

## LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. VIII. No 1 2023 (Special issue)

### GARDEN AS A LINGUISTIC CULTURAL SYMBOL

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**Received:** 25.09.2022 **Reviewed:** 02.12.2022 and 28.01.2023

**Similarity Index:** 5%

**Bibliographic description:** Karasik, V. (2023). Garden as a linguistic cultural symbol. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, VIII (1), Special issue, p. 46-61. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.23.8.1.04>

**Abstract:** The paper deals with symbolic properties of the concept GARDEN as presented in English and Russian world-views. Culturally, gardens are opposed to forests and are correlated to parks, and various types of food and flowers growing. Perceptive characteristics of a garden in the English world-view are mostly connected with it as part of home adjoining a house, whereas in Russian descriptions of gardens we can often see abandoned old gardens as symbols of a lost happy life. Evaluative features of a garden allude to the Biblical description of paradise.

**Keywords:** garden, symbol, concept, notion, image, value.

*To Nataliya Panasenko  
cordially*

### 1. Introduction

Garden as a phenomenon of culture has a long and interesting history and is variously reflected in the language. A symbolic approach to the description of linguistic units consists in explaining the images connected with certain objects and values, which determine our attitude to such images. Symbols make the reality meaningful. Culturally, a garden is opposed to a forest. In this respect, the idea of a garden is its association with the territory cultivated by people and opposite to wild nature. It has an initial symbolic meaning of domesticated nature as opposed to forest, or wood, which is taken as nature in its primordial essence. Cultivated gardens are opposed to parks, on the one hand, and various types of specialized food and flowers growing, such as vegetable gardens, greenhouses, orangeries, vineyards, etc., on the other hand. A garden as a cultural phenomenon has been thoroughly reflected in the Humanities (Агапкина 2009; Лихачев 1998). A linguistic cultural description and explanation



of reality nowadays is usually presented in the analysis of concepts reflected in the language.

The aim of the present paper is to analyze the concept GARDEN in various texts on the material of English and Russian. The rationale of my study may be expressed in the following suggestions: there are general and specific properties in conceptualization of garden in English and Russian, such properties vary in certain types of discourse and correspond to certain values of English and Russian world-view.

## **2. Material and methods**

The material of the study comprises definitions of the concept GARDEN taken from English and Russian dictionaries, textual fragments (sentences) given in the linguistic corpora (British National Corpus and National Corpus of the Russian Language), excerpts from the Bible, proverbs and aphorisms including the word "garden" in English and Russian. The methods used are semantic, contextual and interpretative analysis – explanation of definitions and contextual meaning of the words "garden" and "сад" in English and Russian in everyday communication and in religious and fictional discourse. Associative dictionaries have also been used to find out symbolic meaning of the words compared.

## **3. Garden as a linguistic concept. Notional properties**

Concepts understood as quants of emotionally charged experience (or knowledge) have repeatedly attracted scholars' attention (Воркачев 2014; Карасик 2002; Колесов 2019; Красавский 2001; Пименова 2004; Слышкин 2004; Степанов 1997; Стернин 2008). Certain properties of concepts are taken in our research community for axioms: 1) concepts belong to mental sphere of people, 2) they may have a linguistic realization, though not necessarily, but the most important concepts are always expressed in words and phraseological units, 3) concepts are focal points between a person and the culture, 4) thematically, concepts are organized into multidimensional systems usually called world-views, or maps / pictures of the world, or concept spheres, 5) their structure may be presented as a combination of notional, perceptive, and evaluative components (several linguists include here a symbolic component, too), 6) their history comprises three stages of their development: a) the fact or idea which gave birth to a concept, b) the concretization of a mental object in its definition and perceptive and metaphorical images, c) evaluative expansion of its content leading to simplification and extrusion of its notional details.

