

**GIARDINI STORICI:
DA LUOGHI DI *LOISIR* A MUSEI *EN PLEIN AIR* PER IL
GRANDE PUBBLICO.
QUALI INDIRIZZI PER UNA SOSTENIBILE FRUIZIONE
E VALORIZZAZIONE?**

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Abstract

Historic gardens represent a cultural heritage characterized by changeability and fragility inherent in their own constituent material. Set up for elitist leisure, today they are outdoor museums used by a greater audience than their vocation, with the serious risk of compromising their essence. However, the enhancement of a museum is an essential requirement for its maintenance, in order to increase visitors and income. A sustainable enhancement of historic gardens must involve an obligation in order to allow to the larger number of visitors – in the best conditions of physical, cultural and economic accessibility – to enjoy the place without causing degradation or consumption. Through the analysis of the virtuous example of the Racconigi park, in the years of direction by the architect Mirella Macera (1994-2010), some profitable guidelines for a sustainable enhancement are outlined in terms of visitor flows and types of activities. Firstly, the ‘cultural seasons’ promoted in the early 2000s will be treated, characterized by skilful storytelling and targeted long-life-learning educational programs: not just a trick to attract visitors but a device to explore and make known the *genius loci*. Secondly, the experimental ‘restoration’ of the agricultural activities of nineteenth century will be analyzed: on one side, they allowed to recover the vocation of the place, gathering a set of good practices for amortizing the maintenance costs and improving the ecological and perceptive aspects of the park; on the other side, they offered an earning mode through the typical marketed products, as well as they provided a peculiar fruition linked to the numerous educational activities and types of visits. Then, the first true act of management of a historic garden is the project of knowledge and restoration, that must be derived from the past of the place, well rooted in the present and projected into the future.

Keywords: *historic gardens, enhancement, sustainability, Racconigi park*