

Gardening in “Ershād al-Zerā’a”

A Trove Forgotten Under the Dust of Time

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Abstract | One of important resources for recognizing Iranian Islamic garden and gardening is the book of Abu Nasr Heravi, *Ershād al-Zerā’a*. The author, Qasim-Ibn Yusuf Abu Nasr, lived in the city of Herat and the book is related to the late period of Timurid (about 921/1515). This book is a valuable resource in the subject of agriculture and gardenin. The purpose of gardening and agriculture, planting methods of Plants and Trees, classification of plants, land quality, the right time for different tasks in gardening are described in the book. The book includes eight chapters called “rawza” (garden), which cover the following range of topics: first chapter discusses the quality of the different types of land. The second chapter is about the best times for planting according to

astrology, and prayers to be recited at the time of planting. Chapter three to seven include planting style for large plants and trees, and the last chapter speaks about the “Chaharbagh” layout in garden design. Referring to this book is helpful in understanding the definition of Iranian garden and gardening. According to Heravi, gardening and garden design is a contextual knowledge, and needs expertise in a variety of fields like planting, water distribution, land survey, and technical and aesthetical design. This paper introduces the most important cases mentioned in *Ershād al-Zerā’a*.

Keywords | *Ershād al-Zerā’a*, Abunasr Heravi, Garden, Gardening.

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