

# 1- The many ways to conserve historic fruit and kitchen gardens

The aim of the symposium is to explore the specific nature of the conservation and restoration of historic fruit and vegetable gardens. At the end of the first phase, which gave rise to a series of presentations by owners and head gardeners of this type of gardens it emerged that :

- While they face challenges common to all gardens<sup>1</sup>, the conservation and restoration of fruit and vegetable gardens also face the challenge of being production gardens.
- that there are now many ways of conserving and restoring historic fruit and vegetable gardens.

## The challenges involved in conserving a production garden

The productive function of historic fruit and kitchen gardens seems to have at least three major consequences:

- Production works naturally as a process of creative destruction<sup>2</sup> that inexorably goes against conservation.
- Most artefacts in a kitchen garden are placed there for fulfilling a well-defined production function. When restoring such artefacts, it is important to make the effort of understanding their purpose and to consider restoring these artefacts in their original purpose.
- Fruit and kitchen garden production requires gardeners with fairly deep and broad competencies.

In order to better understand the specificity of fruit and kitchen gardens and gardening, please refer to Susan Campbell's *History of Kitchen Gardening*<sup>3</sup>. For the historic evolution of kitchen gardens, please refer to Florent Quellier's *Histoire du Jardin Potager*<sup>4</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> The conservation and restoration of heritage gardens is a complex process - and one made even more complex today by climate change. The Florence Charter (1982), the 40th anniversary of which was recently celebrated, is not itself free of ambiguities. See also: Goult, Sheena MacKellar, *Heritage Gardens, care, conservation and management*, Routledge, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> According to an expression frequently used in economics

<sup>3</sup> Unicorn Publishing, 2015

<sup>4</sup> Armand Colin, 2012

## Production's creative destruction force

The continuing appearance of new plants, new horticultural techniques and new owners tastes and appetites makes fruit and kitchen gardens evolve a bit like craftsman workshops or even industrial sites; In order for a production site to remain up to date, new features need to continuously and ruthlessly replace old features<sup>5</sup>. If this is done systematically, there is the possibility that almost nothing is conserved in a fruit and kitchen garden, even if it has been cultivated for centuries<sup>6</sup>! This applies to the whole garden: plants, structure, technologies and artefacts.

As for industrial sites, the process of creative destruction inherent to production has sometimes led owners to decide that it was best to ignore an old fruit and kitchen garden's site and to open a new, more effective one. Many historic fruit and kitchen gardens have been abandoned<sup>7</sup> and the symposium has confirmed that there is still a large potential for restoring lost gardens<sup>8</sup>.

### Kitchen vs market gardens

Kitchen gardens have a value that is higher than the value of their produce as it could be sourced on the market (1). Owners of kitchen gardens consider other immaterial or cultural value: the joy to have their own garden, the joy of cultivating their own vegetables and fruit, etc... Kitchen gardens are not made to sell and compete with market gardens, but it is something that some owners may tend to forget. Selling a few surpluses is a great idea, but engaging in a serious selling activity may oblige a kitchen garden to sell at a price below its costs (2). An owner who wants to engage in serious selling activities should probably decide to become professional and to transform, when this is possible, his garden into a proper competitive market garden (3). The historic fruit and kitchen gardens have an even higher immaterial or cultural value and differ even more from market gardens.

- (1) A case in point is the kitchen garden of Prangins (Switzerland) which was the first facility built on the future estate. Its purpose was to feed construction workers in the absence of any external supply of fruit and vegetable at that location.
- (2) When costs are not properly assessed, one does not always realize that selling can be a loss-making activity and that, when it is the case, the bigger the sales, the bigger the overall loss.
- (3) In many countries, market gardening is a tough and very competitive activity.

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<sup>5</sup> This is probably why there are very few industrial heritage sites attached to active industrial structures or sites. And when they are, this is probably this is the reason why they are clearly separate from the active industrial process.

<sup>6</sup> Even if it is sometimes used, the idea that one can conserve a historic fruit and kitchen garden through the mere conservation of its productive function is, at best, fraught with contradiction.

<sup>7</sup> In the symposium the new owners of Ashley Court (UK) explained that, it is only after their purchase that they discovered in the property an abandoned kitchen garden that they are now restoring. It was not mentioned in any property document.

<sup>8</sup> While some old kitchen gardens are just abandoned, others are (mis)used for a variety of purposes far from their original function: parking lots, tennis courts, swimming pools, places for keeping horses, etc.

