

GUIDED TOUR OF LES JARDINS DU LORIOT

Welcome to the Anglo-Chinese park Les Jardins du Lorient. This 5-hectare family park is maintained and developed by two permanent gardeners, a small team of volunteers and the two creators. The signposted itinerary will enable you to discover the garden in 34 stages. Please refer to the map inside the brochure. Each stage has a title. The arrow indicates the direction of your visit to the next stage. Some flowerbeds have a small QR-Code sign to help you find out more if you have a smartphone and a code reader. Les Jardins du Lorient boasts some 2,600 plant varieties.

CAUTION: THE WATER IN THE GARDEN IS NOT DRINKABLE.
Ask at reception for cold drinks.

1 – Princess Moon Forest and its play trail

In this deciduous forest (lime, American late cherry, hazelnut, oak and beech), clumps of bamboo stand out. The name of this little wood alludes to the old Japanese tale of "The Bamboo Cutter", whose main heroine is Princess Moon, Kaguya-Hime. We invite you to discover the Princess' adventures in 12 episodes. Young and old alike can also try their hand at solving 36 riddles, divided into 3 levels of difficulty. At the end of this wood, you'll discover **the first of 8 Chinese beacons evoking the adventures of "plant hunters" in China. The first is dedicated to the botanical missionary Jean-Marie DELAVAY.**

2 - The Witch's House and the circuit of witch plants to be discovered in 7 beds around the large pond.

3- Otaksa my Love

Otaksa is the name of a hydrangea brought back from Nagasaki in Japan by the German botanist and physician Philipp von Siebold. We have planted several hydrangeas (hydrangeas) at the foot of the arrow bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*), which was also introduced to Europe by the same botanist in 1850. Accused of espionage, P. von Siebold was expelled from Japan, where he had secretly married a Japanese woman, O'Taki san, and had to leave his wife. In memory of this lost love, he gave one of his hydrangeas brought back from Japan the diminutive by which he called his beloved in private "Otaksa" (My beautiful Plant!). Nearby, a rose dedicated to their daughter, Japan's 1st female doctor.

4- The Java garden

This space evokes the site of Borobudur on the island of Java, Indonesia's most famous ancient monument (8th and 9th centuries) and most mysterious edifice in the Buddhist world. The openwork lava stone bells are stupas (Buddhist buildings). A large reclining Buddha, also carved in Indonesia, is a reminder of the ultimate step in meditation towards Nirvana.

5- Moulin Joly Bridge and Sima Guang hut :

Based on an engraving, we have reconstructed a bridge built in the romantic garden of the first creator of an Anglo-Chinese garden in France (18th century). The garden of **Claude Henri Watelet**, engraver and academician, was located on the banks of the Seine at Colombes near Paris. Near this bridge, **Sima Guang's** garden features many Chinese plants, including medicinal plants. We have reconstructed his fisherman's hut. In the 11th century, this Chinese scholar had a garden in Luoyang, the peony capital of China. Watelet wrote about this famous garden in his "*Essai sur les jardins*", thanks to a document collected by a missionary posted to the emperor in the 18th century.

6- « Les massifs (beds) des 5 continents », Chinese Medicinal Plants, and area Paul Farges

These are planted with various species from all over the world: Brazilian thistle, Japanese medlar, Tasmanian podocarpus, American prairie penstemon... We've recreated 3 of Sima Guang's 120 medicinal plants squares, known as the immortality plants! Nearby, you'll find an [area dedicated to the botanical missionary Paul Farges Chinese beacon n° 2](#).

7- The lotus path

In summer, you can admire the lotus flowers emerging from the pond and, on the left, a series of tall bamboos and flowerbeds. *Phyllostachys nigra "Boryana"* or tiger bamboo (its thatch is punctuated with brown spots like a tiger's skin) was introduced to Europe in the 1870s by Bory la Tour Marliac. This famous nurseryman made his living by hybridizing water lilies and Lotus.

8 - The Robert Fortune Bridge

Robert Fortune, a Scottish botanist sent to China in 1840 by the East Indian Company to supply, at great personal risk, tea plants for cultivation in the British Indies and Ceylon, brought back countless plants from his expeditions, including, around 1850, the small white-striped *bamboo (Arundinaria Fortunei)*, which can be seen in the riprap at the foot of an arrow bamboo. You can see in the Parc Jardins du Lorient several "*Camelia sinensis*" (tea tree).

9 - Impressions of Giverny

Climb to the top of the hill to discover the many varieties of water lilies that line this pond.

10 - The kiosk of celestial clarity

An octagonal pavilion (symbolizing the passage from earth to heaven, i.e. rebirth). On the roofs, 16 Burmese nagas (guardians and protectors, mediators between heaven and earth) bring prosperity. Their cyclical moulting gives them a link with immortality. The upper roof features a bell tower with 50 Burmese bells. A leaf is attached to each bell, allowing it to tinkle in the wind. The parasol is topped with an armillary sphere.

