



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

MAY 2019

Dear members and friends

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Saturday 4 May, near Le Barroux, Vaucluse

A wildflower walk, close to Lac du Paty



This event will provide an introduction to some of the tiny but beautiful wild flowers which exist in the Ventoux landscape. The walk will be about 5 – 6 km, and led by an experienced French guide.

Precise location, and joining instructions will be advised to those registering an interest. As wildflowers are best viewed in the cool of the morning, we intend to start at 09.00 and finish with a picnic lunch. Participants should wear footwear suitable for uneven ground and bring a loupe (a small magnifying glass), essential for viewing the smallest wildflowers.

Maximum 15 participants. Attendance is open to members of MGF and a local independent garden group. To book a place, contact the organiser, Tony Kell tony.kell2016@gmail.com.

Tuesday 14 May, Ménerbes, Vaucluse

A day in the Luberon – Le jardin botanique du domaine de la Citadelle and La Louve



Morning:

First, a discovery and tasting of wild edible plants in the field, with Nadine Maffli, head of the association '*Le Silène et L'Ortie*'. Then, guided by Brigitte Bergeron, head of the association '*Un Savoir oublié*' we will visit the jardin botanique du domaine de la Citadelle. Cost: 5€. In this vineyard, six terraces have been developed to accommodate a wide variety of medicinal and edible plants. Lunch will be served here, a refined picnic with wild seasonal herbs, prepared by Romain Dumas, chef at the restaurant '*l'Atelier l'art des mets*'. The visit will take place in French. Cost: 26€.

Photo: Le jardin botanique du domaine de la Citadelle

Afternoon:

A visit to La Louve in Bonnieux, a garden created in the 90s by Nicole de Vésian, designer at Hermès and passionate about the Provençal style of gardening. The garden is on a set of terraces, living and contemplative spaces where stone, natural wood and Mediterranean plants subtly match the local landscape. The property is located in Bonnieux, a charming Provençal village perched on the side of a cliff, with beautiful panoramic views of the Luberon. Cost: 10€.

This outing has been organised by Frances Horne and Nina Guichard.

To book a place, contact [Nina Guichard](#).

Tuesday 21 May, Vallauris and Cagnes sur Mer, Alpes-Maritimes



Photo: Garden of Marro farm (credit: Serguey Karepanov).

On Tuesday May 21st, Martin Smith has organised a visit for us to two contrasting gardens. The first is that of Annie and Louis Zanini who have created a garden in Vallauris packed full of interesting plants and features. The second, where we are invited to bring our picnics, is to the Marro farm in Cagnes sur Mer which has been owned by Jean-Paul Spinetta's family since 1928 (see www.proprietemarro-en.com). This old farm, still watered from two 19th century wells, boasts 30 year old unusual topiary and a rose garden of Meilland roses. Tools of yesterday are still used to harvest the wealth of the garden's fruits.

The visits are limited to 20 participants Contact Nicola mgfnicola@gmail.com if you want to come.

27 – 29 May, Catalonia, Spain

Pre-AGM trip to Figueras and gardens of the Costa Brava



Photo: *Drosanthemum floribundum* in flower at Marimurtra.

André Guiraud and Jennifer Hastings are putting together an itinerary for a three-day trip to Catalonia prior to our AGM in Céret. The provisional programme includes a choice of a visit to the Salvador Dali museum in Figueras or a coastal walk, plus visits to the Jardin Botanique de Marimurtra and the Santa Clotilde gardens in Lloret de Mar.

To book, please contact [Jennifer Hastings](mailto:Jennifer.Hastings@mgf.org) .

30 – 31 May, Céret, Pyrénées-Orientales

MGF Annual General Meeting 2019 and garden visits

This year the AGM will take place in Céret, a small town located on the River Tech, in the foothills of the Pyrénées, and conveniently close to the A9 autoroute. Chagall, Dali, Matisse and Picasso all lived here and some of their works can be viewed in the excellent Museum of Modern Art. The programme of events for these two days is being organised by local members Lynn Hall and Penny Parkinson.

Thursday 30 May



Activities will start with lunch at Restaurant Guy Molas, followed by the **MGF Annual General Meeting**.

After the meeting, we are delighted to welcome designers James and Helen Basson, of [Scape Design](http://ScapeDesign.com), who will give a talk on an aspect of their work in designing and creating Mediterranean gardens. The day will finish with dinner in a local restaurant.