However, the parallel with industrial sites should be used with care for two reasons at least:

- Innovation in gardens is probably slower and less destructive than in factories and new solutions do not always completely replace old ones, they often just increase the diversity of approaches available for solving a given problem.
- It is clear also that many owners of historic gardens who have used their garden for producing the fruit and vegetables – and also flowers and medicinal herbs - that they needed have not fully accepted the logic of creative destruction and have decided to preserve a few historic jewels even if this has resulted in an increase of their production costs. As tastes and methods of production have continuously evolved over time, these gardens have often progressively changed also, except for a few features. A case in point is the potager of the Château de Valmer (France), a garden that dates back from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and that has been more or less continuously cultivated. The conservation rule adopted in this garden is to make sure that the walls and the original design of the beds, alleys and central basin are preserved. Keeping this original design is no easy choice as it forbids, for example, the use of modern tractors in the garden.

### Unfortunate uses of historic artefacts

As explained in Susan Campbell's *History of Kitchen Gardening*, all the artefacts of a productive fruit and kitchen garden are designed for a very specific purpose<sup>9</sup>: producing specific plants with a specific technology, supported by specific savoir-faire, within a specific context. In practice, there is a wide variety of ways for conserving these artefacts ranging in between two extremes:

- At one extreme, historic artefacts are preserved (or restored) more or less close to their original state but are used for completely new purposes: ancient glass houses become a restaurant, ancient buildings become the visitors' center, etc<sup>10</sup>. This is often unfortunate or uninformed restoration.
- At the other extreme, historic artefacts are preserved and used for their original purpose, for the plants and the technology they were designed for. This is what we can call genuine conservation.

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<sup>9</sup> This issue is also central to the conservation of Industrial Heritage. See the Nizhny Tagil Charter <https://ticcih.org/about/charter/> and the Dublin principles <https://ticcih.org/about/about-ticcih/dublin-principles/>

<sup>10</sup> One obvious conservation issue with this use of ancient artefacts: **how reversible are the changes introduced?**

## **A first (and popular) alternative, selective conservation and restoration Search for new purposes and functions**

The presentations in the symposium showed that the overall situation today is that most historic kitchen gardens practice a sort of conservation which organizes the garden around the co-existence of a mix of:

- historic artefacts: walls, overall design, espaliered fruit trees, etc.
- most up to date production features: fashionable plants, high-tech watering systems, modern equipment and machinery, etc<sup>11</sup>.

There exists today an immense variety of combinations of old and new and it would be pointless to try to establish what are the most appropriate combinations<sup>12</sup>. One can only enjoy the results achieved and recognize the beauty and the horticultural excellence of a number of these gardens, even if, in pure terms of conservation, we can only talk of 'selective conservation'.

Our sentiment is that mostly selective conservation can actually be very well adapted to all those ancient fruit and kitchen gardens with a moderate historical and cultural value. As John Dixon Hunt rightly reminds us<sup>13</sup>, we should not focus on conservation only. Even in a garden that has been cultivated for a very long time, it may be more interesting to focus primarily on production and innovation as well as fully accepting creative destruction on the basis that although, very occasionally, historic artifacts are of little value, they may be of greater interest to the visiting public.

The symposium showed that the model of selective conservation mixing old and new is also often used for restoring historic fruit and kitchen gardens. It has also showed that this model is not necessarily economically sustainable because it adds costs to the production of fruit and vegetable. This is probably why many historic and fruit garden have decided to pursue additional or new sources of value:

- either economic value: Dominique Pophin presented the garden (winner of the SNHF best garden award in 2016 and 2021) integrated into the luxury hotel and gourmet restaurant of Château Colbert.
- or social value: Serge Conreur and Thierry Hay showed how the fruit and garden of the abbey of Saint Georges de Boscherville supports a project aiming at bringing jobless people back to work.
- or **cultural value**: Stéphane Repas-Mendes presented the fruit and kitchen garden of Château de Prangins (Switzerland) which has been turned it into a sort of living museum

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<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that many owners of these gardens that mix the old and the new are often reluctant to use all those new technologies that are very visible.

<sup>12</sup> It seems however that it is important to be as precise and as documented as possible when presenting historical elements.

<sup>13</sup> Hunt, John Dixon, What is it about gardens that you want to conserve? *Gardens & Landscapes in Historic Buildings conservation*, John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

that tells the history of plants and gardening. In this case, the revenues come from the many activities organised for visitors, not from the sale of fruit and vegetables<sup>14</sup>. Even if it is not widespread yet, this approach seems to be the one that is most in harmony with the specific nature of historic fruit and kitchen gardens.

