



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

May 2018

Dear members and friends

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Saturday 21 April 14.30, Salle du Dévezou, Chemin des tennis, Montferrier sur Lez, Hérault

A talk 'Improving a small outdoor space' by Nina Guichard (NR Landscaping)



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 at chantal.dania@wanadoo.fr

Sunday 29 April, Villecroze and Salernes, Var

Visits to a Bourse aux Plantes and to two private gardens

Nicola D'Annunzio writes:

In the morning we will visit the Bourse aux Plantes in Villecroze allowing at least an hour and a half to view the full range available.

A 'bring your own' picnic lunch at the home of Macia and Phil Grebot, 625 Route des Espèces, Salernes will provide the more dedicated and imaginative of you an opportunity to offer suggestions for their piece of land. Currently it includes some elements of a garden, reflecting their regular absences, a clay soil, fair-weather gardening inclinations and limited gardening skills. Since there is no on-site water source, it's important to keep water use as low as possible. To date, they have introduced a range of indigenous plants which like clay soil and dry conditions and have created beds around the house and pool. The colour palate has been restricted to mainly whites and blues, but excluding yellow.

In the afternoon, we will visit a neighbour's garden, which offers an outstanding example of the achievements of Nathalie Rigg who sadly died far too young, some three years ago. Nathalie has left a true gardener's garden, full of interesting plants and areas of privacy and tranquillity. The garden was developed over many years, using the idea of rooms to create varied spaces. There are many species of plants, as well as a potager. We hope to be able to show you some of the original plans for the garden which started from a bare plot.

For more information and to book contact: Nicola D'Annunzio mgfnicola@gmail.com

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.

This visit is fully booked. For a waiting list place contact Christine Daniels: christine@christinedaniels.com

Sunday 13 May, Le Barroux, Vaucluse

Fête des Jardins

MGF has accepted an invitation to have a stand at the annual plant and garden fair held in the streets of the stunningly situated medieval village of Le Barroux, about 15 minutes north of Carpentras. We have some volunteer helpers already, but more would be welcome. If you would be happy to join the team manning the stand please contact Christine Daniels christine@christinedaniels.com.

Both English and French speakers needed.

Thursday and Friday 17/18 May, Fayence, Var

MGF Annual General Meeting 2018 and garden visits

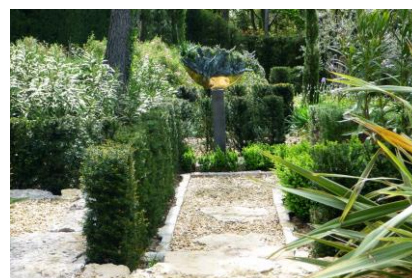
The 2018 AGM will be held in the picturesque perched village of Fayence, which lies on the D562 between Draguignan and Grasse. June Grindley and Nicola D'Annunzio, with a team of local members, have put together a programme of activities for the two days, together with suggestions for overnight accommodation.



La Vinaigrerie de Callas



La Campagne Sainte-Marie



Le jardin de Carla et Herman

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

Sunday 27 May, A garden overlooking the bay of Saint Tropez, Var

A visit to a private garden

Jean Marie-Rey has arranged for us to visit a private garden in Gassin. Situated in an old vineyard on a hill overlooking the Gulf of Saint Tropez, the 5 hectare garden was started in 2002, with garden designer Francois Navarro being involved in its creation. The owners retained some existing mature plants and trees, then added both endemic Mediterranean plants and others from different corners of the world.

For more information and to book, contact June Grindley: jngrindley@btinternet.com

Cancellations and no-shows

There have been a number of instances recently when members who had booked to attend an event have either cancelled at the very last minute, or just not turned up. Please remember that we have waiting lists for most of our activities so if you are going to be unable to use your place, let the organiser know with as much notice as possible.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Sunday 14 - Friday 19 October, Lazio, ITALY

Gardens of the Castelli Romani – a trip organised by Mediterranean Plants and Gardens

The verdant hills and volcanic lakes just south-east of Rome have attracted Romans wanting to escape from the city for millennia. So the Castelli Romani, as the communes are known, are home to some of the most beautiful villas in Italy, with gorgeous gardens and grounds, and to the famous wine town of Frascati, the hilltop Castel Gandolfo, and the scenic Lago Albano.

The group will stay at the elegant Villa Tuscolana Park Hotel, just outside Frascati, and the programme is expected to include visits to: Ninfa, Torrecchia, Villa d'Este, Hadrian's Villa (Villa Adriana), Castel Gandolfo and Villa Landriana. There will also be a full day excursion to Viterbo, to see Villa Lante and the Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo. Christina Thompson will be the guide for the tour. If this trip is oversubscribed a similar tour will be arranged in 2019.

