

# THE PERFUMER'S GARDEN



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1623 • 2023



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# CATHERINE PÉGARD

President, Palace of Versailles

The gardens tell a story of Versailles that has been passed down from generation to generation by its gardeners.

Everyone loved the gardens. First there was Louis XIV, who conceived them as an extension to or mirror of the Palace, and even as self-standing “architecture” in their own right. It is often said that the Trianon palaces, were they not part of the Versailles estate, would be unique, self-contained attractions. This is equally true of the gardens and groves, about whose extreme variety and historical role through 400 years we are constantly learning.

Louis XIV gave as much importance to them as to his living quarters. They were designed to his glory by André Le Nôtre. They reflected the power of the throne and were such a feature of the sovereign's life that he was their first guide, himself writing a description of “How to visit them.” Louis XV was an enlightened botanist and focused his zeal on the Trianon estate, which would soon become the largest exotic garden in Europe, with more than 4,000 previously unknown species. Louis XVI left to Marie-Antoinette the enjoyment of making changes. The Queen exiled the trees to Paris, to the *Jardin des Plantes*, and brought fashionable English-style flowerbeds to the parterres. Saying has it that Napoleon I when a guest at the Grand Trianon took the time to have a pine tree planted there in remembrance of his native Corsica.

Everyone loved the trees; everyone loved the flowers. We are told that women in the court of Louis XIV would faint with intoxication at the scent of the tuberose. We know that Louis XIV set off the “Royal orange blossom” (*fleur d'oranger du Roy*) craze, while his grandson Louis XV preferred Eau de Cologne. Marie-Antoinette, the queen of fashion, arranged scented flowers just as she would the colours of her gowns.



In fact, the gardens tell a story of Versailles that has been passed down from generation to generation by its gardeners. After the pandemic that kept so many people from breathing in their charm, the looming climate change makes gardens even more essential. Every year, a grove is reborn, a pathway way is realigned, a parterre takes on new colours, and “new” paths, such as the one through stately trees, awakening the curiosity of saunterers.

This year, with the loving involvement of Francis Kurkdjian and the patronage of his *Maison*, the gardeners of Trianon have created an extraordinary new garden in Versailles, the *Perfumer's Garden*. A delightful lesson from yesteryear in which a thousand flowers share the sweetest—and sometimes most unpleasant—scents that by a mysterious alchemy yield an infinite variety of perfumes.

Since, when it comes to gardens, gardeners must have the last word, those of the Trianon have gone so far as to create a small “Secret garden” which we believe embodies all the personal dreams that have inspired the “greenery salons” of Versailles for 400 years.



Left: Roses  
Right: Tuberoses

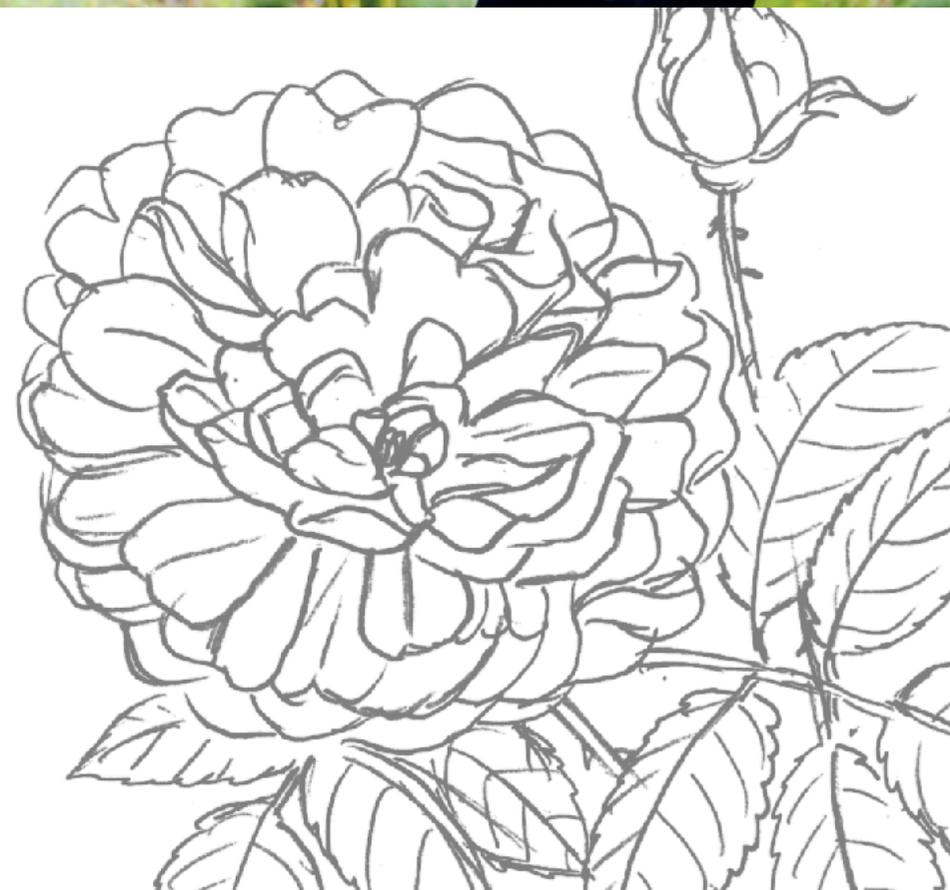


# FRANCIS KURKDJIAN

Perfumer and artistic director

The story of Francis Kurkdjian and Versailles is a story of never-ending inspiration. The first words that came to his mind when he saw the Estate were “grandeur,” “splendour,” and “extravagance.” But the relationship between them is intimate, deep, and sensitive.