Describing a garden as a concept, we begin with its lexical definition. *Oxford English Dictionary* gives us a detailed description of the concept:

Garden – 1. An enclosed piece of ground devoted to the cultivation of flowers, fruit, or vegetables; often preceded by some defining word, as flower-, fruit-, kitchen-, market-, strawberry-garden, etc. 2. Ornamental grounds, used as a place of public resort, usually with some defining word, as Botanic(al), Zoological Gardens, etc. 3. transf. Applied to a region of remarkable fertility. The Garden of England: a name given to various counties, esp. Kent and Worcestershire. 4. to cultivate one's garden [after Voltaire *Candide* (1759), 'Il faut cultiver notre jardin'], to attend to one's own affairs. 5. Colloq. phr. everything in the garden is lovely, the situation is perfectly satisfactory; all is well. 6. to lead (someone) up the garden (-path), to lead on, entice; mislead, deceive. colloq. (OED, *s.a.*)

In *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, a certain distinction between British and American understanding of the concept is emphasized:

Garden – 1. [countable] *British English* the area of land next to a house, where there are flowers, grass, and other plants, and often a place for people to sit [= yard *American English*]. 2 [countable] *American English* part of the area next to a house, which has plants and flowers in it (LDCE, *s.a.*).

In *Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language* compiled by V.I. Dahl the noun сад [garden] is explained in connection to the verb *сажать* [to set, to plant] and is explained in the following way:

Сад – участок земли, засаженный старанием человека деревьями, кустами, цветами, с убитыми дорожками и разного рода и вида затеями, украшениями. Сад бывает плодовый, или потешный, для прогулок; огород же, овощник, для разводки полезных, более съедомых растений. Сады садить, огороды городить. Сад поздно зацветает к смерти хозяина. Хоть его в сад посади, и сад привянет [A garden is a piece of land planted by human efforts with trees, bushes, flowers, with stoned paths and all sorts of amusement and decorations. The garden may be with fruit, or for amusement, for walking; a garden, a vegetable garden, for planting healthy, more edible plants. Gardens are planted, vegetable gardens are enclosed. The garden blooms late to the death of the owner. Even if he is put in the garden, the garden will fade] (Даль, 2020).

The concept САД is defined in *The Dictionary of the Contemporary Russian Literary Language* with specifications:

Сад – 1. Участок земли, засаженный деревьями, кустами и цветами (обычно с проложенными дорожками); деревья, цветы, растущие на этом участке. 2. Городской сад. Сад для отдыха городского населения. Увеселительный сад. В дореволюционное время — сад с увеселительными заведениями. Ботанический, Детский, Зоологический сад [Garden – 1. A plot of land planted with trees, bushes, and flowers (usually with paved paths); trees, flowers growing on this site. 2. City garden. Garden for urban recreation. Pleasure garden. In pre-revolutionary times – a

garden with entertainment establishments. Botanical, Children's, Zoological garden] (Большой академический словарь...).

We can see that in English and Russian the concept GARDEN coincides in the following explanatory notes: 1) an enclosed place of ground, 2) with cultivated plants in it. The difference in conceptualization of the garden in the languages compared is in specification of plants: Russian gardens must include trees (there is a distinction between "сад" [garden] and "огород" [vegetable garden]) whereas English and American gardens have mostly flowers. To denote the place with fruit trees, English-speaking people use the word "orchard". In both languages, the idea of a garden as a place specially organized for having a rest there is explicit.

It should be mentioned that the inner form of the word "garden" in English as well as "Garten" in German and "jardin" in French stems from the Indo-European root 'gher-/ghor-' (to enclose) corresponding to Russian "город / град" (city, town).

#### **4. Garden as a linguistic concept. Perceptive properties**

To determine an image as a perceptive element of a concept we have to analyze the context of the word presented in sentences and word combinations expressing its basic and subsidiary properties. The British National Corpus (<https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc>) has many examples of the word "garden".

The description of gardens may be grouped under the following items. Back yard gardens are part of a common semi-detached house territory:

*The blast – triggered when Alan lit his gas oven – had ripped off his clothes. Most of his red-brick semi lay in pieces in the garden around him.*

A garden is part of a well-to-do person's residence:

*The cost of living is similar to Australia, but homes are even cheaper. A three-bed, detached house with swimming pool, garage, big garden and large loft with sea views recently fetched 25,714.*

*We stayed at Rosetta Cottage, a period furnished Victorian villa on the seafront at Cowes, Isle of Wight. It is very comfortable, tastefully furnished, and set in its own garden, in which Winston Churchill's father Randolph proposed to his mother Jennie.*

