



COLLOQUE EUROPEEN SUR LA CONSERVATION
DES JARDINS FRUITIERS ET POTAGERS HISTORIQUES
EUROPEAN SYMPOSIUM ON THE CONSERVATION OF
HISTORIC FRUIT AND KITCHEN GARDENS



More than two hundred specialists and amateurs gather for the launch of the European symposium on the conservation of historic fruit and kitchen gardens

A body of participants reflecting the diversity of a community

The inaugural session of the Chambord Conversations, the first of the four online sessions of the symposium took place on October 15, 2020. The face-to-face conclusion of the symposium will take place in Chambord in 2021, when the health situation permits.

Historic fruit and kitchen gardens have long experienced hard times that led to the disappearance of many of them, but this is apparently no longer the case today. As Susan Campbell (Walled Kitchen Gardens Network) and Alix de Saint Venant (Amis du Potager du Roi), the two co-chairs of the conference, noted, it is very comforting to feel in several European countries a real renewal of interest for this type of garden.

In his words of welcome, Jean d'Haussonville, General manager of the Domaine National de Chambord, indicated the importance he attaches to this conference which responds to the new taste for gardens, the quest for food quality, and which contributes to the discussions on environmental protection and sustainable tourism.

The participants in the colloquium fairly well represent the great diversity of the community of specialists and amateurs in the conservation of fruit gardens and historic kitchen gardens community. They are :

- Garden managers, garden owners and landscape designers
- Head gardeners, gardeners, horticulturists and nurserymen
- Heads of cultural institutions, journalists
- Researchers, educators, students
- Fruit and kitchen gardens lovers.

While they each have unique and very different knowledge and experiences of historic fruit and vegetable gardens, all people gathered for the inaugural session seemed to show a great desire for exchanges between the members of a same community. Participants in the symposium come mainly from France, England, the Netherlands and Belgium and also from Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland and even the United States.



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As Susan Campbell and Alix de Saint Venant have noted, many people see the conference as something both intellectual and practical and likely to help them develop a project they are pursuing in the field of historic fruit and kitchen gardens conservation: projects to create or restore a garden, research projects, training projects, projects to disseminate knowledge of these gardens!

Since the conference will take place over several months, we will obviously aim to ensure that the exchanges and discussions between the participants and the organizers make it possible to advance several of the projects carried out by the participants, in order to translate the new interest in historic fruit and kitchen gardens into practical action!

Finally, one should note the interest of several participants in fruit trees trained in espaliers and other classical forms and in the knowledge and savoir-faire attached to this arboriculture.





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An event that will take place over several months

Even if this was not the original plan of the organizers, this symposium will now take place over at least eight months! The plan of the Amis du Potager du Roi and the Walled Kitchen Gardens Network was to organize, in collaboration with the Domaine National de Chambord, a one-day European conference.

Insofar as the health crisis made it very difficult for foreign speakers and participants to travel, the organizers have devised a new formula for the symposium, which now consists of:

- The Chambord Conversations: four virtual conferences. Each lasting two and a half hours, and organized on ZOOM, these conferences are each devoted to a specific theme of the symposium
- A closing "face-to-face" meeting in Chambord.

The Chambord Conversations

**October 15,
2020**
9 30 – 12 00 (UK
time)
10-30 -13 00
(French time)

Opening of the Symposium. Organization and participants' expectations

Why so many historic fruit and kitchen gardens disappear?

The great fragility of historic fruit and kitchen gardens. The challenge with their original nourishing function? What are their new functions? Why are so many of these gardens disappearing?

Is it possible to define a few good principles for their conservation?

- Susan Campbell, Founder of the Walled Gardens Network
- Alix de Saint Venant (Château de Valmer).
- and all the other speakers of the symposium

The first session ended with a virtual visit of the new kitchen garden of Chambord guided by Baptiste Saulnier

Next sessions:

**December 17,
2020**
9-30 -12 00 (UK
time)
10 30- 13 00
(French time)

Historic "jewels" and ancient savoir-faire of fruit and kitchen gardens "with a history". How to best conserve them? How to conserve and transmit ancient know-how?

Presentation and discussion of three European examples: a genuine historic nourishing garden preserved until today. Preservation of old methods of keeping fruits and vegetables.