The fragrance artist honed his skills at ISIPCA, the storied perfume school in Versailles. As a student living in a garret apartment, he would go to the gardens of Versailles to study. “I stood out a bit in my class for how much I loved these places,” Francis Kurkdjian confides. At the same time, he joined the Versailles Soleil dance company, participating in light and sound shows to accompany the Grandes Eaux. As the only man in the troupe, Kurkdjian—who had long known he would never become a professional dancer—found himself cast as the Sun King. Some twelve years later, Kurkdjian revived the lavish parties of Louis XIV by infusing the Orangery basin with fragrance. This dream was kept alive through a series of other olfactory installations and experiences that he today calls his “Versailles Saga.” He even reconstructed a historical perfume attributed to Marie Antoinette, and tanned and scented a pair of gloves using traditional methods. Later came the immersive exposition *Virtually Versailles*, which remains on tour around the world with the *Royal Delight* perfume, specially formulated around the orange flower so dear to King Louis XIV. “I was, and I remain, a visitor, but Versailles has been a stage for me,” explains Francis Kurkdjian. Through these events, he has been able to showcase his creativity, but also help “bring History to life” and contribute to “translating, into our modern language, what Versailles has to say.”



This endeavour continues today with the *Perfumer's Garden*, this “little garden still unknown to the public,” which Francis Kurkdjian and the Palace's teams have turned into a unique site that highlights the important role perfumers and fragrance played in the court. “When I was a kid, Versailles was the King, the Queen, and that's it. For a while now, people have become interested in the different types of craftsmanship there, rediscovering the richness of the various types of savoir-faire.” The Garden is also the fruit of the encounter between Francis Kurkdjian and the Trianon gardeners. “We worked together to select the species, we had a deep exchange about flower and plants, we thought together about how best to ensure successive blooms so that there would always be something happening in the garden; we all learned something from each other and shared the pleasure of watching this develop.”

Who knows what dreams will be born here? Francis Kurkdjian, who likes to remind us that scents create memories, sees this garden as full of “Proustian madeleines in the making.” His dream has proven itself a persistent one—and the image of a garden where wonder is renewed from season to season is, without a doubt, a perfect illustration of this.



Left: Jasmine tobacco  
Right: Carnations





Opposite: View of  
*Perfumer's Garden*

# PRESS RELEASE

The *Perfumer's Garden* opens on the 30th of May 2023, created with the support of Maison Francis Kurkdjian.

On the 30th of May 2023, the Palace of Versailles will open to the public a unique site in the heart of the Trianon Estate, thanks to patronage by Maison Francis Kurkdjian: *The Perfumer's Garden*.

Boasting hundreds of fragrances used in perfumery and cultivated in the spirit of the 17th century Trianon Gardens, the garden sheds light on the history of perfume in the court of Versailles.

## **Versailles: a history steeped in perfume**

In the 17th century, when Louis XIV ordered the construction of the Porcelain Trianon (which would be replaced by the Marble Trianon in 1687), flowers were all the rage, and the parterres were bursting with intoxicating blossoms: jasmine, tuberose, and even hyacinth. The flowers suffused the gardens with fragrance and bloomed the whole year round, thanks to a system of nurseries.

At the same time, fragrance was taking off at the court of Versailles, with the Palace becoming the cradle of perfume-making artistry from the late 17th century on. Artisans furnished rulers and courtiers with increasingly sophisticated products: fragrances, sachets, perfumed gloves, and perfumed fans.

The 18th century saw a boom in cosmetics, driven by the personal hygiene movement. Perfumery was in vogue, drawing in specialists in ever greater numbers, including Claude-François Prévost, perfumer to Queen Marie-Antoinette.



### The Perfumer's Garden

The fruit of an exceptional collaboration between the Trianon gardeners and Francis Kurkdjian, the *Perfumer's Garden* brings together hundreds of floral essences. Certain species, such as verbena, roses, and jasmine, are historical, having grown in the gardens of Versailles for centuries; some others offer surprising bouquets reminiscent of chocolate (such as the chocolate cosmos) or apple (like *Pelargonium odoratissimum*, or *apple geranium*), while other species, such as the stinking iris, give off unpleasant odours.