*Two years ago, he pumped 1.7 million into developing an ambitious garden park and leisure centre in the grounds of the 1,000-year-old estate.*

In a garden there are no empty spaces:

*...you don't have to be an expert to make a super garden. Every little bed and gap is packed with plants.*

Usually there are flowers planted in the garden:

*Since then dahlias have become one of the best loved of all garden flowers.*

However, there may be big trees planted in a garden:

*Don't mention trees to Kim Basinger's neighbours. Residents of exclusive Woodland Hills, California, are fuming after the sexy star bought six giant maple trees and had them re-planted in her back garden. One irate neighbour says: 'She hired a huge crane to swing the trees over her house into the garden.' But the crane was so heavy the road caved in leaving a massive hole.*

Gardens usually have fences around them:

*People fled in terror yesterday as a crashed petrol tanker exploded in a fireball, sending 7,000 gallons of blazing fuel roaring up the street. [...] Horrified residents escaped over back garden fences as the flaming petrol cascaded down the street.*

There is a gate to a garden (often made of metal):

*Two-year-old Adam Rippon was freed by firemen after he got his head caught in the garden gate.*

There are special instruments and utilities for gardening:

*Here's a great idea with bags of usefulness. Get the Tidi Noir, a light, plastic bag, for garden debris.*

People have to know how to maintain gardens:

*Ground cover plants help make a garden easy to maintain and they curb weeds.*

People may keep fowl in their back garden:

*A farmer is doing a roaring trade – selling turkey chicks for Christmas. Hard-up families are buying them at 3.60 each to fatten up at home. And farmer Dennis Reynolds says the cost of making the birds plump enough for a feast is chicken feed – especially when supermarket meat can cost 1 per lb. Dennis, 42, of Tonna, West Glamorgan, said: 'They are quite happy in a back garden and are not fussy eaters.'*

Gardens may suffer from bad weather:

*The superstar's Coral Gables mansion was battered by gale force winds which left windows smashed and wrecked her garden.*

People keep gardens to have a rest there:

*And we would go for walks together or just sit in the garden, talking.*

*Sitting in an English garden / Waiting for the sun / If the sun don't [sic] come you get a tan / From standing in the English rain (Beatles).*

A garden is regarded as a paradise:

*A kestrel swooped for a refreshing stop at a waterfall in a little garden paradise high above a busy South London road.*

*According to the British Medical Journal, 'If you want to be happy for a night get drunk, for a year get married, and for a lifetime get a garden'.*

The descriptions presented correspond to dictionary definitions and show that gardens are common in England and make a usual environment of everyday life.

Textual illustrations of the concept GARDEN in Russian have been taken from the "National Corpus of the Russian Language" ([www.ruscorpora.ru](http://www.ruscorpora.ru)). A general view of a garden includes fruit and flowers:

*...на экране появилась симпатичная картинка: небо, сад и девочка с корзиной, которая собирает в неё красные яблоки (Ю. Смирнова). [... a nice picture appeared on the screen: the sky, a garden, and a girl with a basket, who fills it with red apples.] (Trans. V.K.)*

*Мы пошли в фруктовый сад, и там этот гость оборвал какую-то редкостную сливу, плоды которой были у дяди на счету (Н. Лесков). [We went out into the orchard, and our guest picked there some rare plum, any piece of them was cherished by Uncle.]*

*Большая терраса вела из дому в сад, перед террасой красовалась продолговатая клумба, покрытая розами; на каждом конце клумбы росли две акации, ещё в молодости переплетённые в виде винта покойным хозяином (И. Тургенев). [A large terrace connected the house with the garden, and in front of it there was an oblong flowerbed covered with roses; two acacias were on the sides of it, they had been twined by the late owner in the form of an external screw.]*

A garden has a special odour:

*– Где мы? – спросила Галя, когда птица с быстротой молнии опустила её на землю, прямо в роскошный, чудно благоухающий сад (Л. Чарская). [Where are we? – Galya asked, when the bird let her down in a flash-like way into a luxurious wonderful fragrant garden.]*

*Они цвели в разное время года и суток, перед дождём и по вечерам одуряюще пахли, бабушка радовалась каждому из них, выходила в сад, подолгу смотрела, разговаривала с цветами и*

*никому не разрешала до них дотрагиваться, но охотно раздаривала: никто не уезжал от неё с пустыми руками* (А. Варламов). [They blossomed in various time of the year and the day, and they gave a stupefying odour before the rain and in the evening, and our granny enjoyed all of them, she went out in the garden, looked at them for a long time, talked with flowers, and let nobody touch them, but was happy to give them one left her empty-handed.]

