

THE RESTORATION OF

THE QUEEN'S GROVE

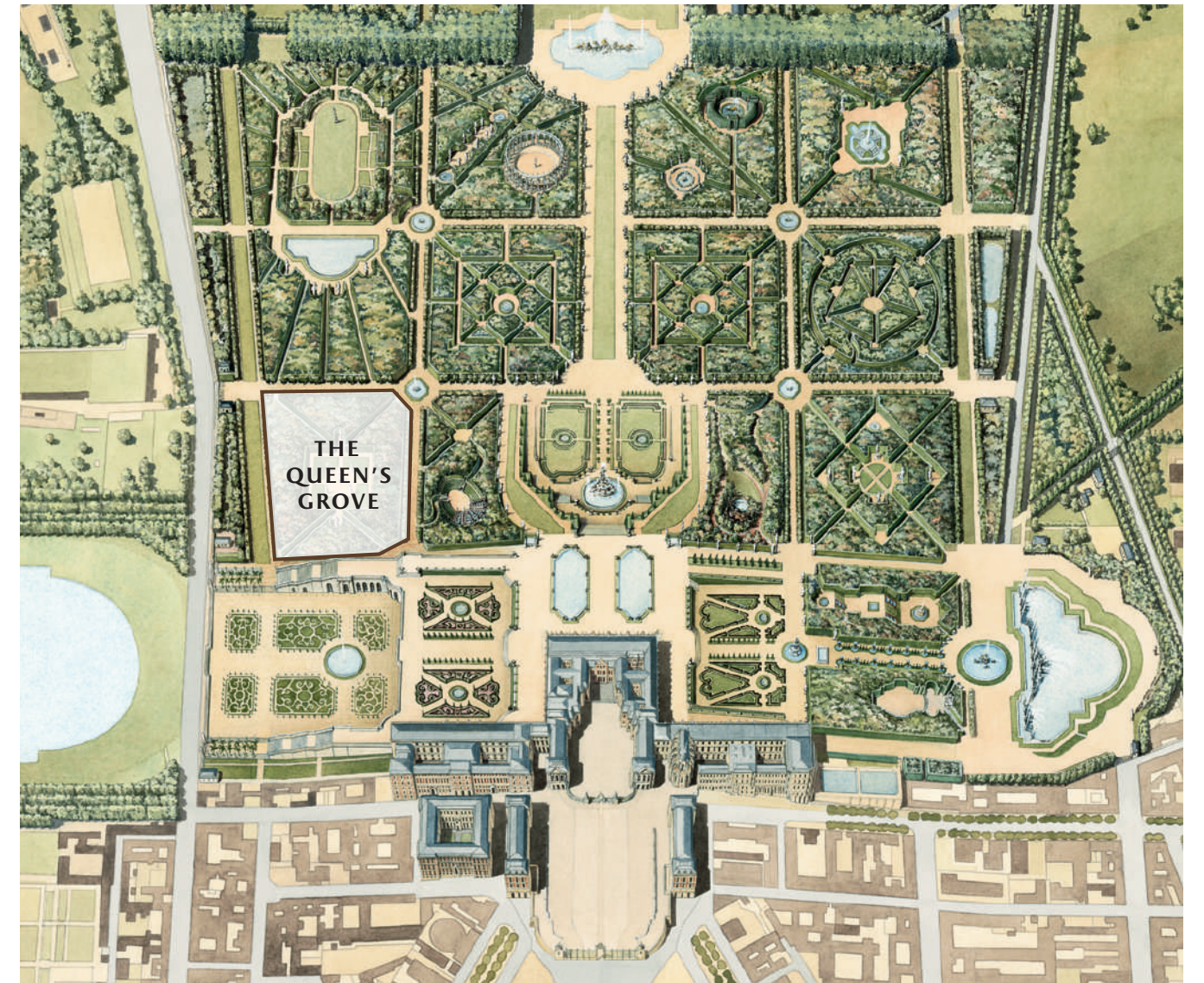


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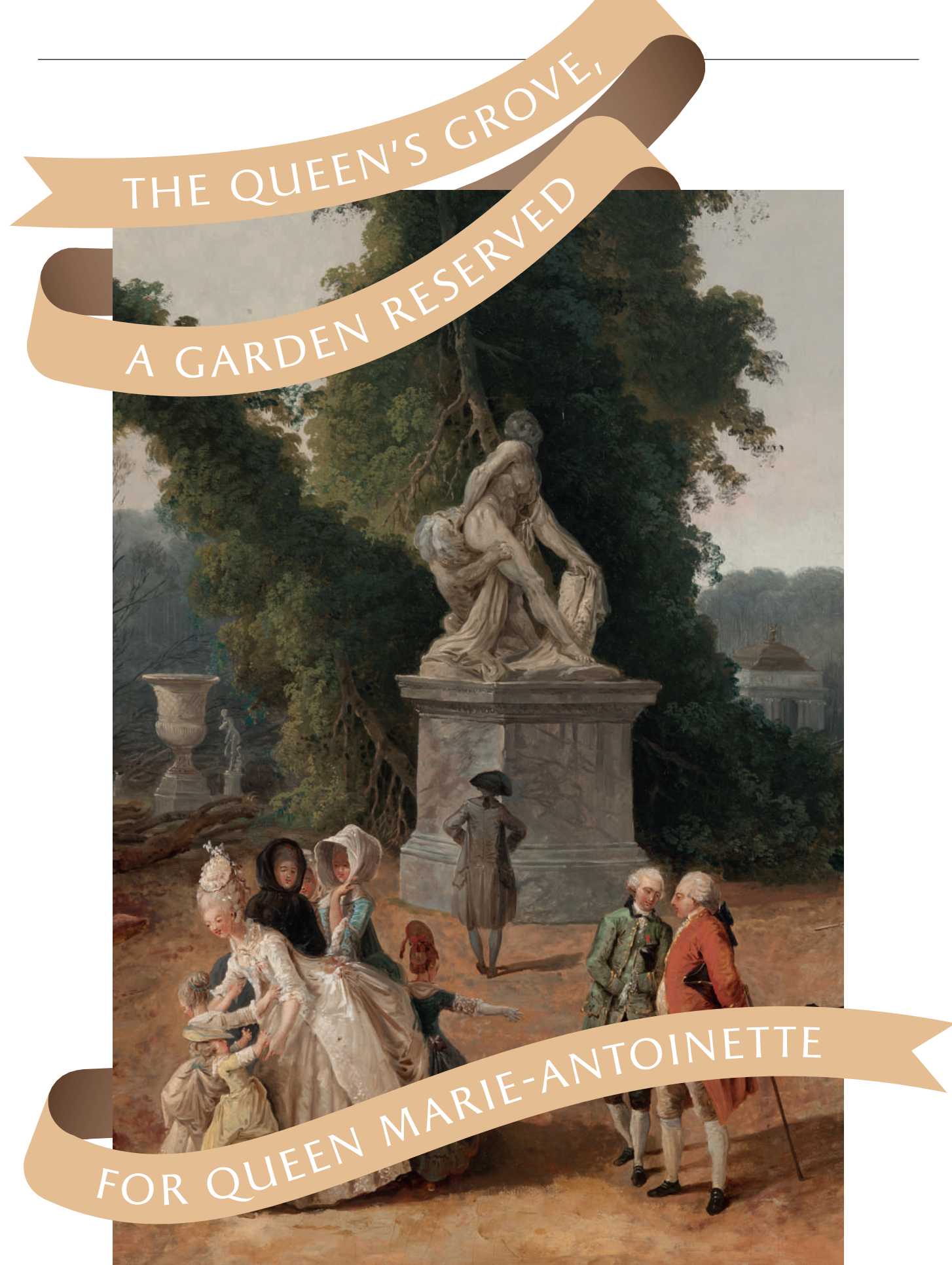


***“Our trade with North America, England and her colonies, has enabled us to acquire a large number [of species] to which we are still adding every day. Some of these new species have not propagated sufficiently, and their qualities are not well enough known for us to be able to plant them in the spaces and the plots which suit them best: in this alphabetical catalogue I shall simply describe briefly those that can now be used to plant out areas of the gardens in the modern style [...]”***

*Essay on modern agriculture dealing with trees, shrubs, and subshrubs for outdoor cultivation, which are used to create walks, groves, massifs, hedges and borders in the modern style.*

Abbé Pierre-Charles Nolin and Jean-Louis Blavet – 1755





Created in 1776 to replace the Maze Grove, this ornamental garden bordering the Orangery Parterre was designed especially for Queen Marie-Antoinette so that she could have somewhere secluded to walk, away from the many visitors to the Palace.

The design reflects the taste at that time for landscaped gardens, combining the precision of the French formal layout, so popular at the French Court, with the twists and turns of the walks inspired by the new English-style gardens.

The Queen's Grove is unusual among the Gardens of Versailles, as it is the only one whose fame and magnificence lie in its plant components.

Planting focused on highly prized shrubberies and species newly introduced into Europe. Around the central area, shaded by Virginia tulip trees, the garden retained densely wooded areas at the edges, interspersed with arbours of plant life linked together by winding walkways.