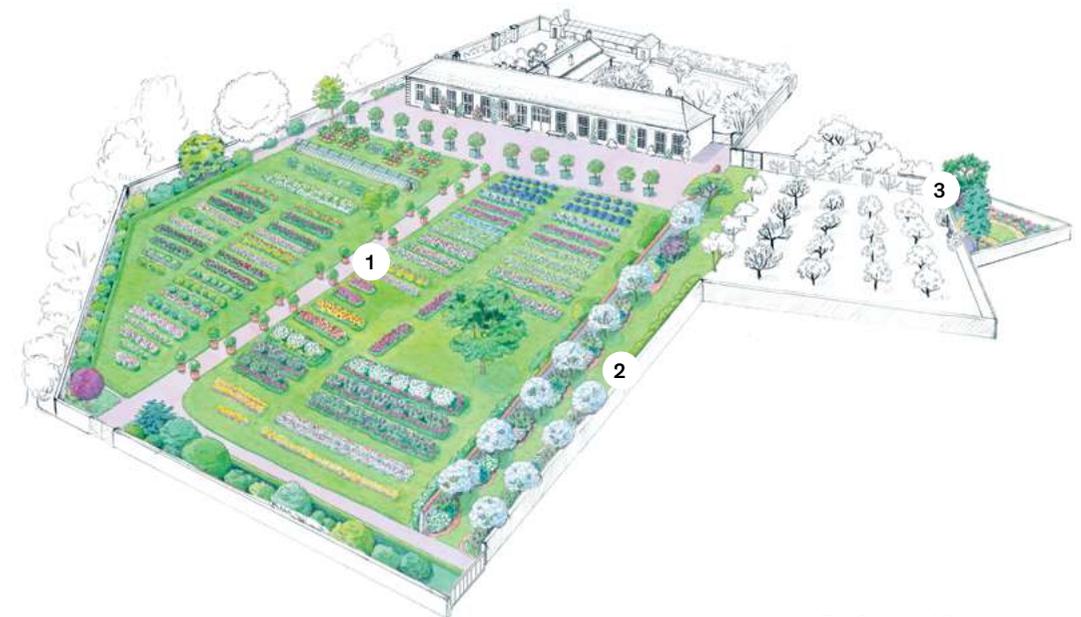
To create the *Perfumer's Garden*, gardeners worked with teams from Maison Francis Kurkdjian to select nearly 300 plants used in perfumery. Classified in nine categories according to the raw material used, these plants are the building blocks that the perfumer uses to craft fragrances. Patchouli delivers its scent through its leaves, carrot through its seeds, bergamot through its zest, cedar through its wood, rose through its petals, iris through its rhizomes, benzoin through its resin, and vanilla through the fruit of its orchid. Finally, several plants such as hyacinth, peony and violet are “silent” flowers, meaning that they release no extract that can be used in a fragrance, despite emitting a pronounced scent in nature. Perfumers must therefore recreate their aroma artificially.

Located around the Châteauneuf Orangery, the *Perfumer's Garden* is made up of three gardens, each with its own distinct identity and atmosphere.

The “Garden of Curiosities,” located across from the Orangery, features the majority of the plants, organised in several parterres in the shade of the great Paulownia, the imperial tree that bursts into flower every spring. Thanks to a buried greenhouse maintained at a constant temperature, fragrant herbs and other select plants can be grown all year round. The pathways criss-crossing the garden are interspersed with potted orange and lemon trees, whose branches will fill with fruit in the summer.

“Under the Trees” is a pathway bordered by Japanese cherry trees, made up of several patches of land covered in fragrant plants and shrubs, such as rustic jasmine, lilac, and syringa (mock orange) with its unique and delicate bouquet.

Finally, visitors must cross the orchard planted with several dozen fruit trees to find the more intimate area of the “Secret Garden.” Through a gate in the encircling stone walls, visitors discover a partially shaded garden shielded from the commotion of the outside world and laid with natural Japanese stepping stones. Wandering through this garden is like fording a river, amid perennials and unique plants that blossom at different times of the year. Orchids, rose bushes, and giant Himalayan lilies intermingle, naturalise, and adapt to their environment under the shade of a monumental cherry laurel. A bench invites visitors to sit and admire the charming panorama of this contemplative garden.



1. The Garden of Curiosities
2. Under the Trees
3. The Secret Garden

# PERFUME IN THE COURT OF VERSAILLES

Though the 17th century court of Versailles enjoyed perfuming itself with strong scents, it wasn't until in the 18th century that the art of perfumery took flight. Aromas became more subtle, and perfumers made more complex compositions. Queen Marie Antoinette, an ardent lover of flowers, would go so far as to make perfume an indispensable part of her wardrobe.

From the end of the 17th century, perfumes became a craze at the court of Versailles. Thriving under the reign of Louis XIV, the Perfumers and Glove-maker's guild was created in the 12th century. The majority of perfumers who furnished fragrances for the court also has storefronts in Paris. At that time, strong scents were not only believed to stave off disease, but they hid odours that stemmed from the so-called "dry washing". In fact, water was suspected to be a carrier of disease, so personal "hygiene" in this era usually meant just regularly changing undershirts and cleaning one's face with a plain white cloth. King Louis XIV was particularly fond of perfumes—which at the time were a true luxury product—to the extent that his contemporaries recounted that a certain Martial created fragrances for him with ambergris, musk, and tuberose. Even if this story is only a legend, it illustrates the King's passion for perfume. Nevertheless, at the end of his reign, the Sun King moved away from these strong scents in preference to orange flower water, which had become his favourite fragrance. He would go so far as to spray the water in the air to suffuse his room with the scent—thereafter christened as "The King's orange blossom."

In the 18th century, perfumes and make-up became indispensable to the court's fashion and played a leading role in the pomp of the courtiers. Under Louis XV, courtiers liked to wear a different perfume every day, to the point where Versailles would later be nicknamed "the perfumed court." Louis XV used *Eau de Cologne* for its invigorating and bracing effects. Madame de Pompadour, mistress to the King, was known to cover herself with perfumes and cosmetics. Over the course of the century, with hygiene improving and bodily odours becoming less pronounced, perfume also changed roles.



Above: Orange and Lime tree  
Next page: Lily

From that moment on, perfume was used for the pleasure of smelling good. The olfactory revolution was underway. Animal scents such as musk, civet, and ambergris, so prized under Louis XIV, fell out of style. Marie Antoinette, who loved to surround herself with flowers, participated in the birth of a new, subtle, and refreshing floral trend in perfumery. Rose, lavender, violet, and carnation were therefore especially prized. Scented products—powders, pomades, cosmetics, and scented waters—became essential elements in the wardrobes of courtiers.

