



ROMANTIC PARK

In 1890, Marquis Luigi Lupo Meli Lupi di Soragna, together with his wife Countess Luisa Melzi di Cusano, commissioned the unification of two estates—the Toccoli Counts' and the Magawly-Cerati di Calry Counts'—to create a landscaped setting for their residence, which was renovated in neo-Barocchetto style between 1892 and 1899 by the Milanese architect Marquis Antonio Citterio.

Countess Luisa Melzi, a patron of the arts and a cultivated collector of prints and ex-libris, married Marquis Luigi Lupo in 1873. Luigi Lupo had already acquired in 1866 the easternmost Toccoli estate. In 1882, “(...) duly authorized by her husband,” she purchased the western estate, called “Il Palazzo,” from Countess Calista Palmia, widow of Count Valerio Magawly-Cerati di Calry.

Together with the architect, she planned the layout of the large garden, preserving some pre-existing centuries-old trees and planting new specimens, either isolated or in groups of three, arranged to create views from the villa's windows.

The park, imposing and delightful, appears today much as it was conceived and created just over a century ago: expansive English-style lawns interspersed with groups of trees artfully arranged to create picturesque scenic backdrops.

The estate covers 18 hectares (180,000 m²), of which approximately 11 hectares (110,000 m²) are “romantic park” and 7 hectares (70,000 m²) are “floodplain area.”

The “floodplain area” features the typical riparian vegetation of the Parma stream, including all native species of trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers, and wild and medicinal plants.

The “romantic park” area, by contrast, features a collection of decorative trees, shrubs, and bushes coexisting with the native species typical of the Po Valley plains.

In 2021, a **Tree Censu**s was conducted in the “Romantic Park” area for trees with a trunk circumference greater than 60 cm. The survey recorded 416 trees, divided into 40 species, of which 3 are currently considered monumental, visible from this viewpoint:

- **Linden (Tilia)** – circ. 440 cm, height 31 m, estimated age 130–150 years (largest and tallest in the province)
- **Robinia** – circ. 455 cm, height 14 m, estimated age 100–150 years (oldest in the province)
- **Atlas Cedar** – circ. 760 cm, height 35 m, estimated age 140–200 years (largest in Emilia-Romagna and one of the largest in Italy)

Until recently, there were 5 monumental trees, but the majestic 650-year-old solitary oak and the imposing red beech are unfortunately no longer present.

Other noteworthy trees that could soon achieve monumental status include:

- White Hornbeam – circ. 310 cm, height 12 m
- Himalayan Cedar (Deodara) – circ. 521 cm, height 27 m
- Ginkgo Biloba – circ. 370 cm, height 25 m



- Pedunculate Oak – circ. 500 cm, height 28 m
- Sophora – circ. 261 cm, height 17 m

Notes:

- Marquis Luigi Lupo Meli Lupi di Soragna (1845-1923)
- Countess Luisa Melzi di Cusano (1854-1925)
- Marquis Antonio Citterio (1854-1936)