

Flower Carpet

2022 PRESS KIT



TAPIS DE FLEURS DE BRUXELLES
BLOEMENTAPIJT VAN BRUSSEL



"THIS SUMMER, THE GRAND-PLACE WILL DAZZLE US ONCE AGAIN, DECKED OUT IN A THOUSAND AND ONE COLOURS"

"This summer, the Grand-Place, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, will dazzle us once again, decked out in a thousand and one colours. The Flower Carpet is a must-see event on the cultural calendar. Traditionally organised every other year, the pandemic meant that unfortunately, we were unable to present this magnificent floral display in 2020. Incredibly popular with residents and tourists alike, the City of Brussels is particularly happy to see its begonias and dahlias return from Friday 12 to Monday 15 August."

"This ephemeral work of art, which showcases Brussels all over the world, celebrates its 22nd edition this year. On this occasion, to mark the 50th anniversary of this unique initiative, the Flower Carpet is a nod to the very first artwork of 1971. The Flower Carpet on the Grand-Place marks the long-awaited return of the cultural and tourist events that constitute our identity and uniqueness. It also offers the opportunity for a privileged collaboration between artists, horticulturists and volunteers from the four corners of Belgium in a majestic and utterly delightful project."



Delphine Houba

Alderwoman for Culture, Tourism and Big Events
of the City of Brussels
President of the Brussels Flower Carpet Association



PRESS RELEASE

This summer, the Brussels Flower Carpet is back at last!

Following an absence of almost two years, the Flower Carpet is about to take shape once more, transforming the cobblestones of the Grand-Place in Brussels into a glorious sight for all to admire. A nod to its origins, symbolised by a contemporary interpretation of the very first carpet, created in 1971!

Due to the pandemic, the 2020 edition was cancelled altogether. In 2021, the organisers intensified their creativity so that floral art lovers could indulge their passion. Despite the public-health restrictions, the **Brussels in Bloom** event maintained the tradition in a particularly original way.

"After two years of enduring Covid-19, this summer, the Grand-Place, a UNESCO World Heritage site, will dazzle us once again, decked out in a thousand and one colours. The Flower Carpet is a must-see event on the cultural and tourist calendar. The City of Brussels is thrilled to see the begonias and dahlias return", exclaims **Delphine Houba**, Alderwoman for Culture, Tourism and Big Events in the City of Brussels and President of the Brussels Flower Carpet Association.

Even though it will take place **from 12 to 15 August 2022**, this edition sounds like the return of spring for the event that embellishes the most beautiful square in the world every two years.

"After two difficult years, during which Brussels in Bloom was still able to go ahead, thus providing a floral attraction in the shopping districts of Brussels, nothing beats the original, of course. The return of the Flower Carpet puts it back on the agenda as a highlight of summer tourism in Brussels. This event also supports the hotel and catering industry and shops in the city centre", explains **Fabian Maingain**, Brussels' Alderman for Economic Affairs.

A renaissance and a return to its origins

To mark its 50th anniversary and its 22nd edition, the Flower Carpet is a nod to the very first creation in 1971. Because the floral legend began in 1970... in Oudenaarde. Brussels Alderwoman, Mrs Van Den Heuvel and Alderman Mr De Rons, were visiting the Flemish city and discovered a stunning carpet created from thousands of flowers. Thus the idea was born: Brussels would have its own Flower Carpet!

The following year, it sprang to life on the Grand-Place. The first edition was the result of a collaboration between **Francs-Bourgeois** (an association of retailers in the centre of Brussels) and the **AVBS** (Flanders' Federation of Green Industry), of which **Étienne Stautemas** was president at the time.

Born in Zottegem in 1927, and a graduate of Ghent Horticultural College, Étienne Stautemas began creating carpets out of begonias, a flower he was truly passionate about, in the early



1950s. At the time, he had designed more than 180. With his team, he emptied the Grand-Place of its cars (it was then used as a car park) and set to work. The rest is history.

The carpets followed one after another and in 1977, **Annette Katz** took over as head of the organisation for the preparation of **Bruocsella**, the Brussels millennium edition (1979). Anxious for the event to continue after her, she co-founded the 'Brussels Flower Carpet Association' in 1991. In 2017, she passed the torch on to **Richard Poncin**.

A copy? No, a contemporary interpretation!

As a tribute to Étienne Stautemas, the 2022 Brussels Flower Carpet reproduces the very first design he created. All the elements present in the original design appear in the 2022 design, including Saint Michael the Archangel and the Belgian Lion.

"This year we have also included other flowers cultivated in Flanders, such as the chrysanthemum, in the floral composition, to emphasise the variety of our ornamental plant cultivation", explains **Filip Fontaine**, General Director of VLAM, Flanders' Agricultural Marketing Board, a partner of the Flower Carpet and of the 2022 edition.

