



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

January 2018

Dear members and friends

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Saturday 3 March, 14.30, Salle du Dévezou, Montferrier-sur-Lez, Hérault
A talk 'Improving a small outdoor space' by Nina Guichard



This talk by MGF member Nina Guichard has been organised in conjunction with one of our partner associations, Hortus. Nina and her partner Romain Pfister run a garden design and landscaping business specialising in small spaces www.nrlandscaping.fr.

Nina writes:

“Before starting landscape works one must take some time to think about it. We will present an introduction to the basics of landscape architecture and the main steps in designing a project. These principles apply to all outdoor spaces, and especially if you want to optimise the potential of a small area. We will give illustrated advice about how to play with light, colours and volumes through choice of materials and plant combinations.”

Presentation in French. Answers to questions in French or English.

For more information, contact Chantal Maurice chantal.dania@wanadoo.fr

Wednesday and Thursday 4/5 April, Fressac, Gard
A drawing class by Katharine Fedden



Many members will be familiar with Katharine Fedden's delightful plant drawings and after much persuasion she has agreed to hold a two day class at her home in Fressac. Weather permitting, drawing will be done outside, otherwise in her house. Participants can bring a picnic lunch for the first day and Katharine will provide lunch on the second. Overnight accommodation will be B&B, either chez Katharine or locally.

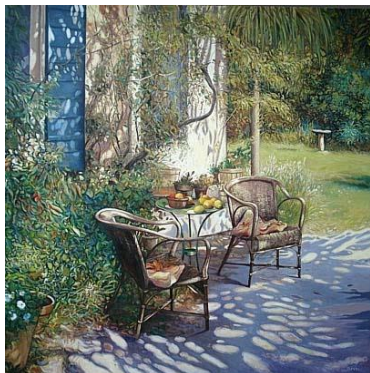
Katharine writes:

“This class will help you to look carefully and see the essential elements of a plant in order to translate it onto paper, to compose the drawing and eventually to bring out the character of the plant and to explore the different effects one can obtain using pencil, ink and charcoal.”

Class size limited to 12 participants.

For more information and to book contact Katharine Fedden katarine.fedden@wanadoo.fr

Thursday 3 May, St Rémy and Maussane, Bouches-du-Rhône
A day visiting gardens near the Alpilles



Clare Armour has arranged a morning visit for up to 12 people to the St Rémy garden of celebrated Provencal painter Joseph Bayol. Some of M. Bayol's works have been inspired by the local landscape and by the flora of his own garden, read more [here](#).

We'll then drive to Clare's home in Maussane for a picnic lunch followed by a visit to her garden. Clare describes this as a 'work in progress', with fields of grasses with views across to the Alpilles, a large sculpture of Rove goats and some recently commenced areas which have been designed by Chelsea Gold medallist, James Basson.

To book contact Christine Savage cs.savage@btopenworld.com

Thursday and Friday 17/18 May, Fayence, Var
MGF Annual General Meeting 2018 and garden visits

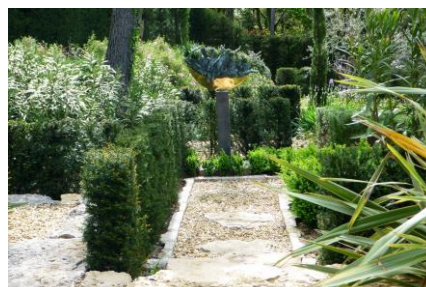
The 2018 AGM will be held in the picturesque perched village of Fayence, which lies on the D562 between Draguignan and Grasse. It has an old town of steep, winding streets and stairways, clustered round the 18th century Église St-Jean-Baptiste, and overlooks typical Provencal countryside. June Grindley and Nicola D'Annunzio, with a team of local members, have put together a programme of activities for the two days, together with suggestions for overnight accommodation.



La Vinaigrerie de Callas



La Campagne Sainte-Marie



Le jardin de Carla et Herman Buehl

Thursday 17 May

The activities will begin with an afternoon visit to Le Clos Saint Antoine in Callas, a vinaigrerie started in 1997 by David Doczekalski. David makes wine vinegars and mustards in the traditional way, respecting ancient methods. The vinegars are aged in oak casks and flavoured with spices or herbs.

