

City dwellers as companions for plants' labour: let it be...but not too much!

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« Greening licence »
Overview in Paris, Lille and Lyon



Place Colbert, Lyon 1, April 2019, AD



Rue Bonte Pollet, Lille, January 2020, AD



Rue Brillat Savarin, Paris 13, October 2019, AD



Rue Etienne Bailleux, Lille, January 2020, AD



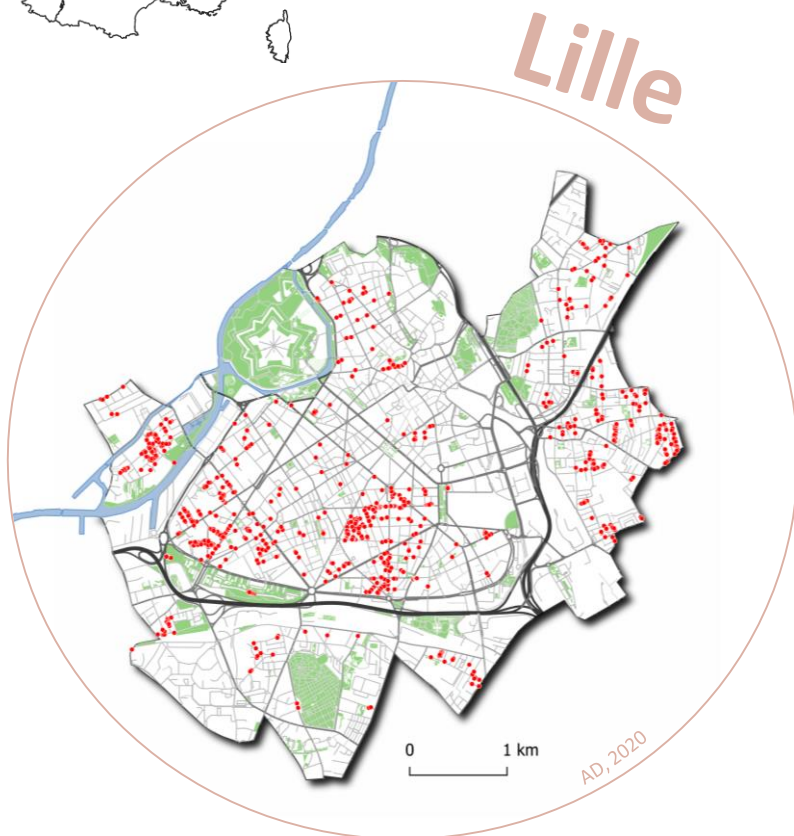
Rue Saint Michel, Lyon 7, August 2020, AD



