

The Botanic Museum

In 1591 the Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici established in Pisa a Gallery to host all the 'works of nature' as a pride and incentive for all the academics of the prestigious Grand Duchy's University.

The following Natural Science Museum inherited that sixteenth-century gallery and acquired several interesting collections during the nineteenth-century, including several precious *Herbaria*.

At the end of the twentieth-century the non-botanical portion of the Museum moved to the Pisa Charterhouse in Calci, where the Natural Science Museum of the University is currently found.

Nowadays, the Botanic Museum is hosted in the "Palazzo delle Conchiglie" with the grotesque façade decorated in 1752. Its collections reflect the history of the research and teaching in Botany at the university, and often have become real art works. The *Herbaria*, irreplaceable tools for botanists, are kept elsewhere, in special rooms with controlled humidity.

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Botanic Museum



Room 1 - Ground floor

THE ORIGINS

Ancient front doorway of the Garden of Simples

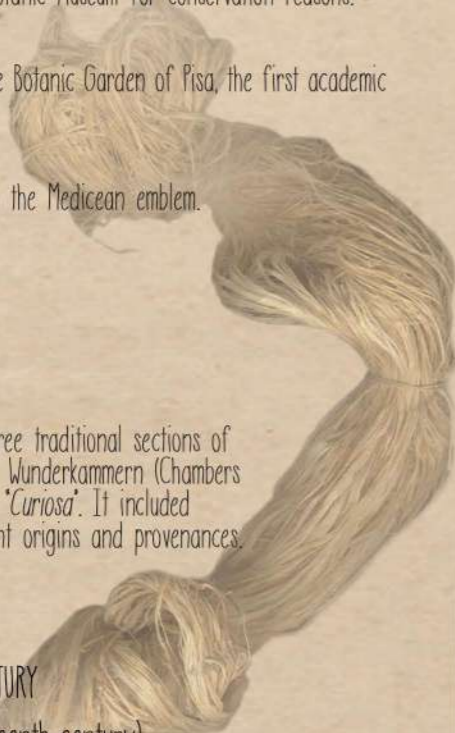
Since the late sixteenth-century, from via santa Maria at monumental carved walnut wooden doorway allowed the entrance into the Garden of Simples and the Museum. After 1969, it has been moved into the Botanic Museum for conservation reasons.

Luca Ghini

Luca Ghini (1490-1556) is the founder of the Botanic Garden of Pisa, the first academic Botanic Garden in the world, in 1543.

Bronze bell

Bronze bell of the nineteenth-century with the Medicean emblem.



Room 2 - Ground floor

WUNDERKAMMER RECONSTRUCTION

The first Gallery

The first Gallery was organized in the three traditional sections of the European sixteenth/seventeenth-century Wunderkammern (Chambers of wonders): "Naturalia", "Artificialia", and "Curiosa". It included thousands of unusual objects with different origins and provenances.

Room 3 - Ground floor

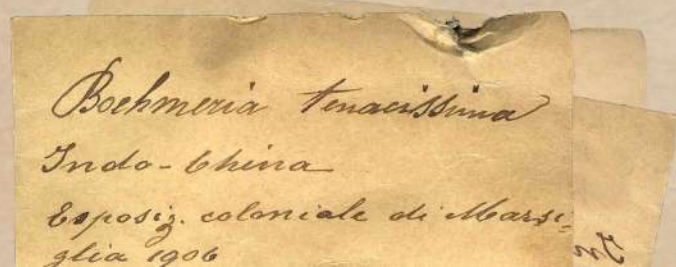
SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

Gallery of famous botanists (seventeenth-century)

From the beginning, the collection of sixteen portraits of the Botanic Garden's Curators, botany Professors and other well-known Italian and foreign Naturalists, accompanied the visitors along the hallway leading to the Garden, celebrating their importance.

The *Catalogus plantarum Horti Pisani* of Michelangelo Tilli (1655-1740)

The Catalogue, published in 1723 and supplied with fine engravings, allows us to know the state of the Garden of Simples in a crucial moment of biological systematics. The written work is accompanied by the description of the Garden with the late Renaissance division of the flowerbeds.



Small room - First floor

EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY

Gaetano Savi

Gaetano Savi (1769-1844) was Prefect of the Botanic Garden and Director of the Botanic Museum of Pisa from 1814 to 1843.

He studied several systematic groups describing new plant species, some of which are still taxonomically valid today.

Giuseppe Raddi

Giuseppe Raddi (1770-1829), friend of Gaetano Savi, is renowned for the precious naturalistic finds collected during his travels in Brazil and Egypt.

Room 4 - First floor

MID NINETEENTH-CENTURY

Wax Fungi

The wax models have been realized by Luigi Calamai and his students in the Florentine Ceroplastics School.



Plaster Fungi

The plaster fungi models have been enriched of anatomical details with other materials such as plaster, paper, wood and then oil painted.

Wax models

The larger models, among which the renowned fecundation of the pumpkin (*Cucurbita pepo*), have been realized by Luigi Calamai between 1836 and 1839, under the direction of Giovanni Battista Amici and Egisto Tortori. The smaller models have been attributed to Silvio Serantoni.



Botanical equipments

Some significant samples of the collection of scientific instruments used in the labs of the Botany Institute during mid nineteenth-century.

Pietro Savi

Pietro Savi (1811-1871) helped his father Gaetano and after his death, in 1844, he was nominated Director of the Botanic Garden. He had a central role in the increase and the study of *Herbaria*.

In vitro collection

Botanical samples and preparations include flowers, fruits, resins and flours. The oldest samples are from the end of eighteen-century.

Room 5 - First floor

SECOND HALF OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY

Teodoro Caruel

Teodoro Caruel (1830-1890) in 1871 took the direction of the Botanic Garden, a position that he fulfilled until 1880.

He improved both the Museum and the Botanic Garden, commissioning a plan layout of the latter in 1877. He leaved his personal *Herbarium* to the Museum.

Giovanni Arcangeli

Giovanni Arcangeli (1840-1921) was the Director of the Botanic Garden from 1881 to 1915. We owe to him the construction of the new building in the Garden, that is currently hosting the *Herbaria*.

Room 6 - First floor

BOTANY DIDACTICS AND RESEARCH

Herbaria

In the sixteenth-century Luca Ghini (1490-1556) started to teach the techniques to prepare the *Horti sicci*, i.e. easily consultable collections of dried plants.

The *Herbaria* of Pisa consist around 320.000 specimen, thanks to the collections and exchanges during the last two hundred years. Even presently, it is an irreplaceable tool for teaching and research.

Paleobotanic collection

Fossils of plants and botanical prehistoric tracks found in sedimentary rocks of Tuscany and Lazio, and petrified woods from the Egyptian desert.

Didactic drawings

On the wall some of the 95 panels illustrated in the second half of the nineteenth-century by famous artists such as Enrico Cristofani are exposed. The drawings of plants and their details are realized with pencil, ink and sometimes watercolored.

Also some of the 450 tables realized between the end of the nineteenth-century and the first half of the twentieth-century are exposed: part of these tables are samples of printing series, and part are original drawings by Tommaso Bernardeschi, a technical designer at the University of Pisa.