Several issues that the symposium did not sufficiently investigate are:

- Could we imagine other possible purposes or functions?
- What are the key success factors of these different approaches?
- Are these different alternatives all equally economically sustainable? Probably not but we clearly lack data on the economics of historic fruit and kitchen gardens<sup>15</sup>.

## **A second alternative : genuine conservation of historic artefacts**

The symposium showed that there is a real craze for the treasures that one can find in gardens with a history: glass houses, conservation caves, walls and buildings, and trained fruit trees and that the interest seems especially strong when these artefacts are used in a function close to their original one.

- Sarah Wain presented the historic glasshouses of West Dean which are still used for cultivation under glass.
- Nicola Bradley and Alasdair Moore described how pineapples are still cultivated under glass as they were in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the Lost gardens of Heligan.
- Ghislain d'Ursel presented the conservation caves of Château de Hex in Belgium where vegetables are still preserved in conservation caves as they were in the past<sup>16</sup>.
- The use of trained fruit trees was presented by Herman Van Den Bosche and Marcel Vossen - Gaasbeek in Belgium- and by Jim Arbury and Gerry Edwards – RHS- United Kingdom

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<sup>14</sup> Some plants may even be allowed to go to seeds, which is not the aim in a productive garden!

<sup>15</sup> The lack of economic data is common to all historic gardens. See for example: Funsten Cassandra, Borsellino Valeria and Schimmenti Emanuele, A systematic Literature Review of Historic Garden Management and Its Economic Aspects, *Sustainability* 2020, 12

<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note that although the garden is used for producing fruit and vegetables for the family of the owner, these caves are not adapted to the conservation of all the produce of the garden: Chateau de Hex uses also modern refrigeration methods. A costly solution to the contradiction between using and conserving.

These presentations showed that:

- It is indeed possible to conserve ancient treasures in their original guise. Heligan still cultivates pineapples under glass in the way in which it was successfully done in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is obviously a challenge; it is labour intensive, the working conditions are not easy and it requires the support of a whole ecosystem that is no longer present (for example, it is very difficult today to find horse manure of the required quality).
- The conservation of these ancient treasures requires the conservation of ancient savoir-faire. In some cases, the conservation -and the further development of ancient savoir faire\_ can become even more important than the conversation of the garden itself: this is the case at Gaasbeek which has become the most important centre in Europe for conserving the art of the espalier.
- Once they are conserved, some of the ancient horticultural savoir-faire do not need to remain limited to the historic vegetable and fruit gardens. They can also be used in other gardens as well as in other places: private gardens, collective gardens, agroforestry, edible landscapes, etc.<sup>17</sup> See: <https://artdelespalier.org/>

As genuine conservation implies that historic artefacts are conserved in their original use, this has obvious implications:

- Conservation efforts need to be based on a deep and broad interdisciplinary research as one needs to get a practical understanding of many dimensions of our history: what were the horticultural techniques used for producing food at that time? What knowledge or savoir-faire supported these technologies? What construction and irrigation techniques, what equipment and tools were used? What was the work and the life of gardeners and head gardeners? How were they educated<sup>18</sup>? What plants were cultivated? What food was consumed? What were the eating habits? What was the interaction of people with plants? Towards nature and the environment? What was the overall societal context, etc<sup>19</sup>.
- The cultural function of historic fruit and kitchen gardens then supersedes then its original production function<sup>20</sup>. Historic fruit and kitchen gardens become unique places for telling visitors about the many dimensions of history.

When genuinely conserved, artefacts of historic fruit and kitchen gardens become cultural objects aimed at conserving and explaining our horticultural – and other – heritage. Contrary to what happen in industrial heritage sites, fruit and kitchen gardens artefacts can continue to produce. They can produce historical plants based on ancient technologies and savoir-faire

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<sup>17</sup> This is the reason why a movement was started in France for requesting that the art of the espalier be on the list of immaterial cultural heritage of Unesco. One of the ways for conserving this ancient savoir-faire.

<sup>18</sup> Some fruit and kitchen gardens have been parts of schools of horticulture. This is the case of Potager du Roi which was recreated as a school of horticulture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>19</sup> As they reflect the use of new materials, for example glass or iron, historic fruit and kitchen gardens also tell us about the history of crafts and industry.

<sup>20</sup> Historic kitchen gardens continue to produce. However, they are sort of ‘frozen in time’ and produce as they were producing in the past, not any longer for suiting continuously changing needs

and visitors can see – even taste – the fruits and vegetables produced. One has also to keep in mind that plants, technologies, savoir -faire and consumer tastes evolved relatively slowly. As a result, ‘freezing in the past’ an artefact generally means freezing it in a period that can be measured in years or even decades. During such a period a number of different cultivation solutions were generally tried out and can be shown again today: historic fruit and kitchen gardens can be extremely lively museums!

