



*A stand of the coast redwood (Sequoia sempervirens [D. Don] Endlicher) at Santa Cruz, California, photographed not far from the site where Thaddäus Hänke discovered the redwood in 1791 while he was a member of the Malaspina Expedition. In 1792, at Santa Cruz itself, Archibald Menzies, who was a member of England's rival Vancouver Expedition (1791–1795), collected the specimen from which David Don described the new species (as Taxodium sempervirens) in 1824. The map on the opposite page shows the landfalls of both expeditions on what is now the Pacific Coast of the United States. The photograph, which is from the Archives of the Arnold Arboretum, was taken in 1908 by G. R. King. The map is taken from Susan Delano McKelvey's Botanical Exploration of the Trans-Mississippi West (1955).*

### **The Nineteenth Century: End of an Era**

Short was the time the Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid enjoyed the intellectual vigor of Antonio José Cavanilles. Cavanilles's death in 1804 signalled the beginning of the long, disastrous twilight the Garden would suffer through the rest of the Nineteenth Century and the better part of the Twentieth. With Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808, the last embers of the limelight in which Spanish

botany had so recently basked were snuffed out.

The Madrid Botanic Garden appears to have been adequately maintained and cared for throughout the Nineteenth Century, but the intellectual momentum of its first fifty years was lost. During the late Nineteenth Century, its formal, geometric, and rationalist Eighteenth Century plan gave way to the Romantic notions in fashion at the time. The

Romantic curvilinear “Isabelino” style took prominence throughout the site. Apparently, the era of rationalist vision had long since withered, and what remained was a painful sentimentality. During that time new greenhouses were built to house what remained of the exotic plants of days long gone, yet even this activity could not save the Garden from the tragic fate that awaited Spanish society in the Twentieth Century.

### The Twentieth Century: Democratic Reawakening

Initially, the Twentieth Century and the Industrial Revolution were times of great promise and creativity for Spain. By the 1930s, however, the political tensions that were being felt throughout Europe and that presaged the coming World War, erupted in Spain as a bloody civil war in 1936. With the advent of Francisco Franco in the late 1930s, Spain was headed, once again, for a period of creative sterility.

The intellectual reawakening of the Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid came gradually, beginning in the late 1950s with the publication of scholarly works dedicated to reevaluating the institution’s early expeditions. Nevertheless, the evidence (including Arthur Steele’s touching description of a director clutching a faded guest book) suggests that the Garden was in a sorry state of disrepair.<sup>19</sup> During the late 1960s, a new administration building was constructed where Spanish botanists could once again work in modern surroundings.

The Garden’s physical restoration began in 1974, sparked by an ill-conceived proposal to make it the site of a Goya Museum. Thankfully, the winds of democracy were stirring in Spain at the time. With Franco’s death in 1975, the stage was set for a complete historical restoration of the Garden, one that would return it to its formal grace. For seven years during the restoration process the Garden

was closed to the public. Finally, on December 2, 1981, with the King of Spain present—this time as a constitutional monarch—the Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid was reopened to the public.

### The Garden Today

Today, thanks to the sensitive restoration plans by Leandro Silva Delgado, one of Spain’s leading landscape designers, the Garden is slowly regaining its grace. The lower, rectangular parterres, or *escuelas*, are taking shape as the boxwood borders gradually fill in, forming a gentle green tapestry that appropriately reflects the geometry and order of Eighteenth Century rational idealism. The center of each parterre is accented by understated fountains that gently burble water, reminiscent of the Moorish garden tradition that antedates the European discovery of America. Meanwhile, on the upper level, facing the two hundred-year-old conservatory, Nineteenth Century Romanticism has been preserved in curvilinear beds outlined by *Viburnum tinus*. Lush trees and shrubs offer the visitor retreat, security, and mystery, so essential in a Spanish garden.

Under the watchful eyes of its new director, Santiago Castroviejo, the Garden has begun publishing the *Flora Iberica*. At the same time the Garden is encouraging international cooperation with Latin America in the painstaking process of reevaluation and publication of the vast wealth of documentation and herbaria from the courageous Eighteenth Century expeditions of discovery.

### Endnotes

1. José Quer y Martínez, *Flora Española, ó Historia de las Plantas, Que Se Crian en España*. Madrid: Joaquin Ibarra, 1762–1764. Four volumes. Volume 1 (1762), page 363.
2. Arthur Robert Steele, *Flowers for the King* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1964), page 6.



From 1974 until 1981, while it was being restored, the Madrid Botanic Garden had to be closed to the public. Plans developed by Leandro Silva Delgado, one of Spain's leading landscape architects, guided the restoration project. Shown here is construction work being done in February 1981 on the Ruiz and Pavón Pavilion, just inside the Puerta del Rey, or Royal Gate. (The Gate and the Paseo del Prado are in the background.) Photograph courtesy of J. Walter Brain.

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3. Quer, *Flora Española*, Volume 1, page 60.
  4. Manuscript letter, in Section "Secretaría y Superintendencia de Hacienda," Legajo 951, Archivo General de Simancas, Simancas, Spain.
  5. Manuscript letter, *ibid.*
  6. Manuscript letter, *ibid.*
  7. Steele, *Flowers for the King*, page 31.
  8. Manuscript letter, *op. cit.*, Legajo 951.
  9. Manuscript letter, *ibid.*
  10. Steele, *Flowers for the King*, page 37.
  11. Manuscript letter in Section "Carlos III," Legajo 3875, Archivo del Palacio Real, Madrid.
  12. Manuscript, Division I, Legajo 3, 6, 7, Archivos, Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid.
  13. *Ibid.*
  14. Madrid: Ibarra. Call Number 255/24, Archivos General de las Indias, Seville, Spain.
  15. Frontispiece to Volume 1 of Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Voyage de Humboldt et Bonpland. Sixième Partie, Botanique. Plantes Equinoxiales*. . . . 2 volumes. Paris: Schoell, 1808, 1809.

I am grateful to Santiago Diaz Piedralita for calling my attention to this fact.

16. Willis Linn Jepson, in his *The Silva of California* (Berkeley, 1910), says (page 138) that "The Redwood was first collected near Monterey by Thaddeus Haenke of the Malaspina Expedition in 1791, who may be said to be its botanical discoverer. The second collector was Archibald Menzies of the Vancouver Expedition [which touched Monterey first in 1792]. . . . No exact locality has ever been given for the Menzies collection, but while examining Menzies' original specimen at the British Natural History Museum in London I [i.e., Jepson] turned over the sheet and discovered written on the back 'Santa Cruz, Menzies.'"
17. Iris H. W. Engstrand, *Spanish Scientists in the New World* (Seattle, 1981), page 107.
18. Miguel Colmeiro, *La Botánica y los Botánicos* (Madrid, 1858), pages 173–174.
19. Steele, *Flowers for the King*, page vii.

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