

THE ROSE GARDEN OF THE MEILAHTI PARK ARBORETUM

The Meilahti Park Arboretum, with its exceptionally rich variety of species, is located in the grounds of the former Meilahti manor house between Johannesbergintie street and Meilahdentie street in a valley guarded by three rocky slopes. Covering some three hectares, the tranquil and lush park includes a collection of trees and shrubs of the built environment.

The collection contains more than 140 species of trees and shrubs, and some 100 species of shrub roses. The arboretum was founded in 1967 as an environmental education and observation park for all those interested in plants. The trees and shrub groups are furnished with name tags to make identification easier. The Meilahti Park Arboretum is one of the three arboreta in Helsinki, the other two being located in Niskala and Viikki.

The word arboretum comes from the Latin word *arbor*, which means tree. The earliest occurrence of the word in literature dates from 1838. In those days, an arboretum referred to a section of a garden where exotic trees were cultivated for exhibition. Nowadays an arboretum refers to an area maintained as a park or park woodland where a wide variety of different trees and shrubs have been planted.

Basically, arboretums are parks used for the cultivation and display various species of tree. Arboretums are needed for research, education and plant cultivation purposes. For the general public, they are interesting places to visit because of their abundance of plants. Visitor often feel as if they were taking a trip abroad!

The speciality of the Meilahti arboretum is its collection of shrub roses, a rosarium. The first rose collection in Meilahti was established in 1991. In 2006–2007, the rose collection was replanted and some of the park fixtures, including both of its entrances, the north and the south gate, were refurbished.



A major part of the species was replaced during the refurbishment. All of the roses are so-called shrub roses; there are no clustered-flowered or floribunda roses. New attractions in the replanted area include a group of perennials and a pergola for climbing roses and clematis. The rose species were selected in cooperation with the Finnish Rose Society. In addition to the name of the species, the birth year of the species is also indicated on the name tags if known.

The main exhibits in the rose area are European historical roses and long-lasting Finnish roses. The species have been planted in groups based on their historical or botanical background. The collection includes a large number of species referred to as 'found roses', which are old, unidentified roses found in various part of Finland, as well as familiar traditional roses, such as *R. gallica* 'Splendens', or 'Valamo rose', and *R. alba* 'Minette', or Minden rose. The assortment of European historical roses includes French or Gallica roses, known for their strongly scented flowers, as well as Damask, Centifolia and Moss roses.

The Helsinki local group of the Finnish Rose Society has, for several years, helped to look after the Meilahti rose collection. The Rose Society was founded in 1989 to serve as a link between rose lovers, research scientists and nurseries. The Society promotes the cultivation of old, long-lasting roses and the general experimenting with and use of roses, as well as familiarising people with the history of roses.



Would you like to take your friend on a rose-scented picnic? The best time to enjoy the scent and delightful blossoms of the roses is usually from mid-June to mid-August.

Welcome to the opening of the replanted rose garden in Meilahti Arboretum on Tuesday, 24th June, 2008 at 3 p.m. Guided rose tours are arranged after the opening ceremony and at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.