A garden is surrounded by a fence:

*У Ивана Карловича был большой фруктовый сад, мы перелезали через забор, пробежали по саду, опять через забор – и мы на дедушкином дворе* (А. Рыбаков). [Ivan Karlovich had a big orchard, we used to climb over the fence, run in the garden, came back over the fence again – and returned to our granddad's yard.]

*Сад был огорожен с трех сторон на случай пожара плетнем, в длину и ширину примерно по 80 метров* (Д. Дроздов). [The garden was enclosed by a wicker fence from three sides to prevent fire, about 80 meters widthwise and lengthwise.]

A description of a garden often includes some notes about its maintenance:

*Сразу скажем: создать сад, которому не требуется уход, невозможно!* (Т. Ефимова). [To put it right away: it is impossible to make a garden with no maintenance.]

*Как уже говорилось, любой сад требует хоть и малого, но всё же ухода* (В. Усков). [As it has been mentioned, one should take at least some little effort to keep up any garden.]

*Секрет талантливого садовника – используя четыре-пять видов, создать эффектный сад* (В. Иршенкова). [The secret of a gifted gardener is to make a glamorous garden using four or five kinds of plants.]

*Тогда мы взяли лопаты и пошли с Мишкой в сад сажать деревья* (В. Медведев). [Then Mishka and I took the spades and went to the garden to plant trees.]

We often see descriptions of old and derelict gardens:

*Разговор был в углу сада у ветхой изгороди, в изгороди прорехи и дыры, там – брошенный сад и брошенный дом* (А. Слаповский). [They were talking at the corner of a garden near a dilapidated fence full of jags and holes, and there loomed a forsaken garden and abandoned house.]

*Пустошь и ту можно превратить в цветущий сад, если она наследственная; а бесхозный* [Barren land may be turned into a flourishing garden if it is inherited, and a flourishing garden if it is derelict, will become a wasteland.] *цветущий сад – превратится в пустошь* (Ю. Давыдов).

*Высокие окна выходят в дремучий сад с давно умолкнувшим фонтаном посередине* (И. Грекова). [Tall windows look at a jungly garden with a dead fountain in the middle.]

People use a garden as a place to have a rest there and enjoy its beauty:

*Они тотчас же уединились с ним в комнате Анненского, долго читали какую-то рукопись, потом сошли в сад, где, по случаю прекрасной погоды, был приготовлен стол для чаепития – с простенькой скатертью и дюжиной разнокалиберных чашек (К. Чуковский). [They immediately had secluded at Annensky's room, read some manuscript there, and after that went out to the garden to have tea as the weather was good, the tea table was ready for them with a simple cloth on it and a dozen of different size cups.]*

*Муромский принял своих соседей как нельзя ласковее, предложил им осмотреть перед обедом сад и зверинец и повёл по дорожкам, тщательно выметенным и усыпанным песком (А.С. Пушкин). [Muromsky had received his neighbours in the most cordial way; he offered them to have a look at his garden and zoo and guided them on carefully brushed out and sanded roads.]*

Gardens may be sold and bought:

*Вам уже известно, вишнёвый сад ваш продаётся за долги, на двадцать второе августа назначены торги, но вы не беспокойтесь, моя дорогая, спите себе спокойно, выход есть... (А. Чехов). [As you know the cherry orchard is to sell so as sold to pay the debts, the auction will take place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, but you should not worry, dear, take it easy, we shall get out...]*

A garden as a symbol of a lost happy life is described in Russian philological investigations (Евдокимова et al. 2017; Сарсенова 2012). A garden may be described as a living or dead creature: *Зимняя ночь тянулась долго-долго, и чёрные окна пустой дачи угрюмо глядели на обледеневший неподвижный сад (Л. Андреев). [A winter night seemed endless, and black windows of an empty country house gloomily looked at the icy immovable garden.]*

