



Gardens of the Netherlands
including Floriade and the famous bulb fields of Keukenhof
April 20 – 29, 2012 (depart U.S.A. on April 19, 2012)

Price \$3,765

Tour Overview

Held only once every ten years, Floriade, the World Horticultural Exhibition, is the leading showcase for Dutch horticulture. More than 100 exhibitors will together pay tribute to horticulture (excerpts extracted from the website, www.floriade.nl). Covering a vast area of specially landscaped woodland near Venlo in the province of North Limburg, close to the German border, Floriade 2012 comprises five separate areas linked by a tree lined avenue. Each area has its own theme which is described in detail in the tour itinerary.

In addition to Floriade, we will tour spectacular private and public gardens, including the world famous Keukenhof, the bulb grower's magnificent display of all the different tulip, daffodil and hyacinth varieties where over 7 million bulbs are planted annually.

Tour Itinerary

Thursday 19 April 2012 – Departure

Overnight flight under own arrangement from USA to Amsterdam Schiphol. Departure airport at tour end will be Antwerp International Airport. (Transportation can easily be arranged to Brussels International Airport for additional fee) – so please book international airfare accordingly. Airfare not included in tour package. Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours will gladly arrange airfare and bill you. Please make arrangements to arrive early morning – if not possible, you will need to book flights to arrive the day prior.

The leaders of the tour, Jeffry de Jong and David Whiting, will arrive two days early into Amsterdam to allow pre-tour exploring of this wonderful city rich in history and museums. Amsterdam also provides nice shopping opportunities. Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours would be happy to make arrangements for pre-tour arrivals and provide a price quote for extra accommodations.

Friday 20 April 2012 – Arrival

Upon arrival, we depart from Amsterdam this morning for a visit to one of the world's biggest flower auctions. Following the flower auction we travel to Utrecht University's Botanic Gardens, which have gone through many changes since they were founded in 1639, three years after the official founding of the Utrecht University. Starting off as a medicinal garden, used solely by students and professors, it has developed into a garden not only for scientific purposes, but also for the pleasure of many non-scientific visitors. The plant collection numbers well over 10,000 species, with specializations in conifers, alpines and the flora of South America. Of particular interest is the enormous rock-garden, built on the remains of former military defences, which includes numerous different habitats supporting a vast range of exotic plants.

Following our visit we continue to our comfortable hotel near Arnhem. Dinner will be served in the hotel restaurant each evening.

Saturday 21 April 2012

After breakfast this morning we drive to the east of Arnhem to Piet Oudolf's Private Garden at Hummelo. The revered garden designer Piet Oudolf, figurehead of the New Perennial movement with his own distinctive style inspired by English gardens, progressed from designing private gardens for his neighbours to Best in Show at Chelsea in 2000. Since then the gardens he has designed include the Millennium Garden in Chicago; the Evolution Garden at Floriade 2002; The September 11 Garden at Battery Park, New York; new borders at Wisley and a new walled garden at Scampston. His own garden features expansive, naturalistic plantings of many grasses and late flowers, but to obtain the plants his designs require he has had to breed his own. Using a combination of locally available varieties and those he travelled widely to find, the result is a fascinating and unique garden.

In the afternoon we visit the country house and garden of De Wiersse, described by a leading Dutch newspaper as "The most beautiful garden in the Netherlands". Surrounded by farmland and woods lies the moated manor house, with 38 acres of garden and 74 acres of landscaped parkland lived in, designed and managed by the same family since 1678. In this historic and beautifully-kept garden a sequence of surprises awaits the visitor.

Sunday 22 April 2012

This morning after breakfast we visit the gardens at Het Loo Palace, just north of the charming town of Apeldoorn. This was the medieval castle of Prince William of Orange and is now recognised as one of Europe's finest formal gardens. When the Dutch Royal Family decided that it would no longer use the palace in 1969 the government opted to turn it into a museum, fully restoring the formal seventeenth century garden to its original state. The palace's type of baroque garden is unique to the Netherlands. It is a late Dutch interpretation of the Italian-French garden dating from the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The exotic flowers and plants and the constant supply of fresh water for the fountains must have made the gardens of Het Loo a spectacular sight worth seeing even then.

