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## Vertical garden expert Patrick Blanc at Cleveland Museum of Natural History on Tuesday



"Vertical gardens can really be different shapes," Patrick Blanc explained during his talk on Feb. 28, 2017, in Cleveland. Blanc has created indoor and outdoor vertical gardens around the world. Credit: Ryn Clarke

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Patrick Blanc, one of the world's leading experts on vertical gardens, will be in town to discuss how he covers skyscrapers with living plants at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Blanc, based in Paris, is also known for his globe-trotting trips to study biodiversity. His appearance is sponsored by the Shaker Lakes Garden Club.

Blanc's vertical gardens are large installations created for public buildings, museums, hotels and other structures around the world. His vertical gardens are based on his observation that plants can grow without soil if they are supplied with water, minerals and carbon dioxide. In his vertical gardens, plants are supported on a metal frame.

"The vertical garden becomes a second skin of the building and this is a living skin," Blanc said on his website. "The plant roots are then only spreading on the surface of the vertical garden structure, leaving the inner wall unaffected."

One of his best-known creations is a 338-foot-long "rainforest chandelier" in Bangkok, Thailand. In Sydney, he used 250 species of native Australian flowers and plants to beautify a

building, according to the English-language newspaper Straits Times in Singapore. His gardens decorate shopping malls in Bangkok, Tokyo, Berlin and Paris.

In this country, he created a vertical garden in Charlotte, North Carolina, and for a 2012 exhibition at the New York Botanical Garden Orchid Show.

Blanc told the Straits Times in 2016, "People tell me, 'Yes, vertical gardens are beautiful, but after one year, everything is dead.' You've got to know plants and their habits, which ones you can prune and when to prune. Plants need to grow in harmony. Vertical gardens can be built to last for many years."

He also travels the world to study various types of forests and how plants adapt to extreme habitats. Recent field trips took him to Thailand, China, Columbia and Indonesia.

Blanc discovered tropical plants as a teenager and holds two doctorate degrees in tropical rainforest botany. His many awards include the Botany prize from the French Academy of Sciences and Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

By Julie Washington, The Plain Dealer