Photo: James and Helen with their Chelsea Flower Show gold medal

Friday 31 May

The programme for this day includes a visit to [Mas Reynes](http://MasReynes.com), a stunning garden filled with exotic plants owned by MGF member, Pierre Bianchi, and the Tropique du Papillon near Elne, with its butterfly house and Mediterranean and tropical gardens.

To book, please contact the MGF secretary, [Michele Bailey](mailto:Michele.Bailey@mgf.org).

Saturday 29 June, Saint-Quentin-la-Poterie, Gard

A visit to le Jardin des Oules



Originally created at the end of the 19th century by Léonce Pascal, Maire of Saint-Victor-des-Oules, this walled garden was left abandoned for many years before being bought by a Parisian family who decided to restore it. They brought in a team of specialists, including François Michaud, *ingénieur horticole* at the Jardin des Plantes de Montpellier, who was charged with researching the design and planting scheme, with a view to the restoration being as faithful as possible to the original. In addition, a number of works of contemporary sculpture have been installed.

More information on the garden at <https://lejardindesoules.com/>

Chantal Guiraud has arranged for us to have a private visit to this garden, normally open only in July and August, and Julia and Graham Petty, who live nearby, have invited us to eat our picnic lunches in their garden. To book a place, contact [Chantal Guiraud](#).

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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

6 – 9 May, Liguria, ITALY

An MGF trip to the gardens of the Italian Riviera

This trip, organised by June Grindley and Maggie Vance, includes visits to the gardens at Villa Boccanegra, Villa della Pergola, Maurizio Casale's grasses nursery, the village of Dolceacqua and [La Mortola](#), the Hanbury garden. The group will be based at Hotel Villa Elisa in Bordighera.

To book, contact [June Grindley](#).

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

28 April	Floralies de Florensac	Florensac (Hérault)
28 April	Bourse aux plantes	Villecroze (Var)
28 April	Festival Art et Jardin	Lussan (Gard)
1 May	Foire aux plants	Forcalqueiret (Var)
1 May	La main verte	Le Vigan (Hérault)
4/5 May	Fête des Plantes et du massif	Abbaye de Fontfroide (Aude)
5 May	Foire aux fleurs	Richerenches (Vaucluse)
5 May	Fête des Jardins	Le Barroux (Vaucluse)
8 May	Bourse aux plantes	Rousson (Gard)
8 May	Jardins, senteurs de Provence	Auriol (Bouches-du-Rhône)
8 May	Foire aux fleurs	Aubussargues (Gard)
12 May	Plantes et fleurs en fête	Grospierres-en-Ardèche (07)
12 May	Journée des plantes de printemps	Uzès (Gard)
17/18/19 May	Orticola	Milan, ITALY
17 - 26 May	Floralies d'Antibes	Antibes Juan-les-Pins (06)
18/19 May	Iris et Pivoines à La Soldanelle	Rougiers (Var)
19 May	Jardins en fête à La Verdière	Saint-Julien-le-Montagnier (Var)
24/25/26 May	Journées des Plantes d'Albertas	Bouc-Bel-Air (Bouches-du-Rhône)
30 May	Fête des fleurs	Velleron (Vaucluse)
1-2 June	Expo-vente de cactées et succulentes	Buisson (Vaucluse)
7/8/9 June	Rendez-vous aux Jardins	Open gardens throughout France

Hortus Programme

4 May	Bourse aux Plantes	Montferrier sur Lez (Hérault)
14 -16 May	Visite annuelle de jardins	Grasse (Alpes-Maritimes)

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 Past Activities, a report on our search for wild, edible plants in the Domaine de Restinclière, guided by John Walsh of the Écologistes de l'Euzière.

[Balade botanique « identifier les plantes sauvages comestibles », Prades-le-Lez, Hérault](#)

Photo: *Valerianella locusta* (La mâche)

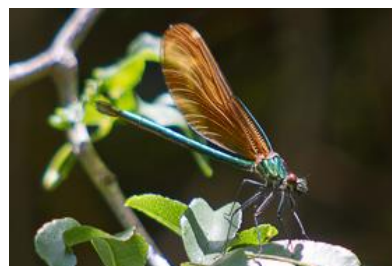
Decline in insect population



Clouded Yellow Butterfly



Buff-tailed bumble bee



Banded Demoiselle

At the suggestion of David Bracey, the MGF management committee discussed this topic at its last meeting. It was decided to change the home page of the MGF website to reflect a concern for the preservation of wildlife and soil conservation and to ask David to summarize the scientific findings of the report in the Journal of Biological Conservation on the decline of insect population.

