

A Landscape of Power and Beauty: The Gardens of Royal Palace Het Loo

As Earth tilts back to center with the sun shining over the equator, the northern hemisphere finds itself at the spring equinox—March 20th. The longer days and milder temperatures cause the flowers to stir from their winter slumber. In just a few short days, tulip season will be in full swing in the Netherlands.

Over the years, many Dutch people and nobility took a particular liking to tulips—one of these royals in particular was Queen Mary II (1662-1694). This blog will highlight the garden landscapes of power and beauty at one of her residences, Royal Palace Het Loo.

Tulips have been a crowd favorite in Holland since their arrival from the Near East in the 16th century. Their popularity grew exponentially shortly thereafter; the 17th century witnessed “tulipmanie,” or tulip mania, a time when the prices of bulbs dramatically rose with the demand.¹ Given that the average skilled worker would not be able to afford the flowers, tulips soon became a symbol of wealth.²

Gardens are prime examples of the display of power. At Royal Palace Het Loo, designers commissioned by Willem III and Mary included exotic plants from afar, manicured pathways through Baroque landscaping, a plethora of fruit trees, water features, and, of course, tulips in the gardenscape.³

Mary’s love for tulips translated inside the palace as well, where she had a collection of towering Delftware vases that looked like blue and white porcelain flower trees. The ability to cultivate tulips, among the other plants and features, and display them in such a way highlighted the wealth, power, and status of the royal couple.^{4, 5}

Inside and out, the botanical displays at Het Loo tell stories of the Dutch Golden Age, the legacies of power and colonialism, and the vibrant colors that tulips bring to the landscape and to the history of the Netherlands.

Stroll through the gardens like a royal

To learn more about the stories and landscape legacies that shaped the country’s history, consider a visit to Royal Palace Het Loo. While the Royal Palace in Amsterdam on Dam Square will be closed for most of the month of April, Het Loo offers a great alternative to curious minds and garden lovers alike.

Join us on our full-day [private](#) or [small-group](#) Royals and Nobility Tour to stroll through the wonders of the palace’s gardens and appreciate how plants have shaped our present!

References

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4. <https://paleishetloo.nl/en/stories/gardens-willem-mary>
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