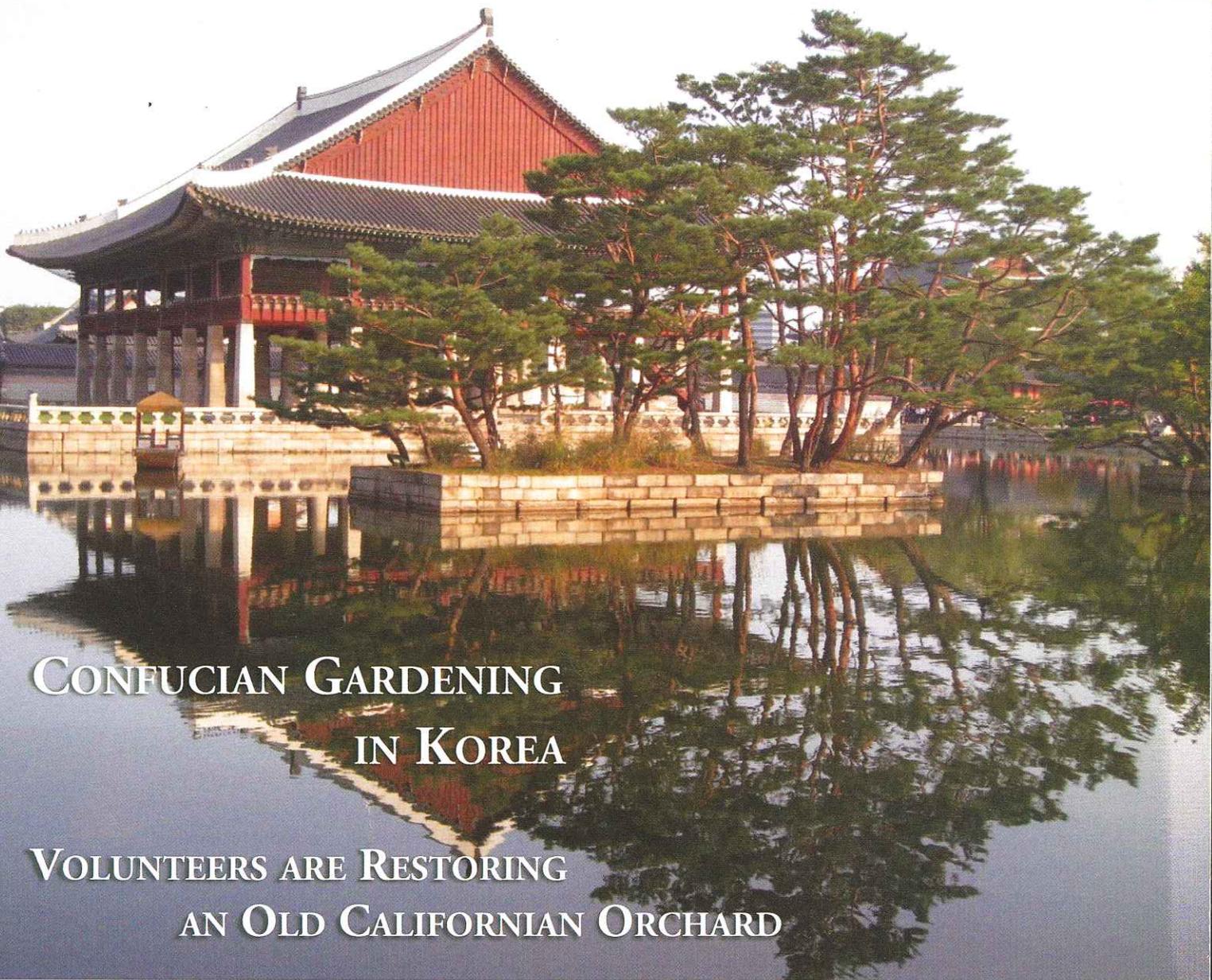


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HISTORIC GARDENS

Review



CONFUCIAN GARDENING
IN KOREA

VOLUNTEERS ARE RESTORING
AN OLD CALIFORNIAN ORCHARD

THE VOICE OF HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS WORLDWIDE



It is hard to avoid the feeling that someone has got it in for the box tree. For the parks and gardens of Europe, box diseases are potentially as threatening as phylloxera was to the 19th-century wine industry. Until fairly recently, such diseases were relatively manageable: few

A Plague of Politick Worms

owners of formal gardens considered them a major threat. That has now changed.

First came a variety of blights – principally box blight (*Cylindrocladium buxicola*) and voutella blight, caused by a fungus, *Pseudonectria buxi*. They were joined by a further fungus, *Puccinia buxi* (box rust). Then appeared the box tree caterpillar, *Cydalima perspectalis*, the larva of a moth which migrated from eastern Asia to Europe in 2007 and has caused severe defoliation ever since.

Now from Denmark comes news of a fresh plague. Frederiksborg Castle near Hillerød is a magnificent Baroque pile, built by King Christian IV between 1600 and 1620, which now houses Denmark's Museum of National History. In 1720 Christian's original Italianate garden was swept away and replaced by elaborate

formal gardens reminiscent of the French and Dutch styles of the late 17th century. These gardens which contain large box broderie, including royal monograms, are among the Castle's major attractions.

Sadly, however, the roots of the box plants have been attacked by what that most famous Dane, Prince Hamlet, might have referred to as a "certain convocation of politick worms" which have eaten away the roots.

These worms have resisted all attempts to eradicate them and the box will have to be stripped out and the parterres left to rest for at least one season before they can be replanted. This is going to cost DKK 3-4m (£350,000 to £450,000) and will be a serious detraction from the splendour of the gardens.

Alas, poor Buxus.

Divide and (Don't) Protect

A local citizens' committee in the town of Forest, a suburb to the south-west of Brussels, is fighting both a building firm and a non-reacting Regional Government in order to preserve the 1920s garden of the Villa Dankaert, more usually known as the Villa Dewin after its architect, Jean-Baptiste Dewin (1899-1945).

The garden, although neglected, was clearly laid out according to the local 'Nouveau Jardin Pittoresque' movement

of which only a few examples remain.

Illogically, only one half of the garden has been officially classified as a monument, and so the site risks completely losing its total design and its century-old trees when, as planned, an apartment building with 39 flats is built on the non-classified part of the garden.

Although the local authorities advised in a convincing way against the project, it is up to the Brussels Region to take the final decision. Despite a petition which collected 4,500 signatures within one month, 208 administrative complaints by local inhabitants, and the advice of the Royal Commission of Monuments and Sites to enlarge the protected zone to the whole site, the Regional government is



not willing to find a permanent solution in favour of the garden.

The local committee is wondering now whether a decision about the actual building project might be expected before the next Regional elections on May 26.

More information on the struggle of the 'Quartier Meunier' committee is on www.notrehistoire.be

Natan Bruneel