Route de Vienne, Lyon 8, May 2020, AD

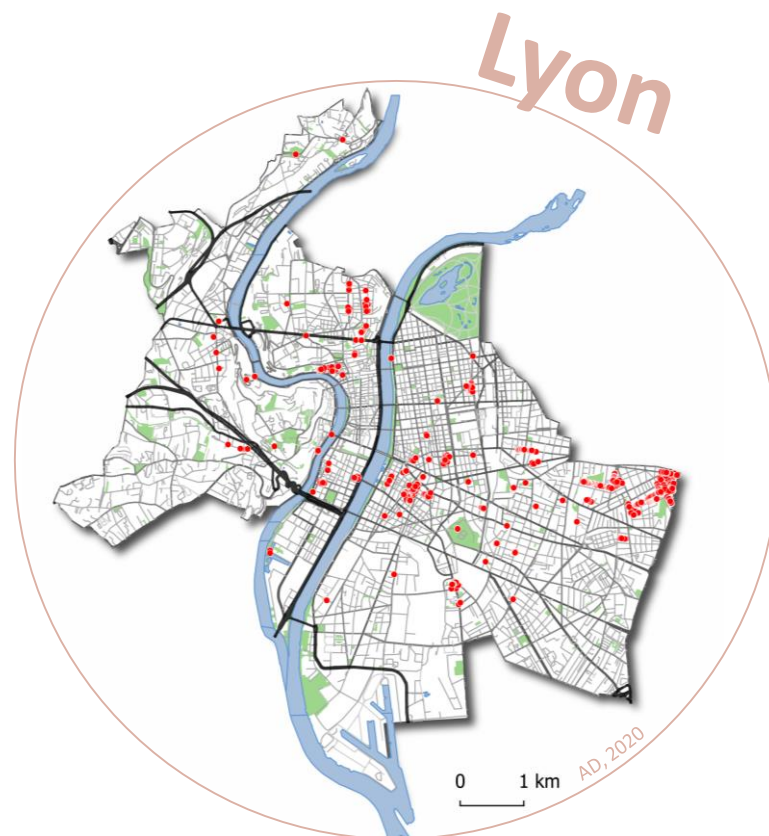


A multi-situated study Lille, Lyon and Paris (France)



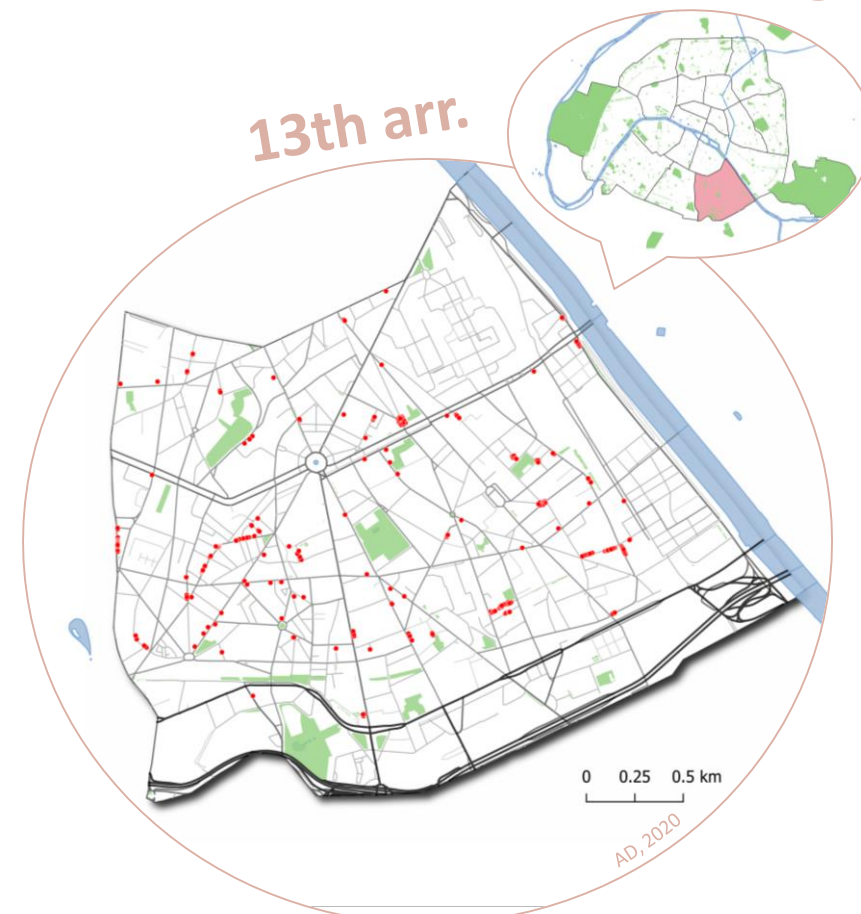
Lille

2004 – « Let's green our walls »
2017 – « Greening licence »
≈ 1400 spots



Lyon

2004 – « Micro floral implantation »
≈ 1000 spots



Paris

13th arr.

