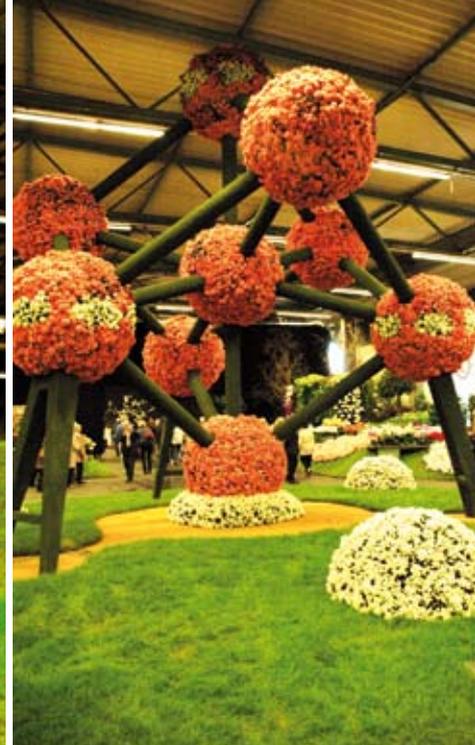
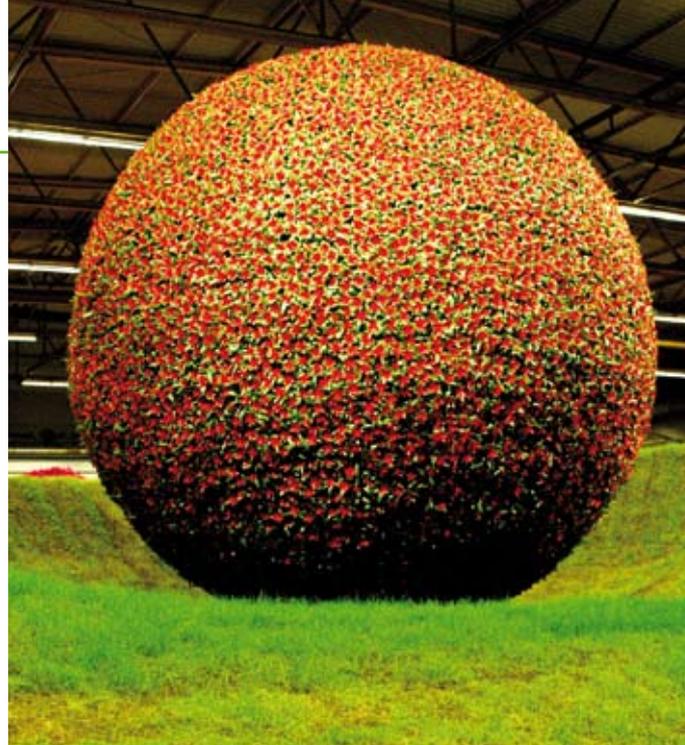


## A Flowering Football

The first day was dedicated to visiting the “Floralien” in Ghent. The Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society organised the 34<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ghent “Floralien”. In an approx. four and a half square kilometres indoor garden, the largest in the world, a circular path virtually two kilometres long passes by the 500 competition entries and 305 exhibitors – including a flower Atomium and a flowering football.



# Ghent “Floralien” and fascinating Brussels

ELCA Study Trip to Belgium: Over 90 Participants from 14 Countries

A study trip of the European Landscape Contractors Association (ELCA) was held to the Kingdom of Belgium. Even though the ash cloud of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull prevented some landscape gardeners from North and East Europe attending the study trip – more than 90 participants from the countries of Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, Czechoslo-

vakia, Turkey and Hungary met in the Belgian capital Brussels. The massive problems affecting flights also had an impact on the planned elections of the ELCA-Presidium. Therefore Antoine Berger, the ELCA-President of many years, and Nico Wissing from the ELCA-Committee of Firms again welcomed the participants. A special thank you to Marie Mertens, who superbly organised and managed the Belgian study trip with the main focus on the Brussels area.