The title of the 1971 carpet was: **Arabesques**. The arabesques in question were formed by the natural shapes of leaves and stems, arranged in a decorative manner. The arabesques were the trademark of Étienne Stautemas, who used them right up to his final carpet in 1998.

More than a simple copy, it is thus a reinterpretation, since techniques have naturally evolved. In 1971, the Flower Carpet was made using a 'template' of an arabesque cut out of thick cardboard and transferred thousands of times, using the space between the thumb and little finger to measure the 20 cm needed.

In a nod to Étienne Stautemas' working method, the 20cm has been retained in the new design, but modern techniques allow surface calculations to be produced to the nearest cm², avoiding errors of scale.

The design of the 2022 edition is the result of a collaboration between **Roo Aguilar Aguado**, a Mexican artist, and **Koen Vondenbusch**, a student of Étienne Stautemas and his successor Marc Schautteet, who has been working on the Brussels Flower Carpet for 28 years. Both spent more than 280 hours reconstructing the pattern of the 1971 carpet, based on Stautemas' hand-drawn plans.

Tickets for this ephemeral masterpiece will be available as of 3 June via www.flowercarpet.be. Don't miss the great return of the floral heart of Brussels, from 12 to 15 August 2022!



Press contacts:

Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail us for more information or to request an interview:

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Pressroom: <https://flowercarpet.prezly.com>

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Programme:

- Construction of the Flower Carpet: 12 August: 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
- Official opening with sound and light show: 12 August: 10.00 p.m.
- Visit to the City Hall balcony:
 - 12 August: 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. (last admission: 5.30 p.m.)
 - 13-15 August: 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. (last admission: 9.30 p.m.)
- Sound and light show: 13-15 August: from 9.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m. (every 30 minutes)

Tickets:

- Panoramic view from the City Hall balcony:
 - **Individual tickets: €7.00 (free for children under 10 years old)**
 - On sale at www.flowercarpet.be (priority access) or at the entrance on the day of your visit (standard access)
 - **Group ticket (minimum 10 people): €6.00 per person + 1 free ticket for the group leader**
 - Only on presale on www.flowercarpet.be (priority access)
- The Grand-Place is freely accessible during the entire event.

More info:

www.flowercarpet.be



FLOWER CARPET 2022: HOW IT'S CREATED

No less than two years of preparation are needed for the four magical, colourful days of the Brussels Flower Carpet with its hundreds of thousands of flowers. For several months, the growers plant and care for the begonias and dahlias that will bring this tapestry, which is unique in the world, to life.

When the time comes, the growers transport the harvested flowers as quickly as possible to ensure the longevity of this ephemeral tapestry. On the big day, the carpet's 'life-size' design is transferred to a cotton canvas. Hundreds of volunteers then fill in the giant pattern, taking into account the different shades of the flowers.



The begonia, treasure of Flanders...

Étienne Stautemas' favourite flower, the **Flemish begonia** guarantees a long flowering period, a wide range of colours and a great variety of shapes and uses. It is mainly cultivated in East Flanders, specifically in the Ghent region. White, yellow, orange or red, in all shades of pink, single or double flowered, trailing or not, the begonia offers a wide and colourful range of options.

For the 2022 Carpet, we are using 464 m² of begonias, the equivalent of 140,000 flowers. The very first carpet in 1971 consisted predominantly of begonias, but nowadays there are only four large growers of this flower, which has led the designers to increasingly work with others.



... and other flowers and bark

To compensate for the scarcity of begonias, we have resorted to **dahlias**, whose flowers are more resilient and can be easily integrated in the Brussels carpet, covering no less than 563 m², or the equivalent of 225,000 dahlias. However, the flower is smaller than the begonia and therefore requires more work and, inevitably, more flowers per m². Just like the begonia growers, this year the dahlia growers will be present to promote their flowers.

We also use **bark dyed** with all-natural, ecological and vegetable dyes. The lion featuring in the carpet is made from black bark. We also use blue and bright green bark. 508 m² of coloured bark is used in the Flower Carpet.

In 1971, the designer used grass clippings for the 'green' areas of the carpet as rolls of turf or coloured bark were not available at the time. Unfortunately, a violent storm washed some of it away. Today, we only use 88 m² of rolls of **turf** to create the carpet's border.

To produce the new logo incorporated in the 2022 Flower Carpet, we will use 72 m² of **chrysanthemums and euonymus**.



The design of the 2022 Flower Carpet

One carpet, two designers

The design of the 2022 edition is the result of a collaboration between two designers: Roo Aguilar Aguado and Koen Vondenbusch.

