

Garden design:
asbl "Histoires de Plantes"

Creation:
Research department and "Green Spaces" department of the City of Namur

Information:
www.ville.namur.be
www.nature-namur.be
0800/935.62

Unaccompanied visits:
July, August and September - open from Tuesday to Sunday,
from 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm. Admission free

Guided tours for groups:
00 32 (0) 81 24 64 44 - info@namurtourisme.be
www.histoiresdeplantes.be



An initiative of the Municipal Council for the Environment and Green Spaces
Publisher with legal liability: City of Namur, 5000 Namur
March 2013
Layout: Reprographics Department

The Jean Chalon Garden

"Botanical stroll through symbols"



NAMUR - Parc Louise-Marie - Boulevard Frère Orban

An initiative of the Municipal Council for the Environment and Green Spaces



Colours

The meanings of colours are many and varied, depending on the culture or the age. These colours are represented by a flowerbed forming a fan of hardy perennials with colourful flowers and leaves.

Tales and legends: mythology

Around a flower-filled meadow depicting the goddess Flora, plants such as the achillea (Achilles' plant) or the anemone evoke ancient mythology.

The garden of feelings

Based on the language of flowers, the flowerbed is shaped like a broken heart. The flowers with negative connotations are placed in the centre, where the heart is rent asunder. Others, linked to love or friendship, edge the heart. All around, a hedge of rosebushes evokes the facets of the language of the rose.

Festivals and seasons

Each season has its needs and its fears, its joys and its anxieties, to which a response is found in rituals and celebrations such as Christmas, Easter or All Saints. Emblematic plants which are associated with them are presented in this garden.

The garden of fairies and witches

The plants are presented in tubs shaped like little sparks, evoking the fire which, in the past, was used to "purify" witches. The plants to be found here are protective, such as artemisia, and divinatory, such as achillea. The evil ones, meanwhile, are represented by aconite and datura.

Emblematic plants

Linked to heraldry, coats of arms or escutcheons, they may represent dynasties, dignitaries or countries. For instance, broom is the emblem of Geoffrey of Anjou, known as Plantagenet. The iris of Clovis was to give rise to the Fleur de Lys, the emblem of the kings of France.

The spirit of the garden

A complex language that can be approached in many different ways, symbols are all around us, sometimes visible, sometimes concealed. Having accompanied mankind from the dawn of time, plants have, by their very nature, been used as a vehicle for this language.

The themes evoked in this garden are illustrated through a selection of representative plants, but also through the structure of the flowerbeds and the infrastructure used. This garden pays tribute to Jean Chalton, the famous Namur botanist born in the mid-19th century.



At a crossroads

Let us begin our journey by withdrawing from the world beneath the arbour covered with roses. Don't they say that everything said beneath a rose is secret?

The maze and the grotto

The maze embodies the centre of the world for those who find their way or meet their destiny there. It is a winding path of trials linked to progress towards the hidden centre of things or oneself. In this sense, it can be associated with the symbolism of the cave or grotto.



4

A sacred place

The aim here is to create an area where everyone can sense their own philosophical points of reference or emotions. A space outside time, which raises more questions than it provides answers. The guiding thread running through the journey is the plant which, through its name, its form or its usefulness, through the legends or myths associated with it, structures the area and accompanies you on your own personal quest.

The garden of traditions

The trees

The tree conveys a powerful symbolism. It is the image of strength, stability and changelessness. Above and beyond this universal message, many trees have their own special significance, such as the olive, the tree of peace, or the oak, the tree of justice.

Signs or symbols?

Signs have a clear meaning, whereas symbols give rise to interpretations that can vary and that convey messages or ideas. They are represented here in the form of box topiaries.

Lucky charm or ill omen

There are plants that protect, such as the houseleek which guards against lightning strikes. That which is rare brings good luck, such as a four-leaved clover. Other plants are associated with bad luck, for instance offering yellow carnations or treading on a lily.

9

The garden of the moon and the sun

These two heavenly bodies are rich in meaning, separately and when set opposite one another. Honesty, whose Latin name, *lunaria*, means "moon-shaped", and gourds, rich in water, recall the aqueous aspect of the moon, while sunflowers and heliotrope evoke the day star.

The alchemist's garden

This takes the form of a pathway and illustrates the quest for the philosopher's stone, symbolised by a spherical fountain. Black and yellow flowerbeds denote lead and gold respectively. The three alchemical ingredients, salt, sulphur and mercury, are represented at the entrance to the garden.

The harmonic garden

For the Pythagoreans, there is a connection between colours and musical notes, the signs of the zodiac and the planets, and even the human body, according to an ideal mathematical ratio. The flowerbed evokes a scale whose seven notes are represented by the colours associated with them and linked to the seven main heavenly bodies: the sun, the moon and the five visible planets.

The garden of signatures

The doctrine of signatures is based on the principle that "like cures like". Although attributed to the famous alchemist Paracelsus, this doctrine has its origin in the theories of the Ancient Greeks. The representative plants in this garden include common lungwort, whose leaves resemble the alveoli of the lung, and swallowwort, whose yellow sap is associated with the bile of the liver.

The spiral

A means of expressing the idea that "Everything is in everything"! The spiral, a very common occurrence in nature, can be seen in the position of the petals in flowers such as roses or magnolias, or in the tendrils of climbing plants, the heart of sunflowers and the crosiers of ferns.

The esoteric garden

The four elements: fire, air, water and earth

Having stepped over the water and crossed the earth, fire is represented by a selection of hardy perennials in orangey-red shades and air by a series of ethereal grasses. On the ground, each element is identified by its alchemical symbol.

Pythagoras' garden

This famous Greek philosopher and mathematician from the sixth century B.C. puts forward a vision of the world based on harmony, linking colours, sounds and shapes through ideal mathematical proportions like the golden ratio.

The numbers

Every number bears a multitude of meanings and great symbolism, which vary according to civilisations, faiths and ideas. Some of them have crossed the ages to our own time, conferring a special value on certain numbers or figures. The number 13, for example, is often associated with good or bad luck, while 3 or 7 are associated with the sacred.

The symbolic meaning of shapes

Each geometric shape bears a symbolic meaning. These are depicted in various forms in the garden, in surface and volume, and are represented by plants. The volumes are illustrated by ivy structures and pruned plants.



- 3. The trees
- 4. Trees crossroads
- 5. Signs or symbols?
- 6. Lucky charm or ill omen
- 7. Colours
- 8. Sacred stones
- 9. Tales and legends: mythology
- 10. The garden of feelings
- 11. Festivals and seasons
- 12. The garden of fairies and witches
- 13. Emblematic plants

- 1. At a crossroads
- 2. A sacred place

- 14. The four elements
- 15. Pythagoras' garden
- 16. The numbers
- 17. The symbolic meaning of shapes
- 18. The garden of the moon and the sun
- 19. The alchemist's garden
- 20. The harmonic garden
- 21. The garden of signatures