

EUROGARD VII, PARIS 2015

7th European Botanic Gardens Congress

Pre-Congress Tour

Gardens & Arboretums of the Loire Valley

2nd to 5th July 2015



This first tour will focus on the region of Touraine that surrounds the elegant city of Tours. It is here that the great River Loire is joined by the Rivers Indre & Cher, bringing water and life to the heart of France. This region has played a key part in the history of the nation and also in the development of garden style. In a country where more than half the population have access to their own vegetable plot, the art of vegetable gardening has reached a very high standard. The main flavour of this tour is the management of plant collections, a theme that is echoed at **The International Garden Festival** at Chaumont where this year's theme is: *Extraordinary Gardens; Collectors' Gardens*. In addition you will visit the decorative and productive gardens of **Villandry & Valmer** and two outstanding Arboreta. The group will be accompanied by a linguistic guide (speaking French, English and Italian) and a botanist from the Jardin des Plantes of Paris to introduce the local vegetation.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Thursday 2nd July

Depart from Jardin des Plantes at 9.00hrs by coach, driving out of Paris to the **Conservatoire National des Plantes Médicinales** at Milly-la-Forêt. Here we have arranged a special tour to observe how this organisation fulfils its aims to manage and conserve the genetic resources of useful plants. Following free time to find your own lunch, continue south to the **Arboretum des Grandes Bruyères**, a privately owned garden that merges into the surrounding wild forest. A fine collection of trees and shrubs are grown over the 25 acres with more than 6,000 woody plants. The garden includes French National Collections of *Magnolia*, *Cornus* and *Quercus*. Tonight we stay in a 3 star **Hotel Les Terrasses de Montargis** with an evening meal included.

Day 2: Friday 3rd July

The National Arboretum des Barres is a 380 ha forest domain founded by the Vilmorin family in the late 19th century. A guided tour is organised in the 35 ha special collection which contains 2,600 tree species from all five continents. There is a tea room with light refreshments available to purchase before driving along the Loire Valley to the elegant city of Tours. We will be staying at the 3 star **Hotel Central**, in easy walking distance to many restaurants, cathedral and main shopping area. Plenty of time to check in before departing again on the coach to visit the private gardens of **Château de Valmer**, a sophisticated garden

of 4 hectares built on eight terraces. The most impressive part is the functional *Potager* where a vast range of vegetables are grown together with a very interesting collection of historic vines producing grapes for wine production and to eat. A local wine tasting will be included and a delicious cold buffet before returning to the **Hotel Central** in Tours, a quiet and very comfortable base for the next two nights.

Day 3: Saturday 4th July

Following a buffet breakfast, you leave to arrive early at **Château de Villandry** a unique testimonial to Renaissance architecture with decorative potager & symbolic ornamental garden. Since its recreation at the beginning of 20th century, it has long been the epitome of decorative vegetable gardens. There is time to view the Château as well as the magnificent gardens. You then drive along the Loire river to Château de Chaumont-sur-Loire. **The International Garden Festival** at Chaumont is now in its 24th year with 20 garden projects presenting this year's theme: *Extraordinary Gardens; Collectors' Gardens*. The visit also includes the Château's own grounds. Return to Tours for a free evening.

Day 4: Sunday 5th July

Start the day with a short guided walking tour of the heart of this historic city, with an option to discover the small **Jardin Botanique de Tours**. We then drive to a tranquil valley to meet expert gardener *Rosamée Henrion* at the **Jardin du Plessis Sasnières** where we are invited to enjoy her garden that includes a vast range of decorative plants set around a lake and her small chateau. You are invited to a delicious simple lunch before returning to Paris. Arrive at the Jardin des Plantes at around 18.30hrs. End of tour.

TOUR COSTS, INCLUSIONS AND HOW TO BOOK

The tour price is **950 EUROS** per person. There is a single supplement of **180 EUROS** per person levied by the hotels for those not sharing a room.

The price includes dinner, bed & breakfast for 1 night at *Hotel Les Terrasses de Montargis* (3*); Bed & breakfast for 2 nights at *Best Western Central Hotel*, Tours (3*) with one additional lunch and evening meal. The price does not include extras at the hotels, or travel insurance.

How to Book

Each individual booking will be required to complete a **Booking Form** (in English) and to send a deposit for **250 EUROS** per person per tour.

Boxwood Tours will respond with a **Booking Confirmation Form**. Full payments will be due 8 weeks prior to the tour start date. On receiving the full payment, Boxwood will respond with a **Holiday Confirmation Form**. All communications will be in English.

Online payment in euros is due to be operational by the end of February, 2015.

Meanwhile, to reserve your place in the interim period you can either:

1. Telephone Credit Card

Telephone the Boxwood office +44 (0)1341 241717 to make a credit or debit card payment by Maestro, Mastercard or Visa,

OR

2. International Bank Transfer

Download, print, complete and post a Booking Form and make a deposit payment by International Bank Transfer into the Boxwood Tours Euro account:

Bank Name: Barclays Bank PLC, Abingdon, Marcham Road Branch

Account Name: Boxwood Tours Limited

IBAN GB37 BARC 2001 0948 3702 99

SWIFTBIC: BARCGB22

All bank charges must be covered by the sending bank.

Please note that Travel Insurance is mandatory for all travellers on Boxwood Tours. Insurance should be taken out in your country of origin.

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