

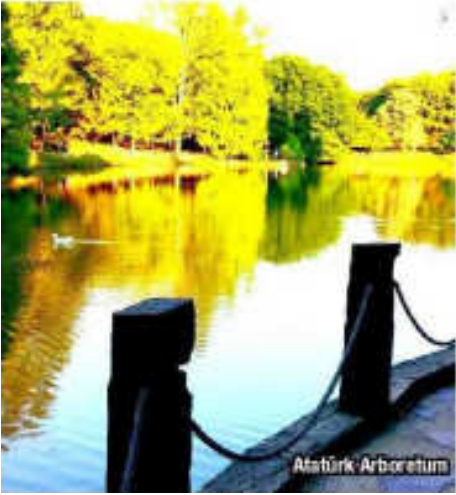
FEATURE *PAGE 14*

Where green meets science: Arboretums of Turkey



A peaceful stroll through Turkey's living tree museums

Literally meaning 'place grown with trees' in Latin, arboretums are large botanical gardens, which only a few exist in Turkey. Housing huge ranges of forest and myriad plant species, the Atatürk Arboretum in Istanbul's Bahçeköy area and the Karaca Arboretum in Yalova province are the two most well-known ones where visitors enjoy fresh air while learning a bit about botany



» **ARBORETUMS** are widely known as giant botanical gardens where trees and myriad of plants grow together in a proper and detailed way and their origins and ages are examined for scientific and observational purposes. Each plant or tree species is grown in a specified area and open to visitors. To put it simply, arboretums are living tree museums predominantly run as educational and scientific centers as well as botanical gardens. In Turkey, there are only few arboretums, two of which are worth visiting - Atatürk Arboretum in İstanbul and Karaca Arboretum in northwestern Yalova.

ATATÜRK ARBORETUM

Serving as an area of scientific study and observation area for İstanbul University's Faculty of Forestry, Atatürk Arboretum covers an area of 730 acres and is home to hundreds of plants waiting to be studied. Also including the Kirazlı Dam ("Kirazlıbent" in Turkish) which was built during the time of the Ottoman Empire and established as Turkey's first nursery garden in 1916, Atatürk Arboretum operates in collaboration with other arboreta and botanical gardens around the world by providing the necessary seeds.

This living tree museum has over 2,000 species of plants. The names of all the plants in the museum are written on small plates in Latin or in Turkish, if available. The blooming plants are announced on the signboard at the entrance every week. Here you can discover trees from tropical and other continental climates along with plants native to Turkey.

Visitors can also see a specific swamp native to the U.S. which can thrive for up to 2,000 years and giant garden near an artificial lake which was established for trees that grow in swamp areas and damp climates. Ash trees that

grow in the swamp surround the lake and alders grown near water fascinate visitors - especially in autumn. Atatürk Arboretum includes three lakes and the ducks that swim in these lakes are quite photogenic and offer the perfect photo shoot for professional photographers. Here you will get the chance to see thousands of plant species at the same time.

In this peaceful garden, there are long walking tracks accompanied by trees on both sides. When you start walking from one end to the other, the atmosphere and view take you away and you do not even understand how time passes. There are three lakes allocated for ducks and swans in the arboretum. If you need to catch your breath at the end of your expedition, sit on the benches situated near the lakes or lie on the soft grass.

Make sure to pack some snacks in your bag so you can re-energize yourself while exploring the arboretum because seeing its natural beauty, you will never want to leave. There are no shops or cafes at the arboretum to preserve its natural state. Nonpoisonous snakes, grasshoppers, colorful butterflies and birds become your companions along your journey.

The tree park is frequently visited by university students for scientific study. Serving as the top destination for movie shoots and wedding photography as well as scientific research and observation, Atatürk Arboretum can be visited every day from 8:30 a.m. until the evening.

How to get there

Atatürk Arboretum is located in the city's Bahçeköy neighborhood with an easy access route. Take the Hacıosman exit from the Taksim-Hacıosman metro line, catch the 42HM bus to Bahçeköy which leaves in every 10-15 minutes and get off the bus at the Kemerburgaz

Road stop. After walking for about 10 minutes, you will see the arboretum on your left.

KARACA ARBORETUM

Located in northwestern Yalova city's Samanlı Village and established in 1980 by Hayrettin Karaca, the founder of TEMA Foundation, Karaca Arboretum is Turkey's first private arboretum and its story began as a house garden project in 1976 when Karaca's botanical interest led him to transform his garden into an arboretum.

Covering an area of 33 acres, the arbore-

tum has a landscape-intense structure. It contains rock gardens, botanical gardens, rosaries, iris gardens, miniature plants and indigenous bonsai plant collections. The place also houses special plant collections such as acer, prunus, malus, magnolia, quercus, betula, pinus, abies, and picea species.

Consisting of over 7,000 plants, Karaca Arboretum which was awarded by the International Dendrology Society in 2004, offers its visitors a guide to information about plant cultures while they explore the garden. The visit takes nearly an hour and a half when accompanied by a guide. Each year, it draws more than 15,000 local and foreign tourists. The garden can be visited on Saturdays and Sundays between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

How to get there

Karaca Arboretum is located in Samanlı village, 5 kilometers from downtown Yalova and is accessible via the Yalova-Termal highway. You can reach your destination by using the Samanlı Village or Termal minibuses.

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A peaceful stroll through Turkey's living tree museums

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Atatürk Arboretum

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