

Do You See the Forest for All the Trees?

Searching for Alnarp's Urban Forestscapes

Caroline Dahl ^[1] and **Dennis Andreasson** ^[1]

^[1] Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management | Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden)

Abstract

Recent sustainability agendas come with the dual mission of responding to climate change and the loss of biodiversity. One strong trend is the increase in the number of trees in urban environments, initiatives often agglomerated under the label of urban forestry. The main focus of this article is to contribute to the development of this discourse by exploring the designerly aspects of urban forestry. This is done by unpacking the concept of 'urban forestscapes' as a dynamic and relational concept, derived from a landscape perspective that opens up to spatio-temporal, synthetic, and trans-scalar approaches, and further developed through a process of embedding the research both in relation to literature and *in situ*. Two wooded areas are studied at the Alnarp campus of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), in the Malmö-Copenhagen conurbation. The campus holds the first landscape laboratory in Scandinavia, a real-world experimentation site dedicated to the study of urban forestry and woods. The article suggests a recognition of the interpretative openness of the concept in addition to its hybrid qualities with the synthesizing power of overcoming divisions like that of nature/culture or forest/city. The results include insights into experiential characteristics of urban forestscapes as well as methodological considerations.

Keywords

Alnarp, campus plan, design research, document analysis visualization, field work, landscape architecture, urban forestscapes

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.47982/spool.2025.1.02>

Introduction

With COP15 in Montreal resulting in an agreement on biodiversity (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2022), and the European Commission's (2022) proposition of a new law on nature restoration, the natural environment is once again the battlefield for environmental policy measures. Forests are part of what is usually thought of as a natural environment, even though the forest industry has impacted ecosystems to a level that is far from 'natural.' Still, the romantic notion of the human-forest relation lingers, not least in the European north where non-fiction books like David Thurfjell's (2020) *Granskogsfolk: hur naturen blev svenskarnas religion* (People of the Fir Forest: How Nature Became the Religion of the Swedes, our translation) become bestsellers, fuelling a nostalgic forest agenda.

Urban forestry, on the other hand, has long been dedicated to research on urban trees, often in terms of technical and management issues of individual specimens, resulting in, for example, the Nature-Based Solution Institute's (n.d.) proposed concept, '3-30-300,' advocating for more trees and green spaces in cities, or the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (2019) 'Trees in Cities Challenge' campaign pledging greener, more sustainable, and more resilient cities through tree plantation. In urban forestry discourse, systemic model approaches, such as ecosystem services or nature-based solutions, are often applied (Bosch et al., 2017). We, researchers in landscape architecture and the authors of this paper, observe that such models often pay less attention to dimensions of site-specificity and aesthetic, spatial, and experiential qualities than they do to economic, ecological, or technical dimensions.

Building on American professor of landscape architecture Elizabeth Meyer's (2008) argument about the importance of aesthetics and beauty in the realization of sustainability agendas, we fear this decreases the impact of recent investments in tree plantations as broader contributions to society's green transition. Meyer argues that 'designed landscapes need to be constructed human experiences as much as ecosystems' (2008, p. 21). Hence, this paper's first aim is to study two constructed wooded areas in the landscape laboratory at the Alnarp Campus in Sweden that hold plenty of experiential qualities in what can be considered to be urban forests. Furthermore, Meyer calls for 'multiple forms and forums for caring and learning about the impact of our actions on the planet: some visual, some textual, and some experiential' (ibid.). Inspired by Meyer's call to action, we use design research as our methodology, which allows us to address the paper's second aim, which is to unpack the concept of urban forests through images, literature, and fieldwork. Design research allows for a meandering exploration (Seggern, 2019, p. 17) from which we interpret our findings in terms of both conceptual development and the biophysical reality of urban forests and their representations (Tang, 2021).

Our guiding research question is: Engaging with academic literature, grey literature, and fieldwork, what synthetic understandings of urban forests can we extract, and how can such *-scapes* be studied to emphasize spatial and experiential qualities?

Context: the Alnarp Campus

To unpack the concept of urban forestscapes, we chose to explore two wooded areas at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' (SLU) campus situated in Alnarp, in the Malmö-Copenhagen conurbation—not only the home of a reputable higher education institution but also the location of the first landscape laboratory in Scandinavia. The Alnarp Campus measures roughly 130 hectares and hosts approximately 1,200 students and 500 employees. The configuration consists of an 'inner' and an 'outer' campus [fig. 1]. The latter also includes the surrounding agricultural landscape, which is important for understanding the spatial context.

Alnarp Campus is not only a site for education and research but also has a long history as a forest and is believed to have been forested for 10,000 years. The inner campus offers a complex setting where the southern and western parts are dominated by a multitude of integrated areas characterized as forest, woodland, and/or park. One important area is the Alnarp Landscape Laboratory (ALL). ALL is a '1:1 scaled experimentation in real life' (Nielsen et al., 2023a, p. 25), and its presence on campus is of relevance to our study as it 'combines complementary research on ecology and aesthetics' (Nielsen et al., 2023a, p. 46) while it acts 'both as a biophysical entity with a physical form, and as a phenomenon, a mindscape, to be experienced by humans [...] in an otherwise chaotic urban fringe landscape' (Nielsen et al., 2023a, p. 59).

Why Alnarp can be considered 'urban' is not self-evident at first glance. When approached by bike, bus, or car, the distance from the surrounding context becomes salient as you pass through the agricultural fields and enter the inner campus and what is commonly referred to as 'the green island' (e.g., Akademiska Hus, 2019, p. 38; Lomma kommun, 2016, p. 14). It does not, however, take much zooming out before one realizes how embedded Alnarp is in a 'fragmented urban landscape' (Sieverts, 2008), situated at the border between three municipalities, in addition to roads and busy motorways in all directions, and within ten kilometres of both Malmö and Lund, both university cities and Sweden's third and twelfth most populated cities, respectively. Indeed, we consider the Alnarp Campus a relevant site for exploring the concept of forestscapes in an urban/peri-urban setting (Kowarik, 2005) [fig. 1].



