lived side by side, brought along different foods and culinary traditions, which mixed with each other and with the Estonian tradition. As a result of industrialisation, there was a migration to the cities and the dishes developed here were more suited to the urban life.

ESTONIAN NATIONAL CUISINE

It is equally difficult to answer the questions when the distinctively Estonian national cuisine developed and what exactly is Estonian national cuisine. Little is known about everyday and festive dishes of the Estonians before the second half of the 19th century. The Estonian peasants' diet was extremely unvaried and meagre. The reforms in the mid-19th century improved the peasants' diet and the dishes which are known today as traditional Estonian food evolved. The dishes, which were cooked and eaten then, might be called our national cuisine, although with some reservations. Estonian national cuisine rests on various dishes made of cereals (porridges, cereal and potato porridge, Palm Sunday barley porridge), They have been staple foods for centuries and only in the 19th century gave way to other foods and dishes. Bread has always had an important place on the Estonian table, our ancestors learned to make leavened rye bread in the 11th–13th centuries. Vegetable dishes, above all dishes made with cabbage, peas, broad beans, lentils (sauerkraut, pea and lentil soups), later dishes made from potatoes, occupy the second place in our national cuisine. Our national cuisine also includes fish dishes, especially those made with Baltic herring (soups, casseroles, baked), as well as dried and salted fish (Baltic herring in a sauce, Atlantic herring) and various pork dishes (roast pork, pork with sauerkraut, boiled pork with vegetables), among them dishes with salted and smoked meat and dishes made with blood (bread, dumplings, sausage, pancakes). Milk and dairy products (milk soups, with vegetables or cereals, cottage cheese), which were introduced with the development of livestock raising, have also become an important part of our national cuisine, the same can be said about dishes made with eggs (egg butter spread, egg butter with potato spread). Wild berries, mushrooms, nuts and honey must be included too. Fruits and berries, which started to be cultivated in the farm gardens in the 19th century, and the dishes and jams and other preserves made from them have been a part of Estonian food culture since then. We should not forget drinks. The traditional drinks, especially throughout the last two centuries, have been kvas and beer as well as birch and maple syrup, which have made a recent comeback.

‹ Photo: Remo Savisaar.
‹ Photo: Jaak Nilson.

‹ Flower garden in front of the house at Tohvre-Miku Farm in Obriku Village, Mulgimaa (Tarvastu Parish). 1962 (Photo: G. Troska)

HISTORIC GARDENS

The Peasant's Flower Garden

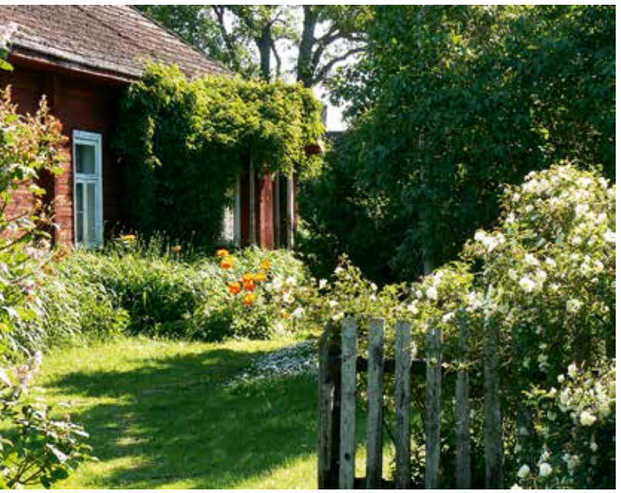
Anneli Banner
(ESTONIAN OPEN AIR MUSEUM)

