

# The Harrachpark in Bruck/Leitha



“In view of the beauty of the groups which are formed by its trees and shrubs, the park at Bruck is without contest one of the most beautiful parks which still exist today. The interweaving of its individual parts is accomplished in a most skilful and artistic manner ...”

Description des principaux Parcs et Jardins de l'Europe, Wien, 1812

## HARRACH FAMILY AND BRUCK

For centuries, the counts of Harrach have ranked among the most famous families of the Austrian monarchy. As high-ranking diplomats and church dignitaries, as well as confidants of the imperial family, they had a great influence on the development of the Habsburg Empire.

In **1689**, Count **Ferdinand Bonaventura I.** bought Bruck at the Leitha River. In 1707 his son, Count Aloys Thomas Raimund, started to rebuild the palace according to plans by **Johann Lukas v. Hildebrandt**.



Bruck Palace

## THE PARK AT PRUGG



Baroque garden (1730)

At about the same time, preparations for the layout of a big **geometric baroque garden** were started. For this purpose, the first large-scale redesign efforts were carried out: marshes were drained and earth banks were built.

Around **1789**, Count **Johann Nepomuk Ernst Harrach**, who was known as a humanist and art lover, commissioned the layout of an **English landscape garden** to replace the baroque ornamental gardens. The water bodies of the Leitha floodplain were regulated and integrated into the park. In the flat areas, artificial hills were built and planted with rare woods.

When strolling through the park, visitors experienced a succession of most varied moods: cheerful, bright, flowery meadows alternating with melancholic, small, shady meadows and forest trails.



Landscape park (Gauermann, 1810)

## THE PARK FLOURISHES

After decades of neglect, the Harrachpark today forms part of an interregional EU project entitled “**The Great Gardens**” Park Network. Numerous measures have been taken to restore the park to its landscape garden design of 1800.

Important vistas have been restored and rare trees and picturesque groups of trees have been made visible for park visitors by means of well-targeted clearing efforts.

The park is on the best way to offer again the **impressive experience of art and nature**, which so many travellers were enthusiastic about at the time of Count Johann Nepomuk Ernst Harrach.



Vista of Bruck palace

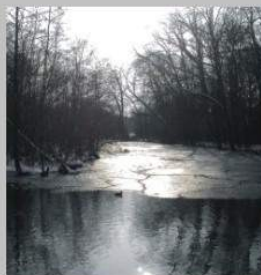
## FAUNA

Besides its art-historical value, the Harrachpark today is of particular importance as a refuge for a large number of rare animal and plant species.

With its many different types of habitats, the park provides the ideal basic conditions for a very diverse fauna. With about **50 bird species** which breed here periodically the park belongs to the most varied habitats of Central Europe.

Among them, there are endangered species like the jackdaw, numerous species of woodpeckers and the stock dove. The **stock dove** is the only dove which lives in the tree holes that were left behind by black woodpeckers.

Animal life also flourishes at the widely ramified network of water bodies in the Harrachpark. In addition to water birds, there are a large number of amphibians and reptiles as well as numerous different dragonfly species, which are buzzing above the meadows near the water.



Moorhen



From the botanical point of view, the Harrachpark is noted for the **extraordinary variety and shapes of its exotic trees**. They testify the gardening ability of Count Johann Nepomuk Ernst Harrach and his gardener **Christoph Lübeck**.

In contrast to many other parks, a multiplicity of exotic plants has survived the lack of accurate maintenance for decades, so that the park today features an unsurpassable collection of fully developed rare woods.

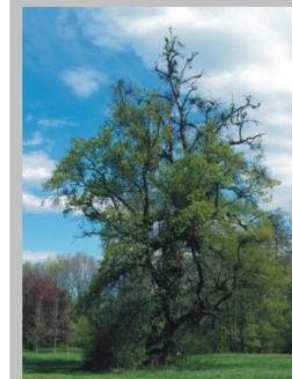
The **swamp cypresses** in the Harrachpark belong to the oldest specimens in Central Europe. The home of these tree species are the marshes of the Southern US-States and the Mississippi valley. Other trees of the park have its origins in Asia, like the Japanese **zelkova**, which seldom reaches such a height in Europe.

Other **botanical gems** include weeping European hornbeams, incense cedars, cutleaf European beeches, a Hungarian oak and an oriental plane.

Representatives of less rare tree species captivate visitors with their particularly beautiful growth. Beeches, ancient oaks, massive planes – they all create highlights in the park scenery.

In addition to the impressive solitary trees, **picturesque groups of trees** have been arranged in other places, such as a group of Austrian pines, a group of Caucasian wingnuts, ensembles of massive planes, or the so-called “pine hill”.

## FLORA



European oak



Blood beech