



„The palace and garden at Rusovce are one of the most beautiful in the county of Moson-Magyaróvár.”

Viennese edition of "Magyar hirmondó" from 1802

HISTORY

In 1646, Rusovce came into the possession of the Counts of Zichy, who were the sole lords of the estate and village for nearly 200 years. In the second half of the 18th century, Rusovce became the country seat of the family. Both palace and garden owe their current design to the rebuilding efforts of Count **Emanuel Zichy-Ferraris**. From 1841 to 1846, he rebuilt the palace in Tudor style, modelled on the design of English manor houses, to please his English-born wife. The baroque garden was likewise redesigned in the modern style of an English natural landscape garden. Its unique location on an **old arm of the Danube** was integrated into the garden design, thereby creating a second garden area which blends into the adjacent open landscape in several places.

Among the last high-ranking owners of the palace was **Crown Princess Stephanie**, the widow of the Austrian Crown Prince Rudolph, whose full title was "Stephanie of Belgium, Princess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Duchess of Saxony, Austrian and Hungarian Crown Princess and Princess of Lónyai". In 1906, she and her second husband, the Hungarian Count Elemér Lónyai, purchased Rusovce palace and garden, where they led a quiet and harmonious life.

Another feature which became extremely well-known was the market garden for fruit and ornamental plants, which was set up in the southern part of the estate and was named "**Stephaneum**" after its owner.



The palace garden around 1920



The palace today



Princess Stephanie (1903)

FLORA

The palace and garden suffered from the looting at the end of World War II, and the garden was in a state of total neglect after the long years without care. For some time now efforts have been made, in co-operation with the municipality of Bruck an der Leitha, to revitalise the landscape garden within the context of the interregional EU project "**The Great Gardens**" Park Network and to invite the public to visit this picturesque place surrounding Rusovce palace.

In the months after the winter, the first harbingers of spring can be seen in the garden, which is blooming with a large number of spring flowers. As early as in January, visitors can enjoy the bright yellow blooms of the winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*). In the months to follow, Alpine and Siberian squills (*Scilla vindobonensis*, *Orthocallis sibirica*), glory-of-the-snow (*Chionodoxa lucilie*), and white and yellow wood anemones (*Anemone nemorosa*, *Anemone ranunculoides*) turn the garden into an **ocean of colours**.



Alpine squill

Botanical highlights of particular interest include the **dry meadows** with low-growing sedges, feather grass, milkwort and a few protected orchid species. The palace garden at Rusovce is one of the few Slovakian locations which host the severely endangered **bug orchid** (*Anacamptis coriophora*) and the unobtrusive autumn lady's tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*).

The dominating feature of the palace garden are the massive horse chestnuts (*Aesculus hippocastanum*). The London planes (*Platanus hispanica*) are of similar magnificence and splendour and are considered as one of the most attractive, and at the same time, resistant trees in the garden.



Plane tree avenue

Visitors will also find remnants of shaped yews (*Taxus baccata*) and box trees (*Buxus sempervirens*). The garden's stock of trees is complemented by limes, maples, oaks, common honey locusts and other ornamental woods. In dendrological terms, the incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) and the **Spanish fir** (*Abies pinsapo*) are among the most interesting specimens.

In addition to its valuable flora, the garden also serves as a sanctuary for a rich and diverse fauna. Alone **30 species of songbirds**, including the rare spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), have found an adequate habitat in this place. With a little patience, visitors can see as many as six different species of woodpeckers. During the night, the park becomes the hunting grounds of owls and bats, but also of night-active mammals. Moreover, the old Danube arm hosts a broad range of amphibians and reptiles.

In the past, the old Danube arm was used for boating and, decorated with Chinese lanterns, even served as the setting for magnificent **Venetian nights**. Today, three bridges lead into the adjacent forest park, which blends harmoniously into the surrounding fields and forests.

Visit Rusovce and experience the **charming atmosphere** of the wild-romantic landscape garden! Take a stroll on the winding walks through the spacious garden and shady riparian forests of the old Danube arm and discover the magic of the calm and cosy places!

FAUNA



The old Danube arm



Boating on the old Danube arm (around 1810)

