

# Welcome to the Krusenstierna Gardens



## *Hermina and Philip von Krusenstierna*

The Krusenstierna Gardens take their name from the former owners, Hermina and Philip von Krusenstierna. When Hermina von Krusenstierna purchased the property 1st May 1874, she and her sisters had just lost their previous home. The Municipality of Kalmar had laid claim to the farm where the family had resided since the 1850s in order to create a city park. The sisters' former garden is now Slottsparken, located between Kalmar Castle and Kvarnholmen, the commercial center of town, and only a couple of hundred meters from the Krusenstierna Gardens.

The garden on Hermina's new property was already fully established. A map drafted two years before the purchase shows a garden having nearly the same design as it has today. With the exception of a couple of utility sheds, all the buildings we find in the garden today were in place.

In 1877 Hermina married her cousin, Philip von Krusenstierna. Hermina's feelings for her cousin are reflected in letters she wrote. In one letter she wrote that she married Philip because she "... felt sorry for him. He was a little different, and no one in the family ever really took him under their wing." In another she described him as gentle and generous, but easily taken advantage of. At the time of their marriage Hermina was 50, and Philip 41. They had no children.



*Hermina von Krusenstierna*  
(1827–1915).



*Philip von Krusenstierna*  
(1836–1908).



*Krusenstiernska gården omkring sekelskiftet 1900. Från vänster Hermina, systern Ebba, Lina Nydell, Hulda Nilsson, Hulda Nydell och Oskar Lindquist. Hulda Nilsson hjälpte till på gården.*



*Hulda Nydell  
(1866–1940).*

Hermina was considered the more enterprising of the two; she continued to manage the garden farm. Philip held a position in the County Agricultural Association.

Around the turn of the century six people lived on the farm. In addition to Hermina and Philip there were Hermina's sister Ebba, housemaids Lina and Hulda Nydell, and the hired farmer-gardener, Oskar Lindquist. Philip and Hermina were very fond of Hulda. She had come to the household at the age of nine, and they thought of her almost as a daughter. They made plans to adopt her, but other members of the von Krusenstierna clan objected.

## *A garden for all*

Objections or not, it was Hulda Nydell who inherited the property after Hermina's death in 1915. Hulda was 49 years old when she assumed responsibility for the farm that had been her home since she was a child. She continued to manage the farm the way she was accustomed to. Perhaps it was also out of a sense of gratitude that she chose not to change anything. It is said that she was determined to preserve the style of life and practices that reigned in Philip and Hermina's era. And late in life, in order to ensure that the farm would remain unchanged after her death, she bequeathed it to the Municipality of Kalmar and Kalmar County Museum with an explicit condition: *"that everything on the farm shall be kept together as a monument over a bygone era and that, as such, the property shall be open to the public."*

Manne Hofrén, Director of the County Museum, supported her effort. He had seen all too many similar gardens and farms on the outskirts of Kalmar disappear, one after the other. The Krusenstierna Farm, too, was under threat. Ever since early days of the century there had been plans to subdivide the property into a number of residential lots. Hulda's testament gave the farm the legal protection needed to block those plans. The farm acquired even stronger protection in 1985, when it was declared a heritage property.



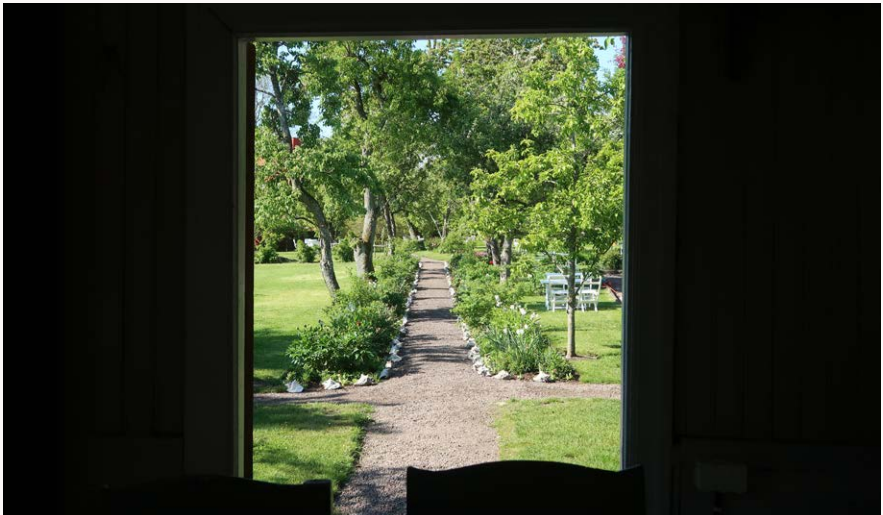
*Hulda together with friends around 1930.*

## *A garden for both utility and pleasure*

The property is surrounded by a tall wooden fence. Some may feel it a shame that the gardens are not visible to passers-by, but from a historical point of view the enclosure is actually one of the gardens' most interesting features. It is part of a very long tradition in Kalmar. All similar private grounds were enclosed in this manner, or otherwise fenced in, up to the beginning of the twentieth century. The solid fence also makes the garden a sheltered environment, a place where time has stood still. As you pass through the portal, you are stepping into the late nineteenth century.

