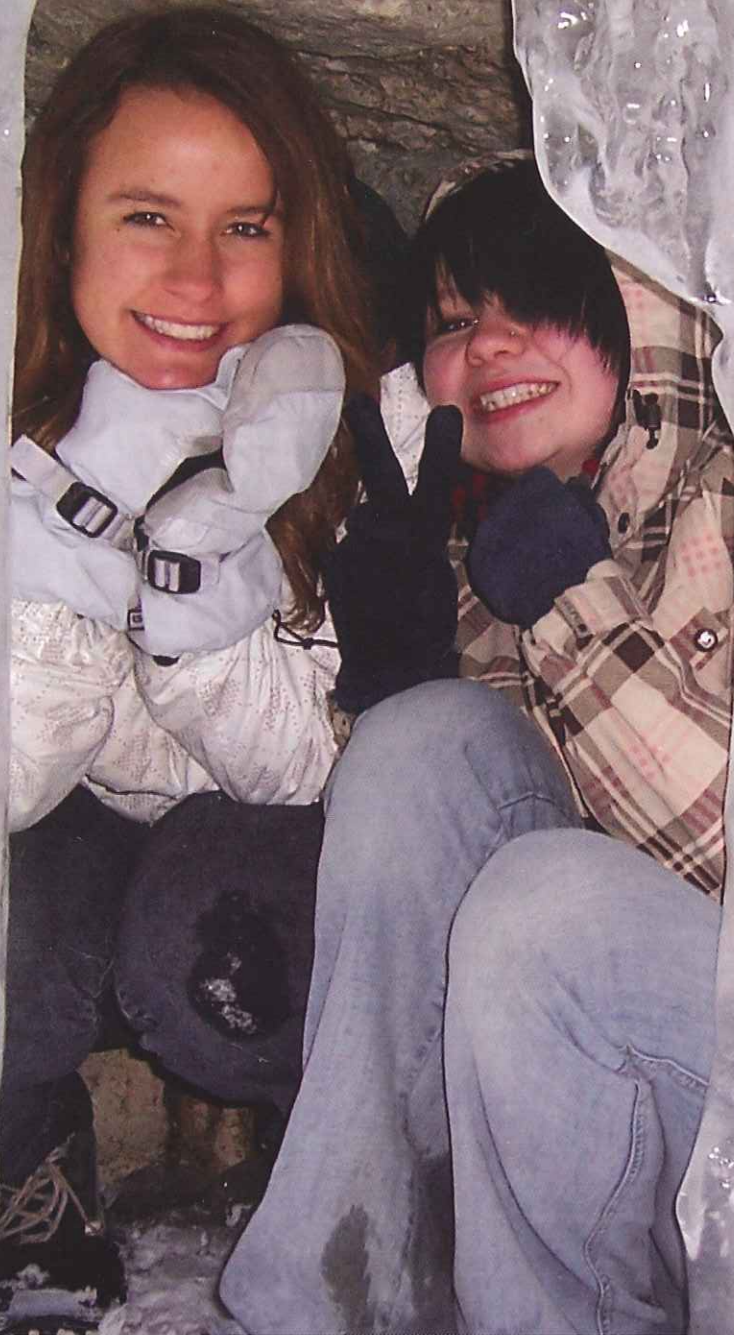


# Ifpra World



International Federation of Park and Recreation Administration

MARCH 2011



**Swedish Garden Tourism**

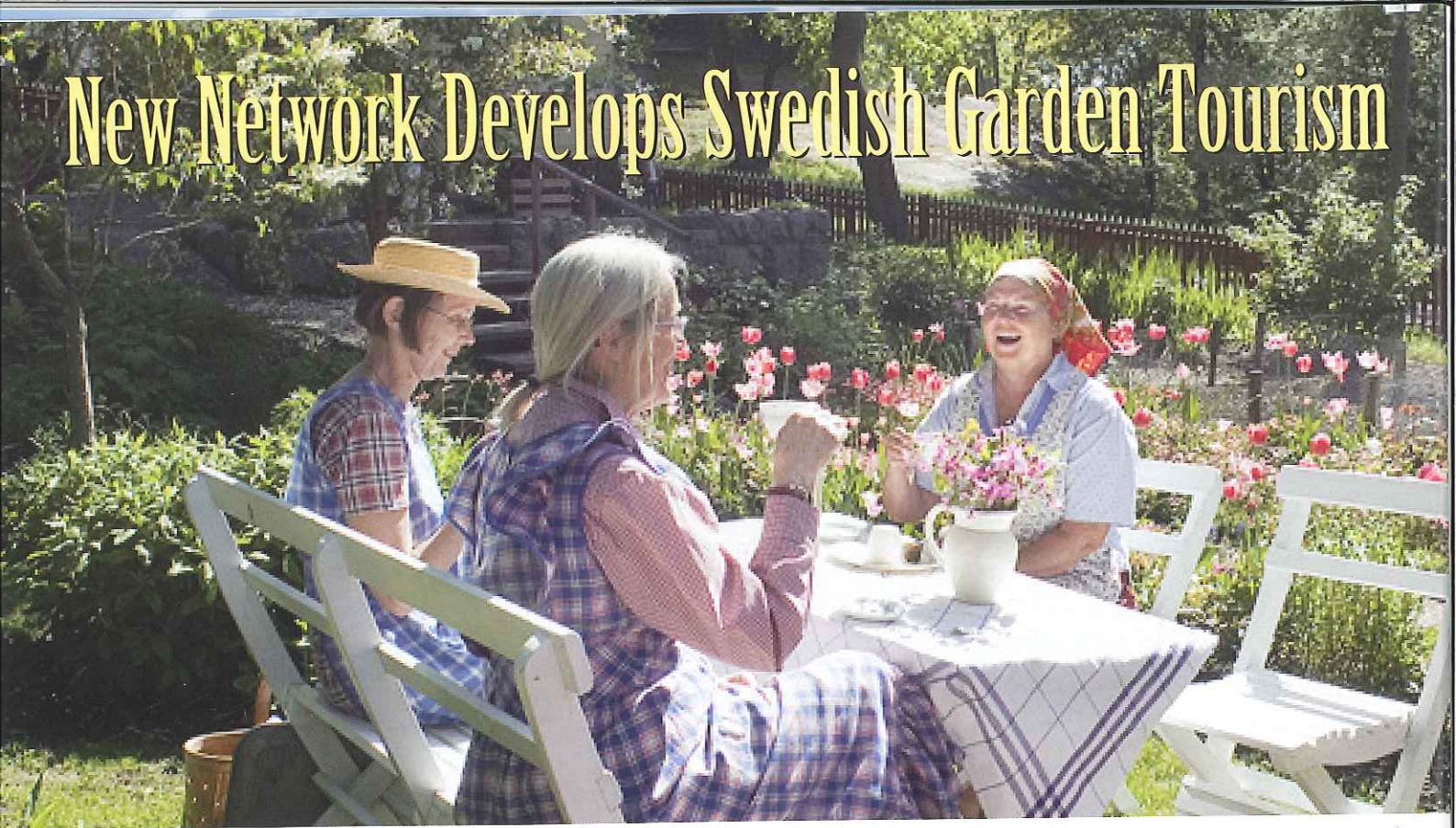
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# New Network Develops Swedish Garden Tourism



In March 2010 a network was established in Sweden with the aim to promote garden tourism and strengthen and develop the Swedish horticultural heritage. The network has currently 18 members. They represent public parks administered by municipalities, regional authorities, the Royal Court and foundations.

Sweden is one of the Scandinavian countries in northern Europe. From north to south in Sweden there is a horticultural tradition with roots in the common European cultural heritage. Swedish garden design is rather informal and draws much inspiration from nature. Stark forms in combination with floral profusion give the Swedish garden a unique and natural characteristic.

The Swedish parks that were established in the mid-1800s have helped create the beautiful recreational experiences that exist today in the very middle of our major cities. City Head Gardeners and charitable foundations managing gardens and parks are developing new modern

concepts together with landscape architects, artists and citizens.

Swedes have a strong passion for gardening and nature. Private and public parks attract thousands of visitors every year and garden tourism is becoming an established concept.

## Forum for public gardens

Today, the great public gardens have a forum, the newly formed Swedish Society of Public Parks and Gardens. The society aims to strengthen, develop and communicate knowledge about the Swedish garden heritage that includes the great variety of landscape from the clearings of the northern forest to the formal palace gardens of the south.

The discussion that led to establishing a network started in March 2008. In order to obtain inspiration and experiences of garden tourism from other countries, Movium (Centre for the Urban Public Space) together with the cities of Malmö and Helsingborg organised a

national conference in Malmö. The invited speakers at this event came from countries such as England, Germany, France and Spain. The audience included representatives from large private gardens that are open to the public and from municipal authorities intending to market their public parks and gardens as tourist destinations. During the discussions at this conference, it became apparent that there is a demand for skills development and exchanges of experiences among those working to develop Swedish garden tourism.