On the ceiling of the kiosk, you can see 8 medallions representing the 8 signs of the Burmese horoscope corresponding to the days of the week (8, as Wednesday counts as 2 days as the historical Buddha is said to have been born on that day). You need to know the day and time of your birth to find out which sign you are. You can use Google lens for read our QR-code.

11- The donkey trail

As you walk around the small water lily pond, you'll spot a fountain with its resurgent waters, and perhaps, if they're not napping, the donkeys.

12- Le passage de Bello Loco et le pas du gna (gna = lamb in Vendéen)

This is built on a riprap with hand-laid stone blocks from the nearby village of Beaulieu-sous-la Roche, whose Latin name is Bello Loco.

14- The Dragon Gate

From the gate called Tori in Japan, with its Ying Yang gate, you can see the tail of the Dragon (12 m long), also designed by Patrick Lucas. The Yin Yang mosaic was created by Gaby Bellanger, who was the driving force behind the volunteer team.

15- The Simples and the Potager, the Dragon Horse

The Dragon Horse (created in 2023 by Patrick Lucas, President of the Association des Amis des Jardins du Lorient) is a character from the 17th-century Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. He invites you to discover a scene unique in Europe (Vallée perdue, Station 25). The Dragon is perched on a cave containing a small bodhisattva called Guanyin and a Poitevin dragon called "Grande Goule".

17- The Koï-nobori Belvedere

This affords a fine panoramic view of the pond and part of the garden. On the island, the small pavilion allows you to observe the birds and the Great Dragon. On one side, a volunteer has created a mosaic representing the Tao symbol. At certain times of the year, this belvedere is adorned with a bamboo pole on which carp windsocks are hoisted. These are known in Japan as Koï nobori, and are used on the occasion of the little boys' festival on May 5th.

In the middle of the terrace, you can ring the bell, which comes from Burma and is used to call for prayer, to gather monks, or in emergencies.

18- The Dragon Passage

We recommend you continue your visit along the dike to meet the Guanyin Fairy and the Giant Dragon on the island. This rocky passage is inhabited by 3 dragons in the style of Chinese gardens.

19- Herman and Jos terraces, and the Guanyin Fairy

Numerous small bamboos planted on the dike come from the very rare collections donated by Herman and Jos. They alternate with shrubs and trees such as Asian evergreen oaks, rhododendrons, cryptomerias and hydrangeas, planted in small terraces in the Asian style.

The Merciful Fairy Guanyin, sculpted near the Chinese Great Wall for the Jardins du Lorient, invites you to discover the "*Journey to the West*" scene (station 25 Vallée Perdue). It was she who chose the 5 immortal creatures: the baggage carrier, the monkey, the pig, the monk Tripitaka and his horse White Dragon, as recommended by Buddha.

21- The green path of rebirth

Rebirth is the time when nature is reborn, i.e. spring. It's the name of a path in Châtellerault (Vienne) in the Poitou region, where one of park's creators was born. It was here that he made the acquaintance of the giant grass known as bamboo. **Chinese beacon n° 3 dedicated to missionary botanist André SOULIÉ.**

22- Panda waterfall

The two bamboos growing at the foot of the waterfall are part of the diet of the great pandas in their native habitat. This animal was discovered in 1869 by **Father David** near the Chinese town of Baoxing in Sichuan. To live, the Giant Panda must devour 40% of its body weight in bamboo leaves every day. As a result of forest regression, the species is now endangered. Opposite, **Chinese beacon n° 4 dedicated to missionary botanist Armand DAVID**

23- In the footsteps of the Tiger in Asia

This exhibition retraces Clemenceau's trip to South Asia from September 1920 to April 1921, at the age of 79. From the outside, you can see a pair of mythological geese, the symbol of the town of Bago in Burma. On one of the pavilion's pinions, you can also see a relief depicting a peacock, the symbol of Burmese royalty until 1885.

24- The nymph pools

The five crescent-shaped basins, as well as the large basin, are adorned with 36 different varieties of water lilies, some of them bred by the famous 19th-century hybridizer Bory Latour-Marliac. He was one of the first horticulturists to successfully cross wild water lilies from temperate zones with exotic water lilies. It was at the 1889 Universal Exhibition that painter Claude Monet discovered the water lilies that would make the beauty of his Giverny pond. These flowers were an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Monet, who painted several hundred canvases depicting the water lilies in his garden. This part of the garden is a tribute to the friendship between Monet and the Vendéen Clemenceau. In summer, you can see Monet's "star-shaped dahlias" and the new "Tiger Rose" or Clemenceau Rose from June onwards.

The basins are adorned with Gargoyles that house Zen Frogs created by artist Rolland Joubert.

25 - Scene of the 5 immortals on their way to "The Lost Valley".

