

# Mediterranean Gardening France

[www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org](http://www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org)

## March 2018

Dear members and friends

### PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

#### Friday 23 and Tuesday 27 March, Bargemon, Var

##### A visit to Domaine l'Oisellerie to see naturalised bulbs in flower

If you ever wanted to know how to landscape a large *domaine*, or to garden in keeping with nature, this is a visit for you.

Nigel writes: "Until 18 years ago L'Oisellerie (the aviary) was a 7 hectare small holding that had been in the same family for some 250 years. It was acquired by Nigel and Alain who, after a great deal of hands-on work, consider it can now be called 'very much a garden'! The land, which has a very varied topography, privacy, and water too, has been developed in a naturalistic way by nurturing and editing the existing 'very interesting' vegetation to full advantage, and then planting to enhance it. A large newish pond, a potager and other surprises have been created. The landscaping was approached with care to play to, rather than offend, the ancient spirit that exists and so the brief for much of the work continues to be that 'nobody should know'!"

Nigel (BSc. Horticulture, University of Reading), has followed a career in landscape design creating gardens and working on projects worldwide, including USA, China, Zanzibar and Greece.

We have had an overwhelming response to this event but Nigel and Alain have kindly agreed to host us on a second date. The visit on 27 March is fully booked but there still places for 23 March.

To book contact June Grindley: [jngrindley@btinternet.com](mailto:jngrindley@btinternet.com)

#### 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.

Fully booked but waiting list open.

For more information and to book contact Katharine Fedden [katarine.fedden@wanadoo.fr](mailto:katarine.fedden@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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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. 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 Provençal 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](mailto: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 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](mailto:jngrindley@btinternet.com)

## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 April, Parco Nazionale del Circeo, Sabaudia, ITALY

#### Wild flowers and coastal vegetation of Lazio

This two-day trip organised by MGS Italy is based in Sabaudia, a coastal town south of Rome. It includes a visit the panoramic Mediterranean garden of the Hotel Punta Rossa and a full day in the Circeo National Park. Expert botanist guides will guide the group, taking in Roman ruins, dune wild flowers and coastal vegetation on the breath-taking promontory where, according to tradition, Ulysses arrived with his ship and fell victim to the bewitching Circe.

For more information and to book, contact Angela Durnford [angela.durnford@mgsitaly.org](mailto:angela.durnford@mgsitaly.org).



## 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](mailto:hma@clara.net). Booking form [here](#).

## Tuesday 23 May Chelsea Flower Show, London, UK

### Early entry to the show, before the crowds arrive

As last year, our UK partner association, Mediterranean Plants and Gardens, has arranged for entry at 6.30am on the first day, when plants are fresh and at their best. Bookings must be made now and payment received in MPG's bank account by Saturday 24 March.

Heather Martin writes:

"The early admission means you can arrive at the same time as those who have show gardens and stands and be there for the announcement of awards. No crowds for the first hours! And you can stay all day if you want. Breakfast with champagne is provided in the Rock Bank Restaurant from half past eight to half past nine, at reserved tables. Tickets are £133 per person and can be booked on the MPG website at <https://www.medpag.org/book-chelsea.html>"

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

## OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Plant fairs and open gardens

17-18 March	Journée des plantes rares, Domaine d'Orves	La-Valette-du-Var (Var)
25 March	1 <sup>ère</sup> fête aux plants et déco jardin	Callas (Var)
25 March	« Primavera » fête des plantes rares	Jardin botanique de Montpellier
1 April	Foire aux Fleurs	Beaumes-de-Venise (Vaucluse)
8 April	Floralies	Figanières (Var)
8 April	Portes Ouvertes à la Soldanelle	Rougiers (Var)
8 April	10.00-18.00 Plantes méditerranéennes et exotiques	Roquebrun (Hérault)
14 April	Fête du Printemps	Le Pontet (Vaucluse)
14 -15 April	Plantes Rares et jardin naturel	Sérignan-du-Comtat (Vaucluse)
22 April	Flora'Lez	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)
1 May	Foire aux plantes	Forcalqueiret (Var)
8 May	Jardins, senteurs de Provence	Auriol (Bouches-du-Rhône)
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)
25-27 May	Journée des plantes d'Albertas	Bouc-Bel-Air (Bouches-du-Rhône)

### Hortus Programme

14 April	14.30 Bourse aux plantes	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](mailto:chantal.dania@wanadoo.fr).

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

### Mediterranean Gardening France website

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



#### ['Gardens to Visit'](#)

Our list has been updated, and nine gardens added, mainly those visited by members at events in 2017. Please have a look at the list and if you have a suggestion for a garden that should be included, write to the website editor, Christine Daniels, [christine@christinedaniels.com](mailto:christine@christinedaniels.com)

Photo: Aerial shot of Le Jardin Champêtre in Caunes-Minervois.



