

# Salicetum in Vrijbroekpark

The wilgernis

Chapter 1

# Vrijbroekpark

# Vrijbroekpark, Mechelen

Wilgernis – Salicetum:

NEW in 2019!



Rose gardens



Garden with  
bee plants



Summer garden



Ecotope garden



Shadow garden



# What can you find/do in Vrijbroekpark?

- Rose gardens (12.000 plants, 1500 taxa)  
Award of Garden excellence in 2003 by World federation of roses society
- Ecotope garden: different biotopes like sand dunes, moor, shadow plants, mediterranean herbs, ...
- Other gardens: summer garden with *Dahlia* and *Canna*, shadow garden with *Fuchsia*, garden with bee plants
- Various plants and trees,  
about 800 species and varieties of trees
- New in 2019: Wilgernis with salicetum!



# What can you find/do in Vrijbroekpark?

- Outdoor sculptures and indoor exhibition area
- Sports: tennis, basketball, running track, hockey
- Fishing pond
- Traffic garden for children
- Playground
- Two restaurants



Chapter 2

# History

# De Ferraris

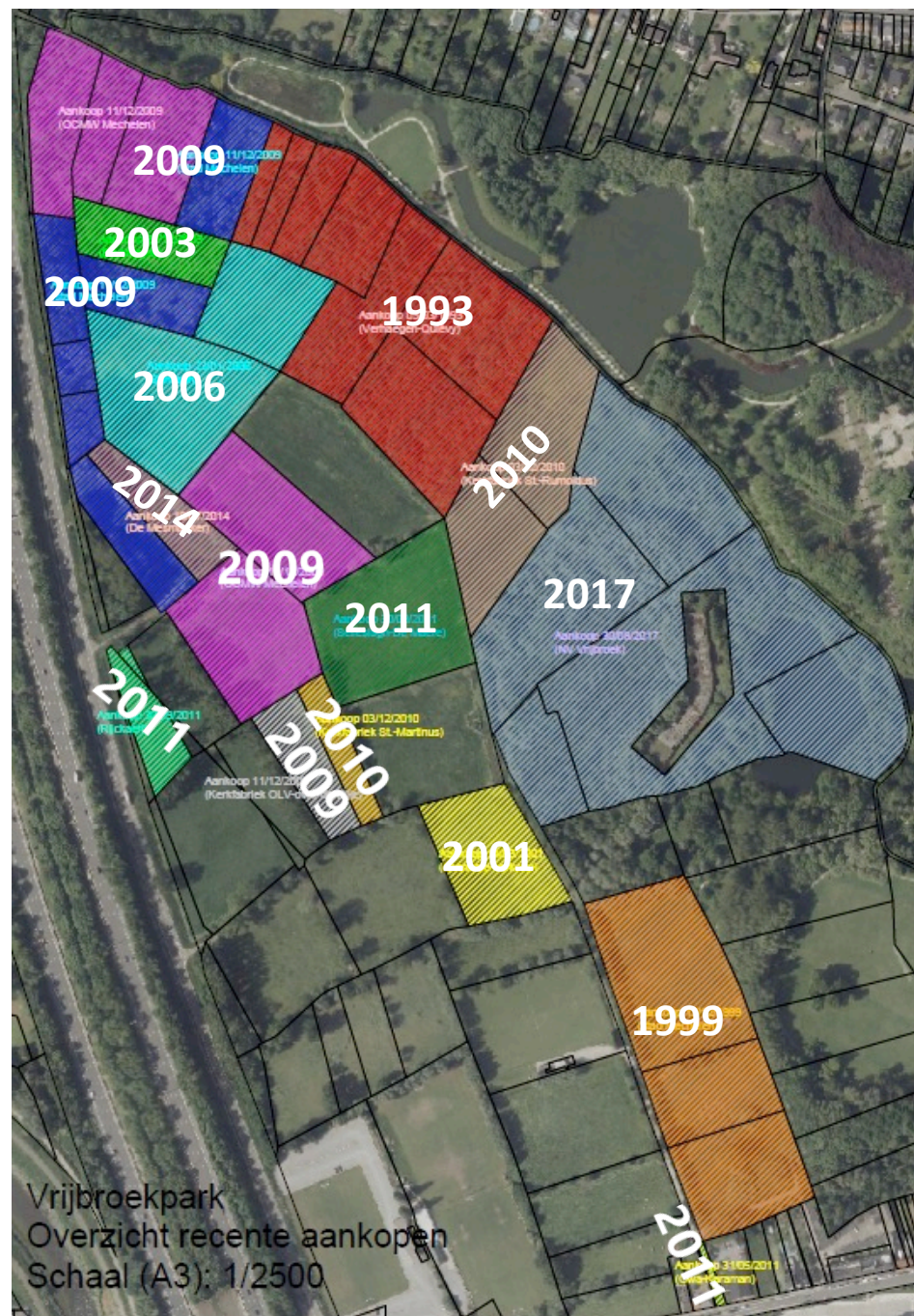
1771 - 1778

The whole **Vrijbroekpark area** can be seen on **18th century** maps drawn by the Austrian General and Cartographer, **Joseph Jean Francois, count de Ferraris**.

The area where the **Vrijbroekpark Salicetum "De Wilgernis"** has been organised had remained unchanged since that period.

# Step by step

- Between 1993 and 2014:  
different plots bought by the Province  
of Antwerp  
→ open for our visitors this year



# Step by step

- 2018:  
