

THE *BROLO*

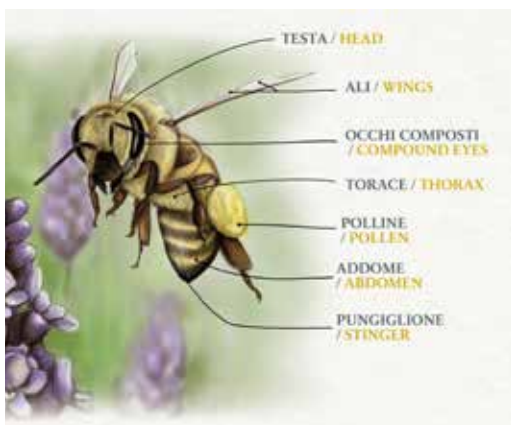


The Villa dei Vescovi seen from the Brolo

From the Latin *brogilus*, the term *brolo* was once widely used throughout northern Italy and also in Tuscany, to denote a vegetable garden, generally bordered by walls or hedges. Today, the term is still used in the Po valley area of the Veneto to indicate an orchard adjacent to the house.

The Villa dei Vescovi was conceived in the 16th century as a place for intellectual solace, but one of its *raisons d'être* was also to serve as a farm. As such, it is not hard to understand the extent to which the Brolo was an integral part of the complex, which also included rustic outbuildings such as that known as the “Barchessa”.

The Brolo can be traversed using a number of paths, the main route running along the outermost walls. Making your way through the natural environment, you can discover unseen corners of the Villa, and get acquainted with the Orchard, the Vineyard, the Pond and the Cherry Tree Wood (used for the cultivation of marasca cherries), before returning towards the courtyard “along the avenue of hydrangeas”.



DID YOU KNOW

“If the bee disappeared off the face of the Earth, mankind would only have 4 years left to live”. Although Albert Einstein may never have actually uttered this phrase, it contains a great truth: bees are a crucial link in the food chain, because they determine the quality and quantity of food that the planet is able to produce, and a full one-third of our food depends on their survival. In 2016, FAI launched a project for the safeguarding of bees, supporting beekeepers in the various regions of Italy in their efforts to repopulate hives. The Villa dei Vescovi is the first FAI property to get involved in the project: 7 hives have been installed in the walled garden.



The southern ("lemon tree") staircase



The Brolo (walled garden)

A document, presumably dating from the 18th century, confirms that back then, the garden played host to numerous fruit trees. Today, via the southern staircase, you can make your way down to the orchard, where ancient species of apples, pears and prunes have been planted out. On the opposite side of the Brolo, to the north west, there is a cherry wood with 84 trees that produce a scarlet-coloured variety with a soft pulp and a sweet, slightly acidic flavour. These marasca cherries are used to make jams and two types of liqueurs: maraschino, produced through the distillation of the fruit; and a cherry brandy, made from the crushing of the pulp following a short period of fermentation.

Cultivating the soil in hilly areas has always been more difficult than doing so on the flat, and the innovations deriving from the new technical understanding developed over the course of the 19th century had trouble taking root in the Euganean Hills. The exceptions to this rule were several winemakers who, in the latter part of the century, began to use early wheeled hydraulic machines, and also implemented the more efficient stake-training system. To this day, in the walled garden, there are numerous vine rows, which produce *Pinot bianco*, *Moscato giallo* and *Fior d'arancio* wines.



The vineyard



The Villa dei Vescovi seen from the vineyard



The "Frog pond"



The "Frog pond"

The north-eastern part of the Brolo features the little body of water known as the "frog pond", which is full of water lilies, aquatic plants, fish and, of course, frogs. Amongst the fish is the famous koi carp, a domesticated variety of the common carp, which had its origins in the East and reached Europe during the Roman period. A byword in Japanese culture for courage and perseverance (thanks to its ability to swim upstream), the koi carp is bred for decorative purposes thanks to the colours that it can take on, the most common of which are white, black, yellow, blue, cream and red.