Roo Aguilar Aguado is a 35-year-old Mexican artist. She already participated in the previous edition, with the theme: the culture of the Chichimecas and Purépechas of the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. Roo trained as a graphic designer and has extensive experience with ephemeral carpets.

Koen Vondenbusch has been working on the Brussels Flower Carpets for 28 years. He was a student of Étienne Stautemas and Marc Schautteet, whom he succeeded in 2018.



They complement each other perfectly. Roo completely redesigned the 1971 graphics to give them a contemporary look, while Koen, who was responsible for the technical aspects of the project, ensured consistency and respect for the proportions.



For its first edition in 1971, the Flower Carpet unrolls its ornamental 'arabesques' on the cobblestones of the Brussels' Grand-Place

50 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AVBS

The AVBS has participated in all the Brussels Flower Carpets since the first edition in 1971. This year, which celebrates the 50th anniversary, is no exception. The Grand-Place in Brussels will not only be gleaming with brightly-coloured begonias but also with potted chrysanthemums and euonymus, representing the floriculture and arboriculture sectors respectively. Two plants that not only fit in very well with this year's design but also highlight the diversity of Flemish ornamental plant cultivation.

A delicate operation

For several months, the flower growers plant and care for the begonias in order to obtain the colours and quantities necessary to bring the Flower Carpet to life. In addition to craftsmanship, external factors, such as the weather during the growing season, are also decisive for harvesting sufficient good quality flowers. On the big day, the flower growers pick, pack and transport the blooms as fresh as possible, so that the carpet will retain its beauty for as long as possible. The grower also strives to ensure that the potted chrysanthemums reach the perfect flowering stage so that their flowers can show off their best colours on Brussels' Grand-Place.



AVBS volunteers positioning the flowers

A living carpet

Begonia flowers are not the end product of these cultivated plants. In autumn, the bulbs are harvested. They find their way to national and foreign markets. After the event is over, the chrysanthemums and euonymus used in the design will be collected and given a new destination in Brussels.

Hundreds of helping hands

On the big day, the life-size tapestry design is transferred to a cotton canvas of the same size. Then, a hundred volunteers are faced with an extremely delicate task: colouring in this gigantic image. When doing so, they take into account the different shades of the flowers, which they place very close together. The preparation takes several days, with the flowers only being laid on the day of the carpet's inauguration, on 12 August 2022. This ephemeral work of art will then be exhibited for four days.



VLAM, NEW PARTNER OF THE BRUSSELS FLOWER CARPET

Belgium is the fourth largest exporter of ornamental plants in Europe and the seventh-largest in the world. Due to its central location in Europe, our country plays an important role in the global trade in flowers and plants. *"We are therefore proud to be able to highlight this success story as part of the partnership for the 50th anniversary of the internationally renowned Brussels Flower Carpet"*, says **Filip Fontaine, General Director of VLAM**, Flanders' Agricultural Marketing Board. *"It offers us the opportunity to bring together tradition and craftsmanship and we are happy to share them with the many visitors from around the world."*

"We grow your way"

Belgian ornamental plant cultivation is renowned for its diversity, tradition, craftsmanship, customisation and quality. The northern half of the country, Flanders, accounts for the lion's share of cultivation, with approximately 90% of the Belgian total. Thanks to their high-quality standards, their favourable geographical location, both in terms of climate and transport and highly customer-oriented service, Flemish companies have built up a solid international reputation.

This flexibility is reflected in the slogan "We grow your way", which is the rallying cry for all VLAM's export activities in the ornamental plant sector. This slogan will also feature in the Brussels Flower Carpet, where two spaces measuring 6 x 6 metres are reserved for it. For VLAM, this is a very important opportunity to reach an international audience, as *"it's a home game"*, explains **Filip Fontaine** in celebrating the partnership.

Begonia flowers traditionally add colour to the Flower Carpet. *"This year, we have also included other products in the floral composition to emphasise the diversity of our ornamental plants. We chose euonymus to represent the nurseries and the chrysanthemum to represent the florists"*, adds **Filip Fontaine**.

For more information: www.belgianplants.com



FLOWERS AND DECORATIVE PLANTS, LOVE STORY OF THE LOW COUNTRIES

Belgium, and mainly Flanders (90% of exports), has a well-established reputation for flowers and ornamental plants. The climate is favourable, the soil fertile, the know-how of the growers and the constant search for innovation are also firmly rooted. Add to this the personal service provided by the suppliers and its central and easily accessible location, and you can see why Flemish ornamental plants are appreciated all over the world.