In 1784, it was the setting for the night-time meeting between Cardinal Rohan and an imposter posing as Marie-Antoinette, a key episode in the affair of the Queen's Diamond Necklace.

The Grove was a flower garden with predominantly North American varieties newly introduced into France, like the Virginia tulip tree, the white fringe tree and the Carolina silverbell. The first seeds of the Virginia tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), brought over in 1732, were cultivated in the Trianon garden before being distributed throughout the gardens at Versailles.

Within the grove, the tulip trees were arranged in a regular pattern in the central area, creating a veritable room of greenery. Around the perimeter, the vegetation comprised a variety of species of trees and shrubs, all flowering at different times and in succession. The four main access paths were ideal for shaded flower-scented strolls, while the smaller paths wound their way to arbours of greenery complete with wooden benches on which to rest.

The new plant species, especially those introduced from North America (Virginia, North Carolina, Canada), began to be used more and more, demonstrating the enthusiasm for plants to embellish the "modern" gardens which were popular at the end of the Ancien Régime.

***"The Queen's Grove is a unique garden. I believe the only way to make it more pleasant and increase the space is to turn it into a Grove in the modern style, to introduce all the foreign trees that have a certain appeal.***

***This space requires artistic variety in the shapes of the trees and their leaves, the colour of the flowers, the period when they will be in bloom, and the different shades of foliage..."***

Gabriel Thouin, landscape architect, 22 October 1775





The Queen's Grove deteriorated considerably during the 19th and 20th centuries, and today is a mere shadow of what it once was, although it still retains most of the original layout. The walks with their imposing foliage have now become unremarkable paths and the botanical diversity has gone, giving way to uniform bushes.

The restoration of the Queen's Grove is an ideal opportunity to recreate a grove where the botanical diversity will be the main feature of the décor, just as the architecture of trellises and fountains embellishes the other groves in the Versailles gardens.

Before the restoration begins, some detailed documentary archaeological research has been undertaken to determine the original layout as precisely as possible: plants, furnishings, sculpted décor, etc. First, the central square and the access paths will be replanted with tulip trees, so that the Grove will once again be filled with plant life, as in the time of Marie-Antoinette. This work will be followed by a gradual replanting of the vegetation around the perimeter. The small arbours will be planted with trees and flowering shrubs.

The tree and shrub species will be selected from a wide range of plants, consistent with those used in the Gardens at the end of the 18th century. This great diversity of flowering trees will give each arbour in the Grove its own individual atmosphere and each will have its own name: white fringe tree arbour, hawthorn arbour, staghorn sumac arbour...

Work will begin in winter 2019.

In this, the 20th anniversary of the great storm of 1999, the replanting of the Queen's Grove will ensure that the Palace of Versailles continues to pursue its policy of restoring and enhancing the gardens, which are really plant-laden extensions to the royal residence.



#### THE VIRGINIA TULIP TREE:



This was Queen Marie-Antoinette's favourite tree, which she also had planted in her gardens at Trianon. The Virginia tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is native to the southern and eastern regions of the USA. Introduced into France at the beginning of the 18th century, this majestic tree can live for up to 500 years and usually grows to a height of 40 to 60 metres. It is distinctive for its heavily perfumed tulip-shaped flowers and broad leaves, which turn red and gold in autumn.