For information on how to book, contact Heather Martin at hma@clara.net

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

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

22 April	Flora'Lez dans le parc Richter	Montpellier (Hérault)
28 -29 April	Journée des plantes rares et de collection	Béziers (Hérault)
28 -29 April	La fête des plantes à MUCEM	Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône)
29 April	Bourse aux plantes	Villecroze (Var)
1 May	Foire aux plantes	Forcalqueiret (Var)
1 May	La main verte	Le Vigan (Hérault)
5 - 6 May	Fête des plantes et du massif	Abbaye de Fontfroide (Aude)
8 May	Jardins, senteurs de Provence	Auriol (Bouches-du-Rhône)
8 May	Bourse aux plantes	Rousson (Gard)
10 May	Fête des fleurs	Velleron (Vaucluse)
11 - 13 May	Orticola 2018	Milan, ITALY
12/13 May	Iris et Pivoines à La Soldanelle	Rougiers (Var)
13 May	Fête des Jardins	Le Barroux (Vaucluse)
13 May	Foire aux fleurs	Aubussargues (Gard)
13 May	Plantes et fleurs en fête	Grospierres-en-Ardèche
19 - 21 May	La roseraie d'Alterarosa	Avignon (Vaucluse)
19 – 21 May	Floralies d'Antibes Juan-les-Pins	Antibes Juan-les-Pins (Alpes-Maritimes)
20 May	Portes-ouvertes - Le Jardin Champêtre	Caunes-Minervois (Aude)
20 May	Journée des plantes	Uzès (Gard)
25 - 27 May	Journée des plantes d'Albertas	Bouc-Bel-Air (Bouches-du-Rhône)
1 - 3 June	Rendez-vous aux Jardins	Open gardens throughout France

Hortus Programme

21 April	Talk 'Improving a small outdoor space' by Nina Guichard	Montferrier sur Lez, (Hérault)
11 – 12 May	Annual trip	Le Lubéron (Vaucluse)

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.



An article by David Bracey about one of the first trees to flower in the spring, the [sweet almond tree, *Prunus dulcis*](#).

Photo: *Prunus dulcis* near Beaumes-de-Venise, by Hugues Pelen



A report by Janet Rowe on our first visit of 2018, to [Domaine de l'Oisellerie, Var](#).

Photo: Anemone de Caen Hollandia



An article by David Bracey describing the botanical garden at [Oasis Park in the Canary Islands](#)

Photo: *Euphorbia cooperi*



Roland and Liliane Leclercq have added a new chapter to their garden diary '[Débuter un jardin à Tourbes](#)'.

Photo: *Ophrys arachnitiformis*



David Bracey visited Fuerteventura in January and was delighted by the remarkable and exotic plants he found there. Read his article, the [unusual flora of Fuerteventura](#), in the 'Plants' section.

Photo: *Phoenix canariensis* growing in a valley

New website page - International Gardens to Visit

This new [section](#) is for members' articles about Mediterranean gardens they have visited outside of France. We encourage all members of MGF and our partner associations to contribute. Send your contributions to the [Website Editor](#). The first article by David Bracey is on [Oasis Park](#), on the island of Fuerteventura (Canary islands), about a botanical garden with educational exhibitions and a collection of plants endemic to the island.

Rendez-Vous aux Jardins: First European Edition

Rendez-vous aux jardins is an annual French event organized by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, in collaboration with the [Parks and Gardens Committee](#). The 2018 edition will take place on Friday 1st, Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd June 2018, on the theme "Garden Europe". This theme has been chosen to fit with the [European Year of Cultural Heritage](#) and is the first European edition. More information on the [website](#) .

Grafted Tomatoes

David Bracey writes:

Last year my pépiniériste offered grafted tomatoes for sale. Grafted tomatoes! That was the first I had heard about them. Was this another attempt to peel more money from me?

In Japan and Korea watermelons have been grafted onto squash rootstocks since late 1920. Bacterial wilt and 'soil sickness' are serious problems where land is limited. Crop rotations were introduced to prevent the build-up of soil pests and diseases however rotations involving greenhouses and plastic tunnels are difficult. To get around this, alternative methods to sterilise intensively cultivated land, including greenhouse soils, were introduced using steam or chemicals. (This reminds me of the joke about the scientists who tried to cross watermelons with strawberries. After 10 years there was a grand announcement that the scientists had succeeded. "We now have watermelons the size of strawberries!").

Commercial growers of tomatoes now use grafted plants to reduce the impact of soil-borne insects and diseases and to increase productivity. Some listed advantages for grafted tomatoes are: earlier fruiting, extended growing season, increased fruit size and increased vigour, all of which lead to increased yields. The rootstocks are resistant to nematodes and several soil-borne diseases including Fusarium and Verticillium - see below.

