VerdeMura in Lucca



erdeMura, Lucca's Green Walls Garden Festival – the biggest garden festival in Tuscany together with September's Murabilia – is back again, now in its 16th year, with 160 exhibitors.

During the first weekend of the month, from 4 to 6 April (Friday 10 am to 7.30 pm, Saturday and Sunday 9 am to 7.30 pm), we can hope for sunshine and temperatures may be rising above 20° C (68° F). There are three entrance points: Baluardo La Libertà, Baluardo San Regolo, and Porta Elisa, near the Botanic Garden. The two bastions *(baluardi)* on the walls are just above the Botanic Garden.

To accommodate the public, this year open-date tickets can be purchased in advance, for use on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Discounted one day tickets (€8) can be obtained by presenting this magazine with its coupon, pictured here. Admission to VerdeMura (full price €10, with reductions for 2 or 3 day tickets) also give access to Lucca's Botanic Garden, with its impressive collection of camellias and the possibility of guided visits organized by A.Di.P.A.

The exhibitors will be displaying plants, flowers, trees, vases, and garden objects for sale, but VerdeMura offers much more than this. They are ready to share their passion and knowledge about plants.

This year's special protagonist is the **narcissus**, harbinger of spring, with over 40 varieties on display. Lucca's garden club will





present these in colorful handmade vases from *Vases&vasi*. The book presentation of *Bulbomania – Scienza e pratica del bulbo*, written by Simonetta Chiarugi and Christian Shejbal (Gribaudo Editore), will be an occasion to learn more about how to cultivate these bulbs both in the ground and in vases.





Especially for families, fun and playful appointments are planned for young gardeners, with the help of Artebambini, Food Family Hub, A.Di.P.A. (seed bank), and Orange Team (with Lego blocks). Michele Ratti will present the Magico mondo degli insetti, Roberto Bottaini will demonstrate the ancient art of intreccio (weaving), Fabio Paoli will transform sorghum plants into enchanted brooms, Lucca Massi will explain how to recognize the birds in our gardens (and encourage them to stay around), Andrea Pozzato will introduce his extravagantly plumed hens.... These are just some of the activities that young people will enjoy. Children under 14 accompanied by an adult can enter for free. For those 14 to 18 years of age, prices are reduced.

Rare plants from various parts of the world will be on display. From Switzerland's EPRIC Foundation, the Ephyfitic Plant

Research and Information Centre shows plants preserved in their natural habitats, for example cactus, succulents, and orchids, as well as those in danger of extinction. Floricultura Lari proposes varieties of small fruits that can be cultivated in vases, such as hybrid strawberries and blueberries and special citrus plants. Vivaio (Plant Nursery) Corazza shows rare plants, some found only in isolated parts of Corsica, Sardegna, and the Balearic Islands.

There will be many varieties of camellias on display, including the japonica variety called *Bella di Lucca*. Vivaio Occhi di Rosa presents its lily known as *Dreaming Clown*, rich in perfumes and extraordinarily colored with brown and lilac tips and dark veins. From Vivaio II Sorbo comes the winter pear known as *Spadona*. Cherries and ornamental plums will be in bloom.

This year a special **rose** resulting from a collaboration between Floricoltura Lari and French breeders from the Loire Valley has been named *Murabilia* and will be featured at Lucca's Murabilia festival coming up on 5, 6, and 7 September. Architect Maurizio Usai, an expert on roses, will present this already flowering plant to the VerdeMura public.

For those who understand Italian, various conferences are on the program. On Saturday 5 April, Master Gardener



Carlo Pagani will talk about vegetable gardens, focusing on errors that we often make and how to improve the productivity of our garden plants. Emanuela Vanda will discuss the ancient tradition of foraging, a way of living harmoniously with nature. Enrico Rossi (better known as *Green House Geek*) will guide the public in how to make terrariums and how to keep their plants healthy. Herbalist Marco Pardini, often featured on Italian television, will discuss herbs and other spontaneous plants.

Co-protagonist this year is the camellia, which has found its second home in the Lucca region. Below Baluardo San Regolo, hundreds of camellia plants will be on display, brought from villas and horticultural centers throughout Tuscany.

If you get hungry while strolling along the walls in the fresh air, two food stands will offer local Tuscan products, with respect for dietary choices in terms of vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free foods. To quench the thirst, local breweries La Collina and Radical Brewery propose handmade local beers. Among the nonalcoholic offerings are non-alcoholic wines. Every taste or sip will be an experience of passion, tradition, and respect for the environment. If you prefer to eat outside of VerdeMura, a bracelet distributed at the entrances will make it easy to exit the festival and return at any time during the same day.

Official partners of VerdeMura are Ivano Gardening, Ford Blubay, and Fontenova. The festival is coordinated by LuccaCrea.

Tickets are available at www.ticketone.it/artist/verdemura/ or by showing this magazine (sold at local newsstands in and around Lucca) at VerdeMura entrance points in order to benefit from the voucher.

For more information: www.verdemura.it/

Photos courtesy of VerdeMura

home Click here to read an article from last month: >>