FIGURE 1 The southern and western parts of the inner campus (within the red dashed line) are characterized by forest/park structures, surrounded by a landscape dominated by agriculture (yellow dashed line). (Image by the Authors; orthophoto by Lantmäteriet 2023)

The campus has evolved over time to respond to new demands from education and research, in addition to changing aesthetic and functional ideals, creating a unique and intertwined environment designated for work, study, and recreation. The continuous development of Alnarp as a university campus has, in recent years, been mapped out through the production of Campus Plans by the public agency responsible for most university campuses in Sweden: Akademiska Hus (AH). The latest Alnarp Campus Plan from 2019 has a projected timeframe spanning until 2030 (Akademiska Hus, 2019). In addition to this, several supplementary investigations and visions have been developed. Of particular relevance here is the study by French landscape architect Michel Desvigne in 2020 (MDP, 2020). Parallel to this, the municipality has both the mandate and the responsibility to develop comprehensive plans for its territory, including a more detailed masterplan for Alnarp, which was drafted in 2016 (Lomma kommun, 2016).

Research: Exploring Forestscapes in Text and Field

The Literature Study: Forestscapes in the Written

Forestscapes as a concept is rather recently established (Ekers, 2009; Komulainen, 2010; Clemente, 2023). The novelty of the concept spurred a broad literature search, as 'a literature review can be a useful strategy for initialising new inquiries' when there is 'a lack of clarity or consistency in the use of a particular term or concept' (Demming et al., 2011, p. 146). The initial literature search was done using the following search terms in combination: *forestscape**, *forest*, *landscap**, 'landscape architect*', 'urban forest*', *urban**, *civilization**, *cultur**, and *natur**.

Forest

Based on the literature study, we can conclude that there is almost no resemblance of what could be defined as natural forest ecosystems in Europe (Konijnendijk, 2008; Ritter, 2011a). The relationship between human culture and the forest can be understood as such that the presence of the latter has been a fundamental precondition in the development of the former (Ritter, 2011b). Another indication of this intimate–albeit antagonistic–relationship would be the modern occurrence, or at least concept, of 'city forests' (Konijnendijk, 2008), 'urban forests' (Konijnendijk, 2005; Kowarik, 2005), and 'urban forestry' (Bosch et al., 2017; Simson, 2017). Furthermore, German botanist Ingo Kowarik (2005, p. 5) suggests that woods, woodlands, and forests are under the influence of various values simply based on their proximity to urban areas: the further from an urban area, the lesser the social functions of the forest and the higher the economic production value.

By tracing the etymological and conceptual origins of the forest back to ideas of 'nature,' most of which derive from geography (Castree & Braun, 1998; Smith, 2008; Braun, 2009), via 'forest' (Harrison, 1992; Hansen & Ovesen, 2011; Boris, 2012; Meeus, 1995), we, in contrast, perceive forestscapes to be a dynamic

concept closely related to our understanding of landscape. We agree, for example, with Swedish landscape architecture professor emeritus Roland Gustavsson et al. (2023a) that there is great potential for landscape architecture to contribute social, recreational, and spatiotemporal values to the study of urban afforestation and forestry, often overlooked by both foresters and ecologists (p. 104). We also acknowledge that, together with agriculture, the human-induced domestication process of forests in many contexts has been, and still is, an important driving force and ‘the architect of the landscape’ (Meeus, 1995, p. 61).

Scape

Scape, the second syllable of the concept of forestscapes, ‘is essentially the same as *shape*, except that it once meant a composition of similar objects, as when we speak of a fellowship or a membership’ (Jackson, 1984, p. 7, emphasis in original). On the one hand, if we understand the origin of *-scape* as sprung from an anthropocentric and static view of landscape originating in arts and further refined through the development of modern society (Lowenthal, 2007; Olwig, 2009; Antrop & Van Eetvelde, 2017; Descola, 2013; cf. Jackson, 1984), we can also understand the reason for the multitude of new *-scapes*.

This can then be explained by a need to further demarcate specific attributes that are not prominent enough (with)in the conventional understanding of landscape. On the other hand, from the perspective of landscape architecture, there is a particular interest in continuously developing the sometimes ‘paradoxical’ concept of landscape itself (Jorgensen, 2015). The European Landscape Convention (European Council, 2000) has contributed to reinvigorating such work by incorporating social and ecological processes related to both the physical and the perception of landscape. Another example of such could include looking beyond simply ‘land-based conditions’ (Lee & Diedrich, 2019, p. 91; Lindholm, 2011).

Looking back into the etymological roots of landscape, Jackson (1984) suggests that, in Old English, it was not uncommon to have ‘compound words using the second syllable—*scape* or its equivalent—to indicate collective aspects of the environment,’ while adding that it is ‘as if the words had been coined when people began to see the complexities of the man-made world’ (Jackson, 1984, p. 7). This does not imply *per se* that what *-scapes* means, and how it is used in today’s discourse, is the same as it was in Anglo-Saxon times (Höfer & Trepl, 2010; Olwig, 1996).

Can we, in line with Braae and Steiner’s (2019) suggestion, contribute to ‘a more direct understanding of the interrelationships between land and *-scape*, between the material and the constructed, the embodied and the discursive without necessarily supplanting one with the other’ (Braae & Steiner, 2019, p. 4) and instead explore a similar tension in forestscapes? We acknowledge, in line with, for example, Swedish landscape architecture researcher Lindholm (2011, p. 6), the ambiguity and/or vagueness that we attribute to the many variations of *-scape*. Additionally, we see our work as an opportunity to embrace ‘relationality’ (Braae & Steiner, 2019, p. 3) and to avoid limiting our perspectives, but rather the opposite—to stay open to the fact that what we are looking for is not ‘objectively given’ (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33) nor yet entirely known to us.

Dissolving Dichotomies through a Landscape Perspective

Simplified divides and fixed categorizations are commonly used to define *something* in relation to *something else*. *Nature/Culture* and *Forest/City* are two examples of such exhausted opponents. German landscape

architecture scholar Martin Prominski highlights that ‘[n]ature, ecology, and landscape are important reference concepts for landscape architecture. Traditionally, all three have been considered polar opposites from culture or humanity, in a dualistic relationship’ (Prominski, 2014, p. 6). Along the same lines, nature(s) and cities can be defined antagonistically, especially with the acceleration of urbanization, which has resulted in nature being removed from daily life for an increasing number of people (Konijnendijk, 2005, p. 33). This change—our alienation from nature—has been discussed by, for example, Bruno Latour (2006), who suggests that the unifying power of nature has been replaced by the dividing power of culture [fig. 2].