A personalised service

The northern half of Belgium is one of the largest exporters of trees, flowers and plants in Europe. Our exporters not only supply high quality ornamental plants but also guarantee personal service, expertise and considerable flexibility. The companies are often still family-owned, with the second or even third generation at the helm. This has allowed them to retain the typical family company spirit, uniting management and employees in the pride they feel for their products.

Constant innovation

Whether it is a question of climate change or new consumer trends, the development of new varieties is of crucial importance in order to continue to meet market expectations. This is why Flemish growers are constantly looking for new varieties. Virus-free and species authenticity are the key concepts.

A wide range of products

Our best-selling plants are begonias, petunias, marigolds, gazanias, impatiens, sage, dahlias, verbena, helichrysum, lobelia, pelargoniums, violets and carnations. As early as the 16th century, Flanders was the leading European country in the cultivation of native and exotic ornamental plants. Its extensive product range, which includes trees, forest plants, roses, ornamental plants, etc., thrives in both Northern and Southern Europe.

The Flemish begonia, unique in the world

With its long flowering period and wide range of colours and shapes, suitable for rock gardens and terraces, the begonia has a wide appeal beyond our borders.

Tradition and craftsmanship

Thanks to its rich tradition of seed selection and tuber production, Flanders is the world's leading producer of tuberous begonias. About 20 million tubers are exported each year to Europe, North America and Japan. Cultivation is mainly concentrated in the Ghent region. Specialist companies are constantly looking for new colours and shapes of flowers. Double begonias and hanging varieties are particularly popular. The immense Belgian flower carpets of begonias contribute greatly to their success and international reputation. The begonias are perfectly showcased in all their colourful splendour.



A floral spectacle for the garden and terrace

Begonias are the ideal choice for those who love striking colours. From white to yellow, orange, red and all shades of pink... single, trailing or double-flowered, the range of begonias offers a wide choice, which means there is a begonia to suit every taste and plant arrangement. With its abundant and long-lasting flowering period, it will provide colour from the beginning of July up until the first frost. Begonias are very versatile and can be used on your balcony, in your hanging baskets, on your patio or as bedding plants. They require little maintenance and are allergy-friendly.

Chrysanthemums, the other Belgian flower

Available in abundance from August to early November, the chrysanthemum does not deserve its rather dull reputation. Thanks to the wide range of varieties and advanced cultivation techniques, Flanders is one of Europe's largest producers of outdoor potted chrysanthemums. Flanders is also at the forefront of developing new varieties of chrysanthemums and improving existing ones. More than 90% of the species grown in Europe have been developed at Belgian companies.

Our horticultural know-how is internationally renowned. In 2010, the Ghent azalea was declared a European Regional Product, making it the first ornamental plant in the EU to receive this quality label. Since then, seven million plants are grown each year under this European quality label and Belgium has become number one in the world.

Five years after the Ghent azalea, the Flemish laurel also received this award. The ten producers who received this label now sell 250,000 laurel plants each year. Its resilience makes it a popular product in both Scandinavian and Southern European countries.



THE THEMES OF THE FLOWER CARPET, SINCE ITS CREATION



The Flower Carpet in 2018

- **1971:** Decorative arabesques
- **1976:** Parks and gardens
- **1979:** Brussels Millenium
- **1980:** 150th anniversary of Belgium
- **1986:** Coat of arms of the City of Brussels
- **1988:** Chinese carpet from the Sinkiang province
- **1990:** Mozart
- **1992:** Brussels, Capital of Europe
- **1994:** 50th anniversary of the Liberation of Brussels
- **1996:** A garden 'à la française'
- **1998:** Carpet inspired by handmade rugs from the north-east of Turkey
- **2000:** Brussels' lace
- **2002:** Versailles
- **2004:** Art Nouveau
- **2006:** Alchemy, the Middle Ages
- **2008:** Savonnerie
- **2010:** Europe
- **2012:** The African continent
- **2014:** 'Anatolian' carpet on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Turkish-Moroccan immigration
- **2016:** 150 years of Belgo-Japanese friendship
- **2018:** Guanajuato, cultural pride of Mexico
- **2022:** 50th anniversary of the Brussels Flower Carpet

In addition to these carpets, there are all those created in other Belgian cities and abroad. Our creative team travels far and wide for world exhibitions, diplomatic anniversaries and other events, to creates wonders miles away from our shores.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Brussels Flower Carpet Association extends its sincere thanks to:

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- Visit Brussels
- VLAM
- AVBS and its volunteers
- Floraliën
- The Belgian National Lottery
- Hotel Amigo
- Maison De Greef
- Maison Dandoy
- Fintro
- Mini Europe
- Marché aux Fromages retailers' association
- Poechenellekelder
- Thill
- L'Occitane
- Gaston Batistini (photographer)
- Retailers in the centre of Brussels

... and all the partners who contribute to the success of this event.

