

Three Remarkable Trees in Bourron-Marlotte

Without claiming to compile an exhaustive list of Bourron-Marlotte's notable trees, we recently focused on three of them, whose appearance, size, or age seem to warrant our collective attention.

An impressive 50-year-old sequoia

A sequoia gigantea, whose proud bearing is hard to miss, is located at the intersection of Grands-Réages and Armand Point streets. Its conical shape is almost perfect, and its trunk boasts an impressive circumference of 4.90 meters (measured at a height of 1.30 meters), or over 1.5 meters in diameter. Its history is well documented, since it was in 1975 that Jean Vilgrain, then Chairman and CEO of the Société des Grands Moulins de Paris, sold a plot of his Bourron-Marlotte estate to his manager of several decades, Paul Gaillard, so that the latter could build a house there for his future retirement. As a sign of generosity towards his staff, Jean Vilgrain gave him a sequoia. When Paul Gaillard planted this tree, Jean Vilgrain exclaimed, "You bought a tree that was far too small; I wanted to give you a beautiful tree!"



Fifty years later, the two men would certainly have been delighted to contemplate this sapling that had grown into a giant... even if it was still only in its prime!

A weeping sophora watches over an artist

Our second tree stands in the heart of the old Bourron-Marlotte cemetery. It is a weeping sophora whose abundant foliage is particularly noticeable on sunny days, when its drooping branches tend to occupy a large part of the path. This superb umbrella was planted approximately 152 years ago on the grave of the romantic painter, engraver, and illustrator Célestin Nanteuil (1813-1873), who died in the home of his friend Abel Orry, himself a painter who lived



in the town. Over the years, the forgotten grave had practically disappeared, until the Amis de Bourron-Marlotte placed a tombstone and a plaque there for the 150th anniversary of the artist's death. This sophora does not require any special maintenance; even though its trunk shows obvious signs of aging, at over 150 years old, the tree continues to grow and produce an abundance of foliage.

A venerable platanus tree near the Place du Marché

From the Place du Marché, take the Ruelle des Mathurins, which runs along the west facade of the Café de la Paix. Upon passing this building, a huge platanus looms into view, shading most of the parking lot behind the café. Its dimensions are impressive: a canopy of about 14 meters and a height of around 23 meters. Even more remarkable, its trunk has a circumference of 5.30 meters (measured at 1.3 meters from the ground). A member of the ARBRES association¹, having spotted this superb specimen, estimates its age to be at least 200 years old... perhaps 250! This tree had already been noted by Henri Froment in an article dating back to 1991². He mentioned at the time that *a specimen of [platanus acerifolia], in a hotel courtyard in Bourron, reaches an estimated circumference of about three meters*. In this same article, another missing platanus is mentioned, which was located on rue Foch, unfortunately pruned, and measured 6 m 20 in circumference one meter from the ground.



¹ Association A.R.B.R.E.S (Arbres Remarquables: Bilan, Recherche, Études et Sauvegarde)
<https://www.arbres.org/>

² *Les arbres remarquables de la commune de Bourron-Marlotte* - Bulletin des Amis de Bourron-Marlotte, 1991, n°27