Good afternoon everyone and thanks for choosing Across the Fence, I am Will Mikell in for Judy Simpson. Today we welcome our regular contributor to the program. He is going to take us across the Atlantic to see and learn about gardens and horticulture in Spain. It's a pleasure to welcome back Leonard Perry always good to see you.

Leonard.: It is always fun to be back Will.

Will.: When were you in Spain?

Leonard.: Last year I had the fortune to do a family trip over the end of March in Spain so I thought it would be nice to see springtime in Spain. Of course going over there even though it was a family trip I had to see some gardens and plants. I thought I would share those today and in general some of the horticulture of Spain which is interesting.

Will.: Madrid is the capital that's the largest city where most people arrive each where you touch down and you told me that's where we're going to begin.

Leonard.: We will begin there and I thought a little geography might be in order to set the stage. Here we have a map of Spain and in the center on the left is Portugal to the left of that to the west the Atlantic and to the right of course the Mediterranean but right in the center is the largest city Madrid that's where basically most people fly into as we did. We focused our 10 days between Madrid and the south's Seville. And in between will take a little side trip down to La Mancha. Getting right into it I thought to set the stage Puerta Del Sol is the main center it's the gate of the sun if you will. Kind of like the planet's revolving around the sun well in the trade revolves around the gate of the sun that's where you always see people. They have a lot of protests an immense and all kinds of things start in this plaza. What we're looking at around this fountain is cyclamen something you don't see much in this country. Read cyclamen they use quite a bit in Spain for these mass plantings. About a block from our hotel and not too far away from the last plaza is this one plaza mayor. This is quite an ancient one it goes back to several centuries has actually 1619. This was the center of activity. Now we have nice shops and cafes with great food it's hard to believe that one time they had bullfights in here and the Spanish inquisition took place.

Will.: Incredible history.

Leonard.: It really is when you look at that. Nearby to that is the heart it City Hall. The capital has moved to Madrid from Toledo in the 17th century. This plaza actually goes back to the 14th century. There's only one building standing but this is the City Hall here in the plaza what we're looking at around the statue there is a planting. We will take a closer look at that. It's something we saw quite a bit in Madrid I haven't really seen in this country used as a bedding plant if you will is ornamental kale. This is a cut leaf form of it with purple and white leaves inter planted
and the interesting thing like a lot of the cruise for crops warm weather and they tend to get warm their makes some bold where these flour stocks come up now what we're looking at. They leave it on so bolted ornamental kale. The color contrasts is just fabulous. This we saw everywhere where his trash to in the first plaza. This is a crest in Madrid. This was in the sidewalk. A bear going as you are after fruit on a bare berry or strawberry tree. This is what it looks like it has fruit on it. Madrone Arbutus. They actually distill beverages from this but this is the plants shove measured the seed white a bit as a street tree. We didn't see it as flowering fruit it's later in the summer but this is what it would look like. So that's a famous part.. This is very typical it is a Euphorbia or spurge. It's really hearty around here but just a mass planting around statues and public places Parks in Madrid. A typical street scene here to southern Magnolia like we see in the south. Just as row and along the streets a lot of green spaces around the boulevard. That's a wallflower in the bed of boxwood. A lot of formality.

Will.: Very well maintained.

Leonard.: Very green is one of the themes will see right along now the royal palace in Madrid is basically used for royal ceremonies and tourism. It's not a place with a royal family lives anymore this was rebuilt after a fire in the 18th century. It's huge it's actually the third largest in Europe after one in Vienna and of course Versailles near Paris. Around that is a park and in the back door these gardens right here. Very formal very green you can see all these clipped hedges. They do in the summer have annuals and some of the beds but a very classical look have to this with a lot of nice trees. Another park that was started for royalty is about 300 acres right in Madrid its huge walk around but now since the late 18th century it's been open to the public. We went there on the week in like a lot of people in Madrid do you can go for a little boat ride on the pond here you as I scream you can do picnics. There's a lot of different gardens here and here's one around a wonderful pond and this Victorian conservatory's which is very modern relatively speaking to all of these. This dates back just over 100 years but it's been restored. And there are no plants inside but you can walk inside in look at it. It's very typical for a lot of the cities of Europe and of course England in Victorian times.

Will.: And these are public spaces?

Leonard.: These are public spaces and this is a very typical scene you see not only here it's maybe a little larger in Retiro park in Madrid but you see in a lot of the cities of course it gets very warm it's a hot arid climate. These are plain trees as they're known in many parts of the world. We often know them as sycamores there's a couple around Vermont but they're more of a southern tree. You walk through here in the whole idea of these Parks wide walks a lot of benches a lot of spaces where you can sit me people talk and chat and try to keep cool in the shade. Of course these up bright cypress trees are very typical for a lot of Mediterranean countries. Here's another aspect of Retiro park in Madrid. There is a very formal gardener reminds you of something you might see in France. Again with those ornamental kale lining the walks and one of the things I thought was fascinating. I've seen this referred to as a Dr. Seuss tree. It's actually a Mediterranean cypress which can be pruned. It does and actually grow this way.

Will.: I don't think Dr. Seuss could have drawn that.

