

Den osynliga handen

Trädgårdsmästaren i 1700-talets Sverige

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ABSTRACT

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Research into historic gardens has often emphasized the garden – the work of art – or else its creator or owner and his interests. Insofar as he has been mentioned, the gardener has often been viewed as an instrumental person giving effect to other people's intentions. A garden, however, is an ongoing process and its form and content are created and re-created through the actions and decisions of various agents. The gardener's knowledge, contacts and managerial acumen have a supremely palpable impact on the outcome. Despite the pivotal role of himself and his work in gardens throughout history, the gardener's almost complete absence in research is notable. Knowledge born of experience, the work of hand and body, has somehow been taken for granted.

This study is based on sources of many different kinds, such as gardening accounts, contracts of service, inventories, wage bills, estate inventories, correspondence, citizenship rolls, gardening manuals, horticultural journals and travelogues. In the absence of complete cradle-to-grave data for one individual, it has not been possible to make an individual case study of a particular gardener. Instead particulars of travel, workplaces, forms of tenure, tasks, name changes, godparents, succession, chattels etc. have been obtained from different documents about different gardeners in different places. The main emphasis of the study is on southern Sweden, without focusing on any particular geographic region.

The thesis shows that a skilled master gardener, with his experiential knowledge, or 'tacit knowledge', was essential to the formal and substantial functioning of the garden during the 18th century. His role was that of caring for the garden and moving it forward, preserving and developing a concept, giving it a *raison d'être* and transforming it completely when called upon to do so. In addition, a gardener had to organize the work in the garden, teach garden boys and journeymen, run a business and keep the accounts, present the garden to visitors and sometimes develop new horticultural techniques. The study indirectly provides knowledge concerning the nature of garden design and the manner of its creation.

Key words: gardeners, garden history, tacit knowledge, horticulture, 18th century Sweden, towns, manorial gardens, gardening books, garden production, Society of Master Gardeners, garden design, gardening profession, garden tools, botanical gardens, market gardens, garden economy, social history.