

Gardens Paradise Of Persia



The symbol of eternal life for ancient Iranians was a tree and a stream flowing beneath it.

Iranians considered tree planting a sacred occupation and spent a lot of time in their gardens, Press TV reported.

Historical accounts tell us about gardens named paradise and filled with all things fair and good that the earth can bring forth.

The Persian paradise garden gets its name from the old Persian word Pairadaeza, meaning an enclosed area. Subsequently, the English word paradise has its roots in the old Persian word Pairadaeza. The Achaemenid idea of an earthly paradise eventually penetrated other cultures and was later translated into Latin as Hortus Conclusus, the enclosed garden, which came to symbolize the Garden of Eden.

The first writer to make reference to a Persian garden using the word 'paradise' was the Greek narrator Xenophon. The word appears in Avestan text only in the form of Pairadaeza.

The Old Testament describes pleasure gardens as sacred enclosures rising in terraces planted with trees and shrubs, forming an artificial hill such as the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Not only were palaces and temples enclosed within gardens, but every city had private and sometimes public gardens which were open to all during Persian New Year celebrations.

Persian gardens were places where shade and cool water could be privately enjoyed. They were places of spiritual solace, meeting places for friends and formal adjuncts to the houses or palaces they surrounded.

> Function

For more than three thousand years, the Persian garden has been the focus of Iranian imagination, influencing the country's art as well as literature. The lavish use of flowers in such gardens inspired the weaving of floral designs into what are known as garden-carpets.

Persian gardens influenced garden design around the world and became the foundation of Islamic and later European garden traditions, an example of which can be seen in the Mogul gardens of India namely the Taj Mahal in Agra.

The paved and tiled Andalusia courtyards with arcades, pools and fountains testify to their Persian roots.

It is reputed that the main design patterns for the Versailles Gardens has replicated the outlines of the paradise gardens of Pasargad and provided inspiration for the gardens of the Louvre.

According to historical accounts, gardens were primarily hunting-parks with fruit-trees grown for food. The bronze works dating back to 1000 BC unearthed in Lorestan province are adorned with trees next to streams.

In the first phase of excavations at ruins of palaces in Persepolis the gardens were ignored. However, the scientific excavations later on proved the presence of gardens.

Palaces scattered according to no specific rules and raised above three terraces with large open stairways brought to the mind of garden archaeologists the simplest form of Persian garden; a rectangle of water, with enough of a flow to give it life and movement, and a raised platform to view it from.

> Ancient Gardens

Further excavation in Pasargad led to discovery of the first monumental garden, at least in western Asia, securing a place for Persian gardens in the history of garden design.

Archaeologists discovered garden accords with the traditional Persian garden plan known today as Chahar Bagh.

Considering the fact that the Achaemenid monarch 'Cyrus the Great' was known as the "King of the Four Quarters", it can be asserted that later-day



Persian gardens owed their origins to the novel garden plan of Cyrus.

The Chahar Bagh plan is a quadrangular/rectangular canal pattern in which waterways or pathways are used to quarter the garden, a layout intended to bring to mind the four rivers of the Garden of Eden.

All Persian gardens have vertical lines in their design, a central structure built on the highest point of the garden, a main waterway, a large pool in front of the structure to reflect the building, and a close relationship with nature.

Earth, water, vegetation and atmosphere are the most important elements in gardens. Underground water canals called Qanats (aqueducts) irrigated the gardens which were often built on slopes to facilitate the natural flow of water or create artificial waterfalls.

Trees and flowers are planted in gardens based on their usefulness; therefore, a Persian garden has more fruit trees, then shade trees and finally flowers.

Achaemenid inscriptions bear witness to the importance of symmetrical designs in Persian gardens. The Chahar Bagh School stresses the necessity of planting trees and flowers in rows.

Fruit trees bring to mind rebirth and spring; strictly aligned sycamore trees, the symbol of eternal life, provide shade while roses, jasmines and other flowers intoxicate people with their heavenly scent.

The most basic feature of a Persian garden is an area, which excludes the wildness of nature, includes the tended greenery of the garden and makes elaborate use of water in canals, ponds, rills and sometimes fountains.

