

# The World's Tallest Vertical Garden Is Like a Niagara Falls of Plants



Patrick Blanc is a French botanist who loves plants so much he's dyed his hair green. (It's either that or he naturally photosynthesizes). Since the late 1960s, Blanc has pursued his life passion of building [vertical gardens](#): His own abode is one [unbelievable hanging jungle](#) with moss-fuzzed walls, vine-shrouded windows, and a tropical lake stocked with aquatic plants and fish.

The plantman has worked with many architects over the decades to grow sustainable green walls. His latest project, however, might be his career's masterwork. It's a 545-foot-tall waterfall of flowering vegetation running down the facade of [One Central Park](#), a major mixed-use development under construction in Sydney. The leaf-sprouting skyscraper, scheduled to open next year, features hundreds of species of native and exotic plants overflowing from planters lodged between floors. The effect is like peering eons into a dystopian future, when biblical deluges and thick concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> have helped plantlife smother many of civilization's urban outposts.

To gather inspiration for this verdant wonder, Blanc [scouted out](#) the forests and bushlands of Australia, poking at giant [eucalypts](#) and expressing wonderment at aquatic thrombolites. Those would be "[clotted accretionary structures](#)" made of cyanobacteria and binding mucus that thrive in western Australia's Lake Clifton, should you ever want to pay them a visit. Now

he's in the process of weaving weeping shrubs and parasitic vines into a living cloak for One Central Park, which when completed will be 50 percent covered in green things and also the highest vertical garden in existence, [according to Dezeen](#).

The development's primary architect, Jean Nouvel, is a Pritzker winner (and also a winner for most [frustrating website ever](#)) who has designed many striking buildings – the Technicolor tusk that is Barcelona's [Torre Agbar](#), for instance, and the block-stuffed [Musée du quai Branly](#) in Paris. The latter structure also incorporates a green wall that reportedly suffers from frost damage when cold weather rolls by. The Sydney project will probably avoid this issue, as the climate is quite balmy and many of the plants are desert species adapted to extreme temperatures.

The sprawling green wall will suck up sunlight during the city's glaring afternoons and artificial light at night, too, thanks to a tremendous contraption mounted high above. This is how the project's developers, Frasers Property and Sekisui House, [describe it](#):

The daring pinnacle of One Central Park is crowned by a hovering cantilever that contains the tower's most luxurious penthouses. Here too, is a jettying heliostat – a beguiling assemblage of motorized mirrors that captures sunlight and directs its rays down onto Central Park's gardens year round. After dark, the cantilevering structure (a favoured Nouvel architectural device) is the canvas for leading light artist Yann Kersale's LED art installation that carves a shimmering firework of movement in the sky and brings a new architectural shape to One Central Park by starlight.

It's exciting times for Sydney in terms of ambitious architectural projects. A number of the industry's biggest names are working in the area, including Britain's Sir Norman Foster and Frank Gehry, who's designed [this crumpled-up oddity](#) for a local university. Here are more renderings and models of the record-setting vertical garden and that "jettying heliostat," a must-have for any modern tower:











Photos courtesy of [Patrick Blanc](#) and [Frasers Property](#)