At the same time, progress in the techniques used since the Middle Ages, and the increasing skills of perfumers, helped this luxury trade develop. Multi-step distillation techniques yielded much more delicate and concentrated essential oils, which lasted up to two years. Thus, the perfumer no longer had to rely on the rhythm of the seasons to compose fragrances. New scents came into being during this period, some thanks to the cold enfleurage technique, which allowed fragrance extraction from flowers too delicate to be heated by instead infusing them in a fatty medium. This is the case for jasmine or tuberose. Other scents arrived in France with the development of international maritime commerce and trade routes that made it easier to import raw material from abroad. These evolutions contributed to the widening of the perfumer's palette, which could then produce a fragrance bouquet—called "1,000 flowers"—with floral essences from diverse seasons and regions. That is why Versailles is considered today to be the heart of the perfume-making trade.



## THE PALETTE OF THE PERFUMER'S GARDEN

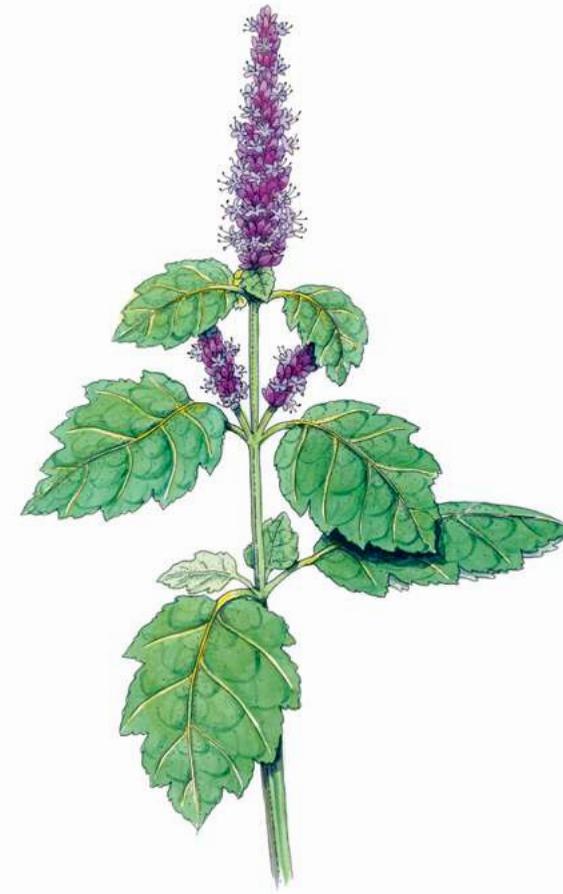
Perfume is traditionally described in terms of head notes, heart notes, and base notes. Fragrance molecules evaporate gradually, taking anywhere from a few seconds to several days, which allows a perfume to display all its different facets over time.

The perfumer's real talent lies in the choice of materials and their concentration, allowing for a high degree of subtlety and refinement.

To create the *Perfumer's Garden*, the gardeners of Trianon and the teams from the Maison Francis Kurkdjian selected some 300 plants used in perfumery. These plants constitute the perfumer's palette, and are grouped according to the raw material used: i.e. flowers, zest, or wood. The *Perfumer's Garden* shines new light on these types of main ingredients through nine emblematic, exotic, or surprising raw materials.

## Leaves and / or stems

The leaves and stems of certain plants are used in perfumery to bring fresh, green notes to a fragrance. Mint, basil, and patchouli are among the plants whose leaves and stems are highly sought-after by creators. Their aromas are extracted through classic methods, such as steam distillation.



**Patchouli**  
*Pogostemon cablin*

Patchouli is an exotic plant originating in Southeast Asia and the Philippines. It made its appearance in Europe in the 19th century, when cashmere shawls exported from Asia were wrapped in patchouli leaves to protect them from moths. The leaves are steam-distilled to yield patchouli essence. Patchouli is a strong and subtle smell, heady and distinctive: at once woody, earthy, and dry.

## Seeds

Seeds can be seen as the perfumer's secret weapon. Little known by the general public for their uses in perfumery, they nonetheless offer unique olfactory richness to the perfumer's creations. The seeds of coriander, cumin, fennel, or even carrot, are often used, their essence extracted through steam distillation. Owing to the diversity of plants from which they come, seeds offer a wide array of aromas—often unexpected ones—and appear in heart or base notes.



**Carrot**  
*Daucus carota*

Carrot plants are not only cultivated for their gastronomic qualities. In perfumery, the seeds are used rather than the root. Their essence—obtained through steam distillation—offers an interesting aromatic profile, delivering sweet, earthy, and lightly sweet notes. As a base note, carrot seeds lend depth and warmth to creations.



## Zests

Citrus zests are among the raw materials most beloved by perfumers. Much used in perfumery since the 17th century—notably at Versailles—citrus fruits fall in the “hesperidium” category of fruits. Orange, lemon, grapefruit, and bergamot are all hesperidiums. They offer incredible freshness, vivacity, and brilliance to the perfumer’s creations. The essential oils contained in zests are mainly extracted via cold-press.