In the afternoon we visit the Kröller-Müller Museum which offers a unique combination of nature, art and architecture. The museum collection constitutes one of the most impressive overviews anywhere of Vincent Van Gogh's extensive *œuvre*, and there are also important works by great artists including Picasso, Mondriaan and Seurat. Within the national park there is also one of Europe's largest sculpture parks featuring exhibits by Rodin, Moore and Hepworth.

Monday 23 April 2012

This morning following breakfast we depart for Venlo in the south-western corner of The Netherlands, close to the German border, the venue for Floriade 2012. We have a full day here to explore the extensive site which was created specially for the event in an area of natural woodland. The site comprises five separate areas, linked by tree-lined avenues, each with its own theme:

Relax & Heal ... shows how horticulture makes our lives healthier by promoting our physical and mental wellbeing and includes topics such as healthy eating - including seasonal and regional produce - the food festival, rituals and religions, and sports activities. Just like the human body, the predominant feature of Relax & Heal is organic shapes. There are no straight lines here, but fluid paths and soft, lustrous, grassy hillocks, creating a harmonious landscape. Planting theme: 'summer visitors'.

Green Engine ... demonstrates how horticulture is an important economic engine and supplier of green energy, with the sector's entire supply chain, from product development and logistics functions to applications and contact with end users, on display. The design is inspired by industrial designs, machines and motors, a fantastic pas de deux of technology and nature. Planting theme: 'pioneers'.

Education & Innovation ... focuses on increasing horticultural knowledge throughout the region, which will continue to benefit in years to come. The design theme is one of constant changes of perspective. Huge ground-features ensure that you won't be able to view the entire field in just one go, as a result the landscape entices you take a journey of discovery. Planting theme: 'explorers'.

Environment ... shows how living and working in a green environment improves our quality of life, covering topics such as the green city, better garden architecture, climate-neutral entrepreneurship and our perception of the new living and working landscape. The design clearly refers to a city, but one bursting with greenery, which in turn attracts all kinds of creatures, such as birds and butterflies, creating a sustainable symbiosis between city and nature. Planting theme: 'acrobats'.

World Show Stage ... promises to provide some of the liveliest exhibits, celebrating the myriad connections between nature and culture around the world. The design here is intense and lively, with water playing a vital role, uniting the various continents and as a shared source of all life on Earth. Planting theme: 'seducers'.

Tuesday 24 April 2012

After breakfast this morning we depart for Keukenhof Gardens, one of the most famous gardens in the world, <http://www.keukenhof.nl>. Keukenhof is one of the most popular destinations in the Netherlands with more than seven million flowers that provide an incredible display. This is a must see garden!!

Wednesday 25 April 2012

This morning following breakfast we check out of our hotel and head for the Gardens of Appeltern. Here nearly 200 model gardens of every type display innumerable plants and gardening products for every conceivable purpose, and are a source of inspiration, information and enjoyment for everyone.

From here we continue over the border into Belgium and on to our hotel in Antwerp. Dinner will be served each evening at the hotel.

Thursday 26 April 2012

Following breakfast we depart for our visit to the Kalmthout Arboretum. Charles Van Geert, a nurseryman from Antwerp, bought 3.75 acres of acid heathland to create a nursery at Kalmthout in 1856; he also planted many of the magnificent old trees around this date, especially the trees in the Old Conifer Avenue. When Van Geert died in