A recurring theme in many gardens is the contrast between the formal garden layout and the informality provided by free-growing plants. Persians placed great importance on having their tombs surrounded by woodlands and gardens. According to historical accounts, the tomb of "Cyrus the Great" was enclosed by four gardens and a grove.

This tradition has continued to the present time and can be seen at the graves of prominent Iranian figures such as the poets Hafez and Sa'di in Shiraz.

The resting place of Hafez, a famous tourism hub, pleases the eyes of visitors with its cypresses, poplars, cedars flowering shrubs and rose bushes.

Persian gardens are pleasures of water, meadow, trees and flowers in which buildings take a subordinate position.

To this day, the size and beauty of these gardens continues to amaze visitors sitting under the shade of cypress trees to enjoy looking at the sky reflected in the central pool while breathing the sweet aroma of beautiful flowers.

Rose Water Ceremonies in Niasar

Concurrent with blossoming of roses and holding the ceremonies for extraction of rose water, many domestic and foreign tourists visited Niasar city in Isfahan province.

Thousands of light and heavy vehicles caused heavy traffic on the Kashan-Niasar route and many tourists did not make it to see the beautiful waterfall of Niasar, the Persian daily Iran reported.

Presence of many tourists in Niasar was the result of media publicity on the occasion of rose water extraction season in Kashan and neighboring cities.

Niasar is one of three important cities where rose water is extracted. Since Niasar is located on the eastern slope of Karkas mountains range, the

presence of Eskandariyeh spring and many aqueducts have provided water for farming in an area of 800 hectares.

A quadric-arch dating back to 2,000 years ago shows the importance of the city to tourists.

Talar garden, Safavid Palace and the Niasar waterfall are among top attractions in Niasar.

Niasar mayor, Hamid Reza Sadeqi noted that more than 300,000 tourists visited his city in the first week of rose water extraction ceremonies.

Tourists from Tehran, Isfahan, Qom and Markazi provinces are still pouring into Niasar.

News in Brief

Europeans to Visit

Corn Poppy Fields

An official of Semnan's Tourism Complex said two ecotourist groups from Germany and Sweden will travel to Shahroud (May 21-June 20) to visit the Kalpoush corn poppy fields.

According to the Persian daily 'Iran', Bardia Sharifi said, "We are also planning the visit of a Canadian ecotourist group to the area."

Sharifi, also manager of a Shahroud tour and tourism agency, noted that the majority of tourists will come from Varamin and Isfahan to visit Kalpoush.

"For accommodation of the tourists the field a dormitory has been considered. If more tourists visit the area, rural houses will be used for tourist accommodation," he pointed out.



Kalpoush corn poppy field is located in the north-east of Shahroud. Every year in mid-May the plain becomes full of red poppies making it appealing to tourists who admire nature.

Handicraft Exhibit

In Belarus

An exhibition showcasing Iran's handicrafts at Mogilov National Museum in Belarus has met with the enthusiastic response of visitors.

Iran's cultural attaché in Belarus, Ramroudi, said that 150 works, including carpets, carpet tableaus, enameled and inlaid works as well as engravings, are on display, ISNA reported.

"To make the people of Belarus more familiar with Iranian culture and arts, a collection of books on painting and carpets have also been showcased in the exhibition," he said.

Anatoly Antolovich, a Belarus cultural official, said the exhibition has provided the people of Belarus with an opportunity to know about authentic Iranian arts.

Referring to the cordial bilateral bonds in all domains, Antolovich said, "I hope that cultural cooperation between Iran and Belarus will improve by the day."

Indigenous Games

Identified

An official said some 2,000 indigenous and folk games have been identified nationwide.

According to the Persian daily 'Iran', Ali Asghar Jabbari, the deputy head of Golestan's Education Department for physical education, made the remark during provincial festival of indigenous and folk games.

"Such festivals can serve as a prelude to a cultural and sporting progress at the provincial and national levels," he said.



Mohammad Beheshti, in charge of the festival, said it aims to inform students about indigenous games that can be played at schools.

"We intend to transfer information about indigenous games in books to students in a practical manner. This will help students understand the attraction of these games much better," he said.

The official emphasized that indigenous and folk games vary, depending on the culture of the region.