

A piece of suburbs

The Vallée de la Bièvre, located in the southern suburbs of Paris, has a characteristic landscape shaped by its historical function in the service of the capital. Working-class housing and housing estates, engineering structures and industrial wasteland bear witness to a rich past and form the landscape signature of a territory between city and nature.

The millstone and its private garden mark the landscape signature of the first ring. Indeed, the 19th and 20th centuries were the periods of construction of the landscape of the inner suburbs. The proliferation of allotments and the construction of the garden city of Arcueil, designed in 1921 by the architect Maurice Payret, is contemporary with the proliferation of this type of pavilion.

The valley is crossed by several structures. The Médicis-Belgrand aqueduct, built from 1613 and renovated under Haussmann, was designed to supply the capital with drinking water. It is supported by the Loing aqueduct in the south of the valley, crossing the course of the Bièvre. The watercourse (in the Rue Cousté sector in Cachan), which was discovered at the time, was the site of an important laundry and tannery industry still serving Paris.

Since the 19th century, the Bièvre Valley has also been a market gardening area for Paris. Vegetables were grown there, but above all vines and other fruit trees. Phylloxera ruined wine production towards the end of the 19th century. Today, the municipality of Cachan is gradually reintroducing vines on the slopes, which gives rise to festive activities and allows people to reconnect with the flavours of yesteryear.



Arcueil and Cachan in the Paris urban unit

Nature in the City

This little guide invites you to discover the different forms that nature can offer in the city. We propose an itinerary in the form of a sensitive urban walk lasting about an hour and a half in the Bièvre valley, starting from the future Arcueil-Cachan Grand Paris Express station. From municipal parks to planted promenades, via shared gardens, we invite you to discover the different meanings of nature in the city: you can learn to identify them along the way.

What is Nature in the City ?

Today's city dwellers are very sensitive to the environmental quality of their daily lives. Parks and gardens, tree lines, and private plots of land with vegetation are all places for relaxation, passage or enjoyment that allow city dwellers to take advantage of nature and the landscape. Urban projects are increasingly integrating this idea of nature in the city, with the principle of improving the quality of the living environment. Nature is also becoming a lever for territories, serving other objectives (social links, security of public spaces, etc.), particularly in the inner suburbs where the landscapes offer a morphology that is conducive to the varied development of the notion of nature in the city.

•The idea of nature in the city takes various forms, such as **landscaped nature** : landscaped nature: public parks (n°3, n°8), pavilion gardens and planted promenades reflect a desire to domesticate nature in the city for the pleasure of city dwellers.

•**"Country" or "nurturing" nature** : refers us to the land ("terroir") to nature gardened for its agricultural potential, in the image of the shared gardens (n°2) or the old workers' gardens of the southern suburbs.

•**"Patrimonized nature"**, such as the Church garden (n°4) or the banks of the Bièvre (n°7) is based on the memorial dimension, a testimony to ancient practices that have been brought back to life.

•At last, **wildness** can be found in neglected , abandoned and/or partly abandoned places such as "forgotten" houses or wastelands (n°6a).

Discover these different meanings of nature and try to identify them along the way.



URBAN

STROLL

Arcueil-Cachan

Take a walk in the heart of the Bièvre valley. 1h30 - 5Km of exploring nature in the city! Suitable for all ages and all audiences, walk and discover the parks, gardens and planted walks of the Bièvre valley in Arcueil and Cachan.



With the support of:





Paul Vaillant Couturier Park (3)



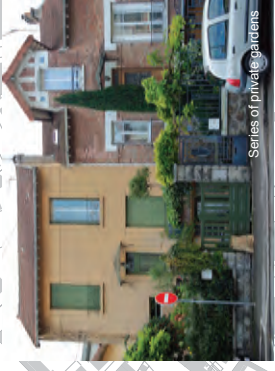
Roure Garden (2A)

3 Paul Vaillant Couturier Park
Nature and leisure
Built around a 19th century house bought by the City in 1930 and then rehabilitated as a municipal health centre, this park is now open to the public, to the delight of the youngest. Between oak and chestnut trees, there are numerous playground for children, large lawns, and a city-stadium for sportsmen; nature is here a marker and a support for leisure.

4 Garden of the Church
Nature as a witness to the past
The heritage is brought to light in this old-fashioned priest's garden. The organisation of the garden, the species selected and the reuse of stones cut in the Middle Ages give the place a worked and nostalgic atmosphere.



Garden of the Church (4)



Series of private gardens

2 Shared Gardens
Nature as a medium of sociability
Here we cultivate good humour like old-fashioned squash. Before being a 'food garden', the shared gardens of the "Arcueil Comestible" group are first and foremost a place of sociability where people from the neighbourhood and elsewhere can meet. Don't hesitate to enter this public space, which its volunteer contributors claim to be free and independent. You may be lucky enough to meet Richard, a colourful gardener. Go to the Roure garden (2A) and, for those who are more interested, go to the Cauchy garden (2B), in front of the church, every Saturday between 10am and 2pm.

1 Vanne Promenade
The channelled nature
Walk along the monumental arches of the Vanne aqueduct (1860), which are rooted in the Médis aqueduct put into service in 1623. Here, nature is channelled, invisibilised but at the same time the raison d'être of the most present element of the Arcueil landscape. And don't the arches, built of millstone, give us a glimpse of the region's subsoil?



Vanne Promenade (1)



Bank of Bièvres, ZAC Desmoulins (7)

9 Simonin Park
Nature at the foot of the building
Leaving the Raspail park, cross the avenue du Président Wilson and enter the transitional space with trees offered by the Simonin block. This is proof that large housing estates and nature can coexist harmoniously. If you are lucky enough to be walking around on a Wednesday or Saturday, take advantage of the lively Cachan market at the exit of the park.

8 Raspail Park
Romantic nature
The largest landscaped green space in the city of Cachan, Raspail Park offers a domesticated nature in a classic style: rocky, old stones and exoticism are everywhere to create a different atmosphere in the city. Stroll through the ordered paths, where you can appreciate a beautiful diversity of flowers, including a bamboo grove, the pride of the municipality, as well as a rose garden on the edge of the park.

6A Vallon Garden
A piece of forest in the city
This small garden below the D127 road provides a change of scenery thanks to a landscape treatment that mimics the wild. It is a way for the citizen to escape from the city in an atmosphere of undergrowth. The dense vegetation alternates between rare species and covering trees.

6B Rue Etienne Dolet and urban wasteland
Between Pavilions and Wilderness
For the more adventurous, this route option first takes you through a traditional suburban landscape. See the variety of private gardens, from banana trees to plastic hedges! If you are in good shape, there is a viewpoint via Rue de la Citadelle, where you can see a patch of vines, a reminder of the hillside's wine-growing past. Next, you will take an informal passage through a wasteland that has allowed wild nature to flourish as much as the talent of some Parisian graffiti artists.

7 ZAC Desmoulins
Nature brought back to life
Walk in the footsteps of the Bièvre... without the Bièvre. Here there are no problems of flooding or water pollution from the laundries, since the river has been buried: enjoy a walk through these new districts recreating the characteristic fauna and flora of wetlands, to end up timidly finding the original river under the aqueduct. Then turn right onto the Long and Lunain promenade, in the shade of the plane trees.