One should pay attention to the difference in the image of a garden in Russia and in the West:

*На российских просторах мини-садики мы практически не встречаем: это вам не обычный сад-огород на шести сотках загородной "fazенды" (А. Лысиков). [We can find practically no mini-gardens here in Russia: it is not our usual six hundred square meters large vegetable garden in our country house humorously called "fazenda".]*

In both English and Russian languages and cultures, we can see images of a garden as cultivated enclosed territory with flowers and fruit. English gardens are parts of the homes, they adjoin the houses, whereas in Russia they are often separate from a living place except the descriptions of aristocratic estates. English people take their gardens as something very dear and comfortable.



Descriptions of gardens in Russian often have a nostalgic tint, old abandoned gardens are shown as symbols of a lost happy life.

To check the data obtained I have compared the reactions of English and Russian speaking people to the stimulus "garden" as reflected in associations presented in the Internet (<https://wordassociations.net/en>) and <http://thesaurus.ru/dict>.

Associative reactions in English include the following words: **nouns** – *Kew, Covent, Busch, cypress, gardener, Kensington, gardening, allotment, orchard, Williamsburg, terrace, parks, cottage, botany, parkway, woodland, flower, Tampa, coaster, villa, park, kitchen, palace, fruit, tea, roller, landscape, Doubleday, suburb, arboretum, walk, brewery, Eden, Jamestown, Madison, boulevard, garden, Orlando, horticulture, fields, amusement, attraction, cultivar, Tao, lawn, howl, bay, planting, hedge, Carroll, fountain, parkland, dive, resort, theme, grotto, greenhouse, Hampstead, patio, ride, stroll, mater, weeds, shrub, rooftop, vegetable, yew, tulip, Florida, hose, conservation, cabbage, pavilion, promenade, courtyard*; **adjectives** – *botanic, horticultural, square, zoological, beautiful, ornamental, walled, vegetable, planted, ripe, cultivated, sunken, lush, blooming, elementary, spacious, fragrant*.

Russian data are to some extent different: **nouns** – *огород* [vegetable garden], *деревья* [trees], *яблоки* [apples], *цветы* [flowers], *фрукты* [fruit], *абрикосы* [apricots], *беседка* [pavilion], *в деревне* [in the village], *в цвету* [blossoming], *весна* [spring time], *виноград* [grapes], *вишня* [cherry], *дача* [country house], *дерево* [tree], *дом* [house], *зелень* [greenery], *красота* [beauty], *культура* [culture], *курорт* [resort], *лес* [forest], *любовь* [love], *Мичурин* [Michurin], *на даче* [in the country house], *над морем* [at the sea side], *невеста* [bride], *Нескучный* [Neskuchny], *овощи* [vegetables], *палисад* [paling], *парк* [park], *при доме* [around the house], *пулемет* [machine gun], *с персиками* [with peaches], *Семирамиды* [Semiramis]; **pronouns** – *мой* [my]; **adjectives** – *вишневый* [cherry], *цветущий* [blooming, blossoming], *яблоневоый* [apple], *фруктовоый* [fruit], *густой* [thick], *зеленый* [green], *зимний* [winter], *огромный* [huge], *весенний* [spring], *вырублен* [cut out], *детский* [kindergarten], *живой* [alive], *запущенный* [desolate], *колхозный* [kolkhoz], *красивый* [beautiful], *райский* [paradise], *тенистый и густой* [shady and thick], *хороший* [good], *яблоко* [apple], *яблони* [apple trees], *яблоня* [apple tree], *ягоды* [berries]; **verbs** – *цветет* [blooming, blossoming], *иметь* [have], *расцветает* [blossoming], *садить* [plant], *трясти* [shake].

English and Russian images of a garden coincide in naming typical garden trees and plants and their view, but differ in the pictures of places: in English and American cultures, a garden is often a proper name of a certain location, whereas in Russia it is mostly associated with a country life and fruit

grown there.

### **5. Garden as a linguistic concept. Evaluative properties**

Values encoded in concepts may be analyzed in their explicit manifestation when we take the texts specially produced and kept in memory to express norms of behavior and stereotypes of world-views. These are legends, myths, parables, proverbs and sayings, aphorisms, jokes and anecdotes, and personal narratives.