#### Plants suitable for Hedges

David Bracey has put together recommendations from members and created a new [plant list](#) : Plants suitable for pruning into a hedge.

Photo: *Eleagnus x ebbingei*



#### The Bold Dry Garden by Johanna Silver

Book [review](#) by David Bracey

This book, subtitled 'Lessons from the Ruth Bancroft Garden' tells the story of how Ruth Bancroft established and developed her garden in Walnut Creek, northern California. David describes it as "a must-have book for anyone with a passion for succulents."

Book reviews can be found on the Mediterranean Gardening International website. Please send reviews to Marjorie Orr:

[marjorie@astroinform.com](mailto:marjorie@astroinform.com)



#### [Gardens of Northern California](#)

In late October 2017, two of our Californian members, Kirsten Honeyman and Jolene Telles, hosted a very special tour of gardens around San Francisco, Carmel and in the San Joaquin valley.

Christine Daniels has written an account of the trip.

Photo: Monterey cypresses (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) at Carmel Point



#### The MGi Seed Exchange - Update to the Seed List

The spring 2018 update to the [seed list](#) is now available on the website. Twice a year Chantal Guiraud edits the list, adding fresh seeds contributed by members and removing any seeds which are past their best. Send your orders to Chantal: [chantal.gouverner@gmail.com](mailto:chantal.gouverner@gmail.com)

Photo: *Tulipa sylvestris* by John Fielding

## Notes to the spring 2018 Seed List

Chantal Guiraud writes:

In case you find it hard to choose between the hundreds of seeds available on the seed list I have selected a few of those that have recently come in which have only a short viability. So, make the most of them immediately!



*Agapanthus africanus*: The seeds should be sown in a warm place in the spring in a mixture of sand and peat and germination will take place within 3 weeks. The seedlings should be pricked out into individual pots, which should be placed in a cold frame for the winter, then planted out in the following spring.



*Cardiospermum halicacabum*: This small climber will self-seed in the garden. Sow it in a heated greenhouse (minimum temperature 20°C) in February-March. Germination will take 15-20 days.



*Cordyline australis* and *C. banksia*: Sow in pots of sandy peat in a cold frame. Germination will take place after about 15 days.



*Gladiolus communis*: The Pacific Bulb Society says: Growing from seeds is not difficult. This species should be sown in the spring, and requires a warm temperature to germinate well (room temperature). Sow the seeds in a well-drained mix and slightly cover with the mix. The papery wings that surround the seeds do not need to be removed. After sowing, place the pots in a tray with water and allow the medium to soak thoroughly. Above watering can dislodge the seeds and cause them to float to the surface. It is probably best to not transplant the seedlings until they have completed their second season of growth. This is valid for all bulbs.



*Ilex paraguariensis*: This tree is not at all Mediterranean but is native to tropical zones of South America. It is the source of maté, the national drink of Argentina. Before sowing you should soak the seeds in hot water for a few hours and then scarify them. You can expect germination to take 1 to 2 months.



*Iris foetidissima*: As with all irises, put the seeds in the fridge or leave them outside so that they can undergo the period of cold necessary to trigger germination. Then in March-April sow them in pots outside. Germination will occur about 3 to 5 weeks later.



*Molosperrum peloponnesiacum*: This is a superb umbellifer with very finely cut fern-like foliage. Being a mountain plant, it prefers cool, rich soil that is very well drained. If you want a similar plant adapted to the dry climate of the Mediterranean Basin, try the lovely *Seseli gummiferum*. It dies after flowering but self-seeds abundantly.



*Nandina domestica*: Sow in spring (end of February/beginning of March) in a cold frame after having stratified the seeds in damp sand for the whole of the winter at the foot of a north-facing hedge or wall. The germination rate is fairly low.



*Pistacia lentiscus*: Pour boiling water (100°C) over the seeds and leave them to soak for 2 or 3 days. Drain off the water. Then stratify them at 3/5°C for 3 months. Sow when the temperature reaches 20°C at night and 30°C during the day. The germination rate is fairly low.



*Ranunculus creticus*: Seeds can be sown at any time but are best sown in winter or early spring to benefit from a cold spell in the wet compost to break their dormancy. We advise covering seeds very thinly with sand or fine grit to about the depth of the seed size. If the seeds do not come up within 6 to 12 weeks the damp seed tray can be given cold treatment in a fridge for about four weeks. They may still take very many months to appear, so please never discard the pot or tray. This is valid for all plants.

*Tulbaghia violacea*: Sow in a cold frame at between 15 and 20°C. Once the plant is established in the garden it will self-seed, but it will take at least three years for your plantlets to become established and flower.

### A useful new find

Marjorie Orr writes:



My latest find is the hugely useful bulb, *Gladiolus callianthus*. It comes into leaf from June and flowers from August to late October. The flowers are lovely, on tall stems and beautifully scented, excellent for a time of year when other things have faded. The bulbs do better in pots than in the ground.

