

A Rocha Lebanon

-

May 2024





**All writers are also readers, similarly
gardeners must sometimes be
visitors.**

We are thankful to A Rocha International
for having given us the opportunity to
free our staff from work for a trip through
Lebanon, visiting other conservatory
gardens and organic farms of Lebanon.

First stop:

Samen Botanic Garden - Fanar

Andrea and Nadim Samen are siblings. They developed a tropical garden in a Mediterranean climate thanks to a rigorous work on micro-climates.





Composting:
building the soil on
which all will then
grow.

Explanations on the
vermicompost system
to our gardeners







Houses and chicken cops are all covered with plants...
or beehives. Here the Kenyan beehive we crafted.



Second stop:

Salem Organic Farm – al-Marj

Salem is the founder of Buzurna Juzurna (Our Seeds Our roots), an organization dedicated to the conservation of ancient and traditional seeds.

We visited his farm where he mainly cultivates Damascus roses. Thank to many ally plants, he cultivates without chemicals, and even with very few compost, which is produced locally (he brought a bird breeder next door for having a local source of manure).

اكتشف الزراعة العضوية

للمزارعين في بلدة مكسة وجوارها،

بذك توفر الكيماويات والمبيدات الحشرية؟ عندك مشكلة
باستهلاك المياه؟
بذك تأمين مستقبل أرضك وثروتها الطبيعية؟
اختبر الزراعة العضوية!

تقترح جمعية "أروشا لبنان للبيئة" زيارة مزرعة سالم (بلدة
المرج) التي تطبق فيها الزراعة العضوية بطريقة ناجحة جدًا
وبخبرة عالية وتعلم كيف تغذي أرضك وتدافع عن مزرعتك
من الحشرات والفطريات بطريقة عضوية وتستقل عن استغلال
شركات بيع المبيدات والكيماويات الصارة لصحتك وأرضك.

موعد الزيارة: يوم الثلاثاء ٢٨ أيار - الساعة ٤ عصرا.
للتسجيل: ٧١٥٢٢٢٨٥٠



Lines of roses are separated by lines of hundreds of species of vegetables and legumes as walls against pests, here topinambours.





Reflections on gardening

As a painter takes a step back to contemplate his painting, a gardener must take a step out of the garden and think about what he is doing.

1° What is a garden?

Reflections based on:

- Genesis, 2-3 – the Persian origin of gardens
- The Arabic lexicon for garden: *ḥadīqa* / *janna* / *bustān*
 - *Why a garden is closed?*
 - *What differentiate a garden from a nature park?*

2° Why gardening better than doing anything else?

Reflections based on Bernard Charbonneau, *Babylon's Garden*.

“Upon the dust of Eden, a city was founded, whose Empire spans the earth. Yet the wonder of Babylon is a garden, suspended at the peak of its stone grandeur. A few trees and flowers, escaped from the hand of God, that one day mankind sized and gathered...”

3° What is a good garden?

Reflections based on Wendell Berry's poetry.

“Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.”

Wendell Berry, “Manifesto.
The Mad Farmer Libération Front.”



“Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.”

A photograph of a pond with several ducks swimming in the water. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery and a fence in the background. The ducks are of various breeds, including some with white and brown feathers. The pond is bordered by grass and a wooden fence in the background.

Meet around the pond

Youngsters helping in both gardens of Mekse and Qabb Elias met around Mekse pond to be initiated to angling.







Al-Ghouj Conservatory Garden

Ghouj for *Ghouroub wara' al-Jibal* - Sunset behind the mountains.









"At night, [the monks] stood upright, in the posture of waiting. They were erect in the open air, straight as trees, raising their hands toward the sky, turned toward the point on the horizon where the morning sun was to come. All night, their bodies in desire waited for the break of day. This was their prayer. They had no words. Why words? Their speech was their bodies in labor and in waiting. This labor of desire was their silent prayer. They were simply there. And when in the morning the first rays of the sun reached the palms of their hands, they could stop and rest. The sun had arrived."

Michel de Certeau,
"The Stranger or Union in Difference"



See you next month