A garden is one of most well-known symbols dealt with in the Bible. It was the place specially created by God for all the creatures to live in peace and harmony:

*Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed (Genesis, 2:8).*

*The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis, 2:9).*

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Genesis, 2:15).*

*So, the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken (Genesis, 3:23).*

We can see that the garden of the God was the best place on the earth, and Adam, the first human being, was chosen to take care of it. After Adam and Eve were banished from paradise, the primary symbolic meaning of it is a nostalgic desire to come back there. A garden in the Bible is referred to as a burial place:

*And Manasseh slept with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza, and Amon his son became king in his place (Kings, 21:18).*

The symbolic meaning of this connection between garden and death seems to be coming back to the earth, which gives life to trees and all the living beings; it is the ever-lasting circle of life.

The Middle East climate makes people value water. The following connection in the words of a famous prophet is significant:

*And the Lord will continually guide you, / And satisfy your desire in scorched places, / And give strength to your bones; / And you will be like a watered garden, / And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail (Isaiah, 58:11).*

The symbolic meaning of a watered garden is life in its blossom. A well-known saying "*Man should build a house, plant a tree and raise a son*" is often repeated and has a deep symbolic meaning. Building a house means that a person should realize himself in his occupation or profession, planting a tree is a metaphor describing one's contribution to future generations' prosperity, and in this respect, a tree and a garden coincide, and raising a son is reaching a personal immortality. Nowadays the phrase refers both to men and women. It is interesting to mention that in the Bible we can see a certain consequential mode of behavior: a person should first build a house, then plant a vineyard and only after that marry a woman (Sotah, 44a:6). Thus, building a house is a preliminary basic thing to be fulfilled, and planting a vineyard should follow it, it is a certain stage of development a person should aspire to reach, and finally there comes family life.

Gardening requires time, and the fruit yielded by trees as well as grapes yielded by vineyards come not immediately but after a certain period of time. Thus, the symbolic meaning of working and reaching the result is realized in parables and proverbs about harvesting. In the commentary to the treatise in Talmud we can find an excellent explanation:

*Just as my ancestors planted for me, I too am planting for my descendants* (Taanit, 23a:15).

The symbol of a garden in this respect is a contribution a person should make into the history of mankind.

The proverbs usually express recommendations of behavior formulated in succinct sentences with images connected with everyday life. It was surprising for me to find out that there are very few proverbs both in English and in Russian dealing with the concept GARDEN. The word "garden" (and its synonyms) in such texts is a metaphor or a comparison.

A garden is a treasure, which can be lost:

*It is easy to rob an orchard when none keeps it* (Engl.)

One should take care of the things one possesses. We have to know that our efforts to cultivate a garden are often energy consuming:

*A house built and a garden to grow never brought what they cost* (Scot.).

This rather pessimistic observation is a kind of warning to romantic enthusiasts in any enterprise they take part in.

An interesting proverbial note can be seen in the following sentence:

*Every man is sociable until a cow invades his garden* (Irish).

The idea is that people are not very friendly when their property is at risk.

There happen to be weeds in a garden, and this fact is reflected in the proverb:

*A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds.*

This comparison is directed to express a recommendation to practice what one promises.

In Russian, we find other observations:

*Каков сад, таковы и яблоки.* [Like the garden, like apples.] *Каков уход, таков и плод.* [Like attendance, like the fruit.] *Каков сад, таков и садовник.* [Like a garden, like the gardener.]

These proverbs show the connection between conditions and consequences.

The fact that an allusion to a garden is so rare in proverbial phrases requires a special study. But it is important to mention that aphorisms about garden and gardening in English are very numerous. According to the Internet resources (<https://www.backyardboss.net/171-inspirational-gardening-quotes-and-sayings>, <https://proverbicals.com/garden>) there are 170 sentences dealing with this topic. An aphorism differs from a proverb in the following points: it is not anonymous, it often lacks a vivid image and expresses some paradoxical ideas, it expresses not a recommendation of behavior, but an observation of human nature, and it belongs to communication of philosophers whereas proverbs have no authors, they usually have a rememberable image, they teach everyone what they should do in certain typical situations, and they belong to folklore expressing the worldview of common people.