David writes:

A paper published in *Biological Conservation** warns that 40% of the world's insect species could become extinct within a few decades. 73 historical reports of insect declines were reviewed and the drivers assessed. They were, in order of importance:

- i) habitat loss, urbanisation and intensive agriculture,
- ii) pollution, mainly that by synthetic pesticides and fertilisers,
- iii) biological factors, including pathogens and introduced species,
- iv) climate change particularly in tropical zones.

Bees, ants and beetles are disappearing eight times faster than mammals, birds or reptiles. Butterflies, moths, wasps, bees, hover flies and dung beetles appear to be most affected. Aquatic species such as dragonflies, stoneflies, caddisflies and mayflies have already lost many species.

The report explains that loss of pollinators threatens crop production and survival of thousands of plant species that depend on pollination. Insect declines threaten the whole food chain, both terrestrial and aquatic. The total mass of insects is falling by a precipitous 2.5% a year, meaning that in just ten years there would be a quarter fewer insects in the world.

The review also finds that a small number of species are likely to be able to adapt to changing conditions. For example, “Fast-breeding pest insects (and presumably non-pest species) will probably thrive because of the warmer conditions.”

Author, Sánchez-Bayo, said the review is not alarmist. He says “We wanted to really wake people up. When you consider that 80% of biomass of insects has disappeared in 25-30 years, it is a big concern.” The paper concludes: “A re-thinking of current agricultural practices, in particular a serious reduction in pesticide usage and its substitution with more sustainable, ecologically-based practices, is urgently needed to slow or reverse current trends.”

* Biological Conservation. Worldwide decline of the entomofauna: A review of its drivers.

Francisco Sánchez-Bayo and Kris A.G. Wyckhuys, (2019).

<https://www.actu-environnement.com/media/pdf/news-32942-etude.pdf>

David comments that the warning in the first sentence is a forecast only and asks what MGF members can do. He suggests we lead by example and promote waterwise gardening, soil conservation and the preservation of all wildlife in the garden and that we establish joined-up thinking with other garden societies, world-wide.

For more information about encouraging insects and other wildlife in the garden, look at the [Wildlife](#) section on the MGF website. It includes a step by step guide to creating a natural balance in the garden and has pages on birds, butterflies and moths, insects and spiders, mammals and reptiles.

As a reminder, the use and retention of most pesticides and herbicides by amateur gardeners was made illegal in France on 1 January 2019.

New additions to the MGF library

Liz Godfrey has kindly donated a number of books to the MGF library. She will bring them to the AGM in Céret, where they will be available for members to borrow.

Français

Les plus beaux jardins du Sud-Ouest
Le Potager Perpétuel

Philippe Prévôt et Richard Zéboulon
Philippe Collignon et Bernard Bureau

English

Topiary, Knots and Parterres
Five Centuries of Women & Gardens
An English Garden in Provence
Visions of Roses
A Heritage of Roses
A French Garden Journey - The Road to Le Tholonet
The Medieval Garden
Little Sparta - the garden of Ian Hamilton Finlay

Caroline Foley
Sue Bennett
Natasha Spender
Peter Beales
Hazel de Rougetel
Monty Don
Sylvia Landsberg
Jessie Sheeler

My favourite plant

Just a euphorbia, but so beautiful (from Roland Leclercq)



Photo : *Euphorbia rigida* in mid-April

Euphorbia rigida originates from the Mediterranean basin and Asia Minor. It stands upright and the leaves are nicely arranged spirally along the stems. It is a top plant in all seasons. In January-February the light yellow inflorescence appears, then the bracts become pistachio green, illuminating the garden, and finally, nectariferous glands turn to an eye-catching flamboyant red. In Autumn and Winter, the leaves are purplish red when the cold comes. No care, no watering, and it can be planted in calcareous soils. When mature, the seeds are projected to several metres and the euphorbia re-seeds generously, contributing to the creation of a wild look in the garden.

You are welcome to send a picture of your favourite plant, accompanied by a short text, to be published in this newsletter. Contributions should be sent to [Roland Leclercq](#).

What is it?

In this new 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](#).

The "What is it?" in the March Newsletter (contributed by David Bracey) was an old seeder.



The new "What is it?" is a plant with a weird flower shape - guess what it is. (suggested by David Bracey)



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

Plant identification/Unknown visitor
Regulatory News/Round-up the latest
MGF Annual Meetings
Management Committee Minutes

The quote of the month

What to do when you are in front of an animal of a protected species eating a plant of a protected species? Jim Carrey (actor)

Best wishes

Roland Leclercq
Newsletter editor

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