



Springtime in Holland, Belgium, Austria and Germany

May 3-14, 2009

Join University of Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator Monica David for a relaxing tour of the tulips and the springtime gardens of Holland, Belgium, Austria and Germany. The group will also visit some of the historical highlights of these four lovely countries. Registration is open to anyone with an interest in gardens, with preference given to Illinois Master Gardeners.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1—Sunday, May 3

Chicago— Amsterdam

Travel Chicago to Amsterdam, Holland.

Day 2— Monday, May 4

Amsterdam-Haarlem

We arrive into Amsterdam early this morning. First stop on our journey is a wonderful canal house and garden tour where we will visit the **Begijnhof**, the only Medieval garden in Amsterdam. Next we see the best coach houses and gardens of the Golden Bend and then the Geelvinck Hinlopen Huis where we will have a light lunch. The group then continues on to the **Maison Descartes Garden** and an 18th century Almshouse. Our wonderful tour is organized by Andre Ancion one of Amsterdam's premier garden designers and historians.



Welcome Dinner
Hotel in Haarlem

Day 3— Tuesday May 5

Amsterdam-Haarlem

Today we visit the tulip fields of **Keukenhof**. This world renowned display garden is a 70 acre estate where over 6 million bulbs are planted annually by local growers. After strolling through the gardens and viewing the plantings we will return to the Amsterdam area for an evening at leisure.

Hotel in Haarlem



Day 4—Wednesday, May 6 Amsterdam-Haarlem

Today we start with the amazing and world renowned **Aalsmeer Flower Market**. This is the largest flower market in the world and visitors walk out over a gallery through the auction complex. During your tour of the auction complex you will hear information over an audio system (in English, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew and Czech). We will be accompanied by a guide in English, who will explain the workings of the auction.



We then will have lunch at **De Kas Restaurant** (Included). In 2001, top chef Gert Jan Hageman, who had earned a Michelin star in Dutch haute cuisine, found a new direction for his own career and a new purpose for the old greenhouse that belonged to Amsterdam's Municipal Nursery. The greenhouse, which dated from 1926, was due to be demolished. With a lot of luck and, most importantly, with help from the municipality and his family and friends, Hageman succeeded in converting the unique 8-metre high glass building into a restaurant and nursery.



Highlight of the afternoon will be our stop at the **Palace of Het Loo**. Built in the late 17th century in the forest of the Hoge Veluwe, the palace of Het Loo was inhabited by members of the House of Orange until 1975. First to live there was Stadtholder William III, who was to become king of England in 1689 and for whom it was originally built as a hunting-lodge. When the Stadtholder's family was in exile during the French Revolution, the palace was lived in from 1806-1810 by Napoleon's brother, Louis Napoleon, the first King of Holland. He had the garden replanted in the English landscape style. In 1814 the palace became the property of the state and was used by members of the House of Orange until 1975. On the death of Queen Wilhelmina it was turned into a national museum. The palace and gardens were opened to the public in June 1984. The palace's type of baroque garden is unique to The Netherlands. The layout as we see it today is a reconstruction of how it was laid out at the time it was built, based on contemporary accounts, records, paintings and drawings, and archaeological evidence revealed during the reconstruction process. However some evidence of Louis Napoleon's landscape garden remains in the form of the mature copper beeches and tulip trees growing in the parterres around the King's Fountain.

Hotel in Haarlem



Day 5—Thursday, May 7 Amsterdam-Bruges

Today we will travel south from Amsterdam to historic Bruges. En route we will stop in Leiden to visit the **Hortus Botanicus Gardens** of Leiden University which is the oldest botanical garden of the Netherlands and one of the oldest in the world. It is well known for its greenhouses with tropical plants and the large collection of sub-tropical plants in the recently renovated Orangery. The new Winter Garden, the Japanese Garden and the Clusius Garden based on a plant list from the 16th century are highlights of this wonderful garden.

