

# amsterdam marketing

## PRESS FEATURE

### Flowers

**To think of Holland is to think of tulips. Did you know that a trip to Amsterdam is very easy to combine with a visit to the world-renowned flower garden of Keukenhof? But then there are plenty of flowers to enjoy within Amsterdam as well. From the flower market to the Hortus Botanicus botanical garden, Amsterdam is a city in bloom!**

### **Tulip mania**

How did the Netherlands become the country of flower bulbs? After excavating the dunes in the second half of the 19th century, the remaining "geest lands" were found to be highly suitable for the cultivation of flower bulbs. That is how a flourishing flower industry evolved. And of all the flower bulbs, the tulip attracted most attention. Originally native to Turkey, the flower was brought to the Netherlands in the 16th century by Carolus Clusius, a botanist working at Leiden University. It was around 1634 that "tulip mania" first reared its head: tulip bulbs started to fetch astronomical sums, sometimes as much as 5,000 guilders for a single bulb. To put the price in context, in those days a labourer earned perhaps 240 guilders a year. In 1637 strict rules to regulate the flower trade were introduced, and tulip mania subsided. From the 18th century onwards, the Netherlands steadily gained an international reputation as the land of bulbs, and bulb horticulture quickly grew in size. As a result, prices decreased so that citizens of all ranks could afford to buy flower bulbs.

### **The Keukenhof**

There is no place on earth where the flower bulb features more prominently than at the Keukenhof in Lisse. In April and May of each year, this world-famous garden offers 32 hectares of the most beautiful flowers, plants, gardens and woods – an overwhelming delight in terms of sight as well as scent. Visitors happily absorb inspiration for their own gardens from the splendid displays created there. And if you find the walking distances at the Keukenhof daunting, then take a relaxing trip on an electrically propelled "whisper boat". In all, there are no fewer than 4.5 million flowers on display. The Keukenhof is open for just eight weeks a year, and in these two months this colourful site attracts more visitors than any other attraction in the Netherlands.

You can travel to the Keukenhof directly from the centre of Amsterdam: from Leidseplein/ Museumplein, take Connexxion bus line 197 to Schiphol Airport (five to six buses per hour). At Schiphol, transfer to bus 858 to the Keukenhof.

### **Going once, going twice, sold!**

The Netherlands is the global trading centre for plants and flowers, with the FloraHolland auction in Aalsmeer as the epicentre. This is the world's largest flower auction. The auctioning process is a fascinating sight and well worth setting your alarm early for: things are at their liveliest before 09:00. Come and be overwhelmed by a sea of flowers that stretches as far as the eye can see.

Curious to know more about the history of horticulture in Aalsmeer? Then visit Aalsmeer's Historical Garden, with its reconstruction of a 1930s auction hall with authentic auction clock. On some days (the so-called auction days), you can bid on a pretty bouquet of roses from the garden. Obviously, the challenge is to pay as little as possible! Aalsmeer is easy to reach by public transport and by tour buses from Amsterdam.  
[floraholland.com](http://floraholland.com)

### **Amsterdam, city of flowers**

It may come as a surprise to some that compact Amsterdam is one of the greenest cities in Europe. This is not only on account of the thousands of elm trees that line the canals, but also the large gardens hidden from view behind the façades of the canal houses. Several of these centuries-old gardens are open to the public. Amsterdam is also a city of flowers thanks to the many flower kiosks found throughout the city and the flower market along the Singel: the world's only "floating" flower market.

Amsterdammers are true flower lovers. The flower containers attached to the façades of many inner-city houses are a typical feature, with geraniums and violets adding splashes of colour from early spring.

Another typical Amsterdam feature are façade gardens, which often see sunflowers and the high-climbing silver lace vine on the pavement. Occupants of the city's many houseboats, too, often maintain colourful gardens on their roofs, even including garden gnomes and other curios.

### **Floating flower market at the Singel**

The flower market at the Singel, between the Munt tower and Koningsplein, is the most colourful and fragrant site in Amsterdam, no matter what the season. What makes this market special is that all the

merchandise is displayed on floating barges. This harks back to the time when all the flowers and plants were transported to this market daily by boat, from the horticultural areas in the city's hinterland. Today, fresh flowers are still brought in daily, only now they're transported by delivery van. First held in 1862, this colourful stretch has since become the best-known flower market in the Netherlands. All that grows and blossoms can be found here, from the quintessential Dutch tulips and geraniums to the delicate indoor cypresses and Easter Island manobolen. And in December, the market of course offers an overwhelming range of Christmas trees in all shapes and sizes.

Open: Monday to Friday 09:00-18:00, Saturday 09:00-17:00.

### **Hortus Botanicus**

The Hortus Botanicus – or, Botanical Garden – is an oasis of green in the midst of the bustling city. With a huge variety of plants from numerous countries, climates and environments, a visit will take you from a tropical rainforest into a warm dry desert, and from an exquisite Japanese garden to a more familiar world of ditches and ponds. The spectacular triple-climate-zone greenhouse, shaped like a glass circus tent, is home to some 2,500 plant species. The tropical zone contains a water tank for the world's largest water lily, the *Victoria Amazonica*.

The Hortus is also a place of history, with a monumental palm greenhouse and a herb garden that dates back to the establishment of the "Hortus Medicus" in 1638. You will also find the world's oldest pot plant here: an *Agave* that's over 100 years old. The 19th-century orangery now houses a very pleasant café.  
dehortus.nl

### **The Jordaan: a garden within the city**

The Jordaan is one of the best-known and most celebrated districts of Amsterdam. It was built in 1612, at the same time as the first part of the canal ring. Some say that the name derives from the French word for garden, "jardin". The district was home to many French Huguenots in the 17th century, who had sought refuge in Amsterdam from religious persecution. Many of the streets and canals are named after flowers and plants, such as the Rozengracht (roses canal), Bloemgracht (flower canal), Goudsbloemstraat (calendula street) and Tuinstraat (garden street).

The Tweede Bloemdwarsstraat is one of many narrow alleys in the Jordaan, running from Rozengracht to Bloemgracht. But this particular street has become an attraction for its "hanging gardens", created as

part of the new housing project built here in 1990. Metal plant containers were attached to the façades along the top of the houses, combined with striking metal grids along the roof edge. The climbing vines that have since draped across the grids now form a green arcade on either side of the street. The architect of this remarkable housing project is C Nagelkerke.

Amsterdam, January 2015

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**About Amsterdam Marketing**

Amsterdam Marketing is the city marketing organisation of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, active in the fields of promotion, information, research and services. Our ambition is to put this region on the map as one of the five most attractive metropolitan areas in Europe for its residents, visitors, businesses and influential groups. Under the motto "I amsterdam", we present the region as a dynamic place to live and work, an attractive travel destination and a test market for innovation.