

ABSTRACT

Key-words: traditional garden, vegetal motifs, flower garden, *Amaranthus hypocondriacus* L, *Aster novae-angliae* L, *Aster novi-belgii* L, *Chrysanthemum indicum* L, *Dahlia hybrida* Hort., *Zinnia elegans* Jack.

In a world that is more and more globalized and with the consequences of this globalization becoming more obvious, it is necessary to address the issue of keeping and asserting the national identity, of promoting authentic national values. “National distinctiveness” remains an important issue for the Romanian society, since a well-defined national identity will shape our personality as a nation and could help us not to “lose” ourselves in the agitated rhythm of modern-day life.

National identity provides power, prestige and, most of all, meaning to its people. The specific character and the power of our traditional culture come from the nature and customs of the Romanian people whose entity provides distinctive particularities in the European context (Pătrașcu, 1984).

Traditions, customs, folk art, costumes etc. are part of the legacy transferred to us from countless generations, a rich and extremely valuable inheritance whose accurate knowledge helps us understand ourselves and then, aware of its priceless value, we can preserve and pass on unaltered to future generations. The disregard of this fundamental patrimony leads to an imbalance between past and present and makes any superior form of Romanian aesthetics remain a wish (Cantacuzino, 1977).

When speaking about traditions, folk arts and rural households we cannot separate the natural environment from the anthropic one. The connection between the landscape and what is built is done gradually, in several stages, providing a natural transition from one part to the other. The first stage is represented by the relationship between the household and its surrounding place, a connection that shows the harmonious manner of integrating the household into the nature. The constructed ensemble relates to the surrounding environment through the garden – an intermediary stage where the natural and the anthropic intertwine forming a whole unit from which, eventually, the plants – elements of the natural – will come into the house, either in natural state, as flower bouquets, or stylized, as elements of the décor (carrying symbols or just ornamental) on various interior design objects.

The present thesis focusses on the traditional Romanian garden, as *part* of the well-defined *whole* of the traditional household, perfectly adjusted to the wonderful universe of the Romanian village from which it first came out. The garden has always aroused the interest of researchers and specialists, especially in what concerns the variety of utilitarian and ornamental plants populating it. The particular importance of the flowers in the life of the Romanian countryman is a common fact. No matter their valences – sacred, medicinal, nutritive or ornamental – flowers have always found their place in the garden and the house of the countryman, and most certainly in his heart.

Numerous poems, songs, legends or folk beliefs focus on plants. Furthermore, the beauty and the perfection of their forms transformed them into an important source of inspiration for various decorative patterns defining the stylistic universe of the traditional house. Thus, promoting the original elements in all their shapes of manifestation constitutes an important mission that helps maintain and disseminate this priceless wealth.

The research works conducted in the present thesis focus on all the points mentioned above, as well as on presenting general and particular aspects, specific to the ethnographic area of Northern Moldova as a study area. Another important point of the thesis is constituted by the collection of ornamental plants characteristic of the traditional garden as viewed from the point of variety of floral species, organizational pattern and the features that made them worthy for the Romanian garden. The flowers that are usually cultivated in the traditional Romanian garden are beautiful, strong, well - adapted to the local ecological conditions while their maintenance is usually rather low. These extremely valuable characteristics led to the idea of a study on their behaviour, in the pedo-climatic conditions of Iasi. The strong, modest low-maintenance species with a high capacity of propagation (self-sowing, plant division, suckers, seedlings etc.) are preferred by the villagers. Some of these species have been brought on the experimental field of the Floriculture department within USAMV Iasi for a proper observation of their behaviour in the pedo-climatic conditions of the area.

In order to fulfil the purpose, the following **major objectives** have been established:

- analysis of the ethnographic area of Northern Moldova from the point of view of historical, ethnographic and natural environment conditions, with an accent on the organizational pattern of the traditional Romanian household and its built or non-built components;
- identification and presentation of vegetal elements that are used for the interior and exterior decoration of traditional houses in the ethnographic area considered in the study;
- study of the natural environment conditions in the area of Iasi where the researches took place;

- evaluation of the behaviour in cultivation conditions in the area of Iasi of local plants from floral species cultivated in the ethnographic area of Northern Moldova.

The present thesis, “**ORNAMENTAL PLANTS CULTURE IN ROMANIAN TRADITIONAL GARDENS AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE**” is structured into two parts and contains eight chapters.

The first part – THE PRESENT STAGE OF RESEARCHES – contains two chapters. Chapter I focuses on aspects of the traditional household as a result of the perfect, century-long communion between the Romanian countryman and nature. The traditional household is interesting in what concerns the constructed spaces (house and outbuildings), the non-built areas (garden, yard) and the manner these two relate and intertwine to create a specific unitary space. Also, there are described the ornamental vegetal motifs used for the interior and exterior decoration of the traditional houses. Emphasizing the natural aspect of the Romanian garden, the present thesis widely describes the plants that found their way, in time, in the Romanian garden.

