



CARRÉ DES JARDINIERS | 2021

LANDSCAPE GARDENERS

ARE READY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW'S WORLD

Every two years, the Carré des Jardiniers contest is a highlight for landscape gardeners and landscape gardening in general. Candidates for the next edition are invited to apply now. Below you will find comments from former finalists and Master Gardeners about the job, its challenges and how it has become modernized.

Landscape gardening has significantly changed in recent years and continues to evolve to meet a host of new challenges. It helps homeowners design gardens that respect nature and their surroundings and work with local government agencies to use plants as solutions to urban problems like pollution and heat pockets. Landscape gardeners train society on a day-to-day basis to bring man closer to nature and ensure pride of place for plants in gardens and public spaces.

In this way, the jobs of landscape gardeners evolve in response to on-going changes, particularly in climate and society. The Carré des Jardiniers finalists are convinced of this mission. They know they have a central role to play in imagining today the garden for (gracious) living in tomorrow's world - the theme of this year's contest!



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FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH GARDENS AND GREEN SPACES FULL OF PLANTS

Climate change impacts the daily life of landscape designers who, depending on their regions and soils, have to modify their working practices and teach their clients what needs to be done.

Finalist of the Carré des Jardiniers contest in 2019 **Antoine Deltour** says this is fundamental today – and tomorrow: *“For several years now winter and spring seasons have been dry. We are worried by the impact of drought and global warming on plant life. In the region where I live and work, we have stopped recommending some species as they are too fragile – beech for example. **We must adapt our choice of plants** and pick more Mediterranean species of trees like holm oaks. We must also work with the soil in place and not overly destructure it. **We adapt the plants to the ground rather than the reverse**”.*

Climate change also affects biodiversity and the place of plants in gardens. **Sylvère Fournier**, Master Gardener in 2015 states *“**If we are not the first to defend biodiversity, nobody else will.** We have to choose the right plants for the region where we work. The nursery gardeners propose a range of well-acclimatised plants and their customers understand that their gardens must evolve, use less water and that a beautiful garden does not necessarily mean a beautiful lawn! I believe it is a heresy to lay out completely dead gardens featuring minerals and synthetic grass. Our job is not to create deserts but to strive for a different opulence of greenery. **Our main mission is to bring our customers closer to nature. That way they can “get away from it all”!**”*

A vision shared by **Luc Echilley**, Master Gardener in 2013, who is convinced that plants must be the main focus of a garden. *“The challenge is to convince young people and people who want a garden to understand that **our core business is plants.** We are neither builders nor garden decorators but people who give life to gardens – which requires time and is inspired by poetry. Forget fashions, “catalogue gardens” and plants perceived as products. It is vital to create barriers because we are working with living materials. Our added value as landscapers is plants, our understanding of people and their gardens and is absolutely not a “manufacturer and decorator” approach.*

The general public is increasingly aware of the importance of plants and the need to consider seasons and gardens in the long term. This awareness is positive!”



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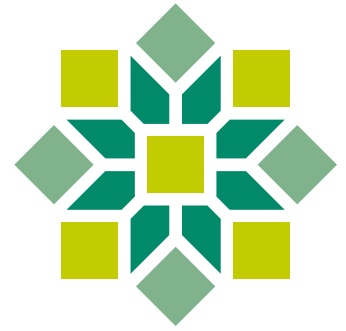
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Vegetalisation is also essential in city centres, affecting not only the environment but also the quality of life and public health. Green spaces are no longer “add-ons” to property developments but real responses to urban problems like heat pockets, wellbeing and pollution.

Laurent Gras, Master Gardener in 2019 explains that *“greening our cities is essential to fight heat pockets, but also to improve the quality of life. We have to bring the countryside into town centres so people can breathe and take times-out. We also have a mission to teach our customers to make them aware of the threats, to teach our suppliers so we get reliable materials with an acceptable carbon index and to teach our employees. This teaching effort pays. The younger generations are more open to these questions because of their education and the society they live in. For example for them sorting, recycling and managing wastes resulting from landscaping are obvious”*.