construction of a hiking trail
- 2019: opening of the Wilgernis:  
wild part of the park,  
wilg = salix, willow



Chapter 3

# Start of the Salicetum

# Summer of 2017

Idea from Sonja Deneve: Salicetum in Vrijbroek

Very good idea because:

- Clay soil makes the park is very wet, historic swamp
- Opportunity for an new project in this park area
- Education is a very important part of our mission
- Willows are very interesting  
and should receive more attention



Chapter 4

# **Aims and ambitions**

# Aims and ambitions

- Focus on education & recreation
  - Guided tours
  - Workshops
  - Informative panels
- Focus on landscape
  - Willows as landscape elements – link with history
  - Tree forms: pollard, coppice, weeping,...
  - Willows as art forms - Exhibitions
  - Willows in private gardens
- Scientific aspect
  - Not our main goal
  - Proper collection management
  - Correct labeling, review of specimens by specialists
  - Gather and maintain around 100 specimens

Chapter 5

# Collecting cuttings

# Cuttings from Europe

- November 2017: cuttings from Kaisaniemi Botanic Garden (Luomus), Helsinki, Finland
- January 2018: cuttings from Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, U.K.
- January 2018: willows and cuttings from Lebbeke, Belgium
- Growing in our greenhouse in winter



# Cuttings from Europe

- March 2018: visiting the Botanische Gärten der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, Germany