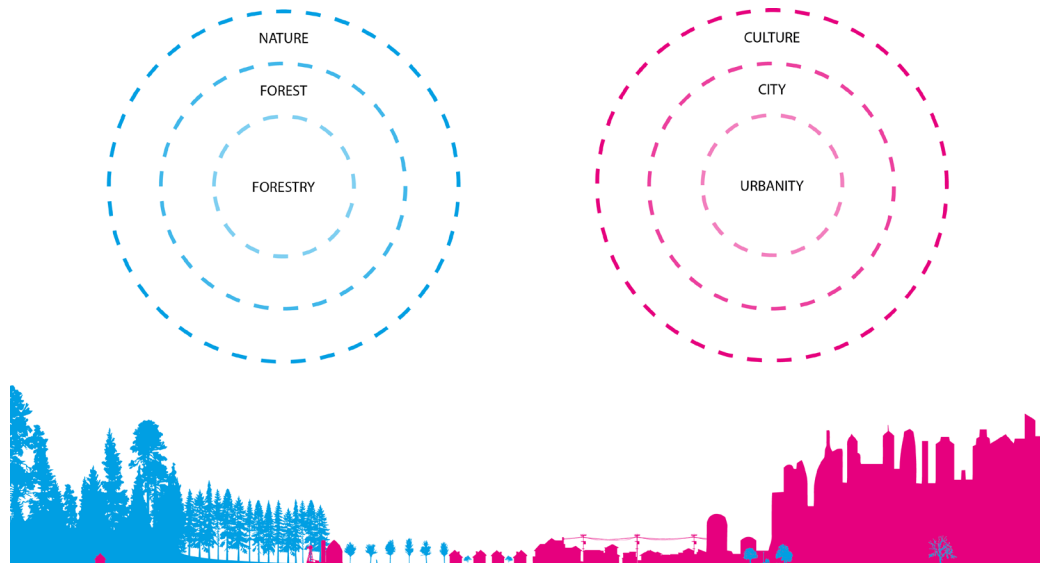


FIGURE 2 The antagonistic relationship between Nature/Culture that lingers in discourse. We suggest that the concentric diagrams have a dual meaning. First that there is a shift in abstraction between the inner and outer circles suggesting that Nature or Culture is a more general—and not necessarily spatial—concept than Forest or City, and Forestry or Urbanity. Second, that there is a gradient of commodification—building on Dennis Cosgrove’s (1985) theories on the commodification of land through the subjugation to urban control of territories—between the inner and outer circles with both Forestry and Urbanity being closely linked to the production of goods and/or monetary values. (Image by the Authors)

The Document Analysis: Alnarp’s Forestscapes in Representation

The initial literature study resulted in the production of a conceptual matrix that has been used for the document analysis and, partly, in an initial stage, also in the fieldwork. The model consists of two gradients. One of the axes ranges from ‘nature/forest’ to ‘culture/urban,’ while the other axis spans from ‘real/shape’ to ‘representation/abstraction’ [fig. 3]. The document analysis focused on documents developed during the ongoing Alnarp Campus development process to allow for ‘finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data’ (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). Two out of three documents are written in Swedish, and the most common translation of the words/concepts has been used when analysing them. In analysing the grey literature, we have used the following words: nature/*natur*, culture/*kultur*, forest/*skog*, landscape/*landskap*, -scape/-*skap*, city/*stad/tätort*, and urban/*urban(t)* [fig. 3-5]. When processing the results, we have focused on interpreting in what way and context they are being used and what that might imply for the understanding of the campus area as forestscapes. The three documents consist of: (i) *Masterplan for Alnarp* (Lomma kommun, 2016), 39 pages; (ii) *Alnarp Campus Plan 2019-2030* (Akademiska Hus, 2019), 25 pages; and (iii) *Landscape Analysis and Development Strategy* by Michel Desvigne Paysagiste (MDP, 2020), 65 pages.

The Lomma Municipality's Masterplan for Alnarp Campus

The *Masterplan* stresses the importance of Alnarp with 'its park, its garden, its surrounding landscape, its houses, and its people' (Lomma kommun, 2016, p. 2, our translation); a place where people can enjoy both nature and culture. Searching for 'forest' in the document results in 30 hits, out of which nine refer to names of organizations or geographical locations. In many instances, 'forest' is used to convey the historical development of the area (Lomma kommun, 2016, pp. 10, 12, 22). The area's high nature and culture values are connected to the long continuity of the area being forested, but in the text, the authors also recognize that there is a shift from the area being thought of as having a 'natural' forest to a more horticulturally characterized park or garden-characterized forest. Another shift that can be detected in the document is how the area evolved from having had a regional relevance as a place for harvesting resources, like, for example, firewood, to the present understanding of the area's regional importance for recreational purposes. This might be interpreted as a shift from looking at Alnarp through a lens of nature to a lens of culture, leaving behind the idea of a forested site in favour of understanding Alnarp as a landscape where the synthetic relationship between forest, people, and cities emerges.