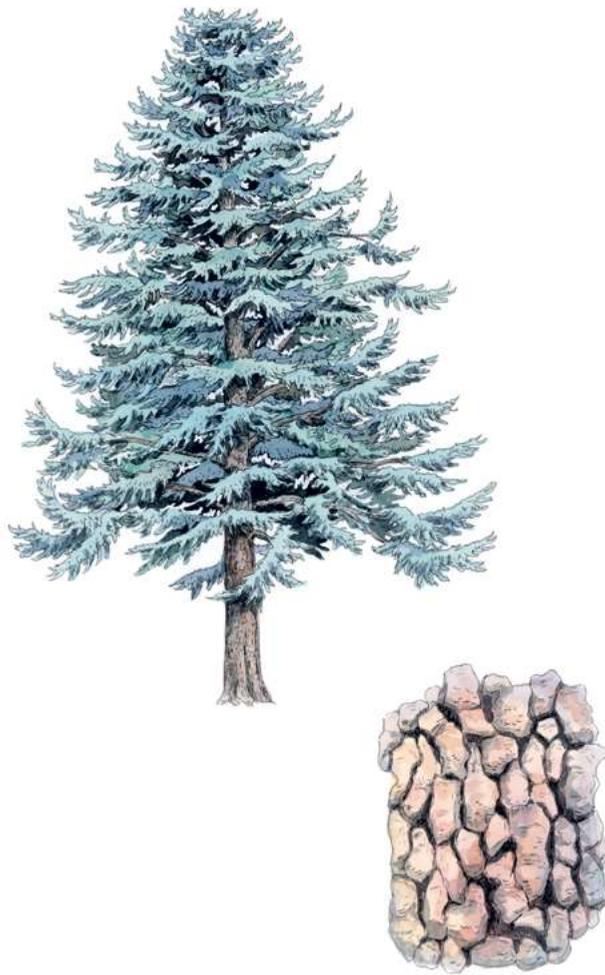


**Bergamot**  
*Citrus x aurantium* 'Bergamia'

Bergamot is a citrus plant whose origin remains a mystery, but which came from Southeast Asia. We do know, however, that its cultivation in Naples began in the 14th century. It was Francesco Procopio, AKA Procope—the chef and founder of the eponymous café—who introduced bergamot to Louis XIV’s court in 1686. Its fragrance would go on to be highly appreciated there: fresh and floral, its lightly sweet smell evokes lavender.

## Wood

The use of wood—that is, the vegetal material constituting the trunk of a tree—in perfumery may appear strange. However, wood plays a central role among the materials used by perfumers, since their essences are so varied: think of cedar, sandalwood, rosewood, and birch. Wood is primarily used as a heart or base note in fragrances. It lends a lot of character, and is particularly popular in men's cologne.



**Cedar**  
*Cedrus atlantica*

Cedar is very popular in perfume-making for its woody, warm, and long-lasting notes. Its essence is extracted from its bark and wood through steam distillation. Cedar is found in heart or base notes, and delivers a woody, dry touch to fragrances. It's often paired with citrus or flowers.



## Flowers

Flowers are the most commonly used raw material in perfumery, spanning hundreds of varieties from different families, such as spring florals, roses, spicy florals, and even powdery florals. With such an extremely wide array of types of flowers used, one finds them as often in head notes as in heart or base notes. Traditionally, flower scents were extracted through a process called “cold” or “hot” enfleurage. In both processes, the flowers are put in contact with a refined, odourless animal fat which absorbs their essential oil. The fat derived from this is mixed with alcohol according to various processes, with the final product, called the “absolute”, containing the concentrated aroma. This process is seldom used nowadays, replaced by techniques of steam distillation or volatile-solvent extraction.

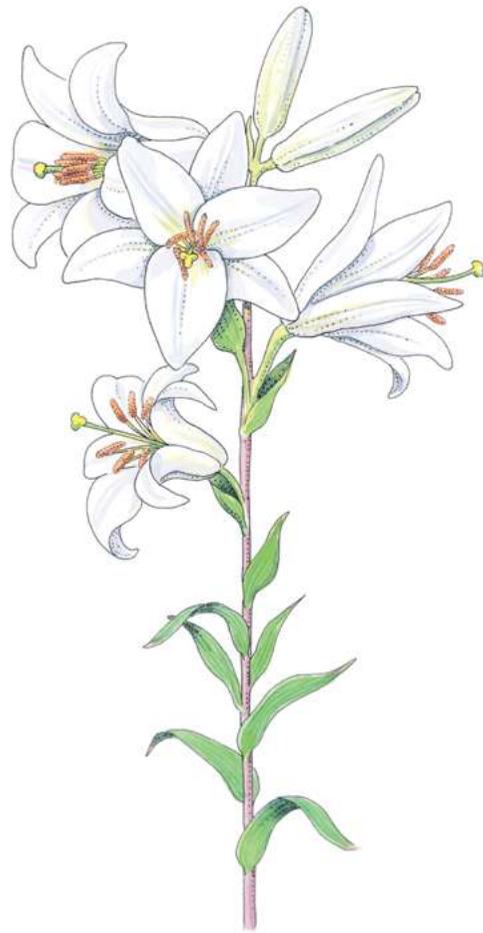


**Rose**  
***Rosa x centifolia* & *Rosa x damascena* 'Kazanlik'**

The queen of flowers, the rose has been used in perfumery since Antiquity, notably by the Romans, who employed it to suffuse their baths with aroma. The fall of the Roman Empire meant the decline of the rose's use in Europe, but it remained very popular in the Middle East. It wouldn't be until the 17th century that the rose came to dominate European perfumery, notably in Grasse, where tanners used it to mask the strong odour of leather gloves. Damask and centifolia roses are among the most-used raw materials. Roses perfectly encapsulate sweetness, sensuality, and femininity, and are found in several heart notes. Rose fragrance is extracted either by distillation to yield the essential oil, or via volatile-oil extraction to obtain the rose's absolute.

