

GREEN CITIES EUROPE 2024:

Lyon wins top award for its Pré Gaudry gardens

Press release, 30 January 2025

The 5th edition of the Green Cities Europe awards marked the first time the event was held at the IPM convention in Essen, Germany.

Since 2020, these annual awards have recognised exemplary achievements in landscaping, enabling cities to adapt to the challenges associated with climate issues, biodiversity, social cohesion, quality of life and attractiveness.

The GREEN CITIES EUROPE 2024 prize-giving ceremony, organised by the ENA (the European Nurserystock Association, represented in France by VALHOR, the French inter-branch organisation for horticulture, floristry and landscaping), took place on 30 January at the IPM Essen (Germany) an international convention dedicated to horticulture.

Flying the flag for France was the city of Lyon, which took home the gold medal for its Pré Gaudry gardens, an innovative project in urban land restoration.



Having already won an award at the 2024 Victoires du Paysage event in the "Urban public spaces" category, this project saw an abandoned industrial site being transformed into an absolute haven of greenery. Located at the heart of a densely populated neighbourhood and attached to a new campus complex, this space is now an urban oasis where the people of Lyon can seek out shade and serenity.

With this prize, Lyon is showcasing its visionary approach at the European level, with regard to the climate emergency and the need to make cities more resilient. The Pré Gaudry gardens serve as an open-air laboratory, illustrating how the urban wastelands can be renaturalised into oases of fresh air and biodiversity.



The Pré Gaudry gardens, located in Lyon's 7th arrondissement on a former industrial site, embody an exemplary urban transformation. Developed by the Lyon city government, these gardens extend over an area of 11,000 m², comprising 6,700 m² of green spaces.

Designed by the ILEX paysage + urbanisme agency (specialising in landscaping and urban development), the gardens provide a green oasis within the densely populated Gerland neighbourhood. They include a rich canopy, wooded copses, sprawling lawns and a variety of spaces for relaxation to encourage local residents to make full use of the gardens.

What sets the project apart is its innovations in terms of soil resilience, notably in situ fertilisation of inert soils, soil biodynamisation, and using earthworms to create "living mulch". These techniques aim to restore the soil's fertility and promote biodiversity.



The Pré Gaudry gardens were designed to slow down the pace of urban life, putting greenery centre stage with its wooded copses, rows of hedges and sprawling lawns. These illustrate how an industrial site can be transformed into a lush, green public space, contributing to urban resilience by providing the people of Lyon with a place to relax and enjoy fresh air within an urban setting.



Project owner: Lyon metropolitan area

Landscape designer: ILEX paysage + urbanisme, CapVert Maîtrise d'oeuvre

Landscaping: Terideal

Plant suppliers: Cholat Pépinières – Pépinières Damien Vivier

"Re-naturalisation is a priority for the Lyon metropolitan area. Our goal is to plant more and more effectively, in order to improve living environments for our residents and preserve green spaces and biodiversity. In time, these plants will transform the city landscape to become urban cool islands, havens for biodiversity and carbon sinks. Such is the dynamic behind all our actions at the metropolitan level, enabling us to achieve tangible results for the climate, nature and biodiversity.

The Lyon metropolitan area has implemented its Nature Plan, which extends beyond the city's public spaces by offering support for re-naturalisation projects undertaken by joint ownership properties or housing associations.

We're proud and delighted to be receiving this prestigious Green Cities award today for the Pré Gaudry gardens, giving us great encouragement as we continue down this path." Pierre Athanaze, vice-président of the Lyon metropole.

Italy took the 2nd place on the podium, while the 3rd place went to Poland.

13 countries coming together for greener European cities

Green Cities Europe is an initiative led by the ENA (European Nurserystock Association), which represents horticultural organisations in 21 European countries. In France, GREEN CITIES EUROPE is supported by VALHOR, the French inter-branch organisation for horticulture, floristry and landscaping.

<https://www.enaplants.eu/>

The programme enables countries to work together to showcase green spaces in their urban areas.

For more information: www.thegreencities.eu

Green cities awards

Each country is able to enter a project to represent their nation. The projects are judged by a jury made up of representatives of each participating country. The goal of the awards is to promote successful, ambitious, inspiring and innovative projects in the field of green infrastructure. In 2024, ten countries entered projects: France, Italy, Poland, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark and Hungary.

Winners since 2020:

- 2020: Belgium, for the [re-greening of the Beringen mining site](#).
- 2021: France, for the [Jardin Extraordinaire in Nantes](#).
- 2022: the Netherlands, for the [mini-parks in Alkmaar](#)
- 2023: Denmark, for the [Basecamp by Xior Lyngby](#).

ABOUT VALHOR:

VALHOR is officially recognised by French public authorities as the French Inter-branch Organisation for Horticulture, Floristry and Landscaping. It represents 45,885 specialist businesses and 202,440 professionals, generating €15.3 billion in revenues. It is the umbrella body for 10 French professional organisations representing the production (VERDIR, Felcoop, UFS, CR), sales (FFAF, Jardineries & Animaleries de France, FGFP, Floralisa) and landscaping (Unep, FFP) sectors. VALHOR's 5 missions are set out in a three-year action plan, resulting from an inter-branch financing agreement concluded by the 10 professional member organisations:

- Develop business potential, namely by certifying and labelling companies with regard to environmental protection
- Address plant health issues, improve product quality and service offering, in particular by championing innovation and research
- Improve knowledge of production and the market, to ensure supply is tailored to demand
- Promote plants, professional know-how and expertise, the wealth of jobs in the sector and their excellence, and attract new talent
- Foster and strengthen dialogue between professional organisations to advocate for the sector's interests

www.valhor.fr - #LeVegetalCestLaVie (Plantsforlife)

Press contact

Caroline MILLION – +33 (0)6 81 33 09 17 – presse@valhor.fr