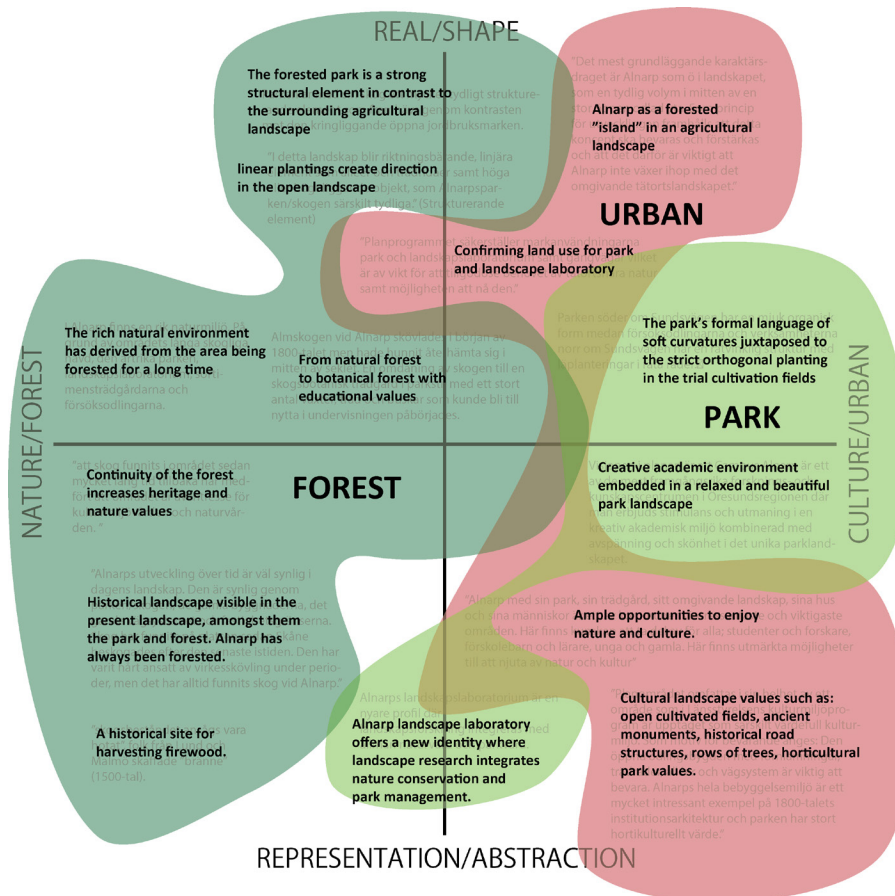


FIGURE 3 Document analysis of the Masterplan by the Lomma municipality reveals a dominating understanding of the campus as a natural and/or a forested site, both in terms of forests as physical objects versus theoretical concepts. The landscape laboratory, which one of the two studied areas form part of, is positioned in the overlap between 'park' and 'urban', with quotes that points toward new hybrid understandings of wooded space. (Image by the Authors)

The park/forest, gardens, the landscape laboratory, testbeds, and experimental farms all contribute to the richness of the 'natural environment' (Lomma kommun, 2016, p. 35). The social values of Alnarp are also apparent when using the search term 'park,' which renders 73 hits. 'Park' is used on several occasions with reference to recreational and outdoor values, in particular for the surrounding towns. But the term is also used to convey spatial characteristics and qualities like 'park landscape,' 'park-like,' or 'park-style.' Searching for 'urban' confirms the area's ecological importance and a place for recreation in an urbanized region. 'City' yields 45 hits, all of which are about housing. Searching for 'urban' returns no hits. 'Culture' yields 63 hits, many of them referencing various documents relating to cultural heritage. In general, the cultural heritage of buildings is separate from that of park/forest. Both are described in the document, and both are understood as equally important, but the lack of connection between the two is evident (fig. 3). In summary, the analysis of the *Masterplan* reveals a strong attention to aspects related to Alnarp as a forested site, in addition to its value as a green island in an urban landscape. We interpret this as a recognition of the Alnarp Campus as an elusive site with hybrid qualities through the entanglement of forest, people, and cities.

Alnarp Campus Plan by Akademiska Hus

The *Alnarp Campus Plan* highlights the importance of the unique cultural and natural values of the area while still acknowledging that the main focus is on the built environment and not the landscape as a whole. Alnarp is further identified as being situated 'strategically' in an expanding urban knowledge region between the two university cities of Lund and Malmö (Akademiska Hus, 2019, p. 9) while also being close to the coast of Öresund in an area rich with archaeological sites from the Stone and Bronze Ages (p. 10).

Searching for 'forest' results in nineteen hits. The majority of these hits refer to formal names of geographical locations or organizations. A couple of the search results point to Alnarp's long continuity of accommodating forests and the natural and cultural values that they offer. In one case, the contrasting effect between Alnarp's forested silhouette and the surrounding landscape is referred to as a 'landscape architectural feature' (Akademiska Hus, 2019, p. 33, our translation); that is, it is understood as an architectural element of value that impacts the spatial experience.

The park, with its biodiversity, is said to dominate the campus together with the gardens and the surrounding natural land and contributes to its unique beauty and atmosphere. Searching for 'park' yields 81 hits. The results almost consistently refer to Alnarp's historic park environment and the strong identity-creating values it produces. The park is also mentioned as an important meeting place and helps to tie together the otherwise scattered buildings/structures. The importance of the park for recreation is emphasized. Several photographs (p. 12) and a plan (p. 13) highlight characteristic 'landscape rooms' and buildings. While the photographs all contain both vegetation and built objects, the plan only includes information about the location of the park.

The connections and the meeting places provided by the park and cultural environment are emphasized as important for the campus, in addition to the surrounding agricultural landscape. Creating and strengthening functionality, while retaining the qualities of the existing cultural environment, is seen as a challenge for future development (Akademiska Hus, 2019, pp. 26, 34). The fundamental idea put forth in the plan is that the campus' character as a 'green island' is to be enhanced (p. 38), and the environment will be developed to facilitate meetings, knowledge exchange, and buildings that promote SLU and a more sustainable lifestyle (pp. 28, 30).

In summary, the *Alnarp Campus Plan* reveals a strong focus on the campus as a park and less as a forest. The plan emphasizes, in various ways, the values that the green environment contributes to, such as identity, work environment, recreation, and as an armature or connecting tissue for an otherwise fragmented built structure [fig. 4].

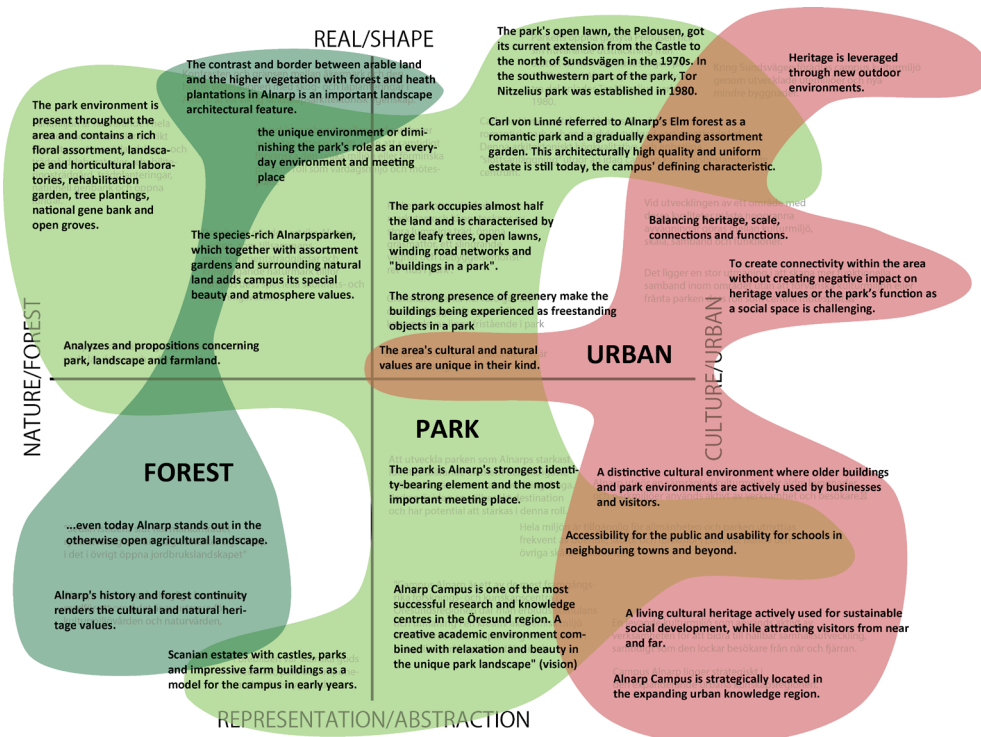


FIGURE 4 Document analysis of the Campus Plan reveals a strong focus on the campus as a park and less as a forested site. The green environment at the campus is argued to be of value for the surrounding communities but also to have a positive impact on the university's identity and reputation. (Image by the Authors)