## **Genuine conservation of the totality of high value historic fruit and kitchen gardens**

Genuine conservation (restoration) applied to the totality of a historic fruit and kitchen garden probably is the **solution to be recommended for all those sites with high historical value**. However, this is probably an extreme that is very difficult or even impossible to achieve completely . In spite of their walls, fruit and kitchen gardens of the past were not isolated but rather part of a whole ecosystem that has disappeared: it is impossible to find all the suppliers that were used of the past and, rightfully, no gardener would accept to work as in past centuries! Genuine conservation will always be the result of choices and compromises. In the symposium we had presentations from gardens that offer substantially different solutions for genuine conservation: Heligan (UK), Château de Prangins (Switzerland) and Château de Villandry (France).

Genuine restoration of the totality of high value historic fruit and kitchen gardens becomes even more challenging when the garden has more than one high value period.

## **The many actors involved**

### **Owners, managers, head gardeners and gardeners**

In the symposium several owners and gardeners made presentations. Among the participants there were also many owners and gardeners.

Fruit and kitchen gardens with a history require a degree of horticultural excellence that can only be reached by a team of knowledgeable gardeners who are well led and who have both the requisite resources and room for manoeuvre. Several speakers gave participants the opportunity to discuss the functions of gardeners and their training; Elinor Davies, RHS

(England), Kelly Fowler and Gemma Sturges, Audley End (England); and Willem Zieleman, Het Loo (The Netherlands).

The role of the owner is essential to the good conservation of an historic fruit and kitchen garden. The unique role and responsibility of the owner was an important focus of the webinar presentations:

- Jacques Soignon presented the history of Nantes 120 years of vegetable gardens in Nantes: from the tropical garden of the Grand Blottereau to the recent nourishing landscapes. From the city of a hundred gardens to the city in a garden.
- The participants in the colloquium were able to discuss the role and responsibility of the private owner to produce and persist in implementing a long-term vision with Henri Carvallo, the owner of Villandry.
- Together with Olivier de Lorgeril, La Bourbansais and the Demeure Historique, they were also able to reflect on the economic models that enable an owner to make his or her garden truly transmissible to future generations.
- Finally, Miranda Rock, the Chair of Burghley House, presented the long-term management plan for the restoration of their historic kitchen garden: how to combine conservation, horticultural excellence and economic success?

Gardeners and head gardeners also have a critical role in the creation and maintenance of any garden and this is obviously the same in historic fruit and kitchen gardens. One has to realize that these gardens require both deep and broad competencies:

- The production of fruit and vegetable is based on fairly sophisticated savoir-faire (especially for fruit)
- Historic fruit and kitchen gardens are not limited to fruit and vegetable in the open air. They often also include cultivation under glass as well as cultivation of flowers and ornamental plants. Kitchen gardens gardeners should master many of the branches of horticulture.
- Finally, gardeners and head gardeners should have a deep understanding of the past.

Several sessions of the symposium were devoted to gardeners, head gardeners and to the process of transmission of savoir faire. This is definitely an area that needs further attention!

### **Garden historians, garden archeologists and landscape architects**

The complexity of the historical dimension of historic fruit and kitchen gardens calls for historians with such a broad spectrum of interest that teams of historians with different fields of expertise may be the preferred solution. When trying to understand the workings and the historic value of an ancient fruit and kitchen garden, multi-disciplinary teams involving historians, garden archaeologists, horticultural experts, engineers, gardeners, etc. are probably needed.

One issue that probably needs to be further investigated is the respective roles of historians, horticulturalists and gardeners on one side and landscape designers on the other side. If the role of historians and gardeners is essential to make the garden, or parts of it, work again as it



did in the past, what could be the additional value of landscape designers? At the same time, in certain periods of the past, and especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, landscape design was an integral part of horticulture !

In Chambord, Thea Dengerink and Nathalie de Harlez ran a workshop dedicated to these issues.

## **The common thread: the pursuit of excellence – including economic excellence**

Cultural excellence, horticultural excellence, conservation excellence and economic excellence were constant themes of the seminar and were particularly present in the Zoom presentations by Jim Buckland, West Dean (England); Chris and Karen Cronin, the Walled Gardens at Croome Court (England); and Didier Moray, Mariemont (Belgium). An essential dimension of achieving excellence in a historic fruit and vegetable garden is respect for the essential role of the gardeners.