## “Silent” Flowers

Some flowers, called “silent” flowers, produce a strong fragrance in their natural state, but do not deliver any scent after an extraction process. Their fragrances are thus recreated by the perfumer with the help of synthetic or natural materials.



**White Lily**  
*Lilium candidum*

The emblematic flower of the French monarchy, the lily is found everywhere in Versailles, from the décor of the Palace to the gardens. In perfumery, the fragrance of lilies cannot be extracted. It is thus the perfumer's job to recreate its aroma. In nature, the lily exudes a powerful and sensuous fragrance, smooth and sweet. The fragrance reproduced by the perfumer is primarily used in the heart notes in feminine perfumes.



## Roots and Rhizomes

Roots and rhizomes are often used in perfumery for their complex and varied aromas. They provide earthy and woody notes. The fragrances of iris or vetiver are notably extracted from roots and rhizomes.



**Iris**  
*Iris florentina* & *Iris pallida*

The iris is a plant particularly prized by perfumers. The extraction process for its aroma is long and complex, which makes it a burdensome raw material. Even though its flower is not without its own seductive aroma, it's the iris root that offers the strongest and most subtle fragrance, at once powdery, floral, and woody. Gifted with unusually great persistence, the iris can be used in minute quantities to lend volume, or in larger quantities to help build floral or woody harmonies.

## Resin

Obtained through incisions in some plants, resin is particularly appreciated by perfumers. Extracted resin then undergoes a treatment: maceration in alcohol or extraction in volatile solvents. Thus it yields a tincture or an absolute. In perfumery, notable examples are benzoin resin or balsam of Peru.



**Benjoin (Styrax)**  
*Styrax tonkinensis*

Benjoin is the name given to a resin extracted from various plants of the genus *Styrax*. It is often used as a base note in some ambered perfumes, as well as in other fragrances for its delectable, generous aroma. It calls to mind caramel and vanilla.



## Fruits

With the exception of vanilla, fragrance cannot be extracted from fruits. For the perfumer, citrus does not count as a “fruity” note, but a “hesperidium” one. For fruits that are green (apple, pear), yellow (peach, apricot), or red (strawberry, raspberry), the perfumer has to re-create them in the same way as for silent flowers.



**Vanilla**  
*Vanilla planifolia*

Vanilla pods are the fruit of certain orchids pollinated by hand. After harvesting, these fruits require six steps to become vanilla pods. Vanilla creates a powerful, multi-faceted perfume, with decadent woody and leathery accents, often highly prized by perfumers.

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# HISTORY OF THE TRIANON GARDENS

From the 17th century onwards, the Trianon estate was developed as an intimate yet luxurious country residence for the pleasure and relaxation of the sovereigns. Kings come to stay here with their families and close friends to escape the constraints of protocol and power. Entirely turned to gardens and nature, the estate exudes a subtle floral atmosphere that over the centuries has always delighted enthusiasts.

The history of the estate began in 1668 when Louis XIV decided to buy and raze the small medieval village of Trianon adjoining the royal estate. Fascinated by this place where he loved to stroll, the Sun King built a small château in honour of his mistress at the time, the Marquise de Montespan. Created by Louis Le Vau, the Porcelain Trianon is entirely covered with white and blue earthenware and multicoloured sculptures. The charm of the estate lies in its gardens, whose lushness quickly gave the building another nickname, “Palace of Flora”. Entrusted to the hands of Michel III Le Bouteux, the domain was then a kingdom of flowers. This gardener spared no effort to ensure that the King might enjoy a lavish garden, continuously flowering with rare, colourful and highly fragrant species. He freely brought in flowers from all over France, and from abroad—such as tulips from Holland and jasmines from Spain. Together with the royal lilies, these thousands of tuberose, daffodils, anemones, cyclamen and other hyacinths formed a veritable palette of blue, white and red: the colours of the king and the Virgin. But the greatest achievement was the orange trees planted in open ground, which must be protected with glazing every winter. Two trellised galleries frame the garden: one of them led to the “fragrance cabinet”, a small building where one could come and enjoy the floral scents.

Previous page: Lilacs  
Opposite: Aerial view  
of the Trianon estate



In 1687, Louis XIV tired of this architecture and had a new castle built: the “Marble Trianon”. Designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, this Italianate palace stretches out in a succession of gold and pink wings. A peristyle designed by Robert de Cotte joins the courtyard to the gardens, placing the palace at the very centre of nature. André Le Nôtre, newly in charge of Trianon, made few changes to the architecture of the gardens. Descending from the peristyle, thousands of flowers cover the upper parterre; jasmine-covered trellises line the low parterre, and orange trees on open ground form rows on the left. Several existing pools are located here: the “Bassin du Plat-Fond” at the end of the perspective, a rectangular pool along the “Trianon-sous-Bois” wing and the “Bassin du Trèfle”. Finally, near the entrance to the palace, a special garden, now called the “King’s Garden”, includes fragrant flowers of the most delicate and remarkable kind.

When Louis XIV died in 1715, Trianon was in a fairly neglected state. In 1741, Louis XV offered the “Marble Trianon” to Queen Marie Leszczyńska. The estate nevertheless experienced a new chapter in its history from 1750 onwards. Louis XV, a botanical enthusiast, created several gardens to the north-east of the “Marble Trianon”, intended for private cultivation: a vegetable garden, a flower garden, a fig garden along with hothouses, a rare novelty at the time. The estate gradually became a place for scientific experiments and horticultural studies. Gardeners gathered the most beautiful and fashionable species, acclimatised rare and exotic flowers and created new varieties. Claude Richard assembled a collection of some 4,000 plant species, a number unequalled at the time. These sometimes came from very distant lands such as India, China and Asia Minor. It was also on these grounds that Bernard de Jussieu first applied his new classification of plants. The Trianon gardens also hosted the agronomist Duhamel du Monceau, who inaugurated a new sowing system, as well as Tillet, who conducted his work on wheat diseases there.