Desvigne's Alnarp Campus Landscape Analysis and Development Strategy

Michel Desvigne Paysage was granted the commission to study the Alnarp site in 2020. The concept of 'urban' is used in the document when discussing the location of the campus in what is defined as a suburban landscape. Alnarp is identified as being situated 'in the middle of a suburban landscape without a defined identity' (MDP, 2020, p. 6) and the architect concludes that the inner campus is dominated by 'forest,' including the park (40%) and agriculture (40%), while only 20% is occupied by buildings (p. 14). They further argue that the suburban landscape is lacking identity due to its structural weaknesses.

Searching for 'forest' in the document results in ten hits. One of them comments on the fragmented wooded spaces in the nearby villages and towns. The study highlights the campus' edges and emphasizes the experience of the forest from the outside, from the surrounding agricultural fields. The feeling from within includes a strong presence of motorways and various traffic-related noise pollutions. Alnarp as a forested site is leveraged in the vision based on the overall idea that Alnarp is an island in the surrounding landscape, and as such, the forest is vital as a contrast. The forest's structure and spatial experience are elaborated on, as the study is proposing both the forest to be the focal point of the island with a path around it, but also that the forest can offer other spatial qualities, like being immersed in a forest clearing.

Informed by Desvigne, we recognize that there are several different ways, not least scale-dependent, to experience the forest and to exist in relation to it. This suggests that the forest is not only a backdrop in a larger regional landscape or a habitat for valued species but also a structural element that offers a gradient of spatially embedded experiences: a forestscape. In summary, the landscape analysis performed by MDP, in contrast to the other documents, describes the campus and its surrounding conurbation as lacking identity. In addition, the focus is on the forested environment from an explicitly spatial perspective [fig. 5].

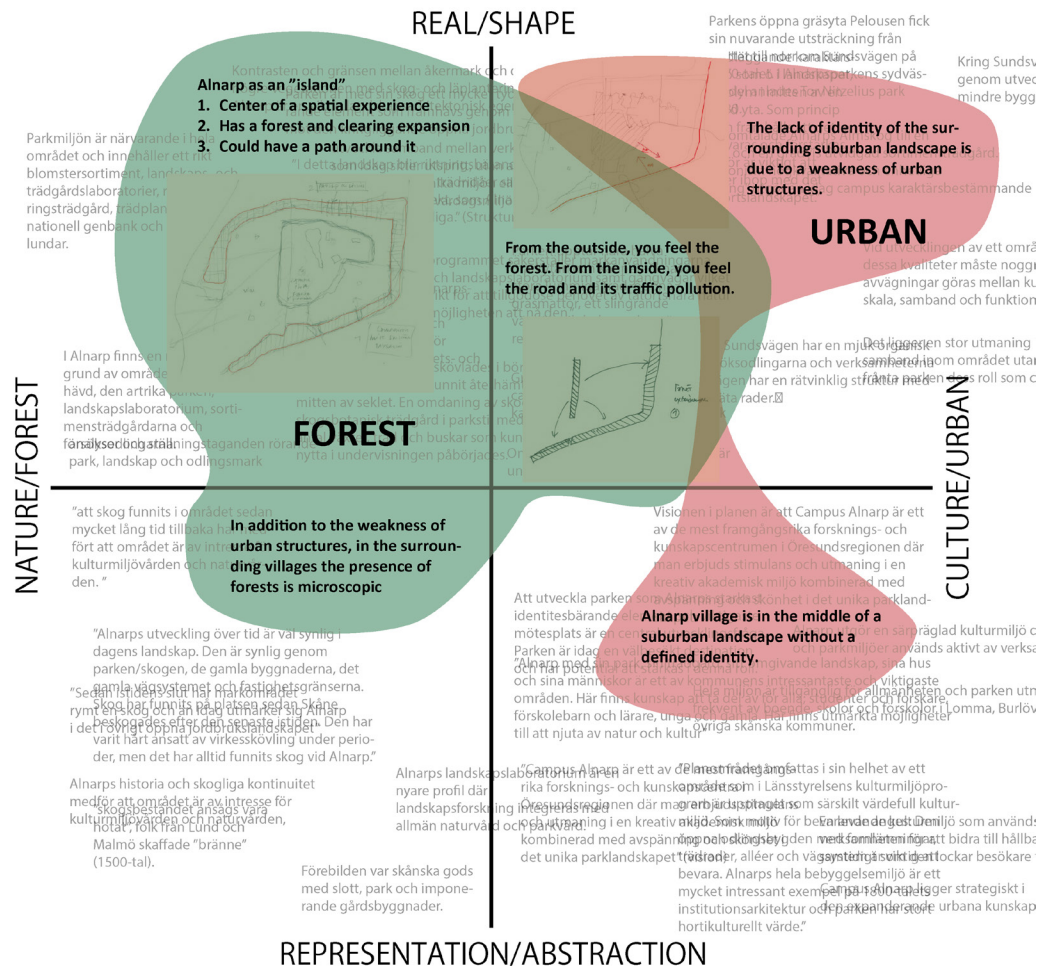


FIGURE 5 Document analysis of the Landscape Analysis reveals that the analysis mainly focusses on the campus area as a (forest)scape with a few comments on the surrounding built landscape. (Image by the Authors)

The Fieldwork: Alnarp Forestscapes in Physical Reality

To further explore our understanding of urban forestscapes, we decided to step out of representation and into the real world, into what we speculate could be understood as forestscapes: the ALL. Fieldwork included several visits to the two wooded areas on campus that are referred to as ‘forests’ in maps, plans, and literature: Alnarp Västerskog and Magnoliaskogen (Gustavsson et al., 2023b; Akademiska Hus, 2019). Within the two areas, we identified our two sites [fig. 6], where we decided to deploy our fieldwork. These sites were visited three times during a time span of almost eight months, from early April to late November.



