

THE FRENCH FEDERATION GARDENS NATURE & HEALTH: UNITING PROFESSIONALS



The Federation Francaise Jardins Sante et Nature (FFJNS) or French Federation Gardens Nature & Health, registered nonprofit since 2018, is the brainchild of a group of French professionals. Representing the fields of garden and landscape design, horticultural therapy, ecotherapy, environmental health, ecology, mental and medical health, education, art therapy, social work and other various health allied human services industries, the FFJNS is highly diverse and yet united around a few key concerns. The Federation's mission is to advocate for professionals, educate the public and lobby institutional forces on issues concerning therapeutic gardens, accessibility to Nature, and health and wellness. Currently there is a lack of recognition in France on nature-based approaches as a valid intervention for improved health despite evidence-based research reporting such benefits. The FFJNS pledges itself to fostering changes on those counts.

A Bit of History

Long before becoming a legal entity, activists from various fields and backgrounds regularly mused, discussing the potential of an organization such as what later became the FFJNS. More informal conversations, notably at the Jardins and Sante

symposium in 2017 (an older sister organization which has been raising and attributing funds to various healing garden initiatives) marked the turning point that would lead to the constitutive assembly of the FFJNS in 2018.

The 30 founding members of the FFJNS, practitioners, in somewhat isolated fashion, of therapeutic gardening and nature-based interventions with various populations requiring health or medical support, came from across the country. The atmosphere, dedicated, convivial and serious, provided a platform for pooling resources and setting the tone and the pace. The FFJNS currently has working groups or commissions invested in the themes of communication and public relations, regional chapters, research, international collaboration, financial opportunities, and policy.

Current Affairs

Today the FFJNS counts both individual members and organizational members selected after a rigorous process in order to best ensure that the strong ethical posture included in our mission statement is respected by all. Our members are essentially French and francophone, but we are open to international collaborators for the advancement of the profession.

Despite the few opportunities for French language research, publication or public funding and the absence of long-term graduate level training programs available in HT or related disciplines, our initial successes include a website with resources for members and non-members; the creation of dynamic regional chapters; increased visibility in the public eye; and inclusion of isolated practitioners in working commissions for attaining FFJNS objectives.

The FFJNS has become a dynamic forum strengthening links across and between sectors for professionals designing with Nature, working in and with Nature, or engaging people in garden and plant-related activities in order to support therapeutic goals. As we approach our first election cycle, we are confident that the FFJNS will continue to surprise with innovative approaches to supporting the profession.

For further information on activities, membership or donations, but also resources on therapeutic gardens, horticultural therapy and ecotherapy, please check our [website](#).