2015 – « Greening licence »
≈ 280 spots (13th arr.) (2500 in Paris)

- **Methodological framework** (Pitt, 2015; Dowling *et al.*, 2017)

- Ongoing PhD, fieldwork from February 2019 to August 2020
- Observations on the field (cartographic survey)
- Photography
- Semi-directive interviews (n = 35)
- Grey literature review (municipalities' charters)

- **Theoretical framework**

- Urban political ecology (Swyngedouw & Kaika, 2000; Heynen *et al.*, 2004; ...)
- More-than-human geography (Braun, 2005; Whatmore, 2006; Hinchliffe & Whatmore, 2006; ...)
- Non-human agency (Latour, 1999; Bennet, 2010; Collard & Dempsey, 2013; Barua, 2016; ...)
- Plant's capacities (Head & Atchison, 2009; Head *et al.*, 2015; Phillips & Atchison, 2020)
- Companion species (Haraway, 2003)

➤ **How do plants participate in urban greening ? What role for humans regarding this vegetal agency ? How plants and humans both become city inhabitants through participatory urban greening program, co-producing new (micro) green spaces ?**

Part 1

City authorities and "the vegetal": dead or alive?



- **Urban vegetation : from still life to lively organisms**

- A long history of urban vegetal as a commodity (Barua, 2017; Mehdi *et al.*, 2012)
- New green space management practice (Allard, 1997; Ernwein, 2020)
- Biodiversity in the city (Clergeau, 2007)

- **Participatory urban greening: the promotion of spontaneous flora?**

- Durability and environmental commitment
- Low maintenance species
- Leisure and social life

Rue Saint Michel, Lyon 7, June 2020, AD

Charte de végétalisation de l'espace public parisien

En acceptant cette charte, le signataire s'engage :

- à jardiner dans le respect de l'environnement ;
- à choisir des végétaux adaptés à l'environnement ;
- à entretenir le dispositif de végétalisation et à en garantir les meilleures conditions de propreté.

Pour tout renseignement :
Maison du jardinage
Parc de Bercy
41, rue Paul-Belmondo
75012 Paris
Tél : 01 53 46 19 19

Informations sur www.paris.fr/permisdevegetaliser

Charte de végétalisation de l'espace public parisien – page 1

- **“Charte de végétalisation”**: what role for humans and non-humans?
 - *Autorisation d'occupation temporaire du domaine public*
 - Inhabitants as life managers
- **A hygienist come back ?**
 - Biocontrol
 - Aesthetic
 - Cleanliness
- **The “réputation d'honorabilité” (Weber, 1998) of the cities?**

Part 2

City dwellers and plants: companions?

- **A private garden on the street?
The illusion of control**

- Time-consuming
- Expensive



Rue de Madagascar, Lille, March 2020, AD

- **Confronted to incivilities and deteriorations**

- *"One day, I saw a man right under my eyes pick a **nail** [on the street] and throw it on the flower pot. He told me that was to avoid flat tyre. Yeah he was right, it's better I get tetanus! A nail of that size! **For them, it's a bin !**"* Brigitte, Lyon, novembre 2019

- *"I had invest quite a lot of money because it's about plants and I like it, but someone stole them repetitively. He identified the spot during week-end and Tuesday night, in the night from Monday to Tuesday, he stole them. **So now, I do wild plants.**"* Christiane, Paris, juin 2019



Rue Brillat Savarin, Paris 13, April 2019, AD

"Stop stealing plants"



Rue Etienne Bailleux, Lille, January 2020, AD

"→ Hello ! Not on the plants please, thanks"



Avenue Félix Faure, Lyon 6, November 2019, AD

"This is a citizens lead initiative. Please respect this place"

- **A wait-and-see approach**

- *"We try, those who participate, we agree that even if dandelions or stinging plants like nettles happen to grow here... well **it's natural**, there is no reason to do something about that, we let live."* Jean-Marie, Paris, June 2019
- *"It's more about observation, we don't know everything, and after that, **we let nature do its things.**"* Catherine, Paris, March 2020

- **Plants recognised as city inhabitants**

- **A vernacular experience of more-than-human agency in the process of the production of the city**



Conclusion

A new sense of community?

"Hello! I am to share,
without violence...
Thank you"

- **Plants' agency and the production of new micro-green space**

- Sidewalks as a new place for vegetal in the city
- A long list of actors, humans and non-humans
- New relations of power emerging

- **Extending the community**

- Plants' voices
- Plants as city inhabitants

- **The reproduction of an uneven urban landscape?**

- Green gentrification?

"Water us!"



Rue d'Anvers, Lyon 7, March 2019, AD



Square des Olieux, Lille, June 2020, AD

Thank you for your attention!