

# Vive la France!

Last summer while some OGC & Talbot members were touring the gardens of England and experiencing the Chelsea Flower Show, OGC member Roberta Maguire was touring gardens in France. “Over a two-week period this past summer I visited gardens located in Normandy and the Loire Valley. Some were part of a chateau while others were transformed from former orchards or farms. I was fortunate to meet Claire Jones who organized the tour in June for Maryland gardeners called “Splendors of France”. We visited about twelve gardens in Normandy and the Loire Valley, in addition to guided visits to historic sites such as the Bayeux Tapestry and Chartres cathedral. Among the private gardens my favorite is the Jardin de Castillon near Bayeux, which features a succession of themed gardens, each one different. The gardeners are now in their 90’s but are still involved in sharing their design process with visitors.” Thanks for sharing your tour with us Roberta. Viva la France!



## **Chaumont-sur-Loire castle, Blois**

One of the more than 300 ‘Jardin Remarquable’ of France awarded by the Ministry of Culture, it is a modern collection of small gardens designed by international garden designers. There is also a wooden parkland and kitchen gardens

## Les Jardin de Castillon

Near Bayeux a succession of themed gardens each enclosed by taxus hedges offer a unique atmosphere from the previous one. Three terraces with yew topiary and beechwood hedges offer ornamental grasses, day-lilies and hostas around a reflecting pond. Created in 1985 by gardeners Hubert and Colette Saints-Beuve who are now in their 90s.



## Les Jardins d'Étretat

A futuristic garden that extends over the white chalk cliffs of the Alabaster Coast in Normandy, Étretat was designed by landscape architect Alexandre Grivko. He transformed the historic garden into an avant-garde site with lush topiary, architecture and contemporary art.





## Le Vasterival near Dieppe

Le Vasterival near Dieppe is a hilly wooded garden with mostly shade loving plants and trees.

## Le Jardin Plume, Auzouville-sur-Ry, Normandy.

Near Rouen this is a beautiful contemporary garden which specializes in grasses and perennials and uses parterres of clipped hedges to give the garden structure. It was designed around a former orchard and pasture by the owners Patrick and Sylvie Quibel.



Monet's garden at Giverny never disappoints with its Japanese style water garden which was the inspiration for the water lilies series of paintings. (all photos by Roberta Maguire)



# Ask A Master Gardener

**Q. I want to separate my beds from the grass using a strip barrier. Some are PVC and some are metal. Which is longer lasting? Which do most gardeners prefer?**

A. There's no denying that edging your flower beds provides an aesthetically pleasing look to your garden. It creates a clear distinction between your plants and grass, enhancing the overall appearance of your landscape and practically speaking, it helps keep garden mulch and soil in place.

Almost anything can be used for edging: boards, old railroad ties, packaged plastic edgings, bender board, etc. Plastic edgings and bender board are easy to work with, especially if your bed/s is irregularly shaped. They are also inexpensive compared to other options. However over time plastic edging can get brittle and be easily damaged by an aggressive mower which gets too close. If you want something long lasting, consider concrete, stone or metal. Which you choose depends on what kind of "look" you want, and your budget. Bricks are a common choice. More expensive are options like metal edging, granite pavers, etc. For more information (and a comparison) on different types of edging check out this website: <https://housegrail.com/types-of-landscape-edging/>

**Q. What is the difference between a native, a cultivar and an invasive plant?**

A. Good question! A native species is one that occurs natural in a specific location, state, or ecosystem. It is not genetically altered by humans nor introduced as a result of deliberate or accidental human activity. Think of the native plant as a straight species—the 'wild type' as Doug Tallamy called it. A cultivar has been bred from the straight species for certain practical or desirable qualities such as color, size, disease resistance. Supporting wildlife or restoring habitat is not the primary goal.

Invasives are non-native plants that out-compete their neighbors, displace natives, strangle trees, smother shrubs, degrade habitat and harbor dangerous pests, like for example, the Spotted lantern fly. The Maryland native plant coalition published a survey in January of the invasives of most concern on the Eastern Shore. They are privet, English ivy, Callery pear, and multi-flora rose. If you have them, get rid of them.

Natives can also out-compete other species. We refer to these as Aggressive plants. Prepare for vigorous growth requiring regular pruning and divisions under certain conditions. Manage (and share) them. While English Ivy is non-native and invasive, Trumpet vine, for example, is an Aggressive native.

**Q. My grass is growing regions Chickweed and Creeping Jenny. What is the best way to bid it goodbye?**

A. Is there anyone who doesn't fight these weeds? An interesting tidbit about common chickweed: the seed capsules are very small and close to the ground. This makes them hard to see but each contains about 2,500 seeds which can stay in the soil for up to 40 years!!! That's why it is so hard to get rid of and tends to pop up wherever there is disturbed soil. It is easy to hand dig if you have a small amount here and there but if it is in huge regions throughout your lawn, you may have to resort to a herbicide to which it is very susceptible. One to check out is Eraser which is 41% glyphosate.

By the way, birds love chickweed seeds so if you love wildlife, you may want to take the hard, slow method of hand weeding .

About about Creeping Charlie. It was brought here from Europe in the 1800's as both an ornamental and medicinal plant. Now its just a broadleaf weed that drives us all crazy. It travels by stolon and loves shade and moisture. There are a few methods of control and which you use will likely depend on how much of it you have. You can hand pull it. If lucky you'll get a long string of it, but don't be fooled. Frequently the string will break and some will be left in the ground. This is a labor intensive process and one you'll have to do repeatedly to get it all (hopefully). If its invasive in a lawn you could try a de-thatching rake. That will pull up a lot of the runner, but again, many will break off and remain. A last resort is to use chemicals and the best time is in the fall. One that is reported to be highly effective is Triclopyr, an herbicide that targets broadleaf plants. Once sprayed, it will take a few weeks after application before the plant dies.

If you don't like the idea of chemicals, then hand weed, try to live with it as much as you can, and consider spreading a pre-emergent in your lawn this coming fall.

#### **Q. What should I be pruning this spring?**

A. There are two reasons to prune, one is for the health of the plant (remove dead, diseased or damaged limbs or branches) and the other is to control shape or size. Generally speaking you don't prune until after blooming. This allows time for new growth that will produce blossom buds for next year. The latest (Spring) issue of ***Fine Gardening Magazine*** has an excellent section on pruning. It suggests the following plants be pruned after spring blooming: Bigleaf hydrangea, Forsythia, Lilac, Magnolia and Crabapple. Plants that are best pruned in late winter or early spring before growth appears are Abelias, Summersweets (Clethra), Hibiscus, Hydrangea paniculata and Crape Myrtles. There's an old saying that you prune roses when forsythia is blooming. Regarding evergreens, prune after last spring frost: Boxwoods, Hollies, Arborvitae. Prune after flowering: Camellias and Evergreen Azaleas and Rhododendrons.



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