The garden tourism conference has become an annual event. The 2009 conference was followed by a seminar entitled 'Building a national network of garden tourism'. During this seminar, around 50 delegates discussed the aims and objectives of a proposed national network. The seminar resulted in Movium, together with event manager Cecilia Liljedahl, being given the task of investigating forms and funding for such a network.



This investigation included a survey in which 25 key individuals were questioned about the themes and activities that should be prioritised within the framework of a garden tourism network. The responses gave the clear message that the network should not simply concentrate on exchanges of experiences and marketing of garden tourism, but should also play an important role as a forum for managing, renewing and communicating the Swedish horticultural heritage.



The investigation was reported in March 2010 in conjunction with the annual garden tourism conference. After a discussion on issues such as title, the network was formally created as The Swedish Society of Public Parks and Gardens – SSPPG. The network initially has 18 members, 10 of which are municipal authorities or public gardens managed by municipal authorities. Eight members have a different principal, for example the Royal Court, county councils or foundations.

### Aims and objectives

The society has agreed on a shared vision: Sweden will be an obvious destination for garden tourism and will play an active part in a number of European contexts as regards protecting our common horticultural heritage. Parks and gardens will comprise a platform for socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development.

The network is being run according to the following aims and objectives:

- Increase the competitive power of Swedish public parks and gardens as tourist attractions and public features.
- Create opportunities for exchanges of experiences through coordination.
- Create opportunities for joint national and international marketing drives at exhibitions and other forums for tourism and the horticultural industry.
- SSPPG is a forum for new thinking and renewal of the Swedish horticultural heritage.
- Restoration of our public parks, which make up a major proportion of the Swedish horticultural heritage, is seen as a way to profile Swedish garden design in the future.
- Create added value for residents and tourists through making parks and gardens a natural part of the tourist industry.
- Contribute to environmental analysis and monitoring of the media and new communication strategies for raising the profile of parks and gardens in the tourist industry, both nationally and internationally.

The members are as follows, from south to north in Sweden:

- Parks of Malmö
- Parks of Lund
- Parks of Helsingborg
- Fredriksdal Museum and Gardens
- Sofiero Palace and Gardens
- Ronneby Brunnsparck
- Gunnebo House and Gardens
- The Garden Society of Gothenburg
- Gothenburg Botanical Garden
- Parks of Linköping
- Skansen
- Royal Court with the Drottningholm Palace Park
- Royal Court with the Royal Djurgården an the palaces
- Ulriksdal, Haga and Rosendal
- Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde
- Parks of Enköping
- Millesgården
- Rottneros Park
- Wij Gardens



### Participation at Florales show

The first major activity undertaken by SSPPG came in April 2010, when the network had a stand and exhibition garden at the Florales show, the world's largest indoor exhibition on the theme of flowers, which is held in Ghent, Belgium. The initiative came from the Swedish embassy in Brussels. The exhibition garden was designed by Ulf Nordfjell, perhaps the best known Swedish landscape architect internationally, who has had major successes at the Chelsea Flower Show, for example.

The Florales show attracted around 300,000 visitors and was covered by 200 journalists. A brochure in English presenting the members of the SSPPG network was produced for the show.

During 2010, the network also organised a seminar, was represented at international conferences and took part in meetings with other European networks. Its operations are funded by contributions from members, and during the year it received some financial support from the Swedish National Heritage Board.

As regards future activities under discussion, SSPPG has received an invitation from the Dutch embassy in Stockholm to host a stand at Floriade in Venlo, the Netherlands, in 2012. It is an honour to be invited to take part in this gigantic Horticultural World Expo, which is held every 10 years and has around two million visitors.

### Cooperation and marketing

During 2011 the goal is to get a number of new members involved in the network. SSPPG will take active steps to increase the cooperation with other European networks within garden tourism and horticultural heritage. Under discussion also is the objective of becoming more known in Sweden through participation in some important trade fairs.

The SSPPG network has a website – [www.swedishgardens.se](http://www.swedishgardens.se). This contains information on the members of the network and provides a map showing where they are located in Sweden. Come and visit their beautiful parks and gardens – the best Sweden has to offer in the form of garden experiences!



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