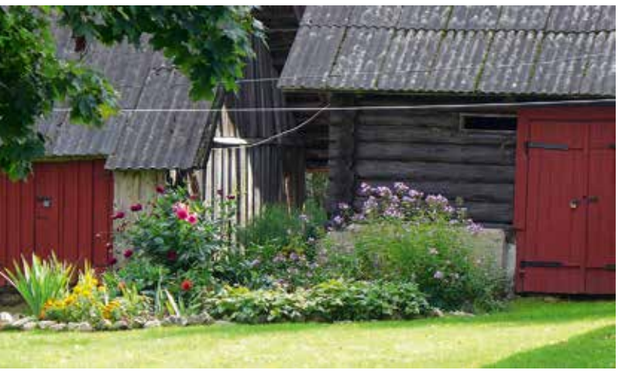
PHOTOS: ESTONIAN OPEN AIR MUSEUM, ANNELI BANNER

The tradition of private fruit and flower gardens in Estonia is not very old. Vegetable patches were a regular feature at farms already in the Middle Ages, but apple – orchards and flower gardens were not founded until about 150 years ago. The slow development of garden culture has been blamed on unsuitable climate and soil conditions, poor knowledge of gardening and serfdom. Serfdom was definitely one of the reasons as neither serfs nor tenant farmers had enough time to spend on growing fruit trees or flowers that seemed superfluous luxury. Some staple foods and other crops useful for household purposes was all that was grown. Tenant farmers believed that if they did something of their own initiative the lord of the manor would increase their rent. For this reason farm gardens were established only after peasants were able to purchase land and did not have to depend on the lord of the manor. When the living conditions improved farmers started planting fruit trees, ornamental shrubs and flowers came later.*

* Serfdom in the Governorates of Estland and Livland was abolished in 1816 and 1819. Although the serfs were emancipated, land was still owned by the manorial lords and peasants had to do labour corvee. After the agrarian reforms in 1849 and 1856 this was replaced by money rent. Towards the end of the 19th century peasants started to buy land and establish their own farmsteads. With the agrarian reform of 1919 manors were nationalised and land distributed to the peasants.– Editor's note.

˘ Alt-Bertas farmstead in Rälby Village on the island of Vormsi. Next to the gate there is a burnet rose, in front of the house an orange daylily (*Hemerocallis fulva*) and an oriental poppy (*Papaver orientale*) grow. 2010 (Photo: A. Banner)





^ A flowerbed with dahlias, phlox and marigolds (*Tagetes*) in bloom. Kase Farm, Korela Village, Setumaa. 2014 (Photo: A. Banner)

› Flowerbeds in front of the barn-dwelling at Kruusaaugu Farm, Kabala Village, Rapla Parish. 1952 (Photo: K. Tihase)

Still, it was the manorial gardens and parks that served as models for farm garden designs. Not only were farm gardens patterned after manorial gardens but the cuttings were also brought from there and shared with other households. The first Estonian-language gardening books followed the example of the German-language ones and the advice given to peasants was very often more suitable for manorial than farm gardens. The gardeners and their helpers at manors who were hired from the local peasant folk were instrumental in introducing new plants. Some manorial lords (for example the Pahlens from Palmse) looked benevolently on farm gardens and gave cuttings from their own garden to be distributed. The new farmhouses and gardens around them often looked as if they had been copied

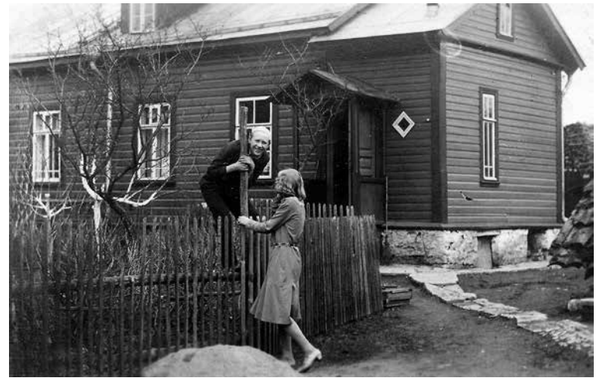
› In the second half of the 19th century farmyards were partitioned by fences. It is believed that manors set an example here; also, mistresses of farms hated cleaning manure from beneath their doors and windows every day. One part of the farmyard was now reserved for domestic animals. The other part where animals were not allowed was "the clean yard" and fruit trees, berry bushes and ornamental plants were planted here. Sometimes the clean yard was used for everyday household chores and behind or beside the house there was a separate fruit and flower garden. In South Estonia such clean yards were named front (door) yards.

