

CONTEMPORARY GARDEN ROMANTICISM A NEW SENSUOUSNESS IN THE GARDEN

The desire for more romanticism is clearly evident amongst female garden owners, in particular. Feeling, passion and an individual connection to nature are gaining in importance, while demanding designs and elaborate materials are no longer decisive for a satisfying garden experience. A social need is emerging here, heralding in a welcome trend reversal in garden design. Leading horticulturists and garden designers are responding early to this development and will be portraying their interpretations of "contemporary garden romanticism" at Giardina 2016. Switzerland's biggest, indoor 'live your garden' event is being held at Messe Zürich from 16 to 20 March.

Making the move into an alternative world

"Contemporary garden romanticism" is a concept that certainly has the potential to trigger a flight reflex. Yet this is anything but a matter of garden kitsch. Instead, landscape architects and horticulturists are called upon to find concepts and designs that respond to the wish for a more conscious perception: how can a garden trigger genuine feeling, passion and individual experience in its users who are subject to such over-stimulation of their senses? How can outdoor spaces be turned into places of refuge, offering not only personal enjoyment but also emotional reinforcement? In a performance-oriented society, where digital communication has caused daily life to shift extensively to the virtual plane, increasing calls are being voiced for an emotional and imaginative alternative world that can be experienced with the senses. Women, in particular, are longing for greater richness and security, as well as for feelings and connectedness.

A search for new forms

In the past, garden owners and garden designers have been able to choose between two basic garden forms. The architectural garden has been noted for its consistent lines and technical highlights, while gardens with a natural look have been designed on the basis of romanticism. In these latter gardens, it is the soft elements together with the imaginative and surprising facets that are valued, while right angles (symbolising man's domination of nature) are avoided wherever possible.

Over the past 20 years, architectural gardens have predominated – in Switzerland at least. Out of sheer purism and for the love of design and materials, these gardens have been tidied up and emptied out until virtually nothing has remained. And in this slightly under-cooled garden space, the pendulum is swinging back towards romanticism once again. The wish for more feeling and greater connectedness with nature does not, however, necessarily mean a return to the near-to-nature design that developed in 18th-century England to counter the first wave of industrialisation.

Exciting interpretations

Contemporary garden romanticism, as understood by Giardina, can certainly prompt garden designers and owners to bring the architectural and natural aspects of the garden to flow into each other. This can even lead on to new forms of design. Perhaps a contemporary creation will no longer have a purist and strict look in future but will make rather a rich and gentle impact instead. Garden owners would then have the opportunity to observe flora and fauna, acquire an even greater proximity to nature and establish an emotional connection. Leading horticulturists and garden designers will be showcasing their ideas and visions at Giardina 2016. Special theme areas dedicated to balcony gardens and small terraces await the visitors, together with examples of designs suitable for smaller outdoor spaces.

Giardina – Europe's highest-quality indoor 'live your garden' event.

This unique exhibition heralds in the season in a dazzling fashion at the start of spring each year. The most important suppliers from the sector present new products, creative solutions and upcoming trends in garden design on an area of some 30,000 m². Amidst spectacular sample gardens and artistic installations, visitors will find a wealth of inspiration and ideas for their personal world of flowers and plants in the garden or on their terrace or balcony.

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www.giardina.ch

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