The AGM will be held in the early evening, in the Salle de Renaissance in Fayence, followed by an aperitif, then we'll move on to the Moulin de la Camandoule for dinner.

Friday 18 May

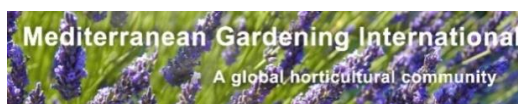
In the morning we'll visit Campagne Sainte-Marie, the garden of author and artist, Nicole Rengade. The garden, which has a stream, a *bassin* and donkeys, is almost English cottage garden in style, with 800 species of plants, lovely old roses, a potager and Zen area.

Lunch will be at the restaurant Le France in Fayence, then we'll visit the garden of MGF members, Carla and Herman Buehl. Set in an oak wood, the garden which the couple have created complements the architecture of their striking, modern house. The garden reflects their extensive knowledge of Mediterranean plants and includes both the usual Provencal plants and many unusual ones, used with flair and a superb sense of colour. There are collections of irises and paeonies and interesting sculptures which enhance the plantings.

For those in need of overnight accommodation, a number of rooms have been reserved for MGF members **until 17 February**, for the night of Thursday 17 May, at two Fayence hotels, Le Moulin de la Camandoule and the Hotel Les Oliviers.

For more information about the event and to book, contact Michèle Bailey jmb26130@gmail.com.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



PLANTS AND GARDENS IN THE PROVINCE OF ALICANTE, SPAIN, 15 - 22 APRIL 2018

One of our partner organisations, Mediterranean Plants and Gardens, will be organising this event in the province of Alicante. Members will see wild flowers, including orchids, near Javea and walk on the Montgó massif. There will be visits to a Moorish-style garden, the palm groves and Huerto del Cura garden of Elche, the Albarda gardens near Denia and a variety of private gardens. This will be a two-centre trip, staying the first nights in Elche and then moving on to Denia. For more information [click here](#). To reserve a place, contact the organiser, Heather Martin: hma@clara.net. Booking form [here](#).

The next two trips, to Cornwall and Mallorca, are organised by MGF member Maria Sansoni, owner of Flora Mediterranea, a specialist plant nursery based in Munich, Germany. The main language on the tours will be German, but Maria also speaks excellent English. Prices quoted in the programme details include air travel from Munich, but for those wishing to make their own travel arrangements Maria can quote a special price.

18 – 24 September, Cornwall, UK

Romantik, Gärten und Natur The romantic gardens of Cornwall

This trip will include visits to many of Cornwall's most famous gardens, including Trebah, Glendurgan, the Lost Gardens of Heligan and the Eden Project. There will also be the opportunity to see a number of private gardens, and, as many of the gardens are on the coast, perhaps to swim in the sea. The main hotel will be Penmorvah Manor, a country house hotel set in peaceful countryside near Falmouth. For full programme details contact Maria Sansoni: info@floramediterranea.de

8 – 14 October, MALLORCA

Trauminsel Mallorca – Besondere Gärten und Natur Gardens of the island of Mallorca

On this tour, Maria has included private and public gardens in all parts of the very diverse island of Mallorca, from the mountainous west coast to the quiet and windswept south-east. Well-known gardens to be visited are the Moorish Alfabia and the Botanical Garden of Sóller, but there are also lesser-known treasures in the Serra de Tramuntana, such as the botanical garden of the monastery Santuari de Lluc. Accommodation is in the Hotel Lido Park in Peguera. For full programme details contact Maria Sansoni: info@floramediterranea.de.

February 2019, SOUTH AFRICA

Wild flowers of the Drakensberg and Lesotho

Mediterranean Plants and Gardens are planning a very special 10-day tour of the wild flowers of the Drakensberg and Lesotho starting on Thursday 7 February 2019. The guide for the trip will be Elsa Pooley, who has an intimate knowledge of the area and has written the definitive book on the flora of the region. The trip is still at the planning stage so expressions of serious interest are sought as soon as possible. Contact Heather Martin, hma@clara.net for a draft itinerary and more details.

For a full list of international events, go to the [MGF website](#).