Known as the Venice of the North, Bruges in Belgium is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. In 2000, UNESCO included the entire historical city centre of Bruges onto the World Heritage list. Walking along the maze of winding cobbled alleys and romantic canals, you imagine yourself to be in medieval times. The wealth of museums is a striking image of this city's stirring history.



Opportunity to visit the Jerusalem Church and Lace Making Museum. The museum is situated in the renovated House of God where the old lace workers lived some fifty years ago. There you can find a yearlong permanent exhibition of several lace varieties. Depending on the theme, these can be pieces of lacework from domestic or foreign collections.

Afternoon to further explore this delightful city.

Dinner Included
Hotel in Bruges

Day 6—Friday, May 8 Brugge-Namur-Cologne

Today the first stop will be **Annevoie Castle and Gardens**. All the charm and refinement of the 18th century await you in these beautiful green surroundings where nature shows its beauty. Annevoie is the only water garden in Belgium and the most beautiful one in Europe. No machinery or pumps are used to make the beautiful displays of water magical. An enchanting walk between water displays, bright borders and eye-catching quiet corners. New: a playground for children, a menagerie, a rose garden and a raspberry patch.



After lunch, we will visit the **Gardens of the Castle of Frey**. With an air of Versailles about it, the Castle of Frey occupies a grandiose setting on the banks of the River Meuse. Dating mainly from the 18th century, the magnificent Renaissance style residence has a refined and cosmopolitan interior that is supposed to have witnessed the first European tasting of coffee! The sweeping classical gardens, laid out in formal French style, are home to 300-year-old orange trees and orangeries that are among the oldest of the country.

We then continue onto Cologne, Germany on the banks of the Rhine River.

Hotel in Cologne

Day 7—Saturday, May 9 Cologne-Rhine River Cruise— Heidelberg

Cruise the beautiful Rhine River this morning to Heidelberg. All Germany is rich in castles but the romantic Rhine Valley - the heartland of the old Holy Roman Empire - has a particularly high density of important medieval military buildings. Some are ruins, but many, like Marksburg Castle, have survived the ravages of war, fire and neglect. Some are fascinating windows into the age of chivalry and the development of this fascinating form of military construction. The castles of the Rhine which



are such a characteristic feature of the river landscape, were created by the martial spirit of the Middle Ages as purely defensive structures, devoid of all romantic notions. They were built by powerful rulers over sacred and secular territories, on hill-tops, and in the lowlands as moated castles to protect their manorail estates and their inhabitants. In most cases the work of breaking the stones and erecting the massive walls and turrets was done by feudal serfs.

Heidelberg, with its 140,000 inhabitants, is known all over the world for its romanticism and beauty. The name of Heidelberg stands not only for its world-famous castle, but also for Germany's oldest university and for lanes steeped in history in the Old Town.

Dinner included
Hotel in Heidelberg

Day 8—Sunday, May 10 Heidelberg-Lake Constance

Situated high above the River Neckar, **Heidelberg Castle** is one of Germany's most romantic locations. It has had a long and turbulent history since it was first constructed in the early 15th century as a residence for the Palatine princes, the powerful secular rulers who presided over this part of southern Germany during the Holy Roman Empire. Having been totally destroyed during the Thirty Years War, and later by the French in 1689 and 1693, the red sandstone building was struck by lightning in 1764. We will visit the Castle ruins and admire the views from the castle over the romantic city of Heidelberg.



We then continue through one of the prettiest parts of Germany, the Black Forest. Lunch (on your own) in **Baden Baden** in the Black Forest with a short guided tour of the **Rose Garden** and the plants and trees along Lichentaler Alee.