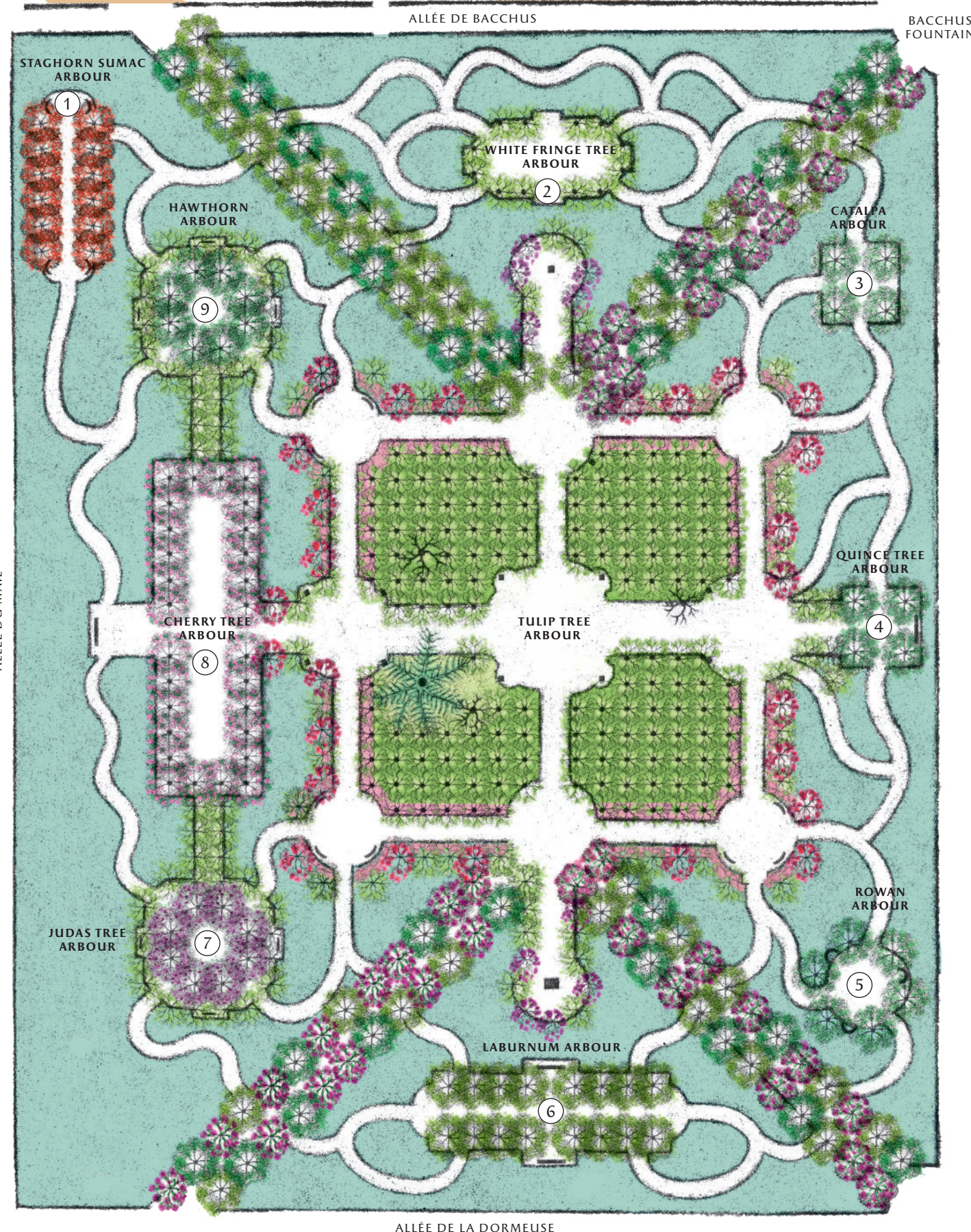


# BECOME A PATRON OF THE QUEEN'S GROVE

PROVISIONAL RESTORATION BUDGET: 1.8 MILLION EUROS

Alongside one or more major patrons, individuals and companies are invited to take part in this important heritage operation by adopting a flowering arbour or a Virginia tulip tree.

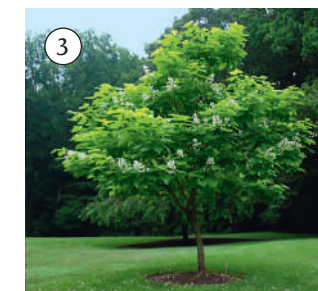
Cherry tree arbour, laburnum arbour .....	150,000 euros
Staghorn sumac arbour, white fringe tree arbour .....	75,000 euros
Hawthorn arbour, rowan arbour, Judas tree arbour, quince tree arbour and catalpa arbour .....	50,000 euros
Virginia tulip tree .....	1,500 euros



1  
STAGHORN SUMAC  
RHUS



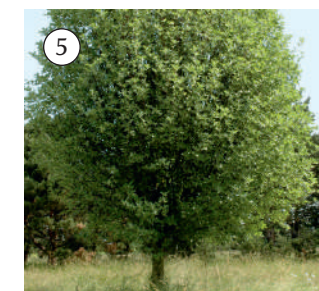
2  
WHITE FRINGE TREE  
CHIONANTHUS  
VIRGINICUS



3  
AMERICAN CATALPA  
CATALPA  
BIGNONIOIDES



4  
PORTUGAL  
QUINCE TREE  
CYDONIA OBLONGA



5  
WHITE ROWAN  
SORBUS



6  
COMMON LABURNUM  
LABURNUM ANAGYROIDES



7  
JUDAS TREE  
CERCIS SILIQUASTRUM



8  
FLOWERING CHERRY TREE  
PRUNUS CERASUS



9  
FRUITING HAWTHORN  
CRATAEGUS