



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org



JANUARY 2020

Dear members and friends,

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Thursday 30 January at 14.30 Résidence Le Terral, Saint-Jean-de-Vedas, Hérault

A talk in French by Pierre Bianchi – Le jardin bleu et blanc



Chantal Guiraud has organized a talk by Pierre Bianchi, whose garden we visited after the May 2019 AGM.

Photo: *Brunfelsia pauciflora* (Common name: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow) growing in Pierre's blue and white garden

Pierre has always been interested in blue plants and, more or less consciously, placed them at the core of his own garden. It follows that he is also particularly appreciative of gardens with a 'blue zone' and of the rare, wild blue plants which grow near the Mediterranean Sea. Pierre says "This awakening to the qualities of the colour blue started in childhood when my father shared his view that the use of blue in a garden gives it 'class'."

After examining the royal aspects of blue, its rarity in nature, its characteristics and its changing appearance when adjacent to other colours, the talk will look at how to use blue in the garden. Pierre will show us images of some wonderful blue flowers which are impossible to grow in our gardens - too hot in summer and often too cold in winter, then list the main blue-flowered plants and blue-leaved plants which thrive on the northern side of the Mediterranean. He will show us many beautiful plants, some relatively unknown and rarely planted, then look at how to use blue in the garden, illustrating this with some inspirational photographs of gardens in the Midi where it will become clear that blue and white are inseparable friends. Those who want to know more will be directed towards nurseries which propagate blue plants and to a book that exists on the subject.

Pierre hopes that his experience as a gardener, experimenter with plant acclimatisation, beekeeper, ophthalmologist and true enthusiast of the colour blue, will enable him to transmit to his audience the very special and refreshing qualities of blue in the garden. He hopes his audience will be inspired to use blue more, but not just in a polychromatic or random way, and to ask questions.

NB: This is Pierre's first presentation on this subject, and any input or beautiful photo that would usefully complement or illustrate the subject would be most welcome.

If you would like to attend this talk please email [Chantal Guiraud](mailto:Chantal.Guiraud@mediterraneangardeningfrance.org)

Saturday 29 February, 15.00 Médiathèque de Clapiers (Hérault)
Conference on citrus fruit (talk in French)



Franck Curk, a seasoned speaker and agronomist at the agronomic research station INRA-CIRAD, will tell us about the Hesperides expedition, or how citrus fruit have conquered the world. He has also co-authored several books on the subject.

This free conference is organized by Chantal Guiraud and will take place in partnership with Hortus in the Salle du Dévezou, situated on the road from Saint-Clément-de-Rivière to Montferrier-sur-Lez 34980.

Contact : Chantal Guiraud,
chantal.gouverner@gmail.com

Wednesday 10 June, Simiane la Rotonde (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence)

A day out to visit the gardens of the Abbaye de Valsaintes and learn about how to use essential oils in the garden.



The Abbaye de Valsaintes, a 7th century Cistercian abbey and restored church is located near Simiane la Rotonde in the east Vaucluse. The gardens are classed as a Jardin Remarquable and include a dry garden, with 350 plant species; an ecological potager, using permaculture techniques and a rose garden, where one follows a path tracing the history of roses (550 species). At an altitude of 600m, the abbey is ideally situated for roses which benefit from cooler nights. Our guide will be Jean-Yves Meignen, the head gardener at the abbey, who gives daily gardening tips on Radio Bleu Vaucluse and has a Q&A session on Saturday mornings. He advocates

natural gardening, ie chemical-free, in particular using essential oils. <http://www.valsaintes.org/>

The visit is scheduled for 10 June 2020; at this time the roses will be in full bloom. It will be divided into two parts: in the morning, a guided 1h30 visit of the gardens (dry garden, roses, potager...) with Jean-Yves Meignen. This will be followed by a 30' guided tour of the church and demonstration of Gregorian chant. 14€ per person. In the afternoon Jean-Yves will give us a talk and demonstration on using essential oils in the garden, including making blends for specific uses and how to apply them. 9€ per person. The day will start at 10:30am and end at about 4:00pm.

For lunch, we can either take our picnics as there is a picnic area in the gardens; or enjoy a casual meal in the abbey's cafeteria (more details on that in the spring).

Contact: Frances Horne: frances.c.horne@orange.fr

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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

21 – 27 April, The Maremma, ITALY

Wild flora and scenery of Southern Tuscany



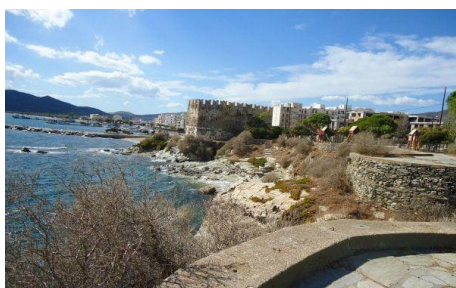
This walking tour, organised by Mediterranean Plants and Gardens and led by Professor Goffredo Filibeck of the University of Tuscia, is for those who enjoy hiking. The habitats of wild flora will include macchia, woodland, beaches, grassland, canyons and hilltop villages. The first five nights will be spent in Porto Santo Stefano, Monte Argentario, and the last two nights inland in the picturesque ancient village of Sovana, an area of volcanic tuff rock.

The itinerary and links to a plant list and booking form can be found [here](#).

Contact: [Heather Martin](#)

29 April – 6 May, Evia, GREECE

An MPG trip to see the wild flowers



This visit to the second largest island of Greece will focus mainly on wild plants. You will also visit churches, a vineyard and wine cellar, an ancient castle and examples of Evia's extraordinary dragon houses. The group will be led by Graham Kendall, who has specialised in the wild flora of Greece for 40 years. Hotels will be in the southern town of Karystos and Rovies in the north-west.