1896 the nursery was acquired by Antoine Kort who purchased additional land and extended the nursery to 87 acres. Unfortunately, like many other Belgian nurseries, the hostilities of the First World War resulted in the nursery being abandoned and the staff probably became refugees; many of whom sought refuge on the country estate of Great Britain until after 1918. The nursery lay derelict for over 30 years and was only developed as an arboretum by the de Belder brothers, Robert and Georges who purchased the property in 1952. From 1984 onwards Robert and Jelena de Belder commenced their plantings with an inspired vision, and the arboretum reflects their detailed attention to colour, form and texture. Carpets of flowering groundcovers, freshly sprouting Japanese maples, and the wonderful collection of flowering cherries and apples herald the arrival of Spring, to be followed swiftly by over 500 rhododendrons and azaleas that turn the garden into a festival of colour. There are two ponds, a pretty pavilion draped with variegated ivy, and a pleasant country house with a terrace, surrounded by old rhododendron hybrids and reached by the Old Conifer Avenue. In many ways the arboretum has the feel of a large private garden and this is attributed to Robert's wife, Jelena. Since 1986 the arboretum has been owned by the Province of Antwerp and now covers 30 acres, but seems much larger due to the way in which the landscape was laid out. It is managed by the Friends of the Arboretum of Kalmthout, and its future is secure.

In the afternoon we visit Gaasbeek Castle near Brussels, which has its origins in a manor founded in 1236 by the Duke of Brabant. The Castle contains a significant collection of paintings, sculptures, tapestries and furniture which was bequeathed to the State by the last aristocratic owner in the 1920s. It is surrounded by an extensive park that was laid out in the seventeenth century. Here there are both impressive avenues and narrow winding paths and some of the tallest beech trees in Belgium. Of particular interest is an impressive collection of trained fruit trees which should be in full flower at this time of year. As you walk you will come across several historical buildings: the Chapel of St Gertrude, the baroque pavilion, the neo-gothic barn, the octagonal pavilion and the triumphal arch.

Friday 27 April 2012

Following breakfast we depart for our visit to the private garden of Albert de Raedt. The De Raedt's have lived at the property for 27 years and they have constructed this interesting garden completely from scratch. It is most unusual for a Belgian garden as the land is hilly rather than flat, however, it was created from flat farmland. The collections include around 600 rhododendron and azalea species and cultivars and it is full of uncommon trees and shrubs. Albert is well known as an authority on the Hardy Ghent Azaleas, for which Belgium is famous, and has authored a monograph on these plants, of which there is a collection in the garden together with what is probably the best collection of the double Rustica Flora Pleno azaleas, introduced in Belgium from 1888 onwards, to be found anywhere. For many years Albert has been working with a small group of enthusiasts from England on a conservation project to rediscover, propagate and conserve many of the old Ghent varieties, of which there were over 500 varieties by 1850, thought to be lost to cultivation. During the latter half of the 19th Century the Ghents were particularly sought after in Britain and in the period prior to Charles Noble's retirement from Sunningdale Nurseries in 1896 his notebook contained a listing of 500 varieties of stock plants. The garden, which resembles a temperate jungle, extends to 3.75 acres with small sandy paths wandering around, with unusual specimens around every corner. There are magnolias, roses and specimen trees such as the large-leaved lime, and various forms of *Betula*, *Sorbus*, *Quercus* and *Fagus*.

Our next visit is to Antoon De Clerck's private garden, which is especially interesting as around 35 years ago he hated gardening, and even mowing the lawn was a real chore! And then, all of a sudden, his outlook changed completely and he developed a passion for everything that was green and growing. So a local farmer was coerced to move his cows to a different grazing area and the adjacent field was transformed into a garden. Being a doctor, Antoon wanted to create some form of 'linkage' between his profession and his new found passion, so he created heart-shaped and ear-shaped planting beds. But, in turn, Antoon was coerced to designate a significant part of his new garden to a children's playing area for football, volleyball and badminton. However, by stealth, the playing area was invaded by further planting beds. So, once again, Antoon succeeded in coercing a second herd of cows to find pasture somewhere else and another acre was planted with shrubs and trees, but this time a custom-shaped

