

# THE ITALIAN GARDEN



Photo of Gimmy Schavi, 2020 © FAI

Palazzo Moroni is complemented by its gardens, laid out according to the original 17<sup>th</sup>-century plans. Given the narrow space at the rear of the palazzo, which was built at the base of the Hill of St Eufemia, **the garden complex was planned as a series of terraces linked by stairs:** in the lee of the mountainous slope, reaching up to the plateau occupied by the 14<sup>th</sup>-century city fortress. The equilibrium between palazzo and garden is a feature of the architecture of similar properties, and Palazzo Moroni's beauty, its monumentality and the variety and refinement of the plant species were all a source of pride and prestige for the owners. To quote a 17<sup>th</sup>-century sonnet written in honour of Francesco Moroni and dedicated to the palazzo: *Towers, Springs, Gardens, Sculpture and Painting / In varied arrangements, in similar form / The Glories of Art and of Nature are here.*

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## DID YOU KNOW...?

“To the eyes of the viewer, the linked gardens form a distinguished, glorious theatre.” Thus were the gardens described by Donato Calvi (1655) in an excerpt from his book *The Mysterious Paintings of the Palazzo Moroni*. In the description the plants and flowers are likened to soldiers, defending the building and protecting its resident family. The visitor's gaze is attracted by the wonderful abundance, vibrant appearance and bright colours of the flora. At the same time the senses are assailed by perfumes set off like invisible arrows.

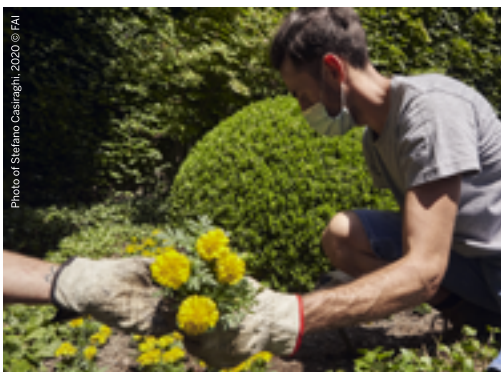


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The courtyard of Palazzo Moroni with Neptune's Fountain

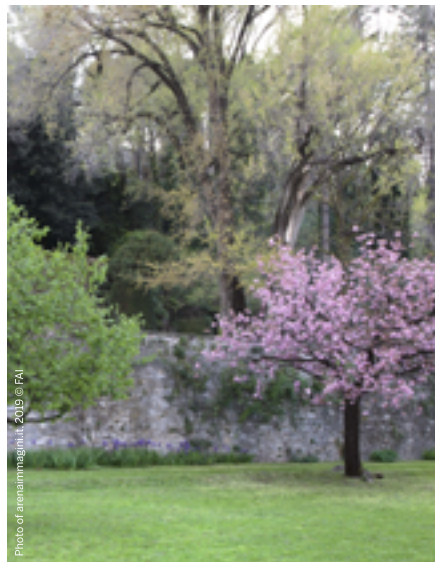


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The Secret Garden with an ornamental cherry tree



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The second terrace with the shaped yew trees

The **small balcony** looks toward **Neptune's Courtyard**, a small Italian formal garden. Here we can stroll between beds bordered with ivy, which are today planted with yellow and orange flowers, reflecting the colours of the city of Bergamo. The flowerbeds are rendered more interesting by the topiary of the box hedges, cut into geometric shapes. This art was first seen in ancient Rome and attained dazzling heights in the gardens of Italy and France

between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first terrace, called the **Secret Garden**, is reached via a short covered corridor. This space has beds of irises, peonies and roses. The retaining wall near the balcony opens onto a small terrace planted with nectar-producing flowers and herbs that attract pollinators. A staircase leads to the second terrace, a garden with a central lawn surrounded by flowerbeds and six shaped yew trees. On the left some irregular stone

steps lead to a third terrace in line with the fortress. Here we come to the *Count's Thinking Place*, a neo-mediaeval tower built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the ruins of a 14<sup>th</sup>-century edifice.

In 2023, FAI enhanced the gardens by replacing trees and shrubs that were in a critical phytosanitary condition, integrating ornamental plants into the flower beds, pruning fit yews, and creating gravel paths to protect the lawns.



Photo of G. Buttazzoni - O. Kolici, 2020 © FAI

The formal garden in the small balcony of Palazzo Moroni



Photo of G. Buttazzoni - O. Kolici, 2020 © FAI

The staircase linking the first and second terraces of the gardens



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The *Count's Thinking Place* in neo-mediaeval style