I tend to buy them from Verberghe, where they are currently available at 1.88 euros per bulb; 40 euros minimum order. Quite a lot, but they are worth it. <https://order.eurobulb.nl/summer-flowering/10374-gladiolus-callianthus-murielae-10374.html>

Or buy from Green Garden, <http://www.greengardenflowerbulbs.nl/>.

## The MGF Member Directory

Christine Daniels writes:

Following a recent correspondence with a member who was looking for gardening contacts near to her home, it struck me that a reminder about the MGF Member Directory might be useful. Of our 264 current members, 192 have chosen to be included in the Directory.

If you'd like to contact a member but don't have their email address or are wondering if there are any MGF members in your locality, click on the MEMBERS tab on the top right of the Home page. This will take you to the sign-in page where you will need to enter your user name and password. There is a 'Remember me' facility to make it quicker to get in on subsequent occasions. Once in the member area you'll see a number of options, one of which is 'View Member Directory'. The Directory can be viewed in alphabetical order, or, most usefully, sorted by postcode. Click on 'Postcode' then 'Display' and you'll be able to see who lives where and possibly find someone in your vicinity with whom you might like to get in touch.

## Autumn flora of the Peloponnese

In November 2017, Juliet Walker joined the Mediterranean Plants and Gardens trip to the southern Peloponnese area of Greece, led by John Fielding.



Juliet writes:

Becky Cross, MPG's first bursary recipient, has written an erudite and charming illustrated diary of this wonderful trip to the middle southern peninsula of the Peloponnese. Anyone interested in the flora of Greece will find this detailed account, with its fabulous photos, a real treat. Especially as several people warned me that 'there would be nothing much to see in November' - manifestly not true! Aside from the prolific autumn flowers there is so much of interest in the Mani, an area sometimes described as a mixture of stones, feuds, towers and turmoil. No, it is so much more. I hope John will take us back in a future spring.

<https://www.medpag.org/peloponnese-becky-cross.html>

Photo: Becky holding a *Cyclamen hederifolium* tuber

## Mediterranean garden plants making the news

David Bracey writes:

Plants have always been a valuable source of new medicines. Recently, several potentially new medicines have been described and some are mentioned here. If readers would like more information please Google the appropriate common name.



*Artemisia annua*



*Catharanthus roseus*



*Iris unguicularis*



*Callistemon citrinus*

*Artemisia annua*, or wormwood, has aromatic leaves and has long been used as a flavouring. In traditional Chinese medicine it was used to treat 'fever'. Dr Tu Youyou shared the Nobel medical prize in 2015 for her work with artemisinin as an anti-malarial drug. Resistance to malarial drugs is well known, especially in SE Asia, and artemisinin was considered to be the 'last resort'. Unfortunately, resistance has been recently reported. Artemisinin is now recommended for use only in combination with other anti-malarial drugs.

Madagascar periwinkle, *Catharanthus roseus*, was originally named *Vinca rosea* which to my mind better describes its appearance. It is well known as an ornamental plant for dry gardens and selections are used as bedding plants in temperate gardens. As a folk remedy it was used to cure diabetes. During the last

World War, US forces used it as a substitute for insulin. Further research in 1958 and 1961 identified two chemicals, both of which have a strong anti-cancer effect on at least 11 known cancers, including Hodgkin's lymphoma, breast cancer and skin melanoma. Today, the World Health Organisation classifies both chemicals, vincristine and vinblastine, as 'essential medicines'.

Mangiferin is found in several plants including the Algerian iris, *Iris unguicularis*, as well as in mangoes! This chemical was first identified in scientific literature in 2005. Since then it has been described as having 'tremendous health-related properties including being anti-viral, anti-diabetic, anti-cancer'. Mangoes are now considered to be a healthy food and this probably accounts for their current popularity, especially in Western Europe.

*Callistemon citrinus*, the common red bottlebrush. An observant scientist in California noticed that the ground under his bottlebrush shrubs was free of weeds, an allelopathic effect. A wag described this as the 'shadow-effect'. However, further research identified new compounds with anti-growth effects which through a series of optimisations eventually led to a new class of herbicides, the triketones. Today mesotrione and sulcotrione, used alone and in combinations, provide very effective pre and post emergence control of broad-leaved and some grass weeds in maize/corn.

Sulphoraphane is found in the cruciferous vegetables broccoli, cabbage and pak choy, and resveratrol is in found in grapes, blueberries and raspberries. Both are in the news as having a positive effect on human health including cancer prevention. However, the evidence to date does not support these claims.

Best wishes  
Roland Leclercq  
Newsletter editor

Please send contributions to this newsletter to: [rolandlec@wanadoo.fr](mailto:rolandlec@wanadoo.fr)