A view of Tooma farmyard in Kiriku Village (Kuusalu Parish). 1957 (Photo: K. Tihase)

˘ House and flower garden in the manorial style, Henno Farm, Sirvaku Village, Tartumaa. 1920s (private collection)

from manorial architecture and garden design. In the poorer regions gardens were simpler. A lilac bush was put into a corner of the front yard, and a wolfsbane (*Aconitum*) planted in the garden between the apple trees. Long and narrow flowerbeds were usually made under the windows or near the front door. In this way one could admire the beautiful flowers and show the guests that the mistress of the house was not only hard-working but had a sense of beauty as well. The preferred plants were hardy, fast-reproducing, long-lived and low-maintenance. Lilacs (*Syringia vulgaris*) mentioned above became an almost obligatory feature in farm gardens. Some other beloved shrubs were the fragrant mock-orange (*Philadelphus*), burnet rose (*Rosa pampinellifolia)* and various Spiraea species. As to flowers, perennials were preferred: common marigold (*Calendula officinalis*), hollyhocks (*Alcea*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*) and sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*) were some of the most common plants. Around the farmhouse doors and windows creepers were grown, for example field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), nowadays scorned as a common weed. But peons (*Paeonia)* and phlox, regarded as typical flowers of Estonian farm gardens today, did not begin to spread widely until the early 20th century.

› A simple home garden in Peetri Street, Narva, early 1930s. (Photo: private collection)



URBAN GARDENS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Tiina Tammet

PHOTOS: MUSEUM OF ESTONIAN ARCHITECTURE, REPRODUCTIONS, PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

The history of town gardens throughout centuries is a little different from that of farm gardens. Still, the aim of establishing a garden has always been the same: to grow food and protect it against destructive forces by fencing it off. Later the aspect of beauty was added and, depending on the wealth of the owner, might have become the primary function.

THE MEDIEVAL GARDEN

There was not much free space in medieval towns, and small areas where trees grew were taken for a public use. There were utility gardens within the monastic complexes, and outside the towns there were garden plots, fields and pastures which the town dwellers either owned or rented, hop and cabbage patches, and apothecary's gardens, where herbs were grown and experimented with. Land within the walled-in towns was expensive and out-of-town households supplied town dwellers with necessary food.

In the environs of towns the town dwellers kept their cattle, stored hay, firewood, etc which could not be stored within the precincts of towns because of limited space and high fire risk.

‹ Dr Palitser's house and garden at 47/49, Nurme Street, Tallinn. The neighbouring house is in the same style (architect Friedrich Wendach) as Kerson's villa the design of the garden was commissioned from the L. Späth Firm, Germany. The design connects the architectonic surroundings of the house to a more landscaped surrounding on the borders of the property. The architectural part and the trees and shrubs are more durable longer-lived than the plants which are more sensitive to changes in fashion and maintenance. The photo shows the garden in early springtime in the 1980s. (Photo: Museum of Estonian Architecture, photographer Peeter Säre)

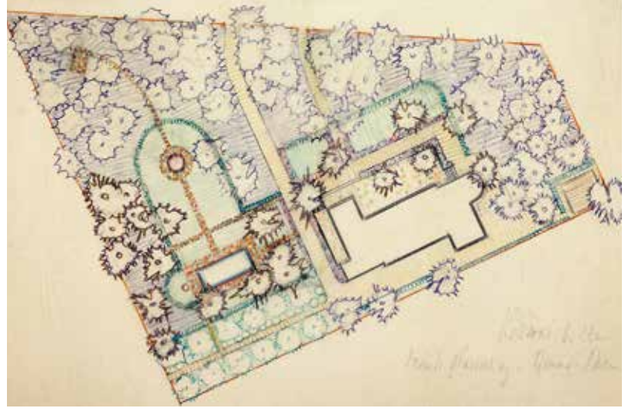
More prosperous citizens built houses not far from towns. The poor travelled to the countryside to be with their relations and the rich spent their summers at cottages.