- May 2018: planting outside on a test field



# Cuttings from Europe

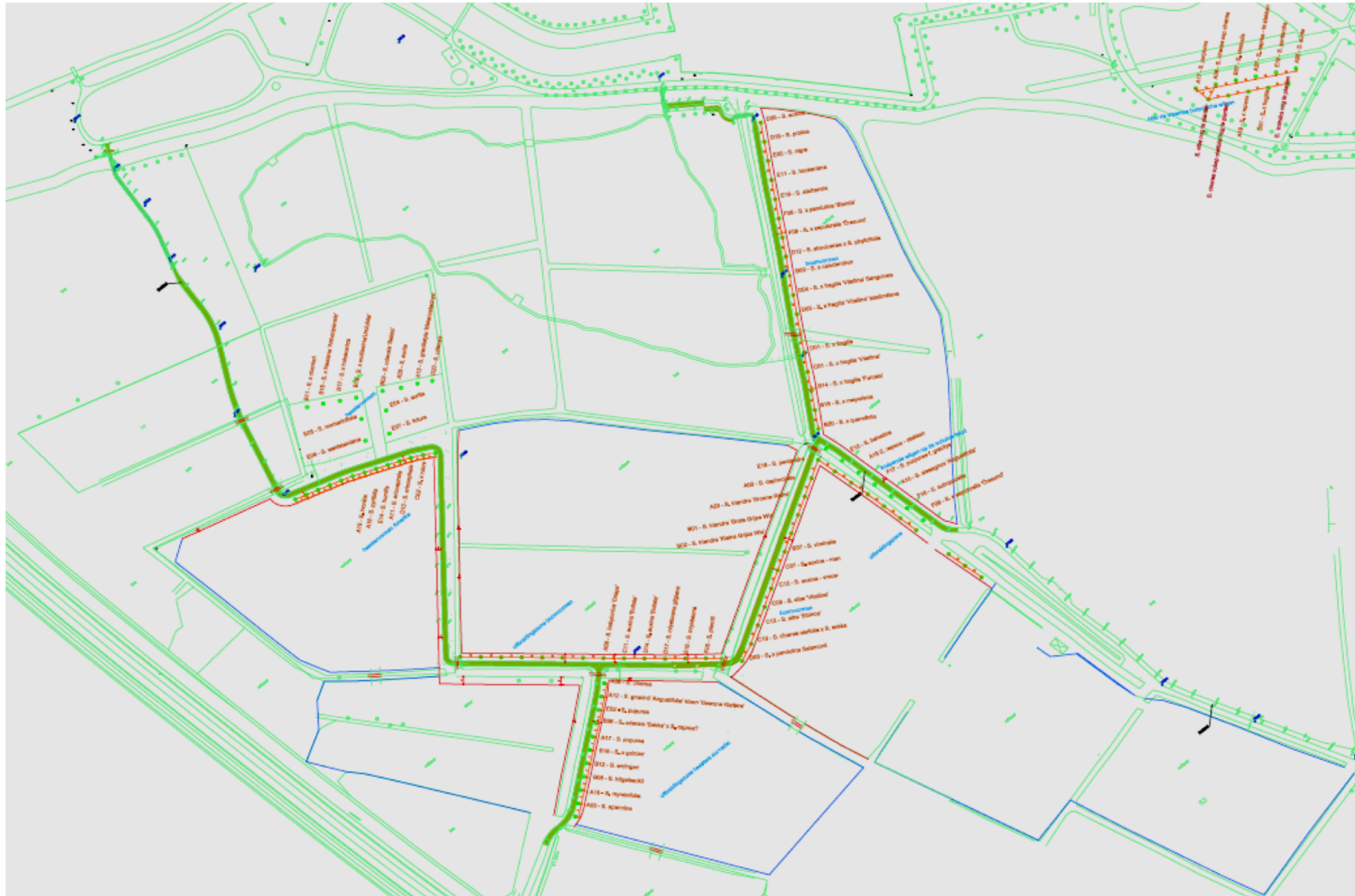
The willows on our test field are doing well



# Cuttings from Europe

- June 2018: cuttings from Zaryadye-park, Moscow, Russia
- March 2019: planting out in the Wilgernis





# 70 specimens planted in the Wilgernis in 2019

- We aim to have 100 different *Salix* species in collection
- We will add the *Populus* genus
  
- If you are interested in our collection list please contact:
  - [Sarah.wouters@provincieantwerpen.be](mailto:Sarah.wouters@provincieantwerpen.be) educational and communication aspects of our salicetum
  - [Maarten.vanwesemael@provincieantwerpen.be](mailto:Maarten.vanwesemael@provincieantwerpen.be) maintenance of our salicetum collection

Chapter 6

# Opening for our visitors

# Opening – 18 & 19 May



# **Thank you**

**Thank you Sonja Deneve**

**Thank you saliceta & botanic gardens**

**Our salicetum team**

**Sarah Wouters, Pieter Van Kelst, Petrus Luyten, Bart  
Cauwenbergh & Maarten Vanwesemael**