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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**Email:** mail@boxwoodtours.co.uk

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A certificate detailing this cover will be given to each and every passenger as evidence of cover. **Please ensure that you have been given the appropriate certificate(s) at the time of booking.**

This insurance has been arranged by MGA Cover Services on behalf of **Towergate Chapman Stevens** through **MAPFRE ASSISTANCE**.