17th–19th CENTURIES

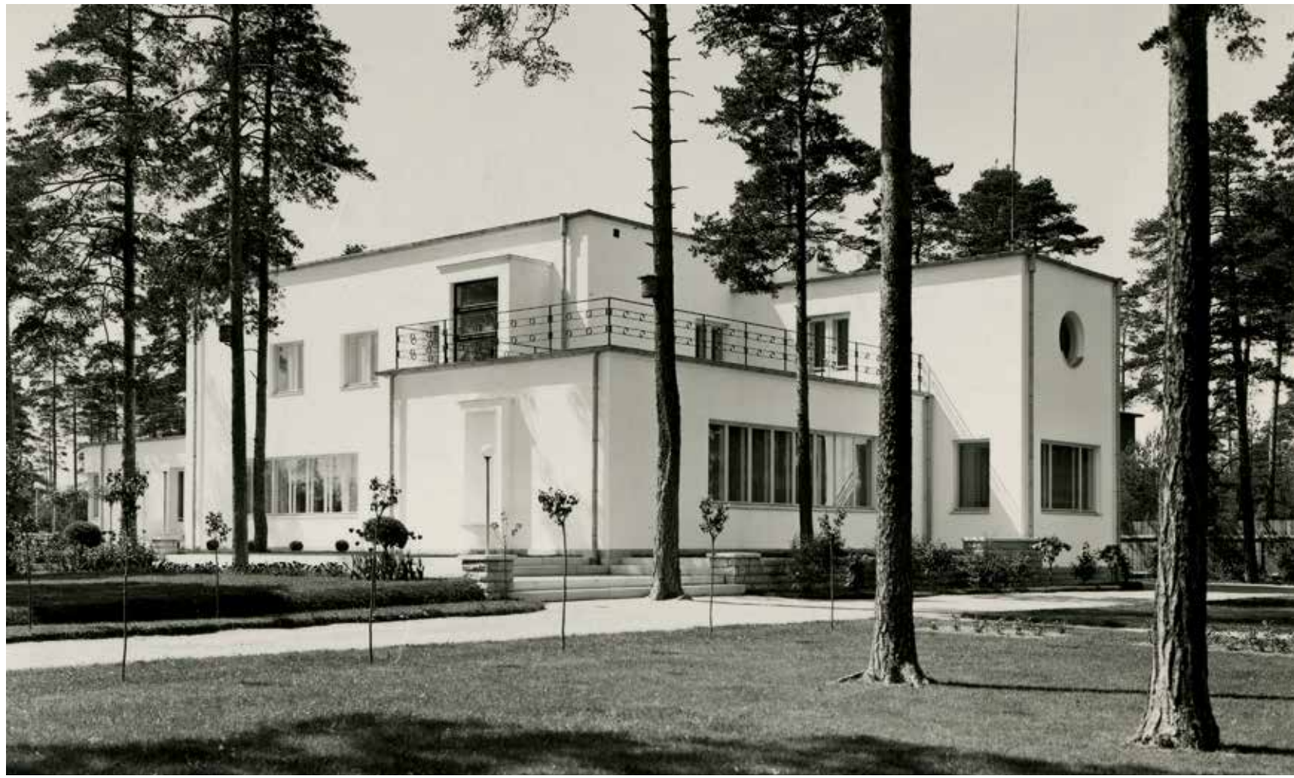
The land surrounding Tallinn's Old Town was reserved for building new defensive structures in the 17th century and the town dwellers were allotted some land farther away in return, where summer cottages were built. In the mid-18th century Tallinn was surrounded by a wealth of beautiful houses with cultivated land adjoining them, and Peter the Great's summer residence at Kadriorg was the foremost among them.

The gardens near the town gates had to make way for dwellings as the urban populations were steadily growing and more and more people were arriving to live and work in the town. After the town walls lost their defensive function in the mid-19th century, zones of greenery were created around the medieval town and the town itself grew quickly out of its bounds because of furious building activity and the expansion of the suburbs. As land in the outlying districts was not as expensive as in the central part of the town, the plots were bigger and gardens were created around the buildings. Expert landscape designers or gardeners were often employed to plan the country houses, but it was only the gardens of the more prosperous owners that benefited from the professional hand. In the poorer areas gardens were founded to grow vegetables, berry bushes and fruit trees and, to some extent, domestic animals or poultry. Gradually, even these garden plots were redesigned after the models seen elsewhere: the flowerbeds were lined with curbstones, there were clean paths and round flowerbeds.

The country houses with gardens belonging to wealthy people influenced the development of garden culture as exciting species of shrubs and trees, imported from different countries were planted, according to the prevailing trends and the owner's interests.



