



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

June 2015

Dear members and friends

I'm writing this a few days after our return from Armenia - a fascinating country with a rich and interesting history and culture, beautiful snow-capped mountains and 3,200 species of plants.

Jason Spencer-Cooke, Annie Nivière and Jo Hynes will be writing on various aspects of our trip and there will be photos from all of us, but particularly from Hubert Niviere and Jock Shearer, who were generally last back to the bus - always just one more stunning flower to photograph....

We'll get the Armenia words and pictures together for the website in the next few weeks, but in the meantime there are lots of new articles and reports to catch up with. You'll find a list, with links, further down this newsletter.

The programme of activities is now taking a summer break and will re-start mid September.

Programme of activities in France

Thursday 10 September, 10.00am, Canet and Servian (34)

Visit to Domaine de la Dourbie and the Jardin de Saint-Adrien



Situated on the banks of the river Hérault, the 4 hectares of garden at La Dourbie include a landscaped park, orchards, vegetable gardens, olive groves, a small lake, a pond and planted areas, bringing together a wide selection of plant varieties native to the surrounding garrigue. The gardens were reorganized in 2006 by Dominique Lafourcade and now hold the *Jardin Remarquable* classification. Chantal Guiraud has organised a visit first to the garden then to the cellar (especially interesting at harvest time), followed by a wine-tasting and a picnic in the garden.

http://www.domainedeladourbie.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=233&Itemid=169

In the afternoon we'll visit the Saint-Adrien garden, <http://www.jardinesaintadrien.com/> another *Jardin Remarquable*. A garden tour led by the owner will be followed by a short film then a glass of wine. Saint-Adrien has been created in a former basalt quarry, now transformed into an oasis of greenery surrounding four small lakes.

Thursday 17 September, 10.30am, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat (06)

Visit to Les Cèdres and the Villa Ephrussi gardens

Les Cèdres, a private villa in 14 hectares of gardens on Cap Ferrat belonged to Leopold II of Belgium from 1904 to 1924. During this time he built the lake for his 'friend' Catherine Delacroix, called 'Très Belle', who was 16 to his 64 when they first met. The villa was bought in 1924 by Alexandre Marnier-Lapostolle, the proprietor of Grand Marnier, who turned it into a *jardin exotique* with an arboretum and 25 heated glass houses. Today the garden contains more than 14,000 species of tropical plants, a palm grove, and collections of bamboos, succulents and epiphytes. We shall have a guided tour lasting 2-3 hours followed by a light lunch in the Villa Ephrussi tea room and a visit the Ephrussi gardens in the afternoon. <http://www.villa-ephrussi.com/en/home>



Number of participants limited to 20.

Thursday 15 October, 11.45am, Le Barroux (84)

L'Aube Safran, guided tour and garden visit

Frances Horne has organised this visit to a saffron farm at a date when the crop should be ready for harvesting. Frances writes:

“Saffron, a deep yellow, beautiful spice, prized in Papal times for the wonderful golden hues and intense flavour it gave to food on the banquet tables, was grown around Marseille, Carpentras and Orange until the 19th century. Now it is found mainly around the Mont Ventoux. Looking to escape the commotion of Paris, François and Marie Pillet fell in love with the beautiful countryside of the Vaucluse. In 2001 they bought a place on the outskirts of Le Barroux, created a bed and breakfast and decided to reintroduce the cultivation of saffron to the area. François will tell us all about growing and harvesting saffron and Marie will give us a tour of the beautiful garden which they have created. The visit will end with a “goûter” of saffron-based, organic home baking.”

We will meet at the nearby home of Jude Baker to eat our picnic lunches, then go to *l'Aube Safran* in the early afternoon. Maximum 30 participants.

<http://www.provenceguide.com/degustation/le-safran-du-ventoux/mont-ventoux/provence-DEGPAC084CDT0001044-1.html>

To book a place for activities in France, contact Christine Savage: cs.savage@btopenworld.com

International activities

28 February – 6 March 2016, Syracuse and Taormina, Sicily

Blütenzauber, Zitrusfülle und Papyrus – a trip to gardens in eastern Sicily with a German-speaking group

Maria Sansoni of Flora Mediterranea, based in Au, in southern Germany, has invited members of MGF to join this two-centre trip to private and public gardens near Syracuse and Taormina. For details of the programme click [here](#). Maria, who will be leading the programme, speaks excellent English, however the main language used on the tour will be German.

