

# MyPlant & Garden 2024: an ongoing natural evolution

"Meten is weten," goes the Dutch saying: to measure is to know. But really, what is the measure of beauty? How can the pleasure one derives from it be quantified? And can beauty favor the involvement of the industry, governments, and citizens alike towards making the built environment more sustainable? These are the questions that hang in the air coming back from our immersive experience of the 2024 edition of MyPlant & Garden, titled Natural Evolution, where, once again and more than ever, our agricultural team was surrounded by the elegance, grace, and power of flowers, plants and innovative ideas alike.

## **Another step forward for the Green Climate Square**

Three moments highlighted the presence of the Dutch Embassy in Italy at the trade show this year. We started with the presentation of the Green Climate Square concept at the Garden Center New Trend, where a passionate and enthusiastic Brenda Horstra, co-director of Tuinbranche Nederland (the Dutch Garden Centers Association), shared a compelling message, urging the sector to involve individuals to take action for the betterment of the climate. Green roofs, water in the garden, de-tiling the garden, and selecting plants and proper housing to increase the presence of birds and insects (therefore, biodiversity) are the four pillars that characterize the concept and which inspired Erica Cherubini - responsible for the area Garden Center New Trend within the trade show- to create her own version of it with the Eco-friendly district, where a synergic approach -based on the collaboration of plants, soil, sustainable materials and water- was showcased. And this is exactly what we would like to see: a cross-pollination of best practices!

## **A Successful Networking Event for the Dutch Companies**

The second highlight was the networking event where the Dutch Embassy succeeded to favor connections among the Dutch companies present at the trade show and also with their relevant Italian counterparts: this was the occasion for the official debut of our designated Agricultural Counsellor Hayo Haanstra, who welcomed the guests by underlining the paramount role that the floricultural and gardening sector plays in setting

individuals in motion aiming at a more sustainable and biodiverse future. We never grow tired of stressing the great complementarity of the Italian and Dutch markets in the sector: numbers can come to our help by showing that the trade flows between the two countries remain very healthy, with, on the one hand, the Dutch produce accounting for more than three-quarters of the Italian import with a revenue of 520 million euro in 2023 (growing by 20% as compared to 2022); and, on the other hand, the confirmation of the Dutch market as main destination for Italian flowers abroad with an export value of 225 million euro.

### **Italy and the Netherlands: the Ties Grow Stronger**

That the relationship between Italy and the Netherlands remains very solid, and emerged throughout all the activities and workshops organized in the Decor District: it was a three-day-long bonanza of contests, photo shoots, fashion shows, workshops, and presentations with trendsetters and masters of international decoration. And this was particularly evident during the workshop organized by the Weddingflowers collective, itself a result of the long and strong Italian-Dutch collaboration at MyPlant & Garden, showcasing each year the novelties regarding wedding flowers. Another leitmotif of the activities of the Décor district was sustainability, surfacing again and again as one of the driving factors in the choices of consumers and the industry alike: the momentum it is gaining as one of the paramount forces to mold the floricultural industry is leading to exemplary changes such as the MPS, Milieu Programma Sierteelt, aimed at certifying the sustainability of cut flowers, simplifying the choices of customers and operators in the sector.