Chapter II focuses on the traditional household, the country-like house and its interior in this area (counties of Suceava and Botosani) with an accent on the specific elements depending on the varied geo-climatic conditions and the relief.

In part II, chapter III there are described the purpose and the objectives of the research works as well as the general methodology to be followed. In order to conduct the experiences there have been chosen six species considered to be representative for the Romanian traditional garden: *Amaranthus hypocondriacus*, *Aster novae angliae*, *A. novi-belgii*, *Chrysanthemum indicum*, *Dahlia hybrida* and *Zinnia elegans*; each species was represented by at least two local populations harvested from gardens in the studied area and constituting the biologic material used in establishing the experiments. In the case of perennial species (*Aster novae angliae*, *A. novi-belgii*, *Chrysanthemum indicum*, *Dahlia hybrida*) there was used an experimental scheme meant to determine the influence of irrigation and foliar fertilization, while in the case of the annual species (*Amaranthus hypocondriacus* și *Zinnia elegans*) the experimental scheme was meant to determine the influence of irrigation and the biologic material on the growth and development of plants.

The general research methods used were the bibliographic and field study, case study, experiment, observation, comparison, analysis and synthesis.

For all the studied flower species, the basic method was the experiment and it consisted in establishing the experimental factors and the corresponding variants. Within each experiment there were conducted observations that followed the evolution of the phenomena and processes regarding the growth and development of plants. As working methods there

were used biometry techniques, physiological and biochemical analysis (determination of chlorophyllin and carotenoids pigments, determination of the dried substance and determination of the content of reducing carbohydrates) and statistic processing of the data.

In chapter IV there are widely commented and presented images of motifs inspired from the vegetal universe as used in the interior and exterior decoration of houses within the studied area. The traditional houses in the area of Suceava surprise the onlookers with their wide variety of ornamental motifs. Their picturesque aspect comes from the variety of motifs, in point of pattern, size and manner of representation. There can often be seen decorations varying from just one flower to various vegetal combinations, from discrete and small sized ones, sometimes only barely suggested (mostly encountered in wooden constructions – houses, gates, enclosures and fountains) to elaborate ones, applied intricate lacings, as is the case of plastered houses in Ciocănești.

Unlike the houses in the area of Suceava, those from Botoșani are extremely simple, with rare and scarce decorative elements on the exterior. Usually limed in one colour only, the houses get dynamic through their window surrounds, which can be simple or with simplified rare motifs.

Chapter V presents organisational patterns of Romanian households in the counties of Suceava and Botoșani and other aspects regarding the flower garden, in point of the layout of ornamental species in the garden and the selection of species encountered in the studied areas. The traditional household in the studied areas fits into the organizational pattern of the Romanian household with the corresponding ground divided into the two distinct functional areas: the yard and the utilitarian garden. Still, there are many differences from one area to another in point of the number and size of the buildings, their volume and aspect, the size of the flower garden and, not lastly, the number of cultivated ornamental species.

The selection of flower species constituting the basic layout of the traditional gardens is composed of several “classic” annual and perennial plants: basil, nicotiana alata, marigold, tagetes, zinnia, aster, sunflower, daffodil, tulip, columbine, poppy, peony, lily, phlox, lupine, chrysanthemum, dahlia, gladiolus etc. The gardens in the area of Suceava are impressive with their wide variety of ornamental plants and the number of plants of the same species, as opposed to the gardens in the area of Botoșani where there are fewer species and a reduced number of plants. The free disposition of ornamental plants, mostly inspired by nature is the main characteristic of traditional gardens and it is still found as such in rural gardens, although there are several differences determined by the ethnographic specificity of the area, the ecopedoclimatic and economic conditions, etc.

In chapter VI there are presented the geographical and pedological conditions of the setting where experiments took place, as well as the comparative analysis of climatic

parameters – temperature, precipitations – as recorded in the studied areas in the period of the study (2011 – 2014). This fact proved to be necessary for an accurate knowledge of the pedo-climatic conditions specific to the areas of the biologic material. Furthermore, there was conducted a general pedological characterisation of the main soil types.

Chapter VII contains the results of the experiences conducted within the study. The results are presented separately for each local population of plants and each species. The data recorded in the study have been statistically processed. Also, there are presented the results regarding the content of assimilating pigments in population of *Aster novae angliae*, *Aster novi-belgii*, *Chrysanthemum indicum* and *Dahlia hybrida* as well as the content of soluble carbohydrates in the tuberous roots of *Dahlia hybrida*.

Chapter VIII presents the **conclusions** of the PhD thesis. Also, this chapter includes the **recommendations** for a higher efficiency when using different cultivation technologies in growing plants from the studied populations.

The PhD thesis concludes with the **bibliography** containing the list of documentary materials consulted and accordingly quoted during the elaboration of the thesis.