Above: Petit Trianon

In 1761, Louis XV commissioned Gabriel to build a new castle, the Petit Trianon, for Madame de Pompadour, his favourite. In the end it was Madame Du Barry who received it, as Madame de Pompadour died in 1764, four years before the construction was completed. In 1768, the newly crowned Louis XVI offered the estate to Queen Marie Antoinette. Caring little for horticulture, she chose to transfer the botanical collections to the King’s Garden in Paris (now the *Jardin des Plantes*) and abandoned the scientific and encyclopaedic orientation of the areas formerly dedicated to research. The Queen did keep the French Garden and its buildings. Won over by the fashion for Anglo-Chinese gardens, she created a new English garden on the site of the botanical garden and then her Queen’s Hamlet on fresh land to the north-east. These gardens reflect the Queen’s taste for nature, echoing the ideas advocated throughout the 18th century by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

# WHAT THE GARDENERS HAVE TO SAY

What is the main idea behind the *Perfumer's Garden*?

What does it hope to accomplish? Alain Baraton, head gardener of the Trianon estate, awarded the design and creation of this garden to Giovanni Delù and his staff. They recount the behind-the-scenes story of creating this unique garden in Versailles and reveal their vision of the gardener's craft. They also explain the importance that visitors have for them in their daily work.

**How did the idea for the *Perfumer's Garden* originate?**

*Alain Baraton:* The idea behind the *Perfumer's Garden* was to create a partnership of excellence. Through it, the men and women who work as the Trianon gardeners can express their talents and personalities. Too often we have differentiated two kinds of gardeners: the landscape gardener, who is an artist, and, on the other hand—I'm caricaturing here—someone who tends the garden. I take the opposite view, that gardening is a complex and comprehensive profession. The gardener is a craftsman able to create, preserve and maintain gardens. I am delighted that my teams, and in particular Giovanni Delù, in charge of the *Perfumer's Garden*, are handling the creation of an innovative place, at the crossroads of gardening and perfumery, reconnecting with the history of the Palace, which has seen the birth and development of the perfumer's trade since as long ago as the 17th century. Giovanni Delù, in collaboration with Maison Francis Kurkdjian teams, chose all the species cultivated in the *Perfumer's Garden*, came up with the idea of the "Secret Garden", the "Under the Trees" pathway, the restoration of the underground greenhouse, and more benches so that visitors could enjoy the contemplative qualities of this place.

Opposite:  
«The Secret Garden»



**The project seems to focus on the visitors.**

*Giovanni Delù:* Absolutely! I'm thrilled that the *Perfumer's Garden* will make it possible to open the gardens of the Châteauneuf Orangery to the public for the first time. I've been working there for many years. The guided tours will showcase the skills of gardeners and perfumers as well as the history of the Trianon gardens and the science of botany. It's giving new life to this magnificent area tucked away in the middle of the Trianon estate.

**What is special about this garden?**

*Alain Baraton:* The garden is a training ground for sharing and wonder. This is what we were aiming for in designing the *Perfumer's Garden*. The vision for new botanical creation is to awaken the visitors' senses, to surprise them while giving them a better understanding of the process of making a perfume, from the plant to the fragrance. For instance, did you know that hyacinths, peonies and violets are "mute" flowers because they don't give off any extracts that can be used in a perfume? To compose a perfume with these essences, the perfumer must artificially re-compose their scent.

**What is the future of this garden?**

*Giovanni Delù:* We've been creating it for two years now. Our profession requires patience and perseverance. We're just getting started. My hope is that the plantings will have time to develop over the years and that way put on the best show possible.

*Alain Baraton:* The *Perfumer's Garden* is already beautiful, but really the best is yet to come. Cherry trees and lilacs have been planted along the "Under the Trees" pathway, and I know they will be wonderful in 10, 15 or 20 years. We are making this garden as much for tomorrow's visitors as for those of today. I will have succeeded in my job if, in 20 or 30 years I see pictures of the *Perfumer's Garden* full, abundant bloom. Then I'll be able to say that I contributed something to it. I think this garden is a new Versailles grove that will last a long time.

# A RICH CULTURAL PROGRAMME

**3 and 4 June 2023**

*The Perfumer's Garden featured at the Rendez-vous aux Jardins*

The *Perfumer's Garden* opens its doors on the occasion of France's *Rendez-vous aux Jardins* event, conceived this year on the national theme of "Music in the Garden." On 3 and 4 June, visitors are invited to stroll through the sumptuous gardens of Trianon and beyond, to explore this new abundantly flowered area and to learn more about the history of perfume at the court of Versailles.

Throughout the weekend, students will welcome visitors, from the *Place d'Armes* of the Grand Trianon to the *Perfumer's Garden*. Students from the *Institut Supérieur International du Parfum de la Cosmétique et de l'Aromatique Alimentaire* (ISIPCA) will discuss their training and career opportunities in the the perfumery professions today. Young facilitators from the *Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'Éducation* (INSPE) will speak about the history of the site. All to the musical accompaniment of the students of the *Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Versailles Grand Parc* (CRR), who will entertain visitors with baroque oboes, natural trumpets, viols and antique percussion instruments.