FIGURE 6 An overview of the inner campus with the Tiny Pear Patch (1) and the Magnolia Woods (2) outlined in red. (Image by the Authors; orthophoto by Lantmäteriet 2023)

Comparing the fieldwork to our previous research activities, we acknowledged an apparent strength in the human scale provided by being in the landscape that the document analysis lacks. While the 1:1 scale offers a certain experience of a site—and the aerial view offers another scale of a top-down planning perspective—the scalar gradient in between is much more challenging to represent. Indeed, we found that the concept of urban forestscapes can enable new/different approaches to perceiving different sites through our actions in and interactions with it (European Council, 2000). Thus, by looking for ‘what a particular concept may *mean*, we have gained insight into what it can *do*’ (Bal, 2002, p. 11, emphasis in original).

The Tiny Pear Patch

We walk through dense plantations of birch trees. The white stems flicker like barcodes. When the mix of species changes, and we start to see traces of human interaction, we know we are getting close. The tiny patch is a stronghold disconnected from the larger plantation by a six-metre-wide setback. We push our way through the dense stand that demarcates the perimeter of the tiny patch and are embraced by neatly ordered stems. This time, we look upward towards the sky through the atrium-like opening in the canopy, a perfect square of trees intersected by a cylinder of light. Another visit. Fall. This time, the floor of the patch catches our attention. Pears everywhere in various degrees of decomposition. The first impression of the site, dominated by its geometry, has been transformed into an experience of living matter.

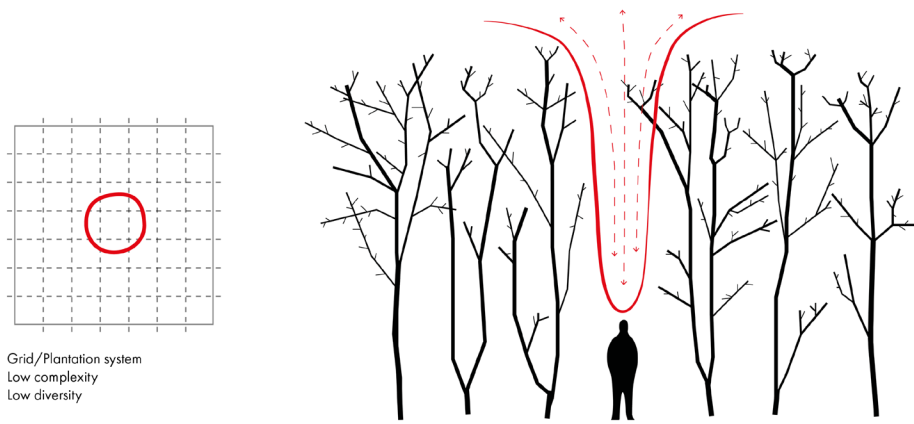


FIGURE 7 Top: Plantation system and profile diagram showing the character of the site. Middle: The Tiny Pear Patch can be found at the north-western corner of the campus, in the northern part of the Landscape Laboratory (Alnarp Västerskog). Bottom: The seasonal changes affect how the -scape is experienced (From left to right: spring, summer, autumn and winter) where the presence of the surrounding agricultural landscape (north and west) is the most prominent influence. (Image and photographs by the Authors; ortophotos by Lantmäteriet 2023)

The 360m² pear patch is situated in the north-western part of the campus and the western part of the landscape laboratory commonly referred to as Alnarp Västerskog and consists of Common Pear (*Pyrus communis*) trees planted in 1998. The choice of species was made partly as a homage to the nursery school that was situated in the area up until 1993 and also as a design choice, where similar relatively small monoculture squares, like floating islands in the bigger system of stands, can be found.

The patch has a clear outside and inside, which can be experienced both from within the patch and from the outside. The relationship between the patch and its surroundings is distinct, with a small but clearly outlined grass-covered void surrounding it on two sides, east and south, while the agricultural fields are spread out to the north and the west. There has been little to no maintenance in the stand other than a thinning that was performed as part of a student course in 2020, where approximately five trees were removed from the very centre of the patch, creating an atrium-like room that can only be experienced if one is on the inside. The atrium posits an example of an 'interior room' (Gustavsson et al., p. 107), opening up the patch vertically and inviting the sky in [fig. 7]. The lack of formal entrances makes it easy to miss. The 'floor' is sparsely covered with grass and moss. In fall, it is full of fallen pears. The unutilized harvest of this stand amplifies the patch as an artefact with values beyond its horticultural production. Indeed, the contribution of the patch consists of bloom and beauty, and fruit for visitors both human and 'more-than.'

Situated anonymously at the very edge of the landscape laboratory, it is not evident why anyone would have a reason to visit. The scale of the patch and its apparent hostility from the outside also contribute to keeping visitors from ever really being engulfed in the patch. One might say it is a very architectural place. A scape. Experiencing 'The Tiny Pear Patch' contributes to our understanding that urban forestscapes do not need to be clearly defined when it comes to the diversity of species, dimensions, or scale.

The Magnolia Woods

Sloping slightly downhill, the gravel road runs along the hawthorn hedge that delimits the original extent of Alnarp Park. In the park lurk majestic oaks and beeches, their branches reaching far above us. The Magnolia Wood is located across the road as an elongated stripe of dense vegetation. Beyond it is the motorway. We access the thick vegetation through a garden gate—how peculiar to enter a wood through a gate. We stay on the meandering paths; anything else would be impossible due to the flamboyant greenery. Field layer, bush layer, canopy layer. Everything seems to grow out of control. Are the gates protecting the wood from us or us from the wood? A glade makes us exhale, almost with relief. A perfect circle with benches and a few free-standing trees offering shade contrasts with the sound from the motorway. How different our summer visit is to our previous visit. In spring, the ground was quiet, but the sky was full of lavish magnolia blossoms. This wood shows off during all seasons.

The first phase of Karl-Evert Flinck's Magnolia Wood ('Magnolia Woods,' for short) was established as a 1.2-hectare standalone extension of the Alnarp Landscape Laboratory in 2007, with two main foci in mind. The first intention was to develop a wide array of new and unique Magnolia hybrids previously untested in a northern European setting, and second, to present Magnolias in a—from a horticultural point of view—unfamiliar way, in a woodland vegetation system rather than as solitaire trees, mimicking their natural habitat (Gustavsson et al., 2023b; Sjöman et al., 2023).