In the symposium, at least three presentations have shown that historic fruit and kitchen gardens can achieve economic success. Henri Carvallo presented the very successful economic model of Villandry. Olivier de Lorgeril – La Bourbansais et la Demeure Historique- explained how owners can implement bold economic models. Finally Miranda Rock presented the approach of Burghley House for constructing the economic model of their future kitchen garden.

Excellence is a dimension of conservation that would need to be explored in more depth.

## **Historic fruit and kitchen gardens can help solve today's challenges**

Several presentations in the symposium showed the potential impact of historic fruit and kitchen gardens out of their walls:

- Jacques Soignon, CVVS and Nantes described the evolution from the historic kitchen garden of Grand Blottereau to the nurturing landscapes of the city of Nantes: <https://secureservercdn.net/160.153.137.128/o1n.fa2.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/E6-Nantes-slides.pdf>
- Jim Arbury, Alexandra and Olivier Debaisieux, Gerry Edwards, Herman Van den Bossche and Marcel Vossen helped us better understand the art of the espalier.

It is clear that past horticultural practices don't all have the same value. Some have a historic/cultural value only: some fruit and vegetable of the 18<sup>th</sup> century have a very poor flavor, some past horticultural and technical practices were harmful to the environment and to human health, etc.

On the other hand there is traditional savoir-faire that has passed the test of time and that is not only valid today but is badly needed for helping to create a more sustainable agriculture: this is the case with the art/savoir faire of espalier trained fruit trees that is needed plant trees in the constrained environment of cities. Ancient horticultural and technical savoir-faire have never been frozen, they have been continuously improved by a multitude of small inventions implemented by successive generations of gardeners. If some ancient inventions have been replaced by new ones, some are still in existence today. The unique role of historic fruit and kitchen gardens is to:

- conserve the diversity of all the horticultural and technical savoir-faire that we have inherited from the accumulation of the inventions of gardeners over centuries.
- promote it to potential new users and help them understand how it could help deal with today's environmental, social and economic challenges.
- work with these new users at making these horticultural and technical savoir-faire continue to grow



## 2- A few proposed dos and don'ts for conserving fruit and kitchen gardens

(As they emerged from the discussions in the symposium)

### Assessing the historical value

1. Don't rush this step when restoring a garden. Try instead to see assessing value as a major project of its own. Value assessment will not only guide the restoration but may also drive the future life of the project. Involve as many people as you can in the value assessment project.
2. Don't assume that finding a historic map is enough. Historic maps (like the Ordnance Survey maps in the UK or Cassini maps in France) are an essential first step but you need to go beyond the surface and develop a reasonably full understanding of how your garden functioned in the past. Once again, a fruit and kitchen garden is a bit like a factory: you need to understand the functional logic behind its organization. This requires a reasonable understanding of ancient horticultural knowledge and savoir-faire and of the work of the gardeners. Collect as many references to the past life of your garden as possible. Look for records in libraries, archive offices and museums. Diaries, letters, memo books, magazine and newspaper articles, fruit and vegetable catalogues, horticultural building catalogues, advertisements, books on travel, on gardening, estate accounts, plans, drawings and paintings are all sources of potential information. Best of all, seek out the memories of old gardeners who once worked in your garden.
3. Avoid focussing solely on your garden. Try instead to see that historic fruit and kitchen gardens were generally part of a network of similar gardens, of gardeners, of horticultural societies, etc. Understanding these ecosystems is key for understanding the value of your garden. Find lists of horticultural prizes in local horticultural societies.
4. Avoid the fashion of being "local" . In many periods in the past, gardening was an activity characterized by rich exchanges between gardeners all over the world. Do not forget this dimension when assessing the value of your garden Many plants or fruit tree shapes are named after the nurseryman or gardener, or place that they came from. e.g. Blenheim Orange apple, Myatt's Pine strawberry, Cannon Hall grape, palmette Legendre, palmette Verrier, etc.
5. Don't focus only on the period when your garden was first created. Accept the fact that many historic fruit and kitchen gardens have changed since their original creation. Some have progressively evolved, some have been periodically recreated. When assessing the value of a garden, this evolution should be carefully researched.

6. When studying the history of the place and doing the research, ask questions: what are its strengths? Who was there before? Look at significant points in history and consider where and why it may have failed in the past.
7. Look at the history of the owners at the time – was this always their main residence? Evidence of their professions - Doctors? Soldiers? Writers? Politicians? Industrialists? Inventors? Were they sometimes hard up, at others very wealthy? Splitting up? Sending plants from postings or travels abroad? Nouveau riche? What happened when the country was at war? Going through an economic slump? Etc
8. And finally, do not rush on simple conclusions: whatever the past period, there was no single way to organise a fruit and kitchen garden – and many gardeners were eager to try different approaches... You actually need to try to map out the vision and personality of those who created the garden!