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

27/28 January	Mimosalia	Bormes-les-Mimosas (83)
3/4 February	Salon des Orchidées	Vergèze (30)
17 Feb – 4 March	Festival des Orchidées	Menton (06)

Hortus Programme

3 March	Talk - 'Improving a small outdoor space' by Nina Guichard	Montferrier-sur- Lez (34)
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All MGF members are welcome to join Hortus activities. For more information about Hortus, go to the [website](#). To book a place for any of the events in the Hortus programme, contact Chantal Maurice at chantal.dania@wanadoo.fr.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Mediterranean Gardening France website

The [WHAT'S NEW?](#) page has a summary of material added recently.



[A visit to Roland and Liliane Leclercq's garden](#)

A report and photographs by Michèle and Daniel Auvergne, on our October visit to Roland and Liliane's garden.



[Flora of the Atacama Desert](#)

An article by Alfredo Unda on the special flowering of the Atacama Desert in August 2017, following an unusually rainy winter.

Photo: *Rhodophiala phycelloides* (common name: *añañuca*)



[Alstroemeria – A Chilean Wonder](#)

Eduardo Olate has written about the amazing variety of alstroemerias to be found in different habitats in Chile, many suitable for growing in gardens.

Photo: *Alstroemeria umbellata* growing in the wild at 2,000m



[Garden Visitors](#)

Yvonne Barton, of MGS Italy, offers advice on the challenges and rewards of opening your garden to the public.

Seeds of Peace

An update to Oron Peri's 2017 seed list is now available. Oron writes:

"The species on the new list have flowered in the last few weeks and have produced seeds that need to be sown upon arrival as they are fresh. Germination is quite fast!" An objective of Oron's list is to preserve rare plants of the Eastern Mediterranean area. Email Oron for more information: oronperi@gmail.com.

FOCUS ON CHILE

Christine Savage writes:



At the end of August, I had the great pleasure of announcing that a new partner had joined Mediterranean Gardening International. Mediterranean Gardening Chile, based in the Curacaví valley in the Mediterranean-climate area of central

Chile, aims to focus on the protection of native plants in the wild and the use of Chilean native Mediterranean species in gardens. We decided to dedicate part of this newsletter to Chile, and its Mediterranean plants, and David Bracey has been busy researching and bringing together information from experts in Chile and in France.

Anthony and I visited Chile in the early part of 2017 and spent a delightful day in Santiago with Alfredo Unda, the guiding light behind the formation of the new Chilean association. He took us to visit the Plaza de Armas, with its avenues of beautiful *Brachychiton discolor* trees, bearing both flowers and seeds, and he and his son helped us gather seeds to bring home for our seed list. We also visited the new Parque Bicentenario by the Mapocho River, where catalpa trees had been planted, and ponds filled with papyrus and other water plants were home to pink flamingos. Then it was a cable car ride up to the summit of the Cerro San Cristobal which overlooks the city and provides views to the Andes.



Brachychiton discolor



Cyperus papyrus



View from Cerro San Cristobal

The rest of our time in Chile was spent in more southerly regions where the flora was stunning, but generally not Mediterranean. However, we did see many examples of some of the trees mentioned in David's introduction, most particularly, the glorious *Araucaria araucana*, or Monkey Puzzle tree.

We wish our new Chilean partners all the best for the future and look forward to hearing more about their activities. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this collection of articles about Chile and its flora.

Chile, an introduction

David Bracey writes:

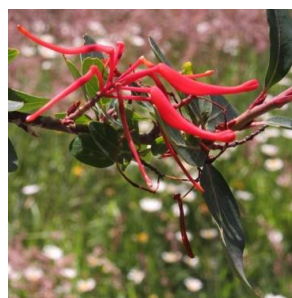
Chile is a very long, narrow country, 4200km long by only 160km-300km wide, bordered by the Andes mountains on the East which rise to 6500m and the Pacific Ocean on the West. The central zone, close to the capital Santiago, is known as the Matorral and is one of the five Mediterranean climate regions of the world, characterised by hot, dry summers and cool humid winters. The others are California, the Mediterranean basin, the Cape area of South Africa and South West Australia. These regions are known for their botanical diversity. The Chilean flora is no exception. There are over 5100 native species and at least half are endemic. It is home to some of the world's best-known flowers and trees, for example, alstroemerias, *Aristolochia* spp., *Azara* spp., *Buddleja globosa*, *Calceolaria* spp., *Embothrium coccineum*, *Geum magellanicum*, *Fuchsia magellanica*, *Hydrangea serratifolia*, *Oxalis* spp., *Schizanthus* spp., *Solanum muricatum*, valeriana and the vines, *Lapageria rosea* (the Chilean national flower), *Ecchremocarpus scaber* and *Tropaeolum tricolor*.



