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Research Article

The plants mentioned in the bible and their equivalents in Lithuanian churchyards

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People's daily life is unimaginable without plants vegetations. Since ancient times, plants have provided human beings with some kinds of needs – they feed, train, heal, provide shelter, delight the eye, and decorate the environment. It is proposed to grow woody plants mentioned in the Bible and introduced in Lithuania in churchyards. Plants mentioned in the Bible that cannot be grown in Lithuania can be replaced with similar visual, ecological and biological properties. It is proposed to put information about the plant and a text from the Bible next to the plants. The most common small architectural structures in churchyards are crosses, chapels, shrines, chapel columns, decorative pools, sculptures of saints, stations of the cross, tombstones, fences, notice boards, lourdes, nativity scenes for Christmas. By using different environmental design tools, it is possible to create church churchyards as Bible gardens.

Keywords: biblical garden, churchyard, plants, sacred landscapes

1 Introduction

Churches and other houses of worship have always been built in the centre of a town or district. A house of prayer is not only a place of prayer, concentration and communion with God. Churches have become places where people not only want to attend mass, but also live an active social life (Kaczynska & Sikora, 2015). Churches are complemented by small architectural buildings with Christian themes and motifs. The most common small architectural structures are crosses, decorative pools, chapels, chapel pillars, chapel sculptures, stations of the cross, tombstones, fences, lourdes, nativity scenes for Christmas Christianity. Different small architectural structures have different functions; chapels, crosses, or shrines are places of worship. Symbols of Christianity are designed and composed within the existing cultural landscape, in harmony with existing architectural styles. The use of local, natural materials for the construction of small architectural structures is encouraged, as they are low-maintenance, durable and safe. The use of small architectural structures and woody plants in churchyards creates a spirit of place and uniqueness. Monuments can be placed in the courtyards to commemorate local notables or people of merit (Mitkowska & Siewniak, 1997; Tóth et al., 2019).

The environment of churchyards is also shaped by woody and herbaceous plants. Greenery with different types of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants have a wider biodiversity (Löki, et al., 2019; Stara & Tsiakiris, 2019). Completed studies in Poland (Kaczyńska, 2020) and Germany (Barber et al., 2021) have shown that urban green spaces, such as churchyards, significantly improve the physical and mental health of residents. Therefore, it is worth investing in, improving, and creating this type of space. A 2019 study in the United Kingdom aimed to clarify the benefits and limitations of the use of urban green spaces, including churchyards. Researchers found that residents appreciate and enjoy the high density of trees, urban green areas for recreation and peace. Green areas bring them the joy of naturalness and exploration (Shams & Barker, 2019; Onose et al., 2021).

Even though biblical gardens have existed for more than 80 years, there are not many scientific publications on them. Biblical gardens are referred to in Bible studies or in theological journals (Włodarczyk, 2018). From the beginning, the Lord God planted a paradise of delights,

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in which he made man, whom he had created. The Lord God brought forth out of the earth every tree of every kind, beautiful and pleasant to eat, the tree of life in the midst of the paradise, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Jacob & Jacob, 2007). The Garden of Eden is understood to be a very beautiful, luxuriant garden of delights, full of plants. The Bible minimizes the large number and variety of plants. Some of them are associated with the Saints and their live. Their importance is emphasized in the Bible: the handmaid of God: "Let the earth bring forth grass, and plants yielding seed, and trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is their seed" (Jacob & Jacob, 2007). He said, "Let the earth bring forth green grass, and such as is able to bear seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which is able to bear seed in itself upon the earth. And so it was done. And the earth brought forth green grass, and such as yielded seed after its kind, and a tree yielding fruit, having seed every one after his kind. And God saw that it was good" (Jacob & Jacob, 2007).

The aim of this study is to disclose the possibilities of adaptation of the plants mentioned in the Bible in the climate conditions of Lithuania and to look for similar plants to those that cannot grow in Lithuania. The objectives are:

a) to analyze what types of plants are mentioned in the Biblical garden;
b) to determine analogous woody plants suitable for cultivation in Lithuanian climate conditions;
c) to provide individual woody plant species for greenery components and space formation.

2 Material and methods

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that biblical gardens have been created in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Although these gardens have actively been created in European countries, they are not so popular or actively created in Lithuania.

The research was carried out through literature review and documents relevant to the topic, comparing and summarizing the analysis of online databases. The analysis was carried out in the months of January to April 2022. The authors searched for publications on keywords, such as "Biblical garden", and "Bibelgärten" "Biodiversity", "Churchyards".