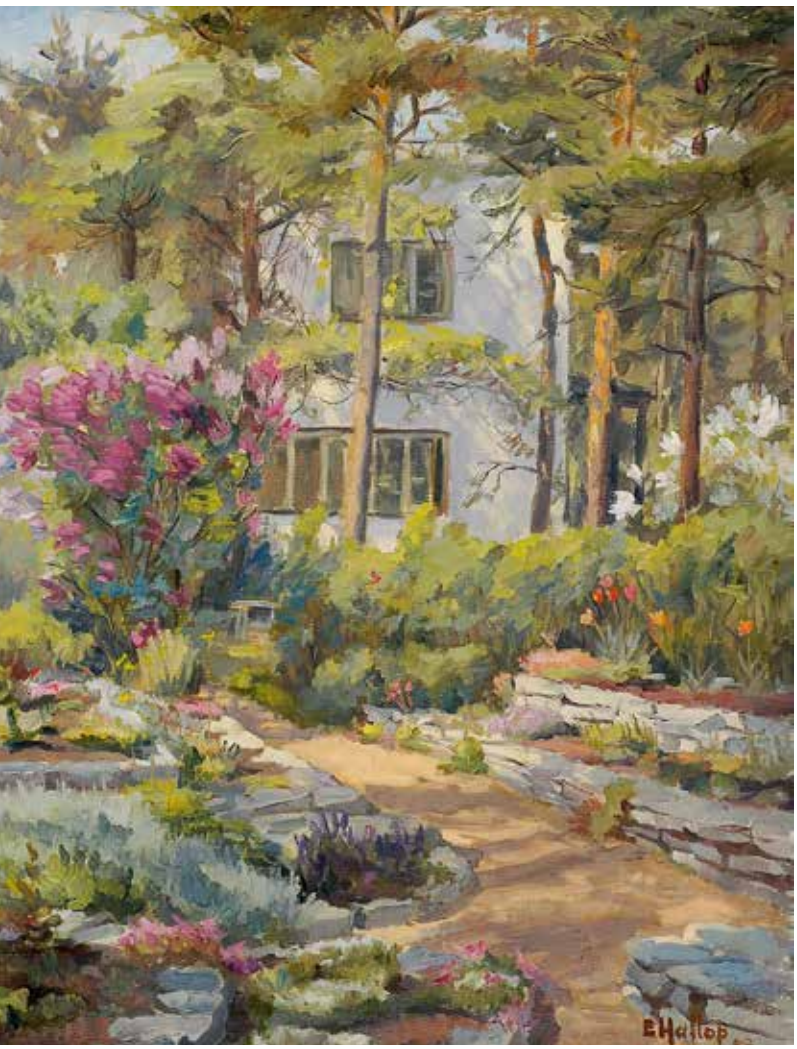
‹ Design for the garden at Otto Kerson's villa at 40, Nurme Street, Tallinn by the architect Edgar Johan Kuusik, 1935. The architect planned the garden and the villa in the Functionalist style. (The collection of the Museum of Estonian Architecture)



˘ Garden of Otto Kerson's villa at 40 Nurme Street, Tallinn some years after its completion. The house and the garden are accommodated between the pine-trees of the suburb of Nõmme. Straight-lined paths, terraces and regular flower beds emphasise the strict architecture of the building. The photo was taken when tulips were in bloom, 2nd half of the 1930s. (Photo: Collection of the Museum of Estonian Architecture)

⌄ Ernst Hallop. Tuglas family home (1958)

Home and garden of the Estonian writer Friedebert Tuglas at Nõmme. Courtesy of the Under and Tuglas Literature Centre, Tallinn)



Often the position of the buildings made it possible to design the garden or park in a more intriguing way, by making use of the existing features of local landscape. There were more changes to the landscape: land was ameliorated and drained, trees were planted in the sandy areas, etc. to attain the desired relief and conditions for plant-growing. The changes made in those days still affect the natural conditions of the suburban areas today.

Starting in the second half of the 19th century much work was done with introduced species by experimenting with their adaptability in our climate. Also, some old and exciting species are still preserved in the former gardens, which are now public parks.

20th CENTURY

The development of an urban garden as part of the middle-class quality of life gathered momentum during the first Republic of Estonia. While planning suburbs the garden as an outdoor living space was designed on the advice given by the architects and the press. In this way such districts as Tähtvere in Tartu and Nõmme and Pirita in Tallinn developed. Similar principles for garden design were applied in small gardens of private houses after WW II and this has continued until today. A more respectable front garden, the back garden which combines functions of utility and rest and a small space reserved for household chores are some of the principles followed in urban garden design even today.

Although the fashions, building materials and the assortment of plants have changed a little since then, the main features of urban gardens were defined in the 20th century: an urban garden should be an outdoor space related to indoor space, which is cosy, but not too time-consuming, where the family members can be occupied with a common activity or with activities that correspond to their age and interests.