genetics and variability** shows chosen problems from this branch of botany, e.g. Mendel's laws, hybridisation, the ways in which new species or forms originate in nature, etc.



Education in the garden

The **flower ecology section** presents the process of flower pollination and the adaptation of flowers to different pollinators. The **morphological and ecological section** includes various phenomena connected with seed dispersal and shows different morphological features which are the result of adaptation to environmental conditions. Visitors always show great interest in the **section on medicinal plants** - there are also other useful plants such as vegetables, fruits, seasoning herbs, fibre crops, dyeing and honey-yielding plants. The **alpine gardens**, imitating high mountain conditions, are devoted to the preservation of mountain plants. The **water plants** of temperate regions, mainly native, are grown in artificial lakes and pools.



The **Arboretum** housing collection of trees and shrubs covers the largest area. It is partly arranged as a landscape park, but there are geographical groups representing trees from East Asia or Northern America, and ornamental groups, e.g. the collection of lilacs. **Ornamental plants** supplement and increase the aesthetic value of the specialist collections.

Autumn in the Garden

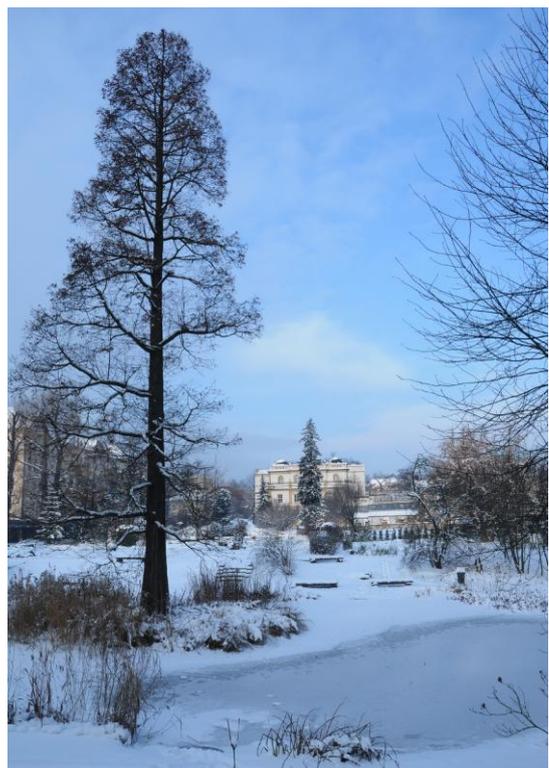


"Victoria" glass house

The **collection of tropical plants** is kept in three glasshouses:

- "Victoria", in existence from the very beginning of the Garden. It is named after the water plant that grows in the pond in the hothouse;
- "Holenderka (Dutch)", a small glasshouse especially designed for epiphytic plants, orchids, and other rare plants which should be kept out of public reach (this glasshouse is closed for visitors);
- "Jubilee", consisting of a palm house and a long hothouse, divided into several compartments for different groups of plants (the name commemorates the 600th anniversary of the Jagiellonian University in 1964, when the glasshouse was opened).

At present the collection of the Botanic Garden includes about 6,000 species and varieties of plants from all over the world, among them about 1000 species of trees and shrubs and more than 2000 species and varieties of glasshouse plants. Among the indoor plants the most valuable are the collections of orchids (ca. 500 species and varieties), cacti (ca. 400 species), tropical ferns (more than 70 species), cycads (ca. 60 species), palms (ca. 50 species); while among outdoor plants there are East Asian trees and shrubs, cultivars of lilacs, groups of birch, maple, etc. Many specimens of trees are more than 150 years old and are treated as monuments of nature.



Winter in the Botanic Garden



Front part of the Garden, view from the Śniadecki Collegium

Year of foundation: 1783

Geographical location: latitude 50°04' N, longitude 19°58' E; altitude 201 - 208 m n.p.m.

Area: 9.6 ha

Time of opening: April – October, 9.00 - 19.00; Greenhouses: 10.00 - 18.00, except on Fridays.

Museum opening hours: Wednesday, Friday: 10.00-14.00, Saturday: 11.00-15.00

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Józef Warszewicz monument among tulips



Taxodium distichum on the main pond