The first phase of the review aimed to find out about the benefits of green areas, including churchyards, to towns and cities and to biodiversity. The second phase aimed to collect scientific literature and scientific sources about existing biblical gardens and the plants grown in them. At this stage, we managed to find out which plants are mentioned in the Bible. During the last stage, after identifying the plants mentioned in the Bible, plants were searched for, which in their biological, ecological, and decorative properties are similar to plants mentioned in the Bible and can successfully grow and develop in the climate conditions of Lithuania. There are four harshness zones on the territory of Lithuania: 5b, 6a, 6b and 7a (Gloning et al., 2013).

3 Results and discussion

The literature analysis shows that the majority of biblical gardens is located in North America and Europe. According to Bielo (2016), there are 182 biblical gardens in the world. Far fewer Bible-themed gardens have been observed in the Middle East and Australia. In Europe, biblical gardens and plants mentioned in the Bible are mostly planted in Poland and Germany. Less often in Austria and the United Kingdom. There are several thematic gardens in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Ukraine with a biblical theme or gardens of plants mentioned in the Bible (Włodarczyk & Kapczyńska, 2019).

All of these gardens are officially recognised as biblical gardens. Most often, these gardens are located near churches, monasteries, or in botanical gardens (Vita & Boc, 2022; De Lacy & Shackleton, 2017). The establishment of gardens in public spaces allows the public to freely visit them and study them not only and admire the plants, but it is also a great space for teaching about the Bible (Hitter et al., 2020).

Analysing the adaptation of plants to human needs, the literature analysis showed that the Bible mentions plants for human food and animal feed, for the treatment of diseases (Dafni & Böck, 2019), for home decoration and for religious ceremonies (Mckenna & Hughes, 2014).

3.1 Biblical gardens in Lithuania

After conducting an analysis of the literature on the plants grown in biblical gardens, the data obtained show that they grow trees, shrubs, semi-shrubs and herbaceous annuals, and perennials. The study focused more on woody plants as they form spaces and biostructures. Thirty-three trees and shrubs were selected. The selected plant species belong to nineteen families. The Rosaceae family is the most widely used for planting. Eleven species of this plant family can be used to create biblical gardens. Four tree species belonging to the Salixaceae family were selected – white willow (*Salix alba* L.), brittle willow (*Salix fragilis* L.), white (*Populus alba* L.) and black (*Populus nigra* L.) poplar. Cupressaceae and Pinaceae families have three possible representatives each, suitable for forming the spaces of churchyards (see Table 1). There are only a few

Table 1 List of plants, are suitable for creating biblical gardens and they application possibilities

Botanical name	English name	Application possibilities
***Abies veitchii* Lindley.**	veitch fir	solitary trees, groups, rows of trees
***Acer pseudoplatanus* L.**	sycamore	groups, solitary trees, rows of trees
***Berberis thunbergii* DC.**	Japanese barberry	groups, hedges
***Buxus sempervirens* L.**	American boxwood	groups, hedges
***Cercis canadensis* L.**	eastern redbud	solitary trees
***Cerasus tomentosa* Thnub.**	nanjing cherry, korean cherry, manchu cherry, downy cherry	groups
***Crataegus monogyna* L.**	common hawthorn	hedges, solitaire, groups
***Cydonia oblonga* Mill.**	common quince	solitary trees, groups
***Hedera helix* L.**	common english ivy	retaining walls
***Hippophae rhamnoides* L.**	sea buckthorn	groups
***Juglans regia* L.**	persian walnut, english walnut, carpathian walnut, madeira walnut	solitary trees, groups, rows of trees
***Juniperus scopulorum* Sarg.**	rocky mountain juniper	solitary trees, groups
***Juniperus chinensis* L.**	Chinese juniper	hedges, solitary trees, groups
***Magnolia* × *loebneri* Kache.**	loebner magnolia,	groups, solitary trees
***Malus sylvestris* Mill.**	crab apple, wild crab	solitary trees, blocks of trees
***Morus nigra* L.**	black mulberry	groups, solitary trees
***Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch.**	peach tree	solitary trees, groups, rows of trees
***Prunus amygdalus* Batsch.**	almond	groups, solitary trees
***Prunus spinosa* L.**	blackthorn	hight hedges
***Platanus occidentalis* L.**	western plane	alleys, rows and/or blocks of trees, solitary trees
***Populus alba* L.**	white poplar	groups
***Populus nigra* L.**	black poplar	alleys
***Pinus sylvestris* L.**	scots pine	grove, groups
***Pinus nigra* Arn.**	black pine	solitary trees, groups
***Pyrus communis* L.**	common pear	alleys, groups, solitary trees
***Quercus robur* L.**	common oak	grove, groups, blocks of trees
***Rhus typhina* L.**	staghorn sumac	solitary trees, groups
***Rosa canina* L.**	dog rose	groups, hedges
***Rosa pimpinellifolia* L.**	burnet rose, scotch rose	groups, hedges
***Salix fragilis* L.**	crack willow	solitary trees
***Salix alba* L.**	white willow	solitary trees
***Sambucus nigra* L.**	American black elderberry	groups, solitary trees
Sorbus ***aucuparia* L.**	European mountain ash	rows of trees, groups, block of trees
***Thuja occidentalis* L.**	northern white-cedar, eastern white-cedar, arborvitae	groups, hedges, rows of trees
***Ulmus minor* Mill.**	smooth-leaved elm, narrow-leaved elm or east anglian elm	solitary trees, groups
***Vitis vinifera* L.**	European wine grape	vertical planting