## Conservation approach

1. Do not assume that since a historical fruit and kitchen garden is a place of production, then maintaining it as a place of production is sufficient to conserve it. Rather try to recognise that deciding to conserve a historic fruit and kitchen garden is a bit like deciding to conserve a piece of industrial heritage. In order to allow for an historic conservation of the types and methods of fruit and vegetable production in a garden with a very high historical and cultural value, then this garden has to be somewhat frozen at a certain period of time in history. In larger gardens a variety of historical periods might be reflected.
2. Try to forget the idea that it is just a place that is for producing today's food with today's methods for today's people. Rather try to accept that it all depends on the importance of the historic and cultural value of the site. If this value is small, it might be a good idea to give priority to the production of food; if the historic and cultural value is great, then the conservation of this value becomes priority and production of food becomes a supporting function
3. Avoid the belief that the great popularity of potagers makes it easy to conserve historical fruit and kitchen gardens. Try instead to consider that this is true and false. If the popularity of this type of gardens attracts people, it is important to help them understand that a historical fruit and kitchen garden - especially if it has a great historical value – is no regular potager. Be aware of the risk that commercial success might change the nature of the garden
4. Try not to limit conservation to a few artifacts, design, built parts. Try instead to acknowledge that a kitchen garden is a holistic system for producing food, a system based on the vision, the knowledge and savoir-faire of an owner and of a head-gardener in a specific historic context with specific plants being available; it may also reflect the notions of beauty of these same people. Ideally, it is all of this that needs to be preserved

5. Avoid the conservation of artifacts without intending to use them for their original purpose. Try instead to see that most of the artifacts of a fruit and kitchen garden have been created to fulfil a specific purpose or function. Conservation calls for keeping in use glass houses, root cellars, fruit houses, etc. This must include the full recognition of the different uses for a glasshouse, i.e. peach-house, vinery, orchid house or whatever, as well as frames, fruit protections on walls, different back sheds and work-rooms, slip gardens and frame yards.
6. Avoid the systematic introduction of new technologies. Try instead, before introducing any new technology, to make sure it does not alter the system that it is intended to conserve.
7. Don't get discouraged by all the constraints created by conservation. Recognise that not all fruit and kitchen gardens with a history are worthy of full preservation, that perfect conservation is impossible anyway. Consider also that innovative actions that are reversible are probably part of real-life conservation.

And also, probably like for any historic gardens:

1. Write a statement of significance
2. Develop a conservation management plan.
3. Don't rely only on a few major periodic restorations. Try instead to implement a plan of continuous preventive maintenance.
4. Don't limit conservation to the resources you have. Relate conservation to the importance of the cultural value of the site. It is the responsibility of the owner to find the required resources.
5. Avoid acting on a case-by-case basis. Try instead to consider working with a systematic long-range plan (as long as needed by the type of plants and methods of culture). This plan should be based on the cultural value of the site and express clearly the purpose of the conservation project.
6. Avoid the belief that conservation is easy. Realise that conservation may involve difficult decisions that need to be guided by a strict approach. Create a strong voice for conservation within or outside your organization
7. When confronted with a garden that is in a poor state, avoid "restarting from zero". Try instead to consider keeping what still exists first.
8. In a garden with a long and rich history, do not necessarily give priority to one specific period. When deciding about restoration make sure that the required information is available.

## Understanding the workings of the ancient artefacts

1. Research the site in detail – people, building, facilities, evolution of the site (science, technology, war and peace periods, etc)
2. Beware of change – climate, development, replacing and repairing structures and plants  
Beware of modern materials and / or modern designs. How to restore a wooden

greenhouse? With metal? Probably okay if we keep its original design and proportions. Ditto for an iron greenhouse that can be restored in powder coated aluminum that is more expensive in investment, less expensive in maintenance and more durable over time.

3. Decide how to use the existing buildings (cellars, greenhouses, orangeries, sheds) Is it a good idea to re-establish cultures that restore them to use? Or is it better to maintain them by giving them a new function, such as boutique, tea room, exhibition room? It seems preferable to ALWAYS USE existing buildings for their original purpose, but it is also necessary in all too many cases, to convert them into lavatories, shops, cafes or ticket offices. This should be done as sensitively as possible.
4. Maintain the same volumes and types of materials for the walls, and associated structures.
5. Do not asphalt, pave or gravel paths in vegetable gardens which should be made of beaten earth (hoggin).
6. Solve the grass paths problem and understand the climatic difference between northern and southern Europe.
7. Do not introduce significant changes that ruin the genius loci, and lose the reasons for why the place has recognition.