Maria writes:

“Ganz frisch gebacken: Mein neues Reisekind Sizilien, geplant für die erste Märzwoche 2016. Eine Zeit, in der die Akazien („Mimosen“) noch blühen, in der Milliarden von Pflanzen in den Gewächshäusern schon blühen und duften – bereit, in den kühlen Norden verkauft zu werden. Eine Zeit, in der die Sonne schon Kraft hat und wir die entsprechende Sehnsucht danach. Eine Zeit aber auch, in der es noch ordentlich regnen kann. Ein Segen für die Natur – und für uns Grund genug, den Regenschirm und die Jacke beim Einpacken nicht zu vergessen. Gerne stehe ich Ihnen bei Fragen zur Verfügung!“

Contact: Maria Sansoni: floramediterranea@t-online.de

22 - 25 April 2016

Mediterranean Gardening International event in Portugal

Rosie Peddle and members of the Mediterranean Gardening Association Portugal have started to plan an MGİ event in late April, 2016. Olivier Filippi has confirmed Saturday April 23rd as the date for his talk *“Dry gardening: a new inspiration for gardeners in the Mediterranean region”*. Rosie writes “We are now able to start looking at venues and will be concentrating on the western side of the Algarve so that we can take groups to visit the splendid wildflowers of the protected St Vincent coastal Nature Park.” <http://www.first-nature.com/worldsites/pt-stvincent.php>
More information soon.

For a full list of international events, look on the MGF website:

<http://www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org/baEvtInt.htm>

News and information

Australian gardening association joins Mediterranean Gardening International

At the AGM in May we announced that Mediterranean Gardening Margaret River had become the fourth member of MG*i*, the international plant and garden community to which our association belongs. Many of you will have met Julie Kinney, the group's dynamic leader, on one of her trips to France. She has written about the 2014 group visit to the Vaucluse on our website: [Australian Visit to MGF gardens](#).

To read more about MGMR and its activities in Western Australia, go to <http://mediterraneangardeninginternational.org/MGMR.htm>. Julie writes:

"Our group has evolved to encourage gardeners of this region the chance to share knowledge, friendship and learn how to best cope with the local climatic conditions for our Mediterranean climate. MG*i* members visiting this beautiful corner of Western Australia are welcome to contact [Julie Kinney](#) for advice on gardens to visit."

Mediterranean Gardening France website

Go to the [WHAT'S NEW?](#) page to see a summary of material added recently.

Highlights include:



A report by June Grindley and Sara Robinson on the propagation workshop held at la Soldanelle and [some hints from Christian and Sylvie Mistre on propagation](#).

Chantal Guiraud's impressions of Mr and Mme Navarro's cactus and succulent garden near Toulon and Julia Petty's report on Iris en Provence: [la visite à un jardin privé et à une pépinière dans le Var](#).



An article on the pruning, fertilising, protection and irrigation of the olive tree by Célia Graud, *consultante en oléiculture* and specialist in olive tree pests and diseases, [the cultivation and care of olive trees](#).

A report by Nicola D'Annunzio and Christine Savage on the visit to the buildings and gardens of Cap Moderne and the stunning terraced garden of Pierre and Giancarla Venera on the hillside above Roquebrune village, [the outing to Cap Moderne and a private garden](#).



Annie and Hubert Niviere have put together [a list of plants found on the Piboules botanical trail](#) near Entrechaux in the Vaucluse. It includes some of the interesting trees, shrubs and perennials growing here, all of which occur naturally on this riverside site.

Photo: *Populus nigra*

[From Lucca with love](#) - Michèle Bailey's list of inspiring gardening ideas gleaned from a recent trip to Tuscany organised by the UK association, Mediterranean Plants and Gardens.



Open Gardens / Jardins Ouverts

Gill Pound, one of the MGF committee members, drew our attention to a new Open Garden scheme for France, www.opengardens.eu which started in 2014. In concept this scheme is similar to those run in other countries, in that participants are mainly private individuals and the money raised goes to charity. If any members are interested either in opening their own gardens or becoming a local coordinator, the president of Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts, Mick Moat, Mick@opengardens.eu can provide more information. I've also posted this message on the MGf forum, together with an attachment which explains more about the scheme. If the idea appeals to any of you, one possibility might be for a member to act as coordinator for MGF members' gardens - please get in touch if you'd like to explore this concept further.

Best wishes
Christine