

HISTORY OF THE MARIMURTRA BOTANIC GARDEN

The strong determination, enthusiasm and perseverance of a cultured and sensitive man, Carl Faust Schmidt (Hadamar, Germany, 1874 - Blanes, Catalonia, Spain, 1952), enabled the creation of the Marimurtra Botanic Garden in Blanes. In 1918 he began to purchase the lands situated on the eastern slope of Mount Sant Joan, on top of the first cliffs of the Costa Brava. He consulted some of the most prestigious botanists of the time, such as Pius Font Quer, Josep Cuatrecasas, Hans Kräin, Eric Sventenius, Carlos Pau or Josias Braun-Blanquet. Faust was also a patron of the biological sciences, and as an example in this sense, we must point out his support to the first researches by ecologist Ramon Margalef.



Carl Faust Schmidt, founder of garden



Construction of the stairs to the Linna Pavilion

In order to guarantee the continuation of his work, in 1951 Faust set up the foundation which bears his name, aimed mainly at "protecting and encouraging studies of Mediterranean biology, especially botany, [...] by seeking cooperation and international relations for the benefit of scientific research and dissemination".

The Garden features 14 ha, 4 of which make up the visitable part; the remaining 10 constitute an autochthonous Mediterranean forest. The Garden displays over 3,000 different species, some of which are notable for their rarity, age or size. The species represented come mainly from subtropical (1), temperate (2) and Mediterranean areas (3).



Flower of Myrica (Myrica communis) which gives the Garden its name



EVOLUTION OF THE GARDEN OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS

CONSERVATION

The Garden has promoted a direct involvement in *ex-situ* conservation, both at home and abroad. On the one hand, it cultivates the most important collection of species belonging to the genus *Androcymbium* in its research nurseries and exhibits some examples during the bloom period. On the other hand, it has developed several conservation biology projects based on studies of population genetics of some of the endemic species of Catalonia. Finally, the Garden owns a seed bank comprising several collections of endemic species, structural species living in the main habitats of the region, the cultivated populations of the genus *Androcymbium*, and some of the main horticultural varieties of the area.



Samples from the Seed Bank

RESEARCH

The research on evolutionary biology conducted by the Marimurtra Botanic Garden began in 1989, when the first expedition to Almeria (southwest of the Iberian Peninsula) to collect examples of the species *Androcymbium gramineum* took place. From then on, the research centred on species belonging to this genus. As a result, four doctoral theses have been written and over 30 articles about the most varied subjects - from morphological and reproductive studies to genetic studies at a micro- and macro-evolutionary level - have been published. At present, the genus *Androcymbium* is still being studied. Nevertheless, new lines of research in the field of evolutionary biology with the genus *Colchicum* and on conservation with endemic species of our Mediterranean area are being opened.



Androcymbium burchellii subsp. *pulchrum*

SPREADING OF CULTURE

The Garden's main objective in this respect is to stimulate the visitor to appreciate and admit the importance of the natural environment and encourage a responsible relationship between people and the plant world. In order to carry out this task, the Garden's pedagogy department has developed several guided tours explaining the plant collections as well as their main and special characteristics. On the other hand, a series of materials have been prepared for the visitor to be able to discover the garden in an autodidactic manner. Aimed mainly at the little ones, day camps and workshops dealing with subjects related to the environment are organised throughout the year. And finally, aimed at a larger group of people interested in the plant kingdom, the Garden collaborates in the organisation and promotion of different activities in such celebrations as the International Museum Day or the Science Week.



Summer workshop at the Marimurtra Botanic Garden



Explanatory itineraries



Tai Chi Chuan in the Pavilion

THE GARDEN'S PROJECT FOR THE FUTURE

The Carl Faust Private Foundation is opening up to broader and more ambitious horizons pointing mainly to the fields of conservation biology and dissemination. In this sense, it is trying to improve the current situation of the local endangered flora together with other institutions such as universities, the Catalan government and other centres concerned with botany.

On the other hand, it is working in collaboration with the rest of botanic gardens belonging to the Iberian-Macaronesian Association of Botanic Gardens on several conservation and dissemination projects, like the development of the REDBAG (Spanish Network of Seed Banks), the creation of management tools for the Botanic Gardens, the contribution to the Spanish strategy for the plant conservation and the promotion of joint initiatives for the Botanic Gardens to be better known and become a reference point for our society.



Example of *Protea Susanna*



Goethe's stairs