## Thinking about new purposes/ functions

1. Respect the genius loci as defined by Alexander Pope. Landscaping should be designed with the place in mind.
2. 1 / Outside the walls. Even if the garden is within walls, it is important to make sure that the surrounding landscape is otherwise protected, at least as little damaged as possible, because it contributes to the general impression (example when you get there, parking lots, etc.) 2 / The walls. Maintain the same volumes and materials. 3 / Within the walls. Difficult to describe because it is not just a question of facts but above all of a felt impression, of a general atmosphere ... The garden must keep its soul. There must be vegetables and fruits !!! In any case, mostly. And flowers and herbs according to the style of the garden.
3. Pay attention to signage, information boards and notices – keep these to a minimum. If there are ornamental beds outside the walls make them as beautiful as any beds within the walls. Don't allow shelterbelts outside the walls to become too high, or too close to the walls.

4. When linking the garden to a restaurant, define the relations between garden and the kitchen? What can be grown that serves the restaurant/ what will need to be brought in? If they exist on the estate, consider the use of slip or field gardens for raising vegetables such as potatoes, cabbages and onions that are much used in the restaurant or café.
5. When adopting a cultural function (showing for example periods in the history of horticulture or in the history of the relations between people and plants), make sure you understand all that is needed to succeed with this new function. This is particularly crucial with tricky things like hot walls and hot beds, which need constant, and skilled attention.
6. When adding new functions try also to stop some old activities so as to avoid too much complexity and costs
7. Don't slavishly follow the fashion of the moment. Currently all buildings are readily clad in wood to "make it natural" and are therefore the same everywhere ... Equally unacceptable are the "architectural gestures" of an architect who is happy to use great speeches to explain the supposed integration of an inappropriate building in its surroundings.
8. Consider having a competition and asking the opinion of (future) visitors? Consider fund-raising events for special restorations such as glasshouses or dipping ponds.
9. Also consider: Education – children, schools, therapeutic gardening, biodiversity – flora and fauna. Avoid: Being over ambitious. Avoid running the garden 'remotely' without knowledge of what the garden and gardeners need in order to achieve what they are asked to do. Avoid insufficient staff or facilities for proposed project
10. Avoid turning a kitchen garden into an allotment site, which means dividing it into equal portions for individual owners. The result is a hotchpotch of materials in use, with sheds, bins and garish plastic hose reels, a complete loss of the garden's original integrity, and no one (like a head gardener) to oversee the proper use of it

## **Owners, managers, head gardeners, gardeners and volunteers.**

1. Avoid saving on manpower. Accept that fruit and kitchen gardening requires real gardening competence. And that the conservation of a historic fruit and kitchen garden requires even deeper and broader expertise. An excellent owner should take this dimension of conservation into full account. Make sure the gardeners have proper mess-rooms, lavatories and workrooms.
2. Employ someone (Head Gardener) with experience and knowledge and with a strong interest or understanding of the place itself. If the owner/manager is a competent and



experienced gardener, he can train his / her gardeners on his own. If he is not, he should bring in an already competent head gardener (or sole gardener).

3. Recruit gardeners with training or sensitivity to historical monuments. This is of primary importance. Recognize the challenge of training gardeners for historical monuments and the need to adapt to the ongoing climatic upheavals. The gardeners also play an essential role in the transmission of knowledge to apprentices by encouraging the maintenance of threatened technical and cultural practices and by sharing their experience with the public.
4. Don't entrust the vegetable garden, orchard to gardeners who do not have sufficient training or awareness of a specificity of the historical vegetable garden.
5. Enable gardeners to have sense of ownership. In all cases, gardeners must be trained throughout their lives (training, meetings, exchanges, welcoming trainees). Do not change gardeners too often. Knowledge of a garden and therefore the appropriate skills are established over time. Remember that in the past, there were generations of the same family of gardeners who followed one another in the same garden.
6. Encourage volunteers, but make sure they have good guidance and defined parameters – that they understand what they are doing and why. That they are happy with the tasks they are needed for. Why is it that Volunteers are very little used in France in gardens in general and in vegetable gardens in particular? Encourage volunteers to explain what they are doing when visitors ask them. Consider how volunteers are managed in Ireland and Netherlands, Germany etc. Different organisations and private or charity/community run gardens have various management schemes for volunteers