Landscape gardeners are driving forces in current changes in society. They know they have a central role to play. As **Anne Cabrol**, Master Gardener in 2017 puts it, *“We are at a turning point in our daily lifestyles, in the way we consume, in the way we travel, in the way we spend our leisure time. Landscapers contribute to this change – as teachers, as communicators and also by planting city centres to fight heat pockets and create social bonding”*.



RECRUITING AND TRAINING THE GARDENERS OF THE FUTURE

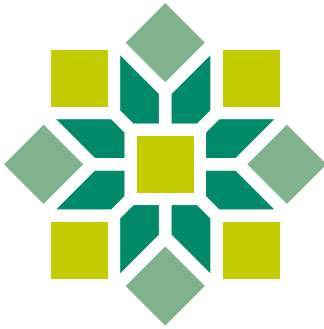
Despite the fact that homeowners have developed a true passion for nature and the surroundings of their houses and that the public authority market is doing well, the landscaping sector is currently facing acute recruitment problems.

As André Bisaccia, finalist in the Carré des Jardiniers contest in 2019 says “a paramount question for which we need to find answers is that although we can easily take on more people, we cannot find recruits. What we do is apparently less attractive than other sectors like building, for example.

Landscape designing has several facets and aspects – maintenance, creation, pruning, public authorities, homeowners, etc. It is up to us to get them better known to make landscaping more tempting. Landscaping and gardening are great jobs!



This challenge is also that of education and closer working between organisations like the MFR (Rural Family Houses), schools and landscaping businesses which must be in permanent contact with apprentices to coach them in the trade, the techniques and the specialities”.



Training problems are linked to the need to communicate about landscaping and gardening in general. **Anne Cabrol**, Master Gardener in 2017 says *“There is an awakening of awareness of people of the need to conserve nature, there are policies on the importance of protecting the environment and biodiversity and in particular to vegetalise town centres. Our mission is to talk to customers, our friends and families – the future professionals. I regularly teach at the Dardilly Horticultural College near Lyon in France and am confronted with the obsolete landscaping practices of yesteryear. However many of the students who want to become gardeners see the job differently – as a profession which pays special attention to plants, favours soft pruning, takes biodiversity into account when choosing plants and believes in Mother Earth. Today our businesses are open to a much broader public, in particular more women and people looking to change jobs.*

