



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

AUGUST 2018

Dear members and friends

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Thursday 13 September, Lauris and Sarrians, Vaucluse

A visit to two private gardens



We have been invited to visit the garden of Arlette and Alain, in the pretty village of Lauris, on the southern slopes of the Luberon massif. The couple commenced planting in the garden in 1990 on a soil which is heavy and chalky. This is a 'dry' garden with cypresses, olive trees and some old oak trees. After a picnic lunch we'll drive to Sarrians where we'll visit a garden (part of the Open Gardens / *Jardins Ouverts* scheme) being developed on a hectare of drained marshland.

Photo: The garden in Lauris

Numbers for this visit are limited to 20 people. To book a place contact Chantal Guiraud chantal.gouverner@gmail.com.

Tuesday 2 October, Eguilles (near Aix-en-Provence), Bouches-du-Rhône

Annual planning meeting chez Michèle Bailey and Ian Davis

Come with your suggestions for activities next year and with a dish to share for lunch. Coffee from 10h30, meeting starts 11h00. After lunch, Nina Guichard of NR Landscaping will give a demonstration of planting up an ornamental pot for a hot dry place. Then you can wander round Michèle and Ian's new garden, intended to be wildlife-friendly as well as economical on watering.

For more information and to book: Michèle Bailey

Friday 5 October, 10.30 Coursegoules, Alpes-Maritimes

A visit to the garden at Le Vallon du Brec



Martin Smith has arranged this visit to Vallon du Brec, a *jardin remarquable* situated in the hinterland of Nice at a height of 1000 metres. It was created in 1992 by a painter and photographer and after a period of neglect, the new owners have breathed life back into the garden. It overlooks a small valley and contains plants from China, Japan and North America as well as indigenous ones. The planting is enhanced by painted wooden structures... pavilions, staircases and arches, redolent of Japan. In October the garden should be showing its autumnal colours.

www.le-Vallon-du-Brec.com

We hope to arrange lunch at a local restaurant. Numbers for this visit are limited.

To book a place, contact Nicola D'Annunzio: mgfnicola@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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



2 – 7 April 2019, International Spring Conference, Évora, Portugal “Bringing the Mediterranean Landscape into your Garden”



Rosie Peddle writes:

We extend a warm invitation to all MGi members and friends to join us in Portugal for a very special spring conference featuring Olivier Filippi and James Basson as keynote speakers. We are working on a programme of visits to private gardens, vineyards and historic gardens in the Algarve and the Alentejo as part of the core weekend and the pre-conference tour. We hope this will be an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful gardens of Portugal and to meet and socialise with fellow Mediterranean gardeners from around the world.

The conference weekend will be based in Évora from 5 to 7 April with a pre-tour (2 to 5 April) in the Algarve which will include visits to the Barrocal Botanic Garden, private gardens and wildflower walks. We are working closely with Évora University for this event and we hope to attract students on relevant courses to join us. Residential packages available.

Contact Rosie Peddle rosie@thebtf.net for more information and to register an interest.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

7 – 9 September	Murabilia www.murabilia.com/programma-generale-2018	Lucca, Italy
9 September	Journée des plantes	Uzès (Gard)
15 - 16 September	Journées européennes du patrimoine	Everywhere in France
15 - 16 September	Portes-ouvertes - Le Jardin Champêtre	Caunes-Minervois (Var)
16 September	Salon du livre de jardin - Domaine d'Orvès	La Valette-du-Var (Var)
21 -23 September	Festival des jardins SEVE 3 Domaine de Grammont	Montpellier (Hérault)
29 - 30 September	Portes Ouvertes - La Soldanelle	Rougiers (Var)
5 - 7 October	Orchidées à Fontfroide	Narbonne (Aude)
6 -7 October	Gondwana Domaine du Rayol	Le Rayol-Canadel (Var)
14 October	Foire aux plantes, Bamboueraie d'Anduze	Générargues (Gard)
21 October	La Fête de l'automne	Sillans la Cascade (Var)

Hortus Programme

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.



Reports by Nicola D'Annunzio, Sandy Graham and Tilly Chambers on the visits to a vinaigrerie and gardens in the Fayence area at the time of [the 2018 AGM](#).

Photo: A group of members at La Campagne Sainte Marie



Two descriptions of a [garden near Saint-Tropez](#), visited by MGF members in May.

The first account is by John and Jill Patterson, the second by the owner of the garden.

Photo: The dry area of the garden



A new entry in the [designers](#) section of Recommendations: Simone Ottonello Architetto e Paesaggista of Studio S.O.A.P, in Liguria, Italy.

Photo: View from the garden towards Monaco, at sunset



In the 'International Gardens to Visit' section, an article by Monique Mirès and Claudette Beneluz on the [Prague Botanic Garden](#).

New member, new seeds

Chantal Guiraud writes:

I'd like to introduce you to our newest member, Pierre Bianchi. Pierre and I have known each other for a long time, originally through correspondence, because, as far back as the nineties, when I was in charge of the National Horticultural Society's seed bank in Paris, he sent seeds to me. The names on the envelopes were of exotic plants, precious treasures which fired my imagination. And yet they had not come from far away, but from a garden near Perpignan, not far from the Spanish border. There is a description of Pierre's garden on the MGF website: <http://www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org/baRpt2013n05.htm>.

This Pierre was quite a collector and sent a diverse range of seeds. No wonder, as he is the President of the Société Française d'Acclimatation: www.societe-francaise-acclimatation.fr. So, his objective is to experiment in his garden (acid soil, orange tree cultivation zone) with marginally hardy species to see whether they can adapt to our climate.