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Conservation of 19th century greenhouses and of the know-how of cultivation under glass. The art of training trees in espaliers and counter espaliers. The management and training of volunteers.

What is the role of historic fruit and vegetable gardens in the conservation and transmission of ancient horticultural know how? What is their role in the promotion of excellence in horticulture and ecology today and in the future?

- Jim Buckland and Sarah Wain, West Dean, United Kingdom.
- Ghislain d'Ursel, Château de Hex, Belgium.
- Herman Van den Bossche, Gaasbeek, Belgium.
- Susan Campbell and Alix de Saint Venant.

**February 4,
2021**

9-30 -12 00 (UK
time)

10 30- 13 00
(French time)

Inventing new functions that could ensure the future of historic gardens

How to invent new functions that replace the nourishing function of the garden, that correspond to a robust business model and that are in harmony with its history. Presentation and discussion of four European examples of new functions: a garden to serve a hotel restaurant, a garden with a social function, and a garden museum and the conservation approach of the administration of Bavaria.

- Jost Albert, Bavarian Administration of Palaces, Gardens and Lakes. Germany.
- Serge Conreur et Thierry Hay, Garden of Abbaye de Saint Georges de Boscherville, France.
- Dominique Popihn, Château Colbert, France.
- Stéphane Repas Mendes, Château de Prangins, Switzerland.

April 8, 2021

9-30 -12 00 (UK
time)

10 30- 13 00
(French time)

Excellence in conservation, in horticulture and in the economic model

How to achieve excellence at multiple levels: conservation, horticulture and ecology, transmission and education and economics?

The intelligence of the use of space. The economic development of a historic fruit and vegetable garden open to the public, a French experience.

How to meet the practical challenges of implementing a restoration plan for a historic fruit and vegetable garden? A British example.

- Jim Buckland et Sarah Wain, West Dean, United Kingdom.
- Henri Carvallo, Château de Villedry, France.
- Muriel de Curel, Château de Saint Jean de Beauregard, France.
- Chris et Karen Cronin, The Walled Gardens at Croome Court , United Kingdom
- Susan Campbell and Alix de Saint Venant.



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The closing meeting in Chambord

The contents of the Chambord Conversations correspond to the contents that what were planned for the one-day meeting in Chambord. The only topic that will not be covered in the conversations is that of producing a catalog of good practices for the conservation of historic fruit and kitchen gardens.

As we proposed to the participants on October 15, we would now like to co-construct with them, not only the catalogue of good practices but also the whole programme of the closing meeting. Among the possible themes that could be considered:

- Finalization of the catalogue of good practices for the conservation of historic fruit and Kitchen gardens.
- Furthers discussion of some of the themes of the Interviews of Chambord
- Presentation and discussion of participants' projects: garden projects, research projects, training projects, projects to disseminate knowledge of gardens, etc.
- Presentation of gardens not presented in the Conversations of Chambord
- Presentation and discussion of themes not dealt with in the Conversations of Chambord: evolution of the gardening profession, integration of old and new horticultural and arboricultural savoir-faire, transmission of savoir-faire, etc.
- Etc.

Experimenting with a new symposium model

The implementation of the new organization required all our partners to make a lot of effort and we would like to thank them for their openness and flexibility.

Today, we are convinced that the new online and face-to-face formula has great potential and may even prove to be a better formula than the one-day symposium that we initially envisioned. Without the new organization, it would probably not have been possible to bring together such a large group of participants and so representative of the community of specialists and amateurs in the conservation of historic fruit and vegetable gardens. It would probably not have been possible either to bring together representatives of such a diversity of gardens.

The new organization also has the advantage of giving the participants and the organizers time to discuss their experiences, projects, skills, etc. With the new organization, we hope that it will even be possible to carry out experiments of co-creation.

In the coming months, we will be implementing approaches aimed at enabling the members of the historic fruit and vegetable garden conservation community participating in the symposium to work together to make this experience a success. Of course, all conference documents are bilingual and simultaneous translation is available to participants in all sessions.

However, we have to be very clear: the interactive approach is only a suggestion. Some participants may decide to attend as simple participants. This is also perfect for us!

Amis du Potager du Roi and Walled Kitchen Gardens Network