After lunch, we travel on to Konstanz. Bordered by three countries, Lake Constance occupies an extremely beautiful corner of Central Europe - and is an ideal destination for a relaxing short break or longer family holiday. The 270km shoreline is shared between Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The lake is essentially a bulge in the Rhine - mirroring Lake Geneva, an expansion of the Rhône, at the other end of Switzerland. The Rhine descends from the Swiss Alps to the area where the three countries converge, and spreads out to create a wide delta. For a distance of 46km it broadens out to a maximum width of 14km, then recovers its fluvial identity at the border of Germany and Switzerland for the long journey to the North Sea. More than half of the shoreline of Lake Constance is in Germany. There are three distinct areas. The German stretch on the north shore, between Bregenz in Austria and the town of Konstanz the Swiss border known as Obersee; Überlingen, the north-western arm; and Untersee, the "lower lake" in the south-west. The views from the German shore across to the Swiss Alps are stunning. The lake is a centre for water sports, while its shores are home to swathes of vineyards and intriguing towns. The area is rich in castles, baroque churches, exquisite town squares and curious museums, while the hinterland is dotted with pretty villages and child friendly attractions.



Dinner included
Hotel in Konstanz

Day 9—Monday, May 11

Lake Constance-Isle of Mainau

There really is a lot to marvel at on the **Isle of Mainau**. The botanical treasures most of all! During the warm season a lot of tropical plants line the way to the Arena of Fountains. In the vast gardens with the magnificent terraced landscape with a unique panorama of the landscape of Lake Constance you can really feel a touch of the Mediterranean. The Italian flower and water staircase is created in the style of



Italian Renaissance gardens and made of precious granite from the south of Switzerland, the cascade is lined by column-shaped conifers and a luxuriant mass of flowers. In spring and summer impressive floral pictures are created on the steps; in autumn the brilliant coloring of the trees at the right- and left-hand side of the stairs has charming effects. The garden has with more than 20,000 roses at three locations on the Isle of Mainau, where fragrance, beauty and the elegance of the

queen of flowers becomes a beguiling sensuous experience. Roses are the highlight at the Italian rose garden on the south side of the castle and may be seen at the beautiful promenades of the island and also at alleys at the south shores of the island.

Afternoon and dinner at leisure.
Hotel in Konstanz

Day 10—Tuesday, May 12

Lake Constance-Innsbruck-Salzburg

Today we travel on to **Innsbruck**, Austria. Located in the broad valley between high mountains, it is an internationally renowned winter sports centre, and hosted the 1964 and 1976 winter Olympics. The word *bruck* comes from the German word *Brücke* meaning "bridge" which leads to "the bridge over the Inn". The Golden Roof built in 1500 was decorated with 2657 fire-gilded copper tiles for Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor. The reliefs on the balcony show coats of arms, symbols and other figures in his life. The emperor and others used the balcony to watch events in the square below.



We will have time for lunch in the old town as well as time to wander the wonderful cobbled streets of this delightful small city.

We then continue on to the beautiful Austrian town of Salzburg, where the hills are alive with the sound of music.

Hotel in Salzburg

Day 11—Wednesday, May 13

Salzburg

A morning city tour will include the highlights of Salzburg including Mirabel gardens, the old town and Sound of Music country. **Mirabel Gardens** is known for its fountains, statuary and the dwarf garden. Prince Archbishop Johann Ernst Graf von Thun had the famous gardens remodeled in 1690 and then redesigned around 1730 by Franz Anton Danreiter. In 1854 Emperor Franz Joseph opened the gardens to the public.



Afternoon at leisure.
Farewell Dinner
Hotel in Salzburg

Day 12—Thursday, May 14

Munich-Chicago

Travel to the Munich airport for your trip home to Illinois.

Trip Details

Tour cost per passenger (twin share) \$4,325. Single supplement \$850.

Tour cost covers airfare, all hotels, luxury coach transportation, entrance to all gardens, 10 breakfasts, 5 dinners and 1 lunch as stated in the itinerary. Should a garden or inclusion not be available, then a suitable alternative will be offered.

To book the tour or for more information contact Robyn Gulstrom 269-629-9248 or rgulstrom@comcast.net **Initial deposit due no later than October 15th, 2008.**