The Trianon gardeners, for their part, will invite visitors to immerse themselves in the world of fragrances with discussions and presentations of plants that compose perfumes. The exploration will continue with demonstrations of extracting essences from plants.

Practical informations:  
Free of charge  
Hours: 10am to 6:30 pm  
No reservation needed

[en.chateauversailles.fr](http://en.chateauversailles.fr)

Opposite: Sweet alyssum





**From 30 May to 10 June 2023**

***Activities for schoolchildren during Garden Weeks***

The Palace of Versailles offers numerous activities for schoolchildren during Garden Weeks. From 30 May to 10 June, pupils will be exploring the gardens of Versailles in a variety of ways: sensory discoveries, experiments, games, and musical walks will be on offer to awaken their senses, pique their curiosity and raise their awareness of the importance of gardens in our environment.

On this occasion, the *Perfumer's Garden* will be spotlighted: a children's symposium will be held there on 30 May. The students, who have become researchers for the occasion, will present their ideas at a round-table discussion with their scientific and professional mentors. There will also be a number of guided tours on the topic of the *Perfumer's Garden*.

**Practical information:**  
Reservation needed

[en.chateauversailles.fr/teachers](http://en.chateauversailles.fr/teachers)

Above: Roses

**All summer long  
*Tours for everyone***

General public

***The perfumer's workshop, an olfactory journey***

All aboard for an olfactory journey! In the *Perfumer's Garden*, with its hundreds of floral essences, visitors will be introduced to the art of scented gardens and the use of perfumes at court. Then, in a workshop, they will exercise their noses and learn the secrets of perfume making: its architecture, ingredients, extraction methods used, and more.

***The Trianon gardens and the history of flowers***

"*But when nothing is left of an ancient past (. . .) smell and flavour long remain, like souls.*" (Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*). This holds true of the Trianon flowers and the *Perfumer's Garden*, whose essences take visitors on a journey in the footsteps of those who imagined and created the gardens. In the peaceful atmosphere of this charming flower-filled setting, your guide recounts the history of the plants that populate these areas.

Families

***The perfumer's workshop, a sensory journey***

Younger visitors can explore the art of scented gardens on a colourful walk. In the *Perfumer's Garden*, they are introduced to the perfumes of kings and queens, then invited to experiment with scents, identify those that make up perfumes and share their olfactory discoveries.

8 years and up

Young adults

***The Poets' Garden, a literary workshop***

The Palace of Versailles invites young adults to a literary workshop in the midst of the *Perfumer's Garden*. This unique event invites visitors to stroll under the trees or in the alleys of the Trianon estate, pen in hand, to draw inspiration from its lushness and create a poetic composition. In this unusual setting, participants are encouraged to give free rein to their imagination and write short poems in haiku, rhyme or free verse.

**Practical information:**  
Reservation needed

[en.chateauversailles.fr](http://en.chateauversailles.fr)

# PATRONAGE OF MAISON FRANCIS KURKDJIAN

“If you can, you must.” As Francis Kurkdjian sees it, patronage is not a question but a matter of course. “One of the fundamentals of the Maison,” insists Marc Chaya, “a state of being.”

Perhaps it's only natural, given the history and sensitivity of these two individuals who know that the world needs help to become a more beautiful place. And who believe we must help make beauty accessible to as many people as possible. The relationship with Versailles is clearly a perfect illustration of the character of Maison Francis Kurkdjian and its values.

Versailles, is grandeur.

It is the history of France as viewed with fascination by two young men who did not yet know each other. One whose grandparents came from Armenia and another who fled war-torn Lebanon.

Versailles is a dream.

Francis Kurkdjian's dream of perfuming the fountains and pools of the Palace would come true a few years later in collaboration with Marc Chaya, his friend and business partner.

Versailles means having a taste for craftsmanship and excellent savoir-faire and being recognised as creative forces in their own right.

Versailles also means meeting people, sharing knowledge and feelings, and fostering memories.

Opposite: Aerial view of  
the *Perfumer's garden*





For Maison Francis Kurkdjian, opening the *Perfumer's Garden* today means staying true to its commitments: to conserve a living heritage, keeping dreams alive and perhaps inspiring new ones, highlighting the crafts that for centuries have helped to make Versailles a place for innovation.

It means calmly and carefully awakening wonder at the multitude of flowers, plants and shrubs in a hitherto unknown space that will evolve with the seasons and over the years. Discovering the diversity of the perfumer's natural palette, which may be expressed using bark, leaves, berries, herbs, roots or flowers. It's an invitation to crumple up a leaf, put your nose to it and remember, as Francis Kurkdjian says, that "the olfactory world is all around us" and that "the sense of smell is part of our humanity". Understanding that the substance is transformed when its fragrance is extracted. Through the educational aspect of the tours and workshops, it also means understanding the important role played by perfumers at court, and so learning about Versailles in a new and different way.

To Marc Chaya, creating this garden is another of the "artistic conversations" that Francis Kurkdjian has been conducting for years with visual artists, musicians, choreographers, et alii. It is a completely free and open dialogue with Alain Baraton and his teams of gardeners, a relationship based on shared values with a magical and enduring place. Contributing to the creation of this garden, as Marc Chaya sees it, means "giving those who visit it a timeless moment, a moment of joy, a moment of magic". For Francis Kurkdjian, it also means "giving back to Versailles what Versailles has given me in terms of inspiration and wonder."



Left: Lillies  
Right: Partly underground  
greenhouse



  
**MINISTÈRE  
DE LA CULTURE**  
*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

Created with the support of  
Maison  
Francis Kurkdjian  
Paris