Leonard.: It's pruned in I don't know how they pruned. There's several of these and they were all pruned in really different shapes. The Mediterranean Cypress' sculpted a guess would be the right word for those just like a piece of sculpture. Another part of its in Madrid read along the main boulevard is a royal botanical gardens. These are kind of like a park and kind of like a plant museum. Here we see daffodils. Each bed is a different variety and they're labeled. A lot of the plants are well labeled and represent different parts of the world. Some nice place to visit as well. Here is their greenhouse and a grape Arbor. We will come back to Grapes later Grapes are big part of Spain. I can just imagine the summer all the Grapes hanging down and walking underneath that would be great. That's another one of the botanic gardens. Here's a good example you can see it's a dry climate these cactus groove great there. No worry about cold here at the botanical gardens. And other plants we often see in the south a lot is the Camellia. They had quite a few different ones of those there and even in the end of March they were still in bloom. The southern part of the states where I grew up you'll see these in February and in the wintertime. Here they're still in bloom was wonderful to see these you can really tell what kind of climate. Again we're looking at the
summertime in Madrid maybe 90° but 110 is not uncommon. Maybe 2 inches of rain throughout the whole summer so it's a very dry climate.

Will.: A great glimpse. Into these things gardens in Madrid. One of the things I'm always interested in talking to you about its a plea found for you unusual or unique?

Leonard.: There were actually several things in particular one was one we just actually were looking for and the other two we happened upon which is even better.

Will.: Especially if it’s a family trip.

Leonard.: Exactly Madrid and Spain in general folks are environmentally conscious now. Whether its hotels or in the inn's you are staying in the energy savings. Windmills a lot of those. But plantings to plantings to fit the hot dry climate not trying to have less green lawns everywhere.

Will.: One of those examples was a living piece.

Leonard.: A living piece this is one of the top examples in the world. Take a look at that. This is actually a living wall. This is five stories next to a bank of all plants. There's about 250 species over 10,000 plants. If we take a closer look at that it looks like a waterfall of plants. We are seeing blue spruce catoniasters things that we think of is shrubs. It's incredible to see this in if you look close up there's perennials up there and there all planted with blocks on the side of growing material irrigation just fabulous. That was one example another one is the famous Prado art museum. Walking around back I didn't see the first time when we're on front but then coming down the hill when we're in back I noticed the new edition has a living roof. These are becoming more popular there's actually several in Vermont and around the Burlington area. This one has a formal hedge on it. You can actually walk amongst it on top of the roof with these plants. That was neat and then in another museum near by the Thyssen which is actually also a nice art museum is a living one roof. I don't know how they get up there to do that but it looks like it is fairly well mowed. Again a very different type of living roof but one that's very special.

Will.: Just fantastic. As part of this family trip he traveled south of Madrid and you said before we got started you had a specific destination in mind.

Leonard.: We did well we had one in particular we want to see in that as the Le Mancha region. La Mancha as you know in Don Quixote that's why we went there and there actually a few existing windmills this is the town of consuegra which we went to see a couple hour south of Madrid took a bus and went through small towns. A very typical small town in Central Spain. A few narrow streets but not a whole lot of horticulture. A few trees you see planted in the square you can imagine how hot it must get in the summertime. They do have a park near a water course nearby again very similar to what we saw in Madrid for people who walk under the shade tree. That's why we went to see and we hiked up there here's what you see about 70 of these. Of course these are not the ones that Don Quixote followed these are later vintage only 17th century. There almost identical. They use these to grind grain and they actually swivel with the wind with the wind. It could use these and they had cloth on it that I'm but you can actually go inside to these in La Mancha Spain. That was our destination. Again vineyards are very popular in Spain. Here's a typical one. For the wine region. Here is an Olive growth you can't leave Spain along with the Italy and Greece. More than you can imagine and that I've ever seen and wonderful to.

Will.: From their I'm not sure if it's a larger region Seville.

Leonard.: It's actually a little bit smaller city but it's an old city as well. We took a train trip on that started the train station which was built an 1850. Taking a look at the picture on that and you'll see where the trains use to start from is now a tropical garden which is pretty amazing. Next to it is where the train leaves from and this is one of the highlights I had a high speed train a little over 2 hours all the way to Seville 120 miles an hour. When you get to Seville there's a lot of small streets it's just a wonderful city. Here is a bull ring. One of the very famous ones looking down on that in Seville. Also of Seville is famous for orange trees. These were in bloom and there's fruit
everywhere you went in the city it smelled like oranges it was the most incredible experience to just everywhere you went deep snow oranges. Wisteria you that everywhere in Seville again a plant that's more of a southern plant for us but beautiful with those flowers hanging down at the end of March. It's a typical park seen people walking in the park a lot of green again not a lot of color what you would see is little private courtyards. You walk along the small streets looking through the little doorway and you'd see these courtyards with all these different pots of color. A very large and famous cathedral Christopher Columbus is buried there in Seville. Here's a court of that with orange trees and water courses again it's all about cool in the summer and Seville tends to be about 5° warmer than even Madrid and even drier.

Will.: We said this would be a quick trip we have about a minute left just time for a couple more pictures of unique or special gardens you found in Seville.

Leonard.: One in particular we saw all was Alcazar. This goes back to Moorish Times it's been renovated but here's an overview. It's quite a large complex with large gardens down there. Here's example of Moorish architecture just beautiful. The baths that date back to the 12 century inside. But again it's all about courtyards keeping cool in the summertime and there's an outdoor water coarse. Just a couple of pictures of some of the gardens outside. You see the palm trees that should clue you in on the climate. Again the formal greenery.

Will.: That spectacular.

Leonard.: Just Alcaza and Seville and then an example of sherry region a place with a very simply lineup pots of geraniums something that anyone could do to create a very dramatic effect.

Will.: Thank you if you like this for and have a quick 15 minutes Leonard will also put this up but as website and you can find Dr. Perry's website online at WWW.perrysperennials.info. Leonard just a great or thank you very much for stopping by. That is our program today we know you have choices so thanks for choosing us I am Will Mikell in for Judy Simpson inviting you to join us each weekday for another visit Across the Fence.

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