

CONTRIBUTION OF WESTPHALENPARK (DORTMUND, GERMANY) TO CULTURAL SERVICES

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Parks play an important role in shaping the ecological framework of a city. They help clean the air and regulate its temperature, absorb noise, support biodiversity, enhance the visual appeal of landscapes, and create spaces for recreation.

Our research, conducted in 2024, focused on Westfalenpark, one of the largest parks in Europe and a remarkable example of a recreational area with ecological significance for the city. It was founded in 1959 in Dortmund, Germany, for the Federal Garden Exhibition. The park was created on the site of former parks and abandoned areas, with its main architectural landmark being the Florian Tower (Florianurm), which at the time was the tallest structure in the country (220 meters) [1]. Later, during the second Federal Garden Exhibition in 1969, the park's area was expanded by 10 hectares. In 1991, as part of the third Federal Garden Exhibition, a section of the park was designated as a nature conservation area visited by schoolchildren, students, and adults for learning and nature research. In 2007, a large-scale renovation project was launched as part of the "Sustainable Urban Parks" initiative.

Guided tours within the park revealed that it follows a regular layout. Pathways with alleys are arranged symmetrically, with lawns, benches, waste containers, small architectural forms (SAFs), water bodies, playgrounds, and informational signs throughout the area.

From the perspective of cultural services, it is significant that the park is divided into thematic zones. Among them is an Asian garden with Japanese and Chinese elements. Certain tree species, mainly from the genus *Pinus* L., are shaped in the *niwaki* style, emphasizing the Asian aesthetic. There are also flower beds designed in the "New Wave" landscaping style, featuring ornamental grasses. A dedicated section showcases various representatives of the *Ericaceae* family. The dahlia garden holds an extensive collection of *Dahlia* Cav., but the most impressive collection is that of *Rosa* L., with around 3,000 taxa. The "Rose Path" tour route allows visitors to explore different rose varieties and includes historical stops such as the Medieval period, Art Nouveau style, rural style, essential oil-producing varieties, and a systematic classification. Every element of the park's design, especially the plant selection, offers insights into the traditions of various cultures and their historical significance.

Thus, the park serves not only as a recreational and scientific center but also as a cultural hub. In addition to its themed sections, it houses the German Cookbook Museum, a puppet theater, the Dortmund Public Observatory, and the

Westphalian Ballet Center. For leisure activities, the park features numerous playgrounds, a miniature railway, a football field, the “Solar Sail” by architect Günter Behnisch, and a chairlift that has been operating since 1959 [1].

References:

1. Westfalenpark [Electronic resource] – Regime of access: <https://www.dortmund.de/dortmund-erleben/freizeit-und-kultur/westfalenpark/index-3.html>, free (date of the application: 10.03.2025). – Header from the screen.

THE ROLE OF SPRING EPHEMERALS IN MAINTAINING ECOLOGICAL BALANCE

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In early spring, natural ecosystems witness the emergence of small plants from beneath the snow cover. These plants are characterized by a short but intense flowering period. Their morphology reflects long-term evolutionary adaptations to the harsh conditions of early spring. The growth of these plants begins even before the leaves appear on the trees, allowing them to maximize light usage for photosynthesis. They play a vital role as a food source for insects that feed on nectar and pollen, particularly during a period when there are not many blooming plants.

This early blooming phenomenon is referred to as "spring ephemerals." Spring ephemerals are an ecological group of plants comprising around 500 species. As mentioned earlier, these plants are light-loving, which is why they bloom during the period when trees still lack leaves and there is ample natural light in the forest. Spring ephemerals have a compact rosette form of leaves, which helps retain moisture and reduce evaporation. The flowers of spring ephemerals are typically located on long stalks, ensuring their accessibility to pollinators. The interaction of pollinators with spring ephemerals contributes to the conservation of insect populations, which impacts ecological stability and biodiversity. Additionally, spring ephemerals prevent soil erosion and enrich it with beneficial nutrients. Therefore, in light of preserving biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance, it is crucial to avoid collecting spring ephemerals in the wild.

The use of alternative approaches, such as growing spring ephemerals in garden conditions, allows for the conservation of natural resources and promotes biodiversity conservation. Due to their decorative properties and low maintenance requirements, spring ephemerals have become popular plants in landscape design. Their early blooming, bright colors, and species diversity enable the creation of garden compositions that not only serve aesthetic pleasure but also support ecological sustainability. Thus, the importance of spring ephemerals is not limited