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*A stunning vertical garden designed by Patrick Blanc for fellow vertical gardener, Noémie Vialard, in Brittany, France. It is filled with edible aromatic plants.*

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## PATRICK BLANC

One of the pioneers of vertical gardening, Patrick Blanc started constructing green walls in France in the late 1990s and has since become internationally renowned, with projects all over the world. His creation of the Vertical Garden (Mur Végétal) has totally transformed the possibilities of what a garden can be, offering remarkable solutions for public buildings and urban gardens.

A botanist who became an artist at the age of fifty-two, Patrick took everything he knew about plants and used it to transform his plantings into vertical art. He understands what plants really need and this knowledge gives him the freedom to experiment with gardens that seem to defy gravity. Plants 'glue' themselves to whatever will sustain them, so all Patrick has done is to create the right conditions for healthy plant growth on the sides of buildings or other walls. Once a waterproof membrane is in place to prevent moisture seeping into the wall, cushions of sponge-like fabric are attached. This horticultural material allows for the free flow of air, nutrients, water and trace elements – it's almost like upholstering the wall – and is thick enough for the roots to grow through. Over time, the roots take over, becoming the new transportation system for water and nutrients.

Patrick draws his inspiration from natural environments where plants and landforms grow vertically, such as epiphytes (plants that grow on the branches and trunks of trees, deriving all they need from the surrounding air) and inselbergs (the isolated rocky outcrops that naturally occur within a landscape), as well as the architecture of leaf colours, waterfalls, root systems and plants that find their way into the cracks and corners of buildings and rock faces. With a focus on texture and forms, the gardens Patrick creates are truly inspirational.




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*I had the pleasure of meeting the master of vertical wall gardens himself, Patrick Blanc, in Paris. Inspirational. He is one of the most energetic and creative men I've ever met. He has green everything – hair, fingernails and clothes!*

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