

Staatliche Schlösser,
Burgen und Gärten Sachsen

Barockgarten Großsedlitz

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Orangery Botanical Collection

Orange trees were among the most important elements of the gardens in the 17th and 18th centuries. No Baroque garden is complete without these trees, which are usually imported from Italy.

The citrus plants with their dark green leaves, which blossom and carry fruits at the same time, were cultivated in vases or pots and formed the movable part of the Baroque garden. The striking, tall trees with their regularly trimmed crowns would be placed on terraces in summer and gave a certain rhythm and structure to the open space. Arranged differently on festive occasions, they ensured a constant sense of variation.

Not only were they highly adored and valued on account of their many uses, of their sensitiveness towards the central European climate and the beauty of how they were growing, but they were also symbolic of the immortality of the ruling house.

The orangery had also a great symbolic significance because of its connection to the Greek myth of Hercules. The fruit of the citrus plants were regarded as the golden apples, which Hercules, as one of his twelve labours, had to bring for his ruler Eurystheus from the garden of the Hesperide. Thus the botanical collection allowed a certain association of its owner with the virtuous hero Hercules, something which was very popular in the Baroque.

Orangery Cultivation

Cultivating beautiful and healthy potted trees demanded skill and the whole range of gardening technology available to the gardener, including the building of a winter greenhouse especially for the purpose. The potted plants, which included other foreign plants, were displayed in the orangeries which were usually heated.

Orangery buildings

Many of these buildings were erected during the 17th and 18th centuries. The orangery used to be a central element of the garden, which often had to satisfy highly aesthetic demands as well as to conserve the valuable potted plants. The buildings, which were empty in the summer, could be used as venues such as banquets and theater performances.