Alstroemeria patagonica



Calceolaria biflora



Embothrium coccineum



Fuchsia magellanica

Perhaps the world's most famous tree, the Monkey Puzzle, *Araucaria araucana* is native to the southern end of the mediterranean climate region. There were extensive forests when the Spanish first arrived in 1541. Today araucaria forests are found in National Parks, often growing with the autumn-coloured *Nothofagus alpina* (Rauli beech). Other well-known trees include the Chilean palm, *Jubaea chilensis*, the evergreen *Schinus molle* and *Sophora* species.



Araucaria araucana



Schinus molle

There are many similarities and differences between the environments of our Mediterranean basin and the Matorral. Soils in the Mediterranean basin are gritty/stony, free-draining, calcareous loams overlying sedimentary limestone. However, the soils in central Chile may be very fertile due to alluvial deposits from rivers draining the Andes. These soils have often developed over volcanic ash. The average rainfall in Santiago is 36 cm (cf Montpellier 60 cm), average temperature is 14°C (cf 14.4°C). Both environments have been heavily influenced by man's activities, by fires, often man-made, by grazing animals and by the weather. Medicinal plants, geophytes, herbaceous annuals and perennials and shrubby sclerophytes dominate the floras of both regions. On the coastal Matorral there are plants that we would find strange and 'out of place' in the Mediterranean basin. Examples are, the common cactus, *Trichocereus* species, which can grow to over two metres tall, terrestrial bromeliads (*Puya*), bamboos and even *Gunnera tinctoria* (Chilean rhubarb).

Alstroemeria – A Chilean wonder

Dr Eduardo Olate writes:

Alstroemeria is a genus native to South America, with species present in several countries of the continent, including Chile, Brazil, Peru and Argentina. However, and despite its common name in English and French, the greatest diversity of species within this genus exists in Chile. I've been very fortunate to see many of these species in their natural habitat, including the Atacama Desert, the coastline of the Pacific Ocean and up to the snowline of the Andes Mountains. From early spring and until early summer you can also see many different species growing along the whole Mediterranean zone in central Chile. There are even a few species that grow in the temperate forest of southern Chile and Patagonia.



Alstroemeria pelegrina on the seashore in central Chile



Alstroemeria aurea in a forest in Southern Chile



Alstroemeria violacea in the Atacama Desert

Read more of this article on the MGF website: [Alstroemeria – A Chilean Wonder](#)

The flora of the Atacama Desert

Alfredo Unda writes:

The Atacama Desert is the driest in the world. However, at its southern end, it tends to receive sporadic rains, giving rise to a unique phenomenon. Seeds, bulbs, shrubs and multiple species that have been dormant for years, germinate, sprout and bloom, painting the normally arid landscape with colour. Insects, reptiles and birds join in with this garden activity. All nature starts moving. This year, thanks to the amount of water which fell, we have had the opportunity to enjoy this special event. At the end of August 2017, my daughter Sofia and I toured several sites over four days with a group of 16 people, guided by María Teresa Eyzaguirre, a botanist specialized in the flora of the area.



See more photographs of the Atacama Desert in bloom on the MGF website: [Flora of the Atacama Desert](#)

Members' experiences with plants from Chile and more suggestions

David Bracey writes:

Artemisia, solanum, euphorbia, festuca, oxalis, sisyrinchium, stipa, senecio and verbena are a few examples of genera found throughout Mediterranean climate countries and all thanks to parallel evolution. Nearly 1000 indigenous plants grow in the Mediterranean region of central Chile. A few should be worth growing here in the Mediterranean Basin. Here are a few comments and choice recommendations!

John Fielding grows two Chilean plants which are closely related, *Philesia magellanica* and *Lapageria rosea*, lapageria being the national flower of Chile. "They grow quite easily in the UK and presumably also in France, even in the Mediterranean region, where they probably prefer shade and some moisture throughout the year".