FIGURE 8 Top: The complex woodland system and profile diagram of the site. Middle: The Magnolia Woods is situated at the south-eastern edge of the campus, only separated from the park by a small gravel road Bottom: The seasonal changes affect how the -scape is experienced (from left to right: spring, summer, autumn and winter), especially the sense of diversity, the multi-layered aspects of the vegetation, and the presence of heavily trafficked roads both to the south and to the east (E6). (Image and photographs by the Authors; orthophotos by Lantmäteriet 2023)

In addition to the Magnolias (*Magnolia var.*), Hybrid Larch (*Larix × marschlinsii*), Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) were used as nurse trees, which 'will be gradually removed in order to give the magnolias more space to develop...' (Sjöman et al., 2023, p. 300). Some will remain as protection against frost and wind. There is also a smaller proportion of yew (*Taxus baccata*), whose evergreen contributions become especially distinct during the winter season.

There are no real 'interior rooms' (Gustavsson et al., 2023a, p. 107) inside the forest as of yet, other than the big round grass lawn, which is situated close to the northernmost entrance. A sense of wilderness is much more present during visits from late spring to early autumn because of the lush and layered vegetation. The site is experienced through a walk either from the northernmost to the southernmost entrance, or vice versa, which slightly limits how it can be approached and appreciated. It is easy to get to, but the 'Magnolia Woods' itself is not easily accessible, depending on the physical functioning of the visitor, weather/season/time of year, etc. The variety of species contributes to the impression that this is very much a site in an ongoing process, that it can be revisited continuously, and that the experience will change over time [fig. 8].

Experiencing the Magnolia Woods adds to our understanding by suggesting that urban forestscapes are not only about their location, dimensions, or mix of plant species. The atmosphere—influenced by such diverse facets as motorway noises, inaccessible vegetation, and excess blooming—adds to the experience of the wood as part of a commodifying culture of urbanity. Hence, experiential aspects must be considered part of an emerging definition of the concept of urban forestscapes.

Conclusion

Guided by our research question on what synthetic understanding of urban forestscapes we can extract from literature studies, document studies, and fieldwork, we put forth a theoretical and an experiential aspect. Through the literature study, we conclude that the concept invites interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and production if we recognize that it can be seen as a shared concept of forest- and landscape-related disciplines, with their etymological and/or disciplinary *heimaten*, respectively. Our fieldwork added to the understanding of the concept by clearly pointing towards the insignificance of numeric data otherwise common in sustainability agendas.

The second part of our research question on how to study forestscapes emphasized spatial and experiential qualities and validated the importance of dynamic qualities. Integrating time-based aspects in an interdisciplinary study also poses the challenge of representing four-dimensional and 1:1 scale. The intended method for documenting our fieldwork, a matrix, turned out to be too static, lacking the necessary complexity to capture and communicate our experiences. It turned out to better communicate the result of the document analysis.

In conclusion, we find that the concept's usefulness lies in what and how it allows us to 'designerly' approach spatial and experiential qualities of the landscape in which it is embedded. It invited us to reconsider the activities and techniques for fieldwork, literature, and document studies that were continuously developed and applied. The trial and error of our search for urban forestscapes in literature and in the physical reality of the Alnarp Landscape Laboratory led to previously unidentified research methods, questions, perspectives, and insights. It prompts future research into the question of how to represent dynamic qualities of landscapes, in particular urban forestscapes, and their socio-ecological and spatial processes.

References

- Akademiska Hus (2019). *Campusplan Alnarp 2019-2030*. <https://www.akademiskahus.se/campusutveckling/campusplaner/campusplan-alnarp-2019-2030/> [2023-05-08]
- Antrop, M. & Van Eetvelde, V. (2017). The Holistic Nature of Landscape - Landscape as an Integrating Concept. *Landscape Perspectives: The Holistic Nature of Landscape*, 23, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1183-6_1
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bal, M. (2002). *Travelling concepts in the humanities: a rough guide*. (Green College lectures). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Boris, S. D. (2012). Urban forest and landscape infrastructure: towards a landscape architecture of open-endedness. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 7(2), 54-59.
- Bosch, C. C. K. van den, Ferrini, F., & Fini, A. (2017). Introduction. In: Bosch, C. C. K. van den, Ferrini, F., & Fini, A. (Eds.). *Routledge handbook of urban forestry*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315627106>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative research journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Braae, E. & Steiner, H. (2019). The role of landscape architecture research : introduction to the volume. In: Braae, E. & Steiner, H. (Eds.) *Routledge Research Companion to Landscape Architecture*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 1-11.
- Braun, B. (2009). Nature. In: Castree, N. Demeritt, D., Liverman, D. & Rhoads, B. (Eds.) *A Companion to Environmental Geography*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. 19-36.
- Castree, N. & Braun, B. (1998). The construction of nature and the nature of construction: Analytical and political tools for building survivable futures. In: Castree, N. & Braun, B. (Eds.) *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millenium*. Milton Park: Taylor & Francis.
- Clemente, M. (2023). Rethinking "Streetline Forestscapes" in a Broader Context of Urban Forestry: In-Between Ecological Services and Landscape Design, with Some Evidence from Rome, Italy. *Sustainability*, 15(4).
- Cosgrove, D. E. (1985). Prospect, perspective and the evolution of the landscape idea. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 10(1).
- Demming, E. M. & Swaffield, S. (2011) *Landscape Architecture Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Descola, P. (2013). *Beyond nature and culture*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ekers, M. (2009). The political ecology of hegemony in depression-era British Columbia, Canada: Masculinities, work and the production of the forestscape. *Geoforum*, 40(3), 303-315. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2008.09.011>
- European Commission (2022). *Proposal for a Nature Restoration Law*. https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/nature-restoration-law_en [2023-10-08]
- European Council (2000). *Council of Europe Landscape Convention*. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=176> [2024-01-05]
- Gustavsson, R., Nielsen, A. B. & Wiström, B. (2023a). Structural Approach: Unfolding Spatial Typologies of Woods. In: Nielsen, A. B., A., Diedrich, L. & Szanto, C. (Eds.) *Woods go urban: Landscape laboratories in Scandinavia*. Wageningen: Blauwdruk.
- Gustavsson, R., Nielsen, A. B., Folkesson, A. & Wiström, B. (2023b). Alnarp Landscape Laboratory. In: Nielsen, A. B., A., Diedrich, L. & Szanto, C. (Eds.) *Woods go urban: Landscape laboratories in Scandinavia*. Wageningen: Blauwdruk.
- Hansen & Ovesen (2011). Definitions and Concepts – The Etymology and Use of the Terms Forest and Landscape. In: E. Ritter E. & Dauksta, D. (Eds.) *New Perspectives on People and Forests*. Berlin: Springer. 179-193.
- Harrison, R. P. (1992). *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Höfer & Trepl (2010). Jackson's Concluding with landscapes – full circle. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 5(2), 40-51. DOI: 10.1080/18626033.2010.9723437
- Jackson, J. B. (1984). *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jorgensen, A. (2015). Is landscape an oxymoron? Understanding the focus of Landscape Research. *Landscape Research*, 40(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2014.998012>