### Royal Greenhouses

Belgium belongs to the founding members of the European Union and Brussels is the seat of the most important European institutions like the European Commission, the Council of the European Union as well as the European Parliament. With an area of 30,528 square kilometres Belgium has over 10.7 million inhabitants.

The Belgian capital is also known for its chocolates, cheerful wine bars and fascinating muse-

ums. All streets in Brussels start and end at the Grande Place, the centre of the old town. The Royal Greenhouses in Laeken Park are not only a must-see for lovers of garden art. Of course the ELCA took advantage of the unique chance to visit the gardens as they are usually only open to the public for a short period every year. The “Floralien” in Ghent is one of the largest and most beautiful flower shows in Europe that can only be admired every five years. The ELCA study trip lasted three days in all. The participants all agreed that the study trip to Brussels can be ranked among the most impressive study trips in the history of the ELCA.

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## ELCA on Successful Course

Antoine Berger thanked all fellow campaigners who accompanied him during the past nine years while he was President. He has always completely identified himself with the ELCA and regarded the landscape gardeners in Europe as a big family. This is one of the strengths of the ELCA, even when there have been discussions or arguments, compromises were always found and joint cooperation was always given priority. Many developments were kick-started and pushed forward with study trip programmes, excursions, workshops and publications, stated Antoine Berger.



### Famous Bronze Statue

The third day was reserved for a sightseeing tour of Brussels. A small group of the ELCA study trip participants continued with the tourist program that also included a visit to the famous Manneken Pis. The 60 centimetre high bronze statue on the corner of the Rue de l'Etuve and Rue des Grands Carmes was created by a Brussels sculptor in 1619. The figure has been stolen many times; today's statue is a copy dating from 1965. The original is kept in the Maison du Roi. Occasionally the statue is dressed up. For example it wears the jersey of the Belgian national team during any international games.

### Architecture and Nature

On the second day the ELCA participants visited Groep Moris, a versatile company that not only has a 25 hectares tree nursery but is also active in the garden and landscaping architecture field as well as in the construction of residential buildings. The company aspires to achieving perfect harmony between architecture and nature. The buildings that purposefully appear old are all new constructions and contain modern furniture and the corresponding domestic engineering inside. To be able to fulfil these special requirements the employees of Groep Moris are continuously searching for old construction materials.



### Visiting Wim Becaus in Wetteren

A visit to the landscape gardening company of Wim Becaus in Wetteren was also on the agenda. The successful Belgian landscape gardener surprised the experts with his enormous hall for machines and equipment as well as with the exemplary tidy organisation of the special small parts and pipe connections used by the landscape gardening industry for swimming ponds and pools.



## Roof Garden: Twin Square

The landscape architect Jean Delogne with his project "Twin Square" in Diegem presented a special concept. The architect put his focus on a car-free park. The cars can be parked in a subterranean garage passing through an entrance of natural stone. The whole park represents an intensive roof garden of excellent quality.



Talking at "Twin Square": Jean Emmanuel Bois (left) and Emmanuel Mony. The – in the meantime – newly elected ELCA-President Emmanuel Mony (right) is now at the helm of the ambitious European Landscape Contractors Association.

## Thank you to Antoine Berger

The former ELCA-President Erris van Ginkel thanked the parting ELCA-President Antoine Berger for his excellent work during his time in office. When Antoine Berger was elected on 26. April 2001 the ELCA had twelve members. During the nine years of his Presidency he was able to induce ten further countries to join as members, said Erris van Ginkel. Currently the ELCA has 22 member countries.



## A Visit to Tree Nursery Solitair

The visit to the tree nursery Solitair in Loenhout represented a highlight on the second day because the Belgian tree nursery has been producing very special plants for 23 years. The focus is on each individual plant that is cared for and developed individually. The evergreen bushes are often used as a "scaffold" to generate forms and structures. Especially the ball-shaped box trees – shaped on the left and untrimmed on the right as the prerequisite for later round shapes. As well they have a large selection of *Quercus ilex*, *Prunus lusitanica*, *Taxus baccata* and other plants. These are often decades old or even more than one hundred years old.



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Peter Wirtz (left), talking to Erris van Ginkel,  
presented a lecture on current projects of the

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