

## **The garden of fragrances**

Namur Castle Site –Rue de l'Ermitage 1 – 5000 NAMUR

### **The spirit of the garden**

Much more than merely a place for a stroll, a garden of fragrances arouses our senses, by approaching the subject of scent from different angles. It touches our senses but also our emotions. This set of theme gardens was created with the aim of proposing a beautiful and sweet-smelling walk, but also exciting, astonishing and awakening our curiosity and our attention. When people talk of scent, several ideas spring to mind. Smells, through their power of reminiscence, often have the power to move us, to make us salivate or wander. In this case, we wanted to interpret these different aspects of scent, through gardens where each has its own character, its theme, its guiding thread. As the fragrances float by, 6 different atmospheres and therefore 6 ways of “seeing” the smells are proposed.

### **The lavender coloured garden**

Located at the entrance to the park, this garden carries us away in the colours and fragrances of the Mediterranean, with one of the big celebrities of sweet-smelling plants: lavender. The collection presented here opens a door onto the great variety of this species. The arrangement of the plantations conjures up the fields of lavender so typical of the landscapes of Provence. The selected varieties form a gradation of colour ranging from light blue to dark mauve including deep blue. White and pink lavenders extend the rows of blue. In the background, the varied colours of butterfly lavenders call to mind the scents of the “garrigue”. A few plants such as the olive tree or the edges planted with rosemary further emphasise the Mediterranean appearance of the garden.

### **The garden of emotions**

Structured around the circular ornamental lake, this garden proposes to form the link between colours and fragrances, or more precisely, between the emotions aroused by these perceptions. An amphitheatre of colours presenting a rainbow-like chromatic gradation forms the background. Like a painter's palette, it answers the flowerbeds of sweet-smelling plants arranged in the foreground. To make the connection between colour and smell, do not take the colour of the sweet-smelling plants into account, but rather those of the coloured flowerbeds situated in the background. In actual fact, a flower that smells of musk may very well be white, even though we spontaneously associate it with mauve or dark red colours. In this garden, every colour evokes an emotion matched by a type of smell, and vice versa. This classification is only one of the many possibilities on the subject, all subjective. As you stroll through, stoop down to inhale the inflorescences with the pleasant and powerful, musky sweetness of the Heliotrope. Few of us associate it with light green or yellow shades of colour because its sensual fragrance blends perfectly with the deep and warm tones of pink, mauve and violet.

### **The gourmet garden**

Plants with sweet, fruity and spicy smells, they all make our mouths water. Walk from squares to squares in the central checkerboard to take full advantage of all their richness. If the aromatic herbs traditionally used in cooking of course have their place there, others will perhaps surprise you like the shiso or Japanese parsley, the rue, the sweet gale or the sweet cicely. This garden proposes 4 mini-collections of 9 varieties of thymes, sages, mints and basil so as to present the great diversity of aromatic herbs to you. Next to the culinary aromatic herbs, visitors can discover some plants that smell of chocolate, vanilla, apple, curry, pepper ... These “imitators” are not always edible or do not necessarily have a taste related to the aromas that they release. They are set out on raised benches, designed so that people can smell them easily. You find, for example, an immortelle that smells of curry or a cosmos with brown flowers smelling of chocolate.

### **The Rose garden**

The main feature of this rose garden with its 76 varieties is to present only scented roses, in different forms: bush, climbing, creeper, ground-covering and standard roses. Another characteristic: most of the selected varieties are remontant, i.e. they flower twice between May and September. The rose garden is composed of two symmetrical groups, located on both sides of the central path. The tunnels of archways covered with climbing roses lead to the central flowerbeds, at the heart of a chamber of greenery surrounded by stone railings also decorated with flowers. At the centre of each of these chambers, a central pillar carries a rambler, a profusely straggling, creeping rose bush. These pillars are surrounded with ground-covering rose bushes and standard roses. Just opposite the Castle, don't miss the "Château de Namur" rose, created at the beginning of the 19th century by one of Belgium's most eminent rose growers, Louis Parmentier.

### **The four seasons garden**

The scent of plants is generally associated with the summer months. Mother Nature, however, offers us her fragrances all through the year. Laid out on sunny embankments, this garden is divided into four parts, each devoted to a season. The autumn garden whose characteristic colours are red, orange and yellow, perfectly blend into the collection of Prunus, with wonderful autumnal colours. The star attractions are the Cercidiphyllum with its withered leaves smelling of caramel, forming a delicious fragrant carpet when they fall in October and November, and the superbly scented, late-flowering osmanthe. The winter garden is the place to discover the witch hazel, the viburnum, the heather, the daphne and the sarcococca (sweet box). The winter or bush honeysuckle, Lonicera fragrantissima, also known as sweet-breath-of-spring, whose small white blossoms smell of lemon between November and March, has been planted in the gourmet garden. The spring garden brings to life the yellows and whites through the lily of the valley, the daffodil, the seringa or the rhododendron. The summer garden with its multicoloured flowers, laid out at the foot of the rockery, climbs up along the stairs that lead to the castle terrace. This is the realm of the carnations and the lilies.

### **The garden with strange smells**

In this small enclosed garden, boxed in by a wall of box trees, you will find some plants with curious, strange, surprising and sometimes even unpleasant smells. The perception of smells varies greatly from one person to another. In some cases, a plant with a nauseating smell for some people will be pleasant for others, and vice versa. Reactions to some smells, by contrast, are unanimous ... in the negative! The stinking iris, also called the stinking gladwin or gladdon, whose Latin name proves its power: *Iris foetidissima*, gives off unpleasant beefy smells which sometimes earned it the nickname of roast-beef plant. Several explanations justify these peculiar smells which are, like the most pleasant fragrances, means of protection against predators or, on the contrary, attraction to pollinators. Belonging to the large family of the Araceae, our truly indigenous *Arum maculatum* (cuckoo-pint or wake-robin) smells of urine and sweat. Like its cousin, the *amorphophallus*, this scent acts as a lure to attract insects. Some nauseating smells also have the merit of keeping away predators or indicating the presence of toxic substances.