Table 2 Characteristics of analog trees and shrubs for creating biblical gardens in Lithuania

Plants grown in biblical gardens mentioned in the Bible	Equivalents that can grow in Lithuanian climate conditions	The shape of the tree canopy	Dimensions (height, m)	Possible application in Bible garden greens
Cilician fir *Abies cicilica* Antoine & Kotschy	veitch fir *Abies veitchii* L.	conical	25	solitary tree, groups
Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* L.		oval	20–35	groups, solitary tree
Cretan barberry *Berberis cretica* L.	Japanese barberry *Berberis thunbergii* DC.	colony	up to 1,2	groups, hedges
American boxwood *Buxus sempervirens* L.		oval	up to 1	hedges, group
Judas tree *Cercis siliquastrum* L.	eastern redbud *Cercis canadensis* L.	oval	up to 10	solitary tree
Christ's thorn jujube *Zizipus spina* – Christi (L.) Desf.	nanjing cherry *Cerasus tomentosa* Thnub.	round	up to 2	groups
Mediterranean medlar *Crateagus aronia* (L.) Bosc ex DC.	common hawthorn *Crateagus monogyna* L.	oval	up to 5	solitary tree, groups, hedges
Agarwood *Aquillaria agallocha* Roxb.	common quince *Cydonia oblonga* Mill.	round	up to 3	groups, solitary tree
Common English ivy *Hedera helix* L.		liana	up to 30	retaining walls
Olive tree *Olea europea* L.	sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* L.	upright funnel	up to 6	groups
Persian walnut *Junglans regia* L.		umbrella	25–40	solitary tree, groups
Greek juniper *Juniperus excelsa* M.Bieb.	rocky mountain juniper *Juniperus scopulorum* Sarg.	colony	up to 3	solitary tree, groups
Phoenician juniper *Juniperus phoenicea* L.	Chinese juniper *Juniperus chinensis* L.	conical	up to 3	solitary tree, hedges, groups
Snowbell bush *Styrax officinalis* L.	loebner's magnolia *Magnolia – loebneri* Kache.	umbrella	up to 5	solitary tree, groups
Wild crab *Malus sylvestris* Mill.		oval	10	solitary tree
Black mulberry *Morus nigra* L.		upright funnel	15	groups, solitary tree
Ceylon ebony *Diospyros ebenum* J. Koenig ex Retz.	peach tree *Prunus persica* (L.) Batsch.	umbrella	8	solitary tree, groups, blocks or/ and rows of trees
Almond *Prunus amygdalus* Batsch.		oval	up to 6	solitary tree, groups
Bear's plum *Prunus ursina* Kotschy.	blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*	oval	up to 8	hight hedges
Oriental plane *Platanus orientalis* L.	western plane *Platanus occidentalis* L.	oval	up to 30	alleys, rows or/and blocks of trees, solitary tree
White poplar *Populus alba* L.		colony	up to 15	groups
Black poplar *Populus nigra* L.		umbrella	up to 40	alleys

Content Table 2

Plants grown in biblical gardens mentioned in the Bible	Equivalents that can grow in Lithuanian climate conditions	The shape of the tree canopy	Dimensions (height, m)	Possible application in Bible garden greens
Turkish pine *Pinus brutia* Ten.	scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* L.	umbrella	up to 40	grove, groups
Aleppo pine *Pinus halepensis* Mill.	black pine *Pinus nigra* Arn.	umbrella	up to 50	solitary tree, groups
Common pear *Pyrus communis* L.		pyramidal	up to 20	solitary tree, groups
Palestine oak *Quercus calliprinos* L.	common oak *Quercus robur* L.	round	up to 12	groups, solitary tree, grove
Sicilian sumac *Rhus coriaria* L.	staghorn sumac *Rhus typhina* L.	umbrella	up to 5	solitary tree, groups
Dog rose *Rosa canina*		round	up to 2,5	groups, hedges
Phoenician rose *Rosa phoenicia* Boiss.	burnet rose *Rosa pimpinellifolia* L.	round	up to 1	hedges, groups
Crack willow *Salix fragilis* L.		round	up to 4	solitary tree
White willow *Salix alba* L.		weeping	up to 20	solitary tree
Mount atlas mastic tree *Pistacia atlantica* Desf.	American black elderberry *Sambucus nigra* L.	round	up to 6	solitary tree, groups
Mastic tree *Pistacia lentiscus* L.	European mountain ash *Sorbus aucuparia* L.	oval	up to 15	groups, rows of trees
Mediterranean cypress *Cupressus sempervirens* L.	northern white-cedar *Thuja occidentalis* L.	colony	up to 20	rows or blocks of trees, hedges, groups
Smooth-leaved elm *Ulmus minor* Mill.		round	up to 20-30	solitary tree, groups
Common grape *Vitis vinifera* L.		liana	up to 10	vertical planting