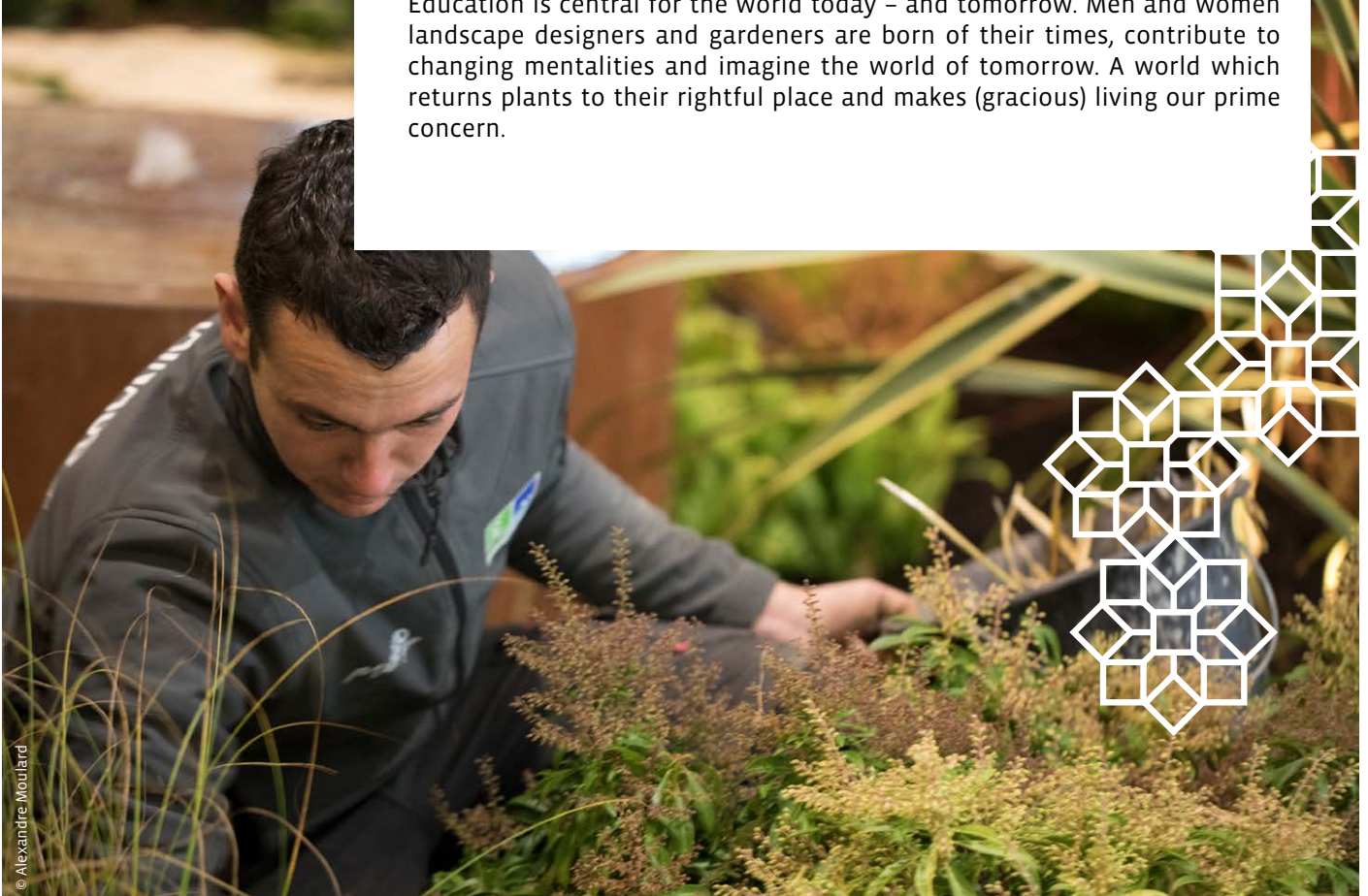
For me, the future of the profession lies in attracting people from different backgrounds by another closer to nature and less mechanized vision of landscaping”.

A vision shared by Antoine Deltour, finalist of the Carré des Jardiniers contest in 2019, who thinks it is vital to boost awareness in future generations: *“I would say to young landscape designers: watch out, first and foremost you are working with living nature. Respect it! Get outside the fence and away from ground cover: plant the right species, make the soil permeable again. This is a colossal challenge which must be reflected in college curricula to ensure they evolve in the right direction”.*

Education is central for the world today – and tomorrow. Men and women landscape designers and gardeners are born of their times, contribute to changing mentalities and imagine the world of tomorrow. A world which returns plants to their rightful place and makes (gracious) living our prime concern.



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THE VISION OF UNEP PRESIDENT LAURENT BIZOT, AHEAD OF OUR TIME

Unep President Laurent Bizot believes, landscapers and gardeners must be in the vanguard of progress and adapt to changes in society.

« Although a traditional business, landscape gardeners must always be ahead of their time. It is not just a question of knowing the trends, the colours, the styles of gardens or plants in fashion. You have to keep up with the very latest techniques to reassure increasingly more informed customers, anticipate climate change to create long-lasting gardens and be a teacher to influence mentalities. Zero pesticides, robotisation, digitalization, protection of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change – there are so many challenges facing our profession! We are ready to meet them. »

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To discover the gardens created by the 5 finalists in the 2021 edition on the theme “a garden for (gracious) living” at Eurexpo in Lyon, France, book the dates from 30th November to 2nd December.

There is also a new Web site:

carre-des-jardiniers.com

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