

Urban Gardening Practices in Moscow-city by the Middle of the 19th Century

Sir Robert K. Porter, an artist and diplomat of the early 19th century, noted that Moscow 'is not a city of houses, but rather a collection of mansions, each embosomed amidst its own lawns, gardens' (Porter, 1813, p. 206). The earliest maps of Moscow from the 17th century (Isaac Massa, 1610; Adam Olearius, 1656) reveal this urban-rural character of its urban texture. Moscow had this half-rural, half-urban landscape due to its basic structural element of urban mansion—a complex of buildings and arable land. Indeed, according to recollections of the citizens Moscow retained its 'patriarchal manor' type of urban texture with extensive gardens until the early 1900s. Such sustainability of this pattern suggests the significant amount of the urban agricultural lands along with established practices for its cultivation.

Basing on the analysis of the most detailed map of Moscow for this period an 'Atlas of Moscow capital city' (1852-53, draw by A. Khokhlov) this research aims to clarify the amount and the type of agricultural land in Moscow-city by the 1850s. Besides, in order to identify established practices among Moscow gardeners statistical and historical data on Moscow food market were used, along with materials from 'Gardening journal (1838-55).