



Iran appointed as deputy to UNESCO's Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention

Iran has been selected as the Deputy to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, according to reports from the country's permanent representation at UNESCO in Paris. The country was unanimously chosen as the Deputy of the Assembly and a member of the Convention's Bureau for a two-year term, IRNA reported.

The green connection: Love affair of humans with their plants and flowers

Exploring the cultural significance and emotional bonds between humans and their verdant companions



By Ali Amiri
Staff writer

It's not difficult to imagine that somewhere in the bustling streets of Tokyo, a young woman, let's call her Yuki, cradles a delicate cherry blossom in her hands, marveling at its ephemeral beauty. It's even easier to imagine that halfway across the globe, in the heart of London, an elderly gentleman, by the name of Charles for example, tends to his prized roses, their vibrant hues a testament to decades of devotion. These two individuals, separated by thousands of miles, share a common bond: a deep love and appreciation for the plants and flowers that grace their personal space and ultimately our planet.

The relationship between humans and their green companions has blossomed throughout the centuries, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural divides. From the ancient Hanging Gardens of Babylon to the meticulously manicured gardens of Versailles, to the magically green gardens scattered across Iran's deserts, trees, plants, and flowers have long held a special place in the hearts of people all over the world.

In Japan, the cherry blossom, or sakura, is revered for its fleeting beauty, symbolizing the transient nature of life. Each spring, millions of people gather to celebrate hanami, or cherry blossom viewing, picnicking beneath the trees and marveling at the delicate pink petals that blanket the ground.

Our very own Yuki, with eyes full of wonder, muses, "The sakura reminds us to cherish each moment, for life is as fleeting as the blossoms themselves."

In a very different climate, in Mexico, the vibrant marigold takes cen-



ter stage during Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, a celebration honoring deceased loved ones. The bright orange petals are believed to guide the spirits of the departed back to the world of the living, creating a bridge between the two realms.

"The marigold is a symbol of love that transcends death," says Maria, 28, a Mexican artist who creates intricate marigold arrangements for the annual festivities. "It's a reminder that our connection to those we've lost is never truly severed."

In the Netherlands, the tulip has become somewhat synonymous with the country's identity, its colorful fields drawing tourists from around

the world. The Dutch's love for the tulip dates back to the 17th century, when the flower's popularity led to a speculative frenzy known as Tulip Mania.

"The tulip is a symbol of our national pride," says Pieter, a third-generation tulip farmer, who was kind enough to explain to this pen everything about the cultural significance of the tulip. "It represents our resilience and our ability to find beauty in even the harshest of conditions."

"Damask rose has been the only constant in my life," says Nasser, a 68-year-old gardener in Kashan, central Iran. "As far as I can remember, I've been planting and caring for

these lovely, auspicious flowers."

The cultural significance of the damask rose in Iran extends beyond its mere beauty, as its fragrance elicits salavat from Iranian Muslims who smell it. Its concentrate, known as golaab, is used in an array of Persian dishes.

For many, the love of plants and flowers extends beyond their cultural significance, fostering a deep emotional bond between humans and their green friends. In the quiet solitude of a New York City apartment, a young woman might find solace in her collection of houseplants, each one a living testament to her resilience in the face of adversity.

"My plants have been with me through the darkest times," writes Emma, a 37-year-old resident of the metropolis, in her email. "They've taught me the importance of patience, of nurturing, and of growth." Emilio, a millennial residing in the verdant hills of Tuscany, Italy, tends to her olive grove, the gnarled trees a living legacy passed down through generations.

"These trees are a part of my family," he explains, adding, "They've witnessed our joys and our sorrows, and they've stood strong through it all."

As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, the love of plants and flowers continues to unite us, transcending borders and bridging cultural divides. One might succumb to say that plants and flowers are the universal language of the earth, a testament to the enduring power of nature and the indomitable human spirit.

So, whether it's the fleeting beauty of the cherry blossom, the vibrant hues of the marigold, the sacred fragrance of the damask, or the steadfast resilience of the olive tree, the love affair between humans and their green companions shows no signs of wilting.

Dasht-e Rivas, a red gem on desert of Yazd Province

Iranica Desk

Dasht-e Rivas (Rhubarb Plain), extending in an area of 76.6 hectares, is the only habitat of rhubarb plant in Yazd Province and one of the few in Iran.

The plain is located 60km from the provincial capital city of Yazd, in the southwest of Kalmand Protected Area and west of Aliabad Dargazi region.

The distinctive vegetation of the plain, which lies next to numerous moorlands, depicts a beautiful landscape.

In the spring, when the plain turns green, the newly-grown leaves of rhubarb bushes spread across the plain, creating a unique landscape. This is while this area is a dry desert in other seasons of the year.



The growth of the plants is directly related to the amount of precipitation; in rainy years they are numerous, full of leaves with crimson, red and yellow flowers.

The unique plain has attracted the attention of people in recent years. A large number of tourists arrive in the area, especially in the spring, to enjoy its amazing landscapes and collect rhubarbs.

The region, with significant elevation differences, is a suitable habitat for various plant and animal species. The natural site was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2019.

All parts of the rhubarb plant are used for various purposes, for example, rhubarb stew is made from its stem which is rich in vitamins and minerals. The flower of the plant is also used in the cosmetics industry. Rhubarb is a plant that has long, sour-tasting red and green stems that can be cooked and eaten as a fruit.

Iranian traditional oral storytelling nationally registered

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian storytelling was nationally registered during a Tuesday ceremony attended by cultural officials.

Officials from Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization as well as the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults attended the ceremony with Farhad Fallah, the deputy director of cultural affairs of the institute announcing, "Iranian storytelling was

nationally registered on the eve of the 25th edition of the International Storytelling Festival".

Fallah added that the cultural body is reviewing the global registration of storytelling as well, IRNA reported.

Naqqali (Iranian Dramatic Storytelling) and narrating the 'Shahnameh' is one of the intangible cultural heritages of Iranians registered in UNESCO.

Referring to the actions

of the 25th international event, Fallah said the festival aims to popularize storytelling as a deep culture among families.

During the 24th edition of the international event, ten storytellers from across the world attended the festival to share tales from their folk cultures.

Addressing the registration ceremony, Deputy Adviser of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Alireza Tabesh said that the

Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, in cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, added storytelling to the national register.

"The important element of literature and storytelling is part of Iran's national identity and cultural attraction; we must transfer literature with its capacities to future generations," Tabesh concluded.