We asked talented Chinese sculptors living in Hebei province to create this unique scene in Europe, taken from the famous Chinese novel "*Pilgrimage to the West*". It's based on an authentic story from the 7th century: a monk named Xuanzang or Tripitaka, without warning the emperor, decides to go to India (the West) to collect and translate into Chinese the sacred texts of Buddha. The novel is very popular in China, as it is gripping, full of humor, irony and wisdom. It inspired the world-famous **Dragon Ball** manga. The feisty monkey **Sun Wukong [Monkey King]**, the pig unrestrained glutton and obsessed with beautiful Chinese girls **Zhu Bajie [Pygmy]**, the wise luggage carrier **Sha Wujing [Sandy]**, and the feisty and powerful **White Dragon Horse**, team up to protect the monk from the many dragons and demons he encounters on his way to the West. They want to devour the Monk, because they all also want to become immortal.

On the road to the Lost Valley : **Frank MEYER's Chinese Beacon n° 5 recounts the adventures of this Indiana Jones** which collected many Chinese plants and the delicious "*citrus x meyerii*".

26 - La Gloriette

A small factory or gazebo built with Thai elements. Just beyond a massif dedicated to botanist-adventurer Reginald FARRER. **See Chinese Beacon n° 6, which recounts the adventures of the Prince of Gardeners, who died in Burma.**

27- The Golden Pagoda

Guarded by two marble lions (chinthé), topped by a golden umbrella (Hti) from which bells hang, it is adorned with teak wood carvings and houses a magnificent white marble Buddha. All these works of art are authentic and come from Mandalay (Burma's second largest city). A rock garden in Mandalay dedicated to Burmese youth committed to a return to democracy. We've been very attached to this country ever since one of the park's creators began doing political science work in 1971-72 on the establishment of the dictatorship in 1962.

28- The Bali Garden

Around the Lotus Basin, you can admire the great goddess Tara, the female equivalent of Buddha, and the elephant-headed Ganesh. Ganesh is the deity of happiness, a bon vivant who devours pastries, dances, plays the viola, reads poetry, plays with and protects children and helps remove all obstacles. These volcanic stone statues were carved in Bali.

29- Burmese Spirit temples

These small altars house statuettes sculpted by artists from Mandalay, an important city in Upper Burma. They represent spirits or "nats". Most inhabitants of central Burma are Buddhists, but they believe in the supernatural powers of spirits, which can be either beneficent or malefic. They are represented in pagodas, in areas dedicated to them or in small domestic altars. Like Buddha, they are entitled to offerings of flowers, fruit and incense.

To get to the 2nd small altar, cross the valley and go up to the ogres' square, where a small temple has been built to display Buddhist statues, guarded by two ogres who protect the sacred places.

31- The Alexandra David Neel trail

This tireless explorer and Buddhist enthusiast was the first woman to reach Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. When she left for Tibet, dressed as a beggar, she left almost all her luggage and her mule with the Vendéen missionary Father Ouvrard, stationed near on the river side Mekong Tsechung (Cizhong). **Chinese beacon n° 7 - dedicated to the adventurous botanist George FORREST.**

32- Maryse's rose garden

Pass under the rose arches and around the circular clump of bush roses. You can go out onto the lawn to see the rhododendron and azalea beds.

33- The flight of Garuda

This part of the park, planted with small bamboo groves, is dedicated to the German botanist and agro-forester Sir Dietrich Brandis (1824-1907), who in 1879 founded a forest school in the Indian town of Dehra Dun to train forestry officers to combat the deforestation of the forests of India and Burma by exotic wood traders, and to ecologically manage the teak and bamboo forests. He was immortalized by Rudyard Kipling, in the guise of Inspector Müller, in his story "In the Rukh", the sequel to Mooglie's adventures.

In the middle of the valleys sits the mythical Garuda bird, famous throughout Southeast Asia and the Far East. Here, it is associated with the famous god Vishnu, protector of the universe.

Go to Chinese Beacon no. 8, which marks the large clump of camellias, rhododendrons and hydrangeas dedicated to the last of the great botanical explorers in China, Frank KINGDON WARD .

34- Jean Houzeau de Lehaie Station and Pandashop Showroom

To complete your visit, you can visit the bed dedicated to Jean Houzeau de Lehaie, naturalist and specialist in the study of bamboos. Our bamboo collection is dedicated to him. Because of the botanical, agronomic and economic importance of bamboos worldwide, he wished to create Bambusetum (a place for planting, conserving and researching bamboos, like e. g. the Maymyo botanical garden near Mandalay in Burma). To find out more, you can read the panel summarizing his life and work, as well as our article in Wikipedia.fr and .en, which we produced thanks to the archives of the Houzeau de Lehaie family (Mons - St Barthelémy in Belgium).

In summer, you can buy plants in the PANDASHOP showroom, and small souvenirs at the Boutique in the reception pavilion.

Thank you for your visit and we look forward to seeing you again.