- Komulainen, M. (2010). Forestscapes – a forest landscape typology as an integrated planning process tool. *Dissertationes Forestales*, 2010(98). <https://doi.org/10.14214/df.98>
- Konijnendijk, C. C. (2005). New Perspectives for Urban Forests: Introducing the Wild Woodland. In: Kowarik, I. & Körner, S. (Eds.) *Wild Urban Woodlands New Perspectives for Urban Forestry*. Berlin: Springer. 33-46.
- Konijnendijk, C. C. (2008). *The Forest and the City: The Cultural Landscape of Urban Woodland*. Berlin: Springer.
- Kowarik I. (2005). Wild Urban Woodlands: Towards a Conceptual Framework. In: Kowarik, I. & Körner, S. (Eds.) *Wild Urban Woodlands New Perspectives for Urban Forestry*. Berlin: Springer. 1- 32.
- Latour, B. (2006). *Which protocol for the new collective experiments?* <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/node/372> [2024-02-29]
- Lee, G. & Diedrich, L. (2019). Transareal excursions into landscapes of fragility and endurance: A contemporary interpretation of Alexander von Humboldt's mobile science. In: Braae, E. & Steiner, H. (Eds.) *Routledge Research Companion to Landscape Architecture*. Abingdon, Oxon. 90-102.
- Lindholm, G. (2011). 'Visible gestures': On urban landscape perspectives in planning. *Planning Theory*, 11(1), 5–19.
- Lomma kommun (2016). *Planprogram för Alnarpområdet*. https://lomma.se/download/18.2f61993515a5f2b1e3111849/1488815387744/PP+Alnarp+antag+et+av+KF+20160317_webb.pdf [2023-10-02]
- Lowenthal, D. (2007). Living with and looking at landscape. *Landscape Research*, 32(5), 635-656. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426390701552761>
- MDP (2020). *Alnarp Campus*. [Internal material]
- Meeus, J. H. A. (1995). Pan-European Landscapes. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 31(1-3), 57-79. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0169-2046\(94\)01036-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0169-2046(94)01036-8)
- Meyer, E. K. (2008). Sustaining beauty. The performance of appearance. A manifesto in three parts. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 3 (1), 6-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18626033.2008.9723392>
- Nature Based Solution Institute (n.d.). *3-30-300*. <https://nbsi.eu/the-3-30-300-rule/> [2023-10-08]
- Nielsen, A. B., A., Diedrich, L. & Szanto, C. (Eds.) (2023a). *Woods go urban: Landscape laboratories in Scandinavia*. Wageningen: Blauwdruk.
- Nielsen, A. B., Gustavsson, R. & Wiström, B. (2023b). Beginnings: Defining a laboratory approach for urban woods. In: Nielsen, A. B., A., Diedrich, L. & Szanto, C. (Eds.) *Woods go urban: Landscape laboratories in Scandinavia*. Wageningen: Blauwdruk.
- Olwig, K. R. (1996). Recovering the substantive nature of landscape. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 86(4), 630-653. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1996.tb01770.x>
- Olwig, K. R. (2009). Landscape, Culture and Regional Studies: Connecting the Dots. In: Castree, N., Demeritt, D., Liverman, D. & Rhoads, B. (Eds.) *Landscape, Culture and Regional Studies: Connecting the Dots. A companion to environmental geography*. Chichester, U.K.; Malden, MA :: Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444305722>
- Prominski, M. (2014). Andscapes: Concepts of nature and culture for landscape architecture in the 'Anthropocene'. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 9(1), 6-19.
- Ritter, E. (2011a). Forests in Landscapes – The Myth of Untouched Wilderness. In: Ritter, E. & Dauksta, D. (Eds.) *New Perspectives on People and Forests*. Berlin: Springer. 11-27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1150-1_2
- Ritter, E. (2011b). Forest Landscapes in Europe - Visual Characteristics and the Role of Arboriculture. In: Ritter, E. & Dauksta, D. (Eds.) *New Perspectives on People and Forests*. Berlin: Springer. 211-229. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1150-1_14
- Seggern, H. v. (2019). Crossing fields Designing and researching Raumesgeschehen. In: Prominski, M. & Seggern, H. v. (Eds.) *Design Research for Urban Landscapes*. New York: Routledge. 8-32.
- Sievert, T. (2008). Improving the Quality of Fragmented Urban Landscapes – a Global Challenge. In: Seggern, H.v., Werner, J. & Grosse-Bächle, L. (Eds.) *Creating Knowledge – Innovation Strategies for Designing Urban Landscapes*. Berlin: Jovis. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783868598865-016>
- Simson, A. (2017). A landscape and urbanism perspective on urban forestry. In: Bosch, C. C. K. van den, Ferrini, F., & Fini, A. (Eds.). *Routledge handbook of urban forestry*. New York: Routledge. 194–204.

- Sjöman, H., Gunnarsson, A., Wiström, B. & Gustavsson, R. (2023). Horticultural Focus. In: Nielsen, A. B., Diedrich, L. & Szanto, C. (Eds.) *Woods go urban: Landscape laboratories in Scandinavia*. Wageningen: Blauwdruk.
- Smith, N. (2008). *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. (3 ed). Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Spirn, A. W. (2005). Restoring Mill Creek: Landscape Literacy, Environmental Justice and City Planning and Design. *Landscape Research*. 30(3), 395-413.
- Tang, R. (2021). Moving across the Terrain: Perceiving and performing the landscape. *Performance Research*, 26(3), 59-65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2021.1977503>
- Thurfjell, D. (2020). *Granskogsfolk: hur naturen blev svenskarnas religion*. Stockholm: Norstedts.
- UNECE (2019). *Trees in the Cities Challenges*. <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/trees-cities-challenge>. [2023-10-08]
- UNEP (2022). *COP15 ends with landmark biodiversity agreement*. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/cop15-ends-landmark-biodiversity-agreement> [2024-02-12]