



Chèvreloup National Arboretum and Gardens of the Château de Versailles

The excursion to Versailles, about 15 km West of Paris, gives the opportunity to discover a part of the large area consisting of two contiguous domains: the Chèvreloup Arboretum (200 ha) and the gardens of the Palace of Versailles (800 ha).

The Chèvreloup Arboretum is part of the Department of Botanical and Zoological Gardens of MNHN. On



Photo : MNHN

the former hunting grounds of the king, plantings of the arboretum began in 1927, then followed a period of destruction and abandonment linked to

the Second World War. In 1965, the new planting scheme was established.

Today, the arboretum includes three main areas:

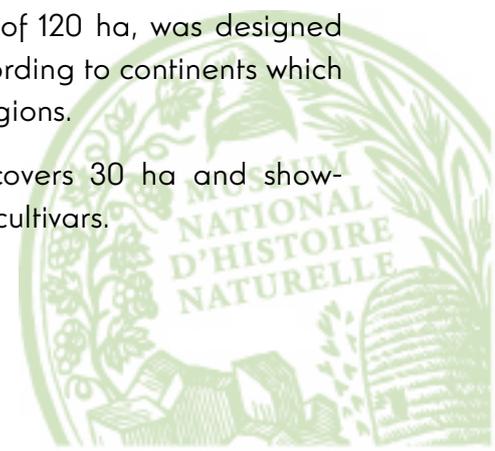
- The Systematic zone, on 50 ha, from the first planting phase, includes important conifer collections, among others. From this period, beautiful alleys of Cedrus (850 m long), Platanus and Juglans have remained.

- The Geographical zone of 120 ha, was designed in 1965. It groups trees according to continents which are further divided into regions.

- The Horticultural zone covers 30 ha and showcases a collection of tree cultivars.



Photo : F.G. Grandin-MNHN



The arboretum includes 2,500 species of trees and is particularly rich in *Acer*, *Picea*, *Quercus* and *Tilia* (national collections).

The Chèvreloup domain also includes greenhouses for the production of bedding plants for the Jardin des Plantes in Paris and greenhouses for the tropical collections.

The latter, not open to the public, include, among others, important collections of succulents (including national collections of *Aloe*, *Haworthia*, *Aizoaceae*, *Rhipsalis*, *Mammillaria* ...), *Arecaceae*, *Fuchsia*...

The gardens of the Palace of Versailles were built between 1661 and 1700 by the landscape architect André Le Nôtre at the request of Louis XIV. This very

large park is the epitome of the "jardin à la française" with its immense perspectives, water features (including the Grand Canal, 5.5 km in periphery) parterres and boxwood embroideries. Within the "Bosquets" or «green rooms», surrounded by hedges and crossed by paths, are hidden statues, fountains, gardens or open-air theaters.



At the foot of the palace, the monumental Orangery shelters over 1,000 trees in containers (citrus, palm trees, laurel, pomegranate... some over 200 year old).



In the park, on the remains of the botanical garden created by Bernard de Jussieu in 1759, Louis XVI laid out, from 1774, the domain of Trianon, according to Marie-Antoinette's requirements. She created an English-style garden with rockeries and follies (entirely restored in 2008) and a picturesque reconstruction of a small village, the Hameau de la Reine.