Please contact [Heather Martin](#) for more information or to request a place on the tour.

8-15 May, Sicily, ITALY

An MPG tour of Eastern Sicily



This seven-night trip includes both public and private gardens in and around Taormina, Mount Etna, Catania and Siracusa, together with two wildflower walks, visits to two nurseries and an archaeological site and a historic site; staying in both Catania and Siracusa. The trip will be led by local horticulturist, [Sergio Cumitini](#), who will introduce us to his area, with the assistance of local gardeners and other specialists.

A provisional itinerary can be seen [here](#). A booking form is available [here](#).

Contact: Maddy Hughes at madalynhughes@aol.co.uk.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

25/26 January	Mimosalia	Bormes-les-Mimosas (Var)
1/2 February	Salon des Orchidées	Vergèze (Gard)
1/2 February	Fête du Mimosa	Sainte-Maxime (Var)
15 Feb - 3 March	Fête du Citron	Menton (Alpes-Maritimes)
7/8 March	L'art des Jardins	Ille-sur-Têt (Pyrénées-Orientales)

7/8 March	Expo-Vente Plantes, Nature & Terroir	Nîmes (Gard))
22 March	Primavera	Montpellier (Hérault)
28/29 March	Fête des Jardins	Antibes (Alpes-Maritimes)

Hortus Programme

25 January	Les rosiers adaptés à notre région par Françoise Navratil	Montferrier-s-Lez (Hérault)
29 February	Les agrumes par Franck Curk	Clapiers (Hérault)

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](#).

NEWS AND INFORMATION

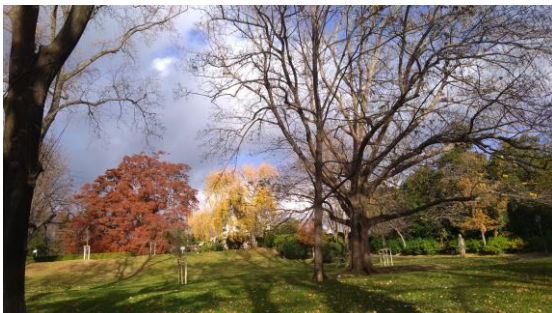
Mediterranean Gardening France website

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



In October, Yves Maccagno, a botanist specialising in trees, took us on a walk around Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort to look at remarkable trees.

Read Elisabeth Gratraud's account of the day [here](#).



In December, Elisabeth Gratraud has organised a visit to an oil mill in Sauvian near Béziers and to the Plateau des Poètes, a large park with rare tree and plant specimens in Béziers.

Read Roland Leclercq and Chantal Guiraud's account of the day [here](#).



Plants which survived well during heatwaves

In June 2019, a national record temperature of 46.1°C was measured in Gallargues-le-Montueux in the Gard. The heatwave was experienced for several weeks in June and July across most areas of Mediterranean France and when it was over, members of Hortus compiled a list of plants which had survived well. Nina Guichard combined the Hortus list with a similar one compiled by MGS France members after the heatwave of 2003 and images from the MGF photo library have been added. You can find it [here](#).

Photo: *Salvia darcyi*

Name change for *Rosmarinus officinalis*

Christine Daniels writes:

I spotted this article in the December 2019 issue of The Garden, the Royal Horticultural Society's monthly magazine. It seems that the much-loved Mediterranean plant *Rosmarinus officinalis* has been reclassified as part of the *Salvia* genus and will in future be known as *Salvia rosmarinus*.



“We're adopting a change in the scientific name for rosemary after research has shown that is in fact a salvia. In technical terms it will now be known as *Salvia rosmarinus*, rather than *Rosmarinus officinalis*, but its common name – rosemary – is unchanged.

The name '*Rosmarinus officinalis*' has been used since 1753 when the international system of naming plants began and salvia and rosemary were deemed to be two different genera. Even at that time, the creator of the system, Carl Linnaeus, observed the close similarity between them and recent research has demonstrated that one of the crucial distinctions made between them – a difference in their stamens - is much less significant than previously thought, and down to a small adaptation to pollination.

The move will see plant labels exhibiting a plant's scientific name gradually change over the coming months and years across RHS gardens. “

WHAT IS IT?

In this topic, photographs of unusual plants, fruits, seeds or garden tools will be shown without the caption and readers are asked to identify them. The answer will be given in the following newsletter. The photos will also be available in the Members' Forum where you can suggest your answers. Contributions should be sent to [Roland Leclercq](mailto:Roland.Leclercq@rhc.org).

The “What is it?” in the November Newsletter was *Salvia regia*.



Salvia regia, mountain sage, is a deciduous perennial, native to west Texas and a large area of Mexico. It forms a shrub with a stately appearance which can reach up to 2 m tall (generally 1 m) and 1 m 50 wide. The large deltoid green leaves are deeply veined. The tubular orange-red flowers bloom in late summer and fall. This sage is semi-hardy (-10°C) and has low to moderate needs of water in most soils.

This plant has been chosen by our partner association, Hortus, as the plant to be tested in the gardens in 2020.

Photo by Jean-René Garcia

The new “What is it?” is below (proposed by Chantal Guiraud). It is a fruit. You can find a clue in the website (Forum, item “What is it?”). Answer in the next newsletter.



What's new in the [members' Forum](#)

Here are some of the new topics being discussed on the members' forum.
To see them, log into the member area and click on ACCESS THE FORUM

Miscellany/ Regulatory news / Glyphosate the latest

THE QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Do you really want to enjoy your garden? Put on loose clothes, a big straw hat, have a rake in one hand and an iced drink in the other. Then show the gardener the flower bed he should dig” (The New-York Times).

Best wishes, Merry Christmas and happy new year.



Roland Leclercq
Newsletter editor

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