According to the literature, peppers, aubergines, squash, chillies, cucumbers and bell peppers are all grafted. We can expect a broader choice of grafted vegetables in the future.

Last year I bought a few grafted tomatoes but failed to follow them through to harvest, although now I believe yields were improved. I shall certainly buy some more this year but I'm not sure if my favourite tomatoes, Roma, Marmande and Coeur de Boeuf will be available in a grafted version, and what their taste will be. Grafted plants will be more expensive but I think they are worth it.

There is an interesting video: "[How to graft tomato and eggplant: tube splice method](#)", made by the World Vegetable Centre.

Grafted tomatoes, aubergines and peppers can be bought from [Promesse de fleurs](#) in Houplines.
Tel: 03 61 76 08 10

Editor comment:

Last year, I have seen, in the garden of Henri Nardy, a retired nurseryman, a tomato grafted on a potato rootstock. It works well since both plants belong to the Solanum genus. So, from a unique plant Henri obtained tomatoes in the air and potatoes in the ground.

Le Jardin Champêtre, Caunes-Minervois

Imogen Checketts and Kate Dumbleton have sent these ideas, photographed in their demonstration garden in Caunes-Minervois, of plant combinations which look particularly good in May.

Kate writes:

“In flower in May are ground covering plants, green manure, alliums, and a good mix of Mediterranean shrubs, grasses and perennials. These plants have been chosen to create a romantic garden that teems with wildlife and only needs supplementary watering during exceptionally hot weather.”



Low growing ground-covering plants.
Dianthus anatolicus, *Thymus polytrichus*



Medium height ground covering plants.
Achillea coarctata, *Santolina neapolitana*



Green manure in the vegetable garden.
Phacelia tanacetifolia



Spring flowering bulbs:
L to R: *Allium nigrum*, *A. atropurpureum*, *A. 'Purple Sensation'*, *Nectaroscordum siculum*



L to R: *Lavandula 'Alba'*, *L. 'Grosso'*, *Festuca glauca*, *Santolina viridis*, *Geranium 'Rambling Robin'*, *Pennisetum 'Red Buttons'*, *Cistus florentinus*, *Orlaya grandiflora*, *Nassella tenuissima*, *Echinops tienschanicum*

A new association - *Les Amis de la Bamboueraie*

Katharine Fedden has sent this information about a recently created association:



“The association ‘Les Amis de la Bamboueraie / Friends of La Bamboueraie’ was born the 15th December 2017. Formed by a group of dedicated enthusiasts of the park, the association has as its vocation to contribute to the cultural activities both national and international of the Bamboueraie, to initiate educational projects that encourage environmental awareness, and to organise lectures and public events.”

Website: www.lesamisdelabamboueraie.fr

Contact: lesamisdelabamboueraie@gmail.com

Open Gardens -Jardins Ouverts

Open Gardens - Jardins Ouverts, www.opengardens.eu, is a registered association which encourages owners to open their gardens to the public. Admission is by an annual Membership Card (10€) which entitles the holder to visit any of the gardens throughout the year on their stated open days OR there is a 5€ Day Ticket to visit any chosen garden on its specific opening date. The proceeds are donated to charitable organizations in France. Catriona McLean and Chantal Guiraud are joint coordinators for southern Occitanie (a new name for Languedoc-Roussillon) and they are actively looking for new gardens that are willing to join the Open Garden Jardin Ouverts scheme in 2018.

Catriona and Chantal write:

“Would anyone interested in opening their garden in 2018 or next year contact us at catriona@catrionamclean.com or chantal.gouverner@gmail.com for more information and advice.

This season in Occitanie we have 10 gardens due to open at various times during the spring/summer season and autumn. Do go to the web site to find out opening times, and of course, to find out more about beautiful gardens in other areas of France that are opening this season.”



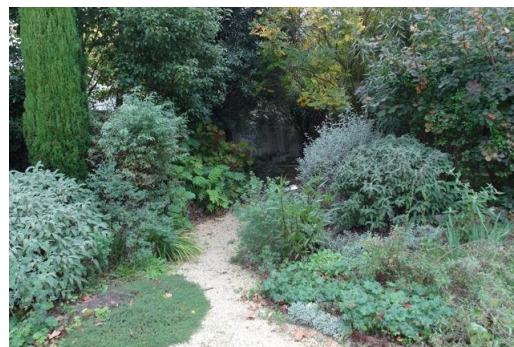
Jardin du Fond de Bézombes (34)



Jardin champêtre (Caunes-Minervois, 11160)



Lunel (34400)



Montpellier (34000)

Best wishes

Roland Leclercq
Newsletter editor

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