

## Koch's Garden

**Current name of the site:** Koch's Garden, Garden at the Koch Sanatorium

**Historical names of the site:** Koch's Garden

**Category:** garden

**Type:** historic

**Location of the site:**

Located between Bartoňova Street, Staroturský Path, and Partizánska Street. **GPS:** 48°09'02.5"N 17°06'28.4"E

**Elevation:** 195–210 m above sea level

**Area:** 4,500 m<sup>2</sup>

**Current owner:** The Capital City of the Slovak Republic, Bratislava, and the National Trust, n.o., have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Capital City of the Slovak Republic regarding the restoration and maintenance of Koch's Garden

Koch's Garden, also known as “**Small Mlyňany**” (after Arboretum in Tesárske Mlyňany) is one of the most significant historic gardens in Slovakia and has been preserved almost in its original form to this day. It is located in a residential neighborhood of Bratislava below Slavín, where vineyards and orchards once stood as recently as the early 20th century. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, modern family homes began to be built here for doctors, professors, civil servants, and architects, many of whom came from Bohemia.

The functionalist **Koch Sanatorium**, built between 1929 and 1932 on the initiative of the physician and educator **Karel Koch**, also became part of this new neighborhood. Koch lived in Slovakia for 50 years, and in addition to his medical career, he served as president of the Slovak Motorists' Club and vice president of the Association for the Care of Disabled Children. During World War II, he and his underground group *Justícia*, which was based in the bookstore of the same name, helped Jews by creating false ID documents for them, thereby saving their lives. Prominent architects **Dušan Jurkovič**, Jindřich Merganc, and Otokar Klimeš contributed to the design. For its time, the modern sanatorium featured above-standard amenities—bright rooms, operating rooms, and an extensive garden designed for patients' relaxation.

After World War II, the sanatorium was nationalized and served as a maternity hospital for many years. The half-hectare garden was designed by the renowned gardener **Josef Mišák** from the arboretum in Tesárske Mlyňany, after which it earned the nickname “Little Mlyňany.” He planted approximately 120 species of trees and shrubs from around the world—from North America, the Balkans, and Southeast Asia.

Thanks to the sheltered slope and favorable microclimate, evergreen plants thrived here exceptionally well. The garden was designed as a harmonious blend of architecture and nature. It featured stone walkways, a pool, a fountain, a rock garden, herb beds, benches, stone vases, and sculptural decorations. It also included a sophisticated water system and relaxation areas for patients. Koch believed that the **garden environment helped heal not only the body but also the human soul.**

After 2007, the condition of the garden gradually deteriorated due to a lack of regular maintenance. Volunteers and the **National Trust of Slovakia** began efforts to save it, organizing work parties and guided tours. Since 2022, the garden has been owned by the City of Bratislava, which is preparing to restore and repurpose this exceptional historic garden.