As shown on the map, the eastern part of the garden is divided into rectangles, whereas the western part has more fluid forms. The respective areas have had different uses and were most probably laid out in different eras — the 'strict' eastern part first, and the 'romantic' western part later.

The eastern part was devoted to raising produce, for sale as well as for the Krusenstierna household's needs. Indeed, the garden was a vital source of income for the family. The gardener, Oskar Lindquist sold his produce and flowers in the market square outside the cathedral on Stortorget. Some of the garden's produce was even 'exported' for sale on the market in Stockholm. Tree fruit brought in the most profit.



*The eastern part of the garden, viewed from the summerhouse. The footpaths in the former vegetable garden intersect at right angles.*



*In Hermina's and Hulda's time there were no lawns in the eastern part; all the plots were cultivated. The high fencing that surrounds the grounds can be seen in the background.*

All the rectangles, now covered with lawn, were under cultivation until the mid-1900s. The garden was actually larger than the area is today. Some 500 square meters (about 4,500 sq. ft.), which in the 1800s had been devoted to asparagus, were lost in 1944, when the municipality rerouted Kungsgatan. Plants that need a lot of attention — artichokes and flowers, for example — were located close to the gardener's cottage, as were the farm's 68 hotbeds in Hermina's day. Thanks to these glass-covered beds, the garden could produce eagerly awaited lettuce, spinach and radishes in the early Spring. Less demanding crops, like potatoes, were cultivated further afield.

This part of the garden resembled the allotment plots, cultivated by private citizens, we find in the garden today. Those who maintain these plots, leased out since the 1950s, make a vital contribution to the life and maintenance of the garden.

The strict, geometric structure of the productive part of the garden follows a pattern that has existed in Sweden since the 1600s. The planted beds were often surrounded by rows of fruit trees or berry bushes, just as they are here. A document from the Krusenstierna era lists 20 varieties of apple, 15 varieties of pear and 7 varieties of plum.



*This photo shows the large square in the center of the garden when it was still planted. Today the square is lawn-covered and used by patrons of the café.*

The present-day garden has more than 120 fruit trees, including several heritage varieties, such as Stenbergsäpple, Ölands Kungsäpple and Kalmar Glasäpple. About a dozen varieties are represented in a Swedish national clone-archive, which aims to preserve heritage varieties that are at risk of extinction. In recent years, saplings of varieties from the nineteenth century have been restored to the garden, among them a variety of pear known locally as ‘Vattlångor’.

Whereas the eastern part of the garden was utilitarian, the western was a romantic realm for rest and pleasure. The style was popular in the latter half of the 1800s; in Sweden it is often referred to as “German style”. The meandering paths were laid out to afford variety. Trees, ornamental shrubs and flowers were planted so as to enhance the experience.

One major difference between parks then and now is that strolling was confined to the paths. Grassy areas were not mowed, as they generally are today. Instead, the grass was allowed to grow a few weeks and then was cut with a scythe. The ‘lawns’ were more like flowering meadows. So, if you find that the gardens look a bit ‘unkempt’, it is no accident, but simply the custom of the time. You may also find the surface of the paths a bit unusual. Most of

# The Krusenstiernska Gardens

## Buildings and features of the garden

- 1 The family residence/museum
- 2 Brewhouse
- 3 Farmhands' quarters
- 4 Woodshed
- 5 Cowshed
- 6 Latrine
- 7 Henhouse
- 8 Café, former barn/wagon house
- 9 Gardener's cottage
- 10 Well
- 11 Summerhouse
- 12 Herb garden
- 13 Allotment plots
- 14 WC
- 15 WC
- 16 Maintenance







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Kungsgatan

Entrance

Horticultural garden

Västerlånggatan





*The western part of the garden is designed for relaxation and enjoyment. Meandering paths were a popular feature in gardens of the late 1800s.*

them are bare earth. It is not that someone forgot the gravel. Again, this is in keeping with the custom of the time. Careful examination has determined that all of the paths originally had bare surfaces.

Among the most notable trees in the garden's western part are the walnuts. There are seven of them. Together, they produce a couple of hundred kilo (400–450 lbs.) of nuts. The walnut sale is a popular autumn event in the gardens.

In the late 1800s many decorated their gardens with exotic items such as sea shells from the Tropics or shiny glass spheres. Here, both were to be found. Copies of the silver-plated spheres that graced the garden are placed out on pedestals every summer, and large white sea shells mark the edges of the footpaths.

The herb garden in front of the row of utility buildings is a recent addition. It was laid out in the 1980s. The six-pointed star in the center of the herb garden represents the Krusenstierna family crest.

