

The Botanic Museum

In 1591, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando I de' Medici, who greatly loved the city of Pisa, established a Gallery intended to collect all the 'works of nature', as a source of pride and inspiration for the scholars of the prestigious Grand Duchy's University. A chemical laboratory and a painting studio were associated with it, where a professional miniaturist produced botanical illustrations from life for teaching purpose. The sixteenth-century gallery was later succeeded by a Museum of Natural Sciences, with important collections acquired especially during the 19th century, including precious *Herbaria*. At the end of the 20th century, the Museum, except for the botanical section, was moved to the Pisa Charterhouse in Calci, becoming the Museum of Natural History of the University. Today, the Botanic Museum is housed in the 'Palazzo delle Conchiglie', whose facade was entirely decorated in *rocaille* style in 1752. It preserves evidence of its history and the objects used since the late 18th century for university botanical teaching, which over time have become true works of art. The *Herbaria*, indispensable working tools for botanists and always available to scholars, are preserved elsewhere in specially designed rooms with controlled humidity.

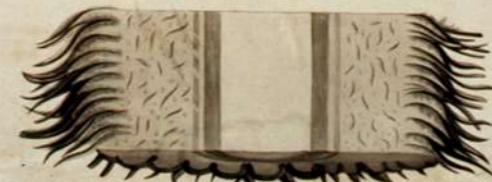
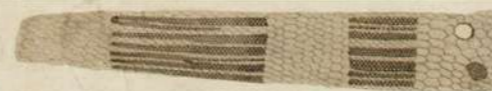


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Orto e Museo Botanico, Sistema Museale di Ateneo, Univeristà di Pisa
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Botanic Museum



Room 1 - Ground floor

THE ORIGINS

Ancient front doorway of the Garden of Simples

Since the late 16th century, the monumental carved walnut wooden doorway provided access from via Santa Maria to the Garden of Simples and the Museum. After 1969, it was moved to the Botanic Museum for conservation reasons.

Luca Ghini

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

Bronze bell

Bronze bell of the nineteenth-century with the Medici coat of arms in relief.

Room 2 - Ground floor

WUNDERKAMMER RECONSTRUCTION

The Ancient Gallery

The ancient Gallery was organized into the three traditional sections of late 16th and 17th-century European Wunderkammern (Cabinets of Curiosities): "Naturalia", "Artificialia", and "Curiosa". It included thousands of unusual objects of different origins and provenance.

Room 3 - Ground floor

17TH AND 18TH CENTURY

Gallery of Illustrious Botanists (17th century)

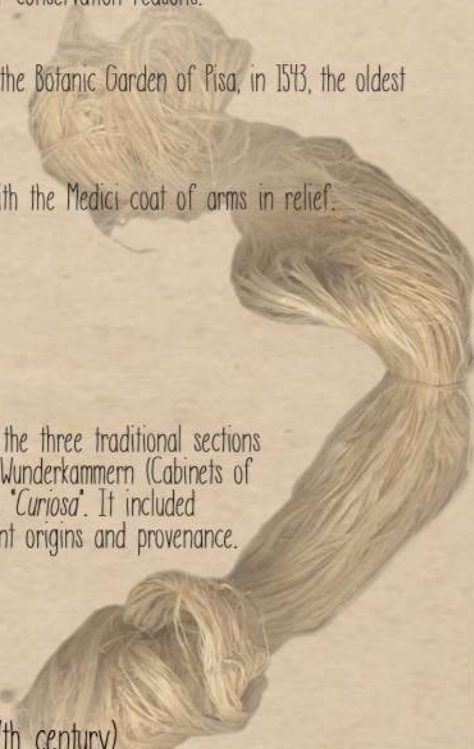
From its origins, this collection of sixteen portraits, depicting the Garden's Curators, botany Professors, and other celebrated Italian and foreign Naturalists, accompanied visitors along the corridor leading to the Garden, serving a clear celebratory purpose.

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

The Catalogue, published in 1723 and supplied with fine engravings, allows us to understand the state of the Garden of Simples during a crucial era for biological systematics.

The text includes the famous layout of the Garden, showing the late-Renaissance arrangement of the flowerbeds.

Boehmeria tenacissima
Indo-china
Esposiz. coloniale di Abassi
glia 1906



Small room - First floor

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

Gaetano Savi

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

A meticulous botanist, he conducted research in various systematic groups and described numerous species, some of which are still taxonomically valid today.

Giuseppe Raddi

Giuseppe Raddi (1770-1829), a close friend of Gaetano Savi, is renowned for the invaluable natural history specimens he collected during his expeditions to Brazil and Egypt. His herbarium was acquired by Gaetano Savi for the Museum in Pisa.

Room 4 - First floor

MID 19TH CENTURY

Wax Fungi

The wax models were realized by Luigi Calamai and his students of the Florentine Ceroplastics School.

The reproductions are meticulously accurate, down to the finest detail.



Plaster Fungi

The plaster mushroom models were enhanced with anatomical details, made with additional materials such as paper and wood, and subsequently oil-painted.



Wax models

The larger-scale models, including the well-known fertilization of the pumpkin (*Cucurbita pepo*), were created by Luigi Calamai under the direction of Giovanni Battista Amici between 1836 and 1839, and by his pupil Egisto Tortori. The smaller models are attributed to the pupil Silvio Serantoni.

Botanical equipments

On display are several significant examples from the collection of scientific instruments used in the labs of the Botanical Institute starting from mid 19th century.

Pietro Savi

Pietro Savi (1811-1871) served as assistant to his father, Gaetano, and upon his death in 1844, was appointed Director of the Botanic Garden. He played a vital role in the expansion and study of the *Herbaria*.

In vitro collection

The botanical specimens and preparations include flowers, fruits, resins and flours. The oldest date back to early 19th century. The collection currently comprises around 1200 specimens.

Room 5 - First floor

SECOND HALF OF 19TH CENTURY

Teodoro Caruel

Teodoro Caruel (1830-1898) was called in 1871 to succeed Pietro Savi as Director of the Botanic Garden, a position he held until 1880.

He dedicated himself to improving the Institute, the Museum, and the Botanic Garden, for which he commissioned a detailed ground plan in 1877. He donated his personal Herbarium to the Museum.

Giovanni Arcangeli

Giovanni Arcangeli (1840-1921) was appointed Director of the Garden in 1881, a role he maintained until 1915. He was responsible for the construction of a new building within the Garden, which was the seat of university botanical activities until recently.

Room 6 - First floor

BOTANY TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Herbaria

Around the mid-16th century, Luca Ghini (1490-1556) began teaching the techniques for preparing collections of dried plants, that could be consulted at any time, known as *Horti sicci*. Today, the collections of the Pisa Herbarium amount to approximately 320,000 specimens, assembled through the field-collecting and exchange policies of numerous botanists over the last two hundred years. It remains an irreplaceable tool for both teaching and research.



Paleobotanic collection

This collection includes fossilized plant remains and impressions found in deposits across Tuscany and Lazio, as well as sections of petrified wood from the Egyptian desert.

Didactic drawings

On display on the wall are some of the 95 charts illustrated by renowned artists, including Enrico Cristofani, during the second half of the 19th century. These drawings of plants and their details were executed in pencil and ink, and occasionally hand-colored with watercolors. Also featured are several of the 450 plates produced between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries: these consist of both printed series and original drawings by Tommaso Bernardeschi, a technical draftsman at the University of Pisa.