Here are some thoughts on the species whose seeds he has contributed to the MGF collection:

Starting with acacia - seedlings give excellent results, with flowers being produced after 3 to 6 years of

cultivation. For best results, follow Pierre's method. Put the seeds in a glass, add boiling water to one third of the way up, wait 90 seconds, then cool by adding the same amount of cold water. Leave the seeds to soak for two days. Sow into a mix of fibrous and sandy potting mix (one third coconut fibre or peat, one third well-rotted compost or potting soil, one third coarse, non-alkaline sand). Sow the seeds on the surface of the potting mixture and cover with a layer of coarse, non-alkaline sand. Germination should occur in about two weeks. Do not separate the seedlings too early. Pot on into a deep pot and keep the young plant for 1 to 2 years before planting in the garden. Plant in well-drained, acid soil taking care that the root collar is level with the ground.

All Pierre's acacias are grown in Roussillon, zone 9/9b, where orange trees are cultivated. They once had to cope with -7°C and only *Acacia iteaphylla* showed some damage to its extremities. This was, of course, a short, dry, Mediterranean cold spell, with temperatures rising above freezing by 11.00 the next morning.

Many acacia species are unsuited to alkaline soils if grown on their own roots. If you want to grow them in alkaline conditions, you need to check whether the specific species will tolerate a non-acid soil. All the acacias on the list will manage without watering, once established, as long as the annual rainfall is at least 600mm per year. However, a monthly watering in dry weather is recommended. All of these acacias have phyllodes (winged leaf stalks) and are therefore very different from the classic 'mimosas of Nice'. They are beautiful even when flowering has finished.

Acacia adunca: A shrub which provides only a little shade due to its light foliage of dark green, long, narrow phyllodes. Original and compact appearance.

Acacia boormanii: One of the most cold-tolerant and beautiful year-round phyllode species: fine glaucous foliage, red bark. Prune after flowering to keep it compact.

Acacia covenyi: Fairly recently introduced to France. Has many good qualities including resistance to drought and cold, decorative all year round, with glaucous foliage becoming silvery in summer. Unfortunately, plants grown from seedlings can be slow to establish.

Acacia cultriformis: Soft, drooping habit, very glaucous triangular-shaped foliage.

Acacia fimbriata: Superb, soft, pendulous foliage, narrow green phyllodes. Very sensitive to snow which can break its branches.

Acacia imbricata: Beautiful red bark, ruffled appearance. Short flowering period around young twiggy growth. Very original in every way.



Acacia imbricata

Acacia iteaphylla: Unusual, as flowers bloom successively. Once established, this is a vigorous, softly-shaped acacia with elongated, pale foliage. Much appreciated by bees.

Acacia semilunata: A small acacia with glaucous curly leaves, a beautiful shrub throughout the year. Drought-resistant despite its origin in Queensland, Australia.

Acacia uncinata: A small attractive acacia, adapted to the Mediterranean climate despite its origin in Queensland and New South Wales. It has short leaves with a small terminal hook and broad, curved, decorative seed pods. One of the most decorative and interesting acacias.

See <http://www.anbg.gov.au/acacia/species/A-uncinata.html>

Acacia vestita 'Sainte Hélène': A beautiful mimosa with a soft habit, bushy, drooping, very beautiful glaucous foliage. Allow sufficient space because it can spread over several square meters.

On the subject of aloes, this is what Pierre says:

Aloe marlothii: An arboreal aloe which can grow to a height of several meters, reasonably hardy due to its mountain origins (no damage at -4°C, a little at -5°C / -6°C, and significant foliar damage at -7°C) but mature plants will recover quickly. Superb orange flowers in March. Grows to more than 2m high after 20 years. Try out in zone 9, should be hardy in zones 9B and 10.



Aloe striata

An aloe with beautiful striated foliage and clouds of orange flowers in March. Completely hardy only to -2°C / -3°C. Foliar damage at -4°C and possible death at -6°C (zones 9B and 10).

And finally, Pierre has sent us seeds of two species of eucalyptus or 'gum trees' with smooth peeling bark. They are lignotubers (their swollen starch-storing roots act as a protection against fire or drought) and originate from South Australia, thus being adapted to both the Mediterranean climate and alkaline soils. Those with pink or red flowers are the best because they flower from November to April. Pierre writes: "In my growing trials, only one in two plants produce colourful flowers. It is therefore wise to obtain at least two plants and abandon the one with white flowers as they are not very noticeable or decorative. Grafting is a possible approach on a young plant. These eucalyptuses are hardy to -8°C in Roussillon (zones 9, 9B and 10) and have not, so far, been attacked by *Phoracantha semipunctata*. Their flowers are abundant and melliferous. They form part of the Melliodorae series, *E. melliodora* being much less decorative."

Eucalyptus leucoxylon is the tallest (up to 12 to 15m high in France).



Eucalyptus leucoxylon subsp. *megalocarpa*

5 to 8m high, very suitable for gardens, noticeable lignotuber, leathery foliage, beautiful flowers and quite large fruits.

I hope that you will be tempted by these exotic plants and thank Pierre for spoiling us with this gift of precious seeds, some of which are quite rare.

News from MG*i* partner associations

Rosie Peddle has asked us to make available this link to the latest newsletter from Mediterranean Gardening Association Portugal.

<http://www.mediterraneangardeningportugal.org/newsletterno15summer2018.pdf>

If visiting Portugal, MGF members are welcome to attend any of the events taking place there.

Best wishes

Roland Leclercq
Newsletter editor

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