plant gardens in Lithuania that mention plants from the Bible – in the conservatory of the Kaunas Botanical Garden of Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) you can admire and learn more about the plants mentioned in the Bible, and in the churchyard of the Garliava church, a garden of biblical plants is blooming and flowering. Other churches have only a few plants mentioned in the Bible in their churchyards. Some churches have sermons on "The Most Significant Gardens in the Bible". The selected trees and shrubs are mentioned in the Bible, for example *Malus sylvestris*, *Morus nigra*, *Populus alba*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Hedera helix*, *Juglans regia*, *Populus nigra*, *Pyrus communis*, *Rosa canina*, *Salix alba*, *Vitis vinifera*, *Prunus amygdalus*. These woody plants have peculiar canopies and silhouettes, which makes them suitable for the formation of spaces and the landscape architecture of church sanctuaries (Table 1).

Evergreen trees, such as black (*Pinus nigra* Arn.) and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris* L.), Chinese (*Juniperus chinensis* L.), or rock juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* Sarg.) provide contrast and variety during the winter. In the climate conditions of Lithuania, *Cupressus sempervirens* cannot grow, as they are assigned to zone 7 (Bannister & Neuner, 2001). The evergreen deciduous *Buxus sempervirens* can be successfully adapted and used for various greenery components when creating a biblical garden in the Lithuanian climate. The spread of *Cydalima perspectalis* is a concern and increases the maintenance and cost of *Buxus sempervirens* plants, but chemical protection and biological agents are available and their correct and timely application shows positive results (Fora et al., 2016). The illusion of cypresses in the landscape can be created for instance by *Thuja occidentalis* L. 'Columna' (Table 2).

Therefore, the establishment and creation of Bible gardens continues to be popular in the world. The goal of Bible Gardens is to create a garden and place that everyone would love to have to discover a sense of peace, the beauty of nature and closeness to God and other people (Bielo, 2016). In an age of visual expression, sensation, and consumption, biblical gardens and their analogies become a kind of niche place that is perfect for prayer, concentration, and contemplation. Biblical gardens become a kind of paradise for physical and spiritual rest (Scheuer, 2008). Therefore, Bible gardens perform a very important social function – they integrate vulnerable people into society – former prisoners, people with addictions, or lonely people. The opportunity to observe the transformation of nature, to see dying and reviving plants, to contribute to environmental shaping solutions, gives people spiritual satisfaction, raises self-esteem, and increases the sense of security and community (König et al., 2004; Stigsdotter & Grahn, 2002). Biblical gardens are not only interesting features of cultural landscapes, but also a place of gathering and social interaction for the local community (Rostami et al., 2015; Jensen, 2019; Bielo, 2018).

4 Conclusions

Biblical plant gardens are being created in church churchyards, community centers, botanical gardens, etc. in many countries around the world. They are widely visited by people and are important for cognitive, educational and recreational purposes.

It is very important to create the right infrastructure for the creation of the Bible Gardens, and to choose plants that can grow in the open ground in Lithuania. The paper also presents planting components for space shaping. The collection can be supplemented with greenhouse-grown plants during the summer. By applying the principle of selecting plant analogues, biblical gardens can be created in other countries.

The Biblical Garden adds identity and uniqueness to the place and enlivens the cultural landscape. Modern tools (QR codes) can be used to display information about the plant and the text from the Bible next to the plant. The effects of climate change may in the future provide more opportunities for the cultivation of woody plants, which have not been possible so far.

In Lithuania, there are only a few plant gardens mentioned in the Bible – in the conservatory of the Kaunas Botanical Garden of Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) you can admire and learn more about the plants mentioned in the Bible, and in the churchyard of the Garliava church, a garden of biblical plants is blooming and flowering. Other churches have only a few plants mentioned in the Bible in their churchyards. Some churches have sermons on "The Most Significant Gardens in the Bible."

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