### **The unique responsibilities of the owner**

7. Avoid the belief that your garden is an island. Try instead to realize that the long-term health of historic kitchen gardens depends on the health of several ecosystems: the profession of the fruit and kitchen gardeners, the conservation of horticultural savoir-faire, the gardens tourist industry, etc. Monitor/get involved in these ecosystems
8. Don't think that the purpose of your garden is a given that requires little attention. Try instead to see that being the guardian of the purpose of the garden means that you have to ensure that all that is done in the garden falls within the scope of its purpose and that this purpose remains relevant.
9. Get to know the place intimately before you change anything – the warmest, windiest, sunniest, shady and coldest bits, the changes in soil conditions, dry bits, damp bits, the layout of old paths and beds, old watering systems, etc.
10. Avoid thinking that the horticultural and cultural savoir-faire that is needed for conserving a historic fruit and kitchen garden is a simple operational issue.

11. Recognise that most of the features of historic fruit and kitchen gardens have been created in order to fulfil a well-defined function and correspond to specific knowledge and savoir-faire. Continuously promote the belief that conserving historic fruit and kitchen gardens is more than preserving artifacts and that it is mostly about preserving knowledge and savoir-faire
12. Avoid the idea that it is easy to recruit gardeners. Try instead to understand that the owners of historic fruit and kitchen gardens have a unique responsibility towards themselves and society as a whole for promoting and developing the profession of fruit and kitchen gardeners.
13. Avoid the idea that your ownership is a given. Try instead to check, continuously, that you are the best possible owner. If it appears that you are not, then have the courage to pass the ownership to the best possible owner

## Excellence

### Excellence in horticulture

1. Knowledge of vegetable crops and fruit arboriculture is essential. Take stock of the different lessons that exist in Europe, depending on the country. The education garden at Dumfries House in Scotland is a good example.
2. At the same time, we need "Heritage gardeners" who are able to grasp the specificities of a historic garden. The education of gardeners should be a nation-wide practice in schools and colleges. Do not believe you can use volunteers only
3. Avoid people who are interested in their own ideas/agenda rather than the long-term future
4. Offer fair wages
5. Be creative – set targets but allow the garden to evolve as times and economics change
6. Understand commitments in terms of costs and time.
7. From Jim Buckland: The Oxford Dictionary defines excellence as “The quality of being outstanding or extremely good” with its root in the Latin verb excellere - “to surpass”. Synonyms for excellence include distinction, quality, skill, mastery or expertise – all qualities that gardeners can and should aspire to.

## Visitors

8. Invest in trying to understand your visitors. Activities must be adapted to their needs

9. Children are an audience in their own right. Arouse their interest through exhibitions, gardening classes, harvests .... Children like scarecrow competitions, and eating raw peas, strawberries and raspberries off the bush. Watch out for children's play areas (avoid garish colors, contemporary materials. put the play area outside the walls of the garden, please!)
10. The vegetable garden must meet the public's expectations and also must keep its 'soul'. Accommodate the public without jeopardizing the space
11. Practice the art of receiving, make people welcome
12. There should be a diversity of events and a richness of programming for visitors. Animations should have imagination but not over-complicated ideas. Try to give people keys to help them understand the plant world around us. Plan visits around different themes such as training of fruit trees, planting and pruning methods, fight against diseases and pests. When an event is very successful, don't let it distract you from managing the rest of the garden. Plant labelling is important, with special notes for the less common vegetables. Take good care of the garden's publicity and communication. Care for the garden cleanliness and maintenance. Manage and/or control the number of visitors: avoid too many. Decide on the opening to the public – specific times or seasonal.
13. Provide access for the public: reception room, ticket office, parking area for visitors, amenities, shop, disabled access.
14. Don't create events that are unrelated to the site or its capabilities. This heritage is fragile, and not designed to be trampled by great numbers of visitors.
15. Don't organize animations that correspond to operations that are financially perilous or that may damage the brand image of the garden

## Economic model

16. Avoid the idea that breaking even on the operations of the garden is an effective target. Try instead to remember that the challenge is to pass a healthy garden to the next generations. Always make sure that your project generates enough resources for the periodic maintenance needed to keep the garden in good health.
17. Do not start planning from the financial resources you have. Rather start a vision, estimate the revenues it can generate that the costs that will be needed to generate these revenues... If the profitability is not enough, then go back to the vision!
18. Historic fruit and kitchen gardens are part of the tourist industry, Benchmark with the best performers in this industry and learn from them.

19. Don't underestimate risks. Try instead to set a systematic approach for understanding risks (bad weather events, climate change, people's changes in taste, skilled manpower shortage, etc.), understand how they can be mitigated and act.