pond suddenly appeared. With consideration for the Belgian climate, Antoon scoured the world for firstly, different species of Rhododendrons and Azaleas, then Magnolia, Prunus, Camelia, Cornus, Hamamelis, etc. Then the beauty of Acers caught his eye, so a third lot of cows got consigned to greener pastures, and the challenge of laying-out a 'harmonic garden in a confined space is still a concern to Antoon who has named the garden 'Pascua', which is latin for 'pasture'. None of this should detract from the fact that Antoon is a skilled plant hybridiser and propagator, and many of the plants in the garden originated from his own nursery. There is a wealth of plants and trees in the interconnecting woodland glades that Antoon has cleverly created, including two small artificial lakes at the heart of the garden.

Saturday 28 April 2012

After breakfast this morning we depart on an all day visit to the Herkenrode Garden and Wespelaar Arboretum. These two separate gardens on the private estate of Viscount Phillippe de Spoelberch are spectacular, and some authorities consider them to be amongst the most beautiful in the world; accordingly, a full day has been set aside for our visit. The Herkenrode Garden surrounding Phillippe's home is designed more like a woodland garden than an arboretum and was originally established in the 18th Century on the estate of Jean-Baptiste de Herkenrode. Over the years the garden was laid out and planted with rare trees, and in 1923 the estate was purchased by Guillaume de Spoelberch, Phillippe's grandfather. Phillippe had his home built next to the 25 acre garden in 1964 and two years later began his amazing dendrological collection. Winding trails through the woodland open onto glades planted with rhododendrons, magnolias and many other genera; the trails open onto breathtaking vistas of Phillippe's home and the garden is a magical place to walk through, especially in the Spring. Strategically placed throughout the garden are many fascinating structures, such as the Temple of Flora, an Obelisk and a Pyramid.

Phillippe started planting the Wespelaar Arboretum in 1986 when he ran out of space in the Herkenrode Garden. Set on around 50 acres of old meadows and woodland the arboretum contains large collections of *Rhododendrons*, *Magnolia*, *Acer*, *Tilia*, *Fraxinus*, *Quercus*, *Prunus*, *Malus*, *Betula*, *Carpinus* and many other varieties of trees and shrubs. One of the aspects that make this arboretum different is that the large trees and magnolias have space to spread their branches and become beautiful specimens. Many of the large magnolias have thousands of flowers on each tree, and large open expanses of grass frame beautiful views to water features and sculptures. It is difficult to briefly quantify the scope and contents of either Herkenrode and Wespelaar other than to say that collectively they are one of the most significant botanical collections in Europe. There are 2,000 rhododendrons in 800 varieties, 300 magnolias, 260 acers and thousands of other genera.

Sunday 29 April 2012

This morning after breakfast we check out of the hotel. Departure back to the states will be from Antwerp International Airport (or Brussels International Airport for additional transport fee if better airline connections available).

Registration Form
Gardens of the Netherlands and Floriade

Passenger Information

Please record information exactly as it appears on your passport and attach a copy to this registration form. Passport photocopy may be sent later if you have yet to obtain a passport.

Name as on passport _____ Name as on passport _____

Passport # _____ Passport # _____

Passport Exp. Date _____ Passport Exp. Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home and or cell) _____ Email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

Please mark your preferred travel arrangements

_____ I will make my own airline reservation/arrangements
(arrive Amsterdam, depart Antwerp or Brussels)

_____ I would like Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours to arrange airline reservations from _____
airport and bill me accordingly

Double Occupancy Standard (tour price \$3,765) _____

Single Occupancy (tour price \$4,565)** _____

** (cannot be guaranteed, and if none available, you will be responsible for single supplement)

Payment Information (deposit \$1,000 per person)

If paying by check: make payable to Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours, L.L.C.

Amount \$ _____ check no. _____

If paying by credit card (we can accept only VISA or MasterCard)

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Amount to be charged _____ Three-digit security code from back of the card _____

**Final payment by credit card will have an additional 3% surcharge

Mail this form and direct inquiries to:

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