Philesia magellanica



Lapageria rosea

Roland Leclercq grows *Colletia paradoxa*, the Anchor tree, native to southern South America. "It grows well without watering and is cold resistant to -8°C. It is evergreen, with curious triangular leaves, scented small white flowers, 3x5m". Olivier Filippi offers *Escallonia illinita*, an evergreen shrub with small white flowers. Depending on your reference the leaves smell like curry or like a pig-sty which is not unattractive! It is cold tolerant to -10°C and tolerates alkaline soils. Both these plants were mentioned in the [website report](#) on the September visit to Pépinière Quissac. *E. alpina* has small pink flowers and is worth a try.

Christine and Chantal both recommend *Verbena bonariensis*, another introduced species from South America. It is an excellent garden plant; its height and lightness and its self-seeding habit are most welcome. *Colletia spinosissima* is also recommended as being very drought and cold tolerant. It grows to 1m and has pink/white tubular flowers.



Colletia paradoxa



Escallonia illinita



Verbena bonariensis



Colletia spinosissima

Chantal makes more comments from her gardening experience: “*Aloysia citrodora* (lemon verbena) is a medicinal plant with multiple virtues. It needs a daily minimum of 5 to 6 hours of sun to produce properly aromatic foliage. Cold resistance is quite good, since in Montpellier, in the most protected part of the garden, it has withstood negative temperatures for more than 10 years. *Alstroemeria aurea*, the lily of the Incas, is a herbaceous perennial from Patagonia that blooms in my home, in a very sheltered situation, almost all the year except the winter months. I have never found seeds in the pods, and so I divide it in the spring by replanting the fleshy roots, that break like glass, as deeply as possible. *Sisyrinchium striatum* is a rhizomatous perennial iridacea with persistent fan-shaped foliage, similar to that of irises. Propagation can be either by sowing in spring or autumn, or by division at the end of summer, every 2 years. In my garden, they are not really watered, but I feel that a little water would not hurt them. I sowed *Vestia foetida* in 2016 and have just planted in the garden, so do not yet have much experience with this evergreen shrub. It resists cold to -8 °C and reseeds easily, but must be protected from strong winds. It is easily propagated from sowing or cuttings, keeping humidity high.”



Aloysia citrodora



Alstroemeria aurea



Sisyrinchium striatum

Here are a few more selections. Two xerophytes are *Rhodophiala bifida*, a member of the amaryllis family, with magnificent blood red flowers, stocked by Bulb'Argence and *Olsynium* spp., members of the iris family, with spring flowers and a range of colours.

Geum magellanicum is the Mediterranean equivalent of *Geum* 'Mrs Bradshaw', a firm favourite in temperate gardens. This has bright red and sometimes yellow flowers and is easy to cultivate.

Calceolaria (Lady's slipper) is endemic in Chile. Possibilities for the garden include *C. arachnoidea*, *C. purpurea* and *C. cana*. They have small attractive purple or mottled flowers which grow on short stems in grey foliage and form thick mats. Those with yellow flowers include *C. corymbosa* and *C. uniflora*.

Solanum tuberosum, *S. crispum*, *S. pulchellum*, and *S. nitidum* are species native to Chile. *Solanum nitidum* is a robust plant growing up to 1.5 m tall with large leaves. Flowers are classically violet with yellow centres. All these plants thrive in dry conditions.



Rhodophiala bifida



Geum magellanicum



Calceolaria corymbosa



Solanum crispum

Of course, there are many more plants which would be worth growing, or at least a try. Some well-known genus names include *Cestrum*, *Albizia*, *Eryngium*, *Polygala*, *Teucrium*, *Oenothera* and *Tropaeolum*. *Alstroemeria* is a must and is described elsewhere.

It is impossible to read about plants from Chile without reference to "*Flora Nativa de valor ornamental*" by Riedemann, Aldunate and Teillier. "*Chileflora*" by Michail Belov, has an excellent website with heaps of information and over 700 species of native seeds for sale.

Photos for the articles on Chilean plants: A. Altamira, John Fielding, Paola Santoro, Christine Savage, Alfredo Unda and from the MGF photo library.

Best wishes
Roland Leclercq
Newsletter editor

Please send contributions to this newsletter to: rolandlec@wanadoo.fr