## *All the buildings remain*

One of the things that make the Krusenstierna gardens so special is that both the grounds and the buildings have been preserved. Just as Hulda Nydell set out in her testament, everything has been kept together. The furnishings, housewares, tools are all in place. Consequently, visitors can easily imagine what a near-urban farm of the late 1800s looked like.

There were buildings for every function – just like on larger farms in the country, but on a smaller scale. Furthest to the west in the row of buildings nearest Stora Dammgatan is the family residence. The household consisted of Hermina and Philip together with Hulda Nydell, Lina Nydell and Hermina's sister Ebba von Krusenstierna. The architecture of the building indicates that it was built sometime around the year 1800. Today, the home is a museum, replete with furniture, furnishings and various items that belonged to the members of the household. Much of it was inherited from previous generations. One such example is the antique porcelain. The collection entered the household as a consequence of Hermina's paternal grandfather's many



*The salon in the main building in 1910. On the shelf to the left is some of the old china that Hermina inherited from her grandfather.*

voyages to China in the 1700s. Most of the collection is in the salon to the left of the entry. The salon is interesting in itself, as it is the only room in the house that has the original wallpaper. In conjunction with renovation in the 1970s, all the other rooms were clad in modern paper, but with traditional motifs.

The utility buildings contained all the equipment and so forth that a self-sufficient household might need. Closest to the main building is the brewhouse, which has a large wood-fired oven. Here beer was brewed, bread was baked, butter churned and laundry washed. The jars and earthenware pots in the pantry were used for all manner of preserves and salt-cured foodstuffs.

The room behind the next rustic wooden door in the row is usually referred to as the farmhands' quarters since it has simple accommodations for seasonal hired help. When not occupied the space was used to store fodder and other supplies.

Next comes the woodshed and cowshed. The cowshed had space for five cows and a horse. All the stalls and equipment are intact, and there are a good number of spades, scythes, rakes and other farming and gardening tools. The bee hives, no longer in use, are also stored here.

On the end of the cowshed is a latrine that accommodates two adults and two children at a time. A narrow paneled door to the right leads into the chicken pen. The henhouse apparently also had space for a pig as well.



*The cowshed had space for five cows and a horse.*



*The Krusenstierna Gardens' utility buildings along Stora Dammgatan. The gardener's cottage in the foreground.*

The last building in the row served as a barn and wagon house. Rebuilt and expanded, it now serves as the Gardens' café.

The barn/wagon house and the henhouse are the only two structures that were built while Hermina owned the property. The brewhouse, at the other end of the row, may be as old as the main building itself, dating back to around 1800. The other structures were probably put up in the mid-1800s.

In the northern corner of the property, at the intersection of Stora Dammgatan and Kungsgatan, lies the gardener's cottage. The house was built around 1870. Much of the building material is said to have been recycled from a former brewery. That the master gardener had a residence of his own reflects his importance to the farm. Today, the building is used as offices for the Krusenstierna Gardens' staff.



*The row of utility buildings includes a brewhouse, farmhands' quarters, a woodshed, cowshed, latrine and henhouse. The barn and wagon house has been converted into a café.*



*The underground portion of the well may date back to the Middle Ages. The structure above it, with sculptured corner posts and a pyramidal roof, was most probably built shortly before Hermina purchased the farm.*

The well in the garden may have roots in the Middle Ages. A good part of the Krusenstierna Gardens lay within the area near Kalmar Castle that was protected by the town's high stone wall. The wall was removed in the latter part of the 1600s, when the center of town was moved to Kvarnholmen. The protective wooden structure above the well was, like many other features of the gardens, probably constructed shortly before Hermina purchased the property.

The only of the older buildings that was not intended to serve a practical purpose is the summerhouse. Like the gardens' western side, the summerhouse was one of the pleasures of rural life in the nineteenth century. That it



*The summerhouse has stood in the garden since around 1840. In the summertime the doors stand open to visitors.*

lies in the more practically oriented eastern part of the gardens has a simple explanation: it was constructed before the romantic western part was planned and laid out. The design and material of the miniature temple indicates that it was built around the year 1800. But, if that is the case, it must have stood in another Kalmar garden. Maps and other historical documents suggest that it was placed in its current location around 1840. A natural relationship between the summerhouse and the romantic part of the garden was created with the help of flower beds on both sides of a straight footpath leading up to its entrance. In the summer, the framed doors stand open.

**Welcome in!**



# Krusenstiernska gården

For information about opening hours, events, bookings, guided tours, etc. please see: [www.kalmar.se/krusenstiernska](http://www.kalmar.se/krusenstiernska)

Since Hulda's death in 1940 the property has been managed by a foundation, whose directors include representatives of the municipality and the museum. The municipality is responsible for the grounds and buildings; the museum looks after the furnishings and inventory. The designation of heritage property means that the foundation also receives some financial assistance from the County Administration Board.

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Länsstyrelsen  
Kalmar län



Kalmar kommun