In aphorisms about gardens and gardening we can find the observations about our life in general. Thus, a garden becomes a symbol of the world we inhabit.

A garden is a symbol of joy and happiness:

*If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need* (M.T. Cicero).

*God Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures* (F. Bacon).

*No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden* (Th. Jefferson).

*I grow plants for many reasons: to please my eye or to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow* (D. Hobson).

*The lesson I have thoroughly learnt, and wish to pass on to others, is to know the enduring happiness that the love of a garden gives* (G. Jekyll).

*Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food, and medicine for the soul (L. Burbank).*

Gardens make people understand what we are. They are symbols of our essence:

*Show me your garden and I shall tell you what you are (A. Austin).*

*I cultivate my garden, and my garden cultivates me (R. Breault).*

*In search of my mother's garden, I found my own (A. Walker).*

*There is no gardening without humility. Nature is constantly sending even its oldest scholars to the bottom of the class for some egregious blunder (A. Austin).*

*I plant a lot of trees. I am a great believer in planting things for future generations. I loathe the now culture where you just live for today (P. Keith).*

*A garden is always a series of losses set against a few triumphs, like life itself (M. Sarton).*

To appreciate a garden, one should love it. A garden is a symbol of love:

*I think the true gardener is a lover of his flowers, not a critic of them (R. Farrer).*

*The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul (A. Austin).*

*Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead (Anonymous).*

*I have never had so many good ideas day after day as when I worked in the garden (J. Erskine).*

The phrases about weeds belong here, too:

*Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them (A. Milne).*

*What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have never been discovered (Ralph W. Emerson).*

*A weed is but an unloved flower (E. Wilcox).*

*A flower falls, even though we love it; and a weed grows, even though we do not love it (Dogen).*

To keep a garden on must work hard there. A garden is a symbol of effort and care:

*A garden requires patient labor and attention. Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because someone expended effort on them (L. Bailey).*

*It will never rain roses: when we want to have more roses we must plant more trees (G. Eliot).*

*Gardens are not made by singing 'Oh, how beautiful,' and sitting in the shade (R. Kipling).*

*Gardening requires lots of water — most of it in the form of perspiration (L. Erickson).*

*Remember that children, marriages, and flower gardens reflect the kind of care they get (H. Jackson Brown, Jr.).*

*It is impossible to live without sacrifice, effort and hardships – life is not a garden where only flowers grow* (I.A. Goncharov).

Gardening gives people hopes to be realized, thus it is a symbol of hope:

*Gardening simply does not allow one to be mentally old, because too many hopes and dreams are yet to be realized* (A. Armitage).

*There's something about taking a plow and breaking new ground. It gives you energy* (K. Kesey).

*One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides* (W. Johns).

However, there are few pessimistic commentaries on gardening. Actually, such phrases express the ideas of killing the joy of gardening:

*A vegetable garden, in the beginning, looks so promising and then after all little by little it grows nothing but vegetables, nothing, nothing but vegetables* (G. Stein).

*Commentators turn any garden into herbarium* (D. Quiller).

Reasoning about gardening and symbols expressed here show us that gardens make people understand our inseparable connection with nature and its harmony.

## **6. Conclusion**

Garden as a cultural symbol is variously conceptualized in the language. Its notional properties as specified in dictionary definitions are expressed in the features "an enclosed placed of ground with cultivated plants in it". Culturally, gardens are opposed to forests and are correlated to parks, on the one hand, and various types of food and flowers growing, on the other hand. Perceptive characteristics of a garden in the English worldview are mostly connected with it as part of home adjoining a house, whereas in Russian descriptions of gardens we can often see abandoned old gardens as symbols of a lost happy life. Evaluative features of a garden allude to the Biblical description of paradise. Proverbs show gardens as the property to be taken care of. Aphorisms depict a garden as the symbol of the world we live in, as a source of joy and happiness, a picture of our essence, something we should love and cherish, a symbol of effort and care, and, sometimes, something frail and vulnerable.

## **Notes**

All the examples in the text as well as the quotations from non-English-language are translated by the author.

## List of abbreviations

LDCE – Longman dictionary of Contemporary English


OED – Oxford English dictionary

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