



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

JULY 2019

Dear members and friends,

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Saturday 24th August, Saint-Quentin-la-Poterie, Gard. A visit to le Jardin des Oules (visit planned on June 29 postponed due to weather conditions).



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](#).

Tuesday 15th October Venterol, Drôme

Planning meeting for 2020 activities in the Vaucluse, Drôme and Bouches-du-Rhone



Jan Morgan and David Ash, who live in Venterol (between Valreas and Nyons) have kindly offered to host this planning meeting.

Jan writes:

“We'll start at 10.30 with tea and coffee before discussing ideas for 2020. Our home, Domaine St Michel, is being restored to being a bio-domaine after several years of neglect. Our vines are on a hillside. We have created olive terraces (the famous Nyons *tanche*) and are also creating dry gardens near the house.

We need more plants, so are offering lunch and our wine. We hope you'll bring plants. In the afternoon we'll give a guided tour of our vineyard and the gardens which we are creating. We follow permaculture principles, so hope you find ideas to take with you.”

To book, contact [Jan Morgan](#).

Friday 18 October, 10.00, St Hippolyte du Fort, Gard
A walk with a botanist to learn about trees



Katharine Fedden has arranged for us to have a walk with botanist, Yves Maccagno, who specialises in trees. He has been working on the census of the biggest trees of the Gard for 12 years and has published two books on this subject. His third book is available to download:

(<http://lestetardsarboricoles.fr/wordpress/2018/01/30/livre-arbres-remarquables-du-gard-tome-iii>).

PHOTO : *Quercus ilex* in St Hippolyte du Fort

The morning will be spent looking at trees in St Hippolyte, then we will take a short drive to a picnic spot and after lunch have a further walk and see an exceptional tree. Flat terrain but good shoes needed. To book a place, contact [Katharine Fedden](#).

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

6/7/8 Sept	Murabilia	Lucca, Italy
8 Sept	Journée des plantes	Uzès (30)
14/15 Sept	Journées du patrimoine	throughout France
22 Sept	Salon du livre de jardin - Domaine d'Orvès	La Valette-du-Var (83)
29 Sept	Portes Ouvertes, la Soldanelle	Rougiers (83)

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Mediterranean Gardening France website

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



In the 'Wildlife' section, [articles](#) by Michèle Bailey and David Bracey about the critical decline in insect populations and what gardeners can do to improve the situation.

Photo: *Libellula depressa*,
the Broad-bodied Chaser / Libellule déprimée



In the 'Gardening' section, an article by Pierre Bianchi, who has many years' experience of gardening on the clay soil of the Roussillon plain:

[Mediterranean gardening on clay soil: difficulties and proposed solutions.](#)

Photo: A rockery created in clay soil in which pockets of coarse sand have been formed to grow an Australian proteaceae, *Banksia blechnifolia*, which does not tolerate constant humidity.



A detailed report by Annie Nivière on a [pruning workshop](#) in Malaucène, tutored by Valérie Guillaud, of the Hérault CFPPA (Centre de Formation Professionnelle et de Promotion Agricole).

Photo: Valérie cutting back a *Euonymus japonicus* 'Aureomarginatus'



An account by Gill Robinson about the April visit to [two private gardens in the Var](#).

Photo: The wisteria in full bloom



[A day in the Luberon](#) – Nina Guichard's description of our visit to the *restanques* of the Domaine de la Citadelle in Ménerbes, with their aromatic, medicinal, magical and edible plantings, and an afternoon in the iconic garden of La Louve, in Bonnieux.

Photo: La Louve

And on the Mediterranean Gardening International website:



A report on the April 2019 Spring Conference organised by Mediterranean Gardening Association Portugal -

[Bringing the Mediterranean Landscape into your Garden](#).

Photo: The group in the Jardim Quinta do General, in Borba.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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

25 February to 5 March 2020, Wild flowers and holy sites, ISRAEL



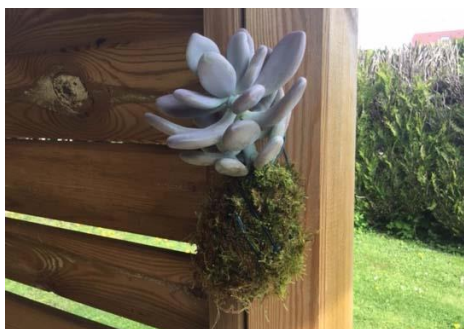
This is a Mediterranean Plants and Gardens tour in Israel led by Oron Peri who has recently led trips to Jordan and Tenerife, and is the author of *Bulbs of the Eastern Mediterranean*. Participants will stay in hotels on the coast in Haifa, on Lake Galilee in the city of Tiberias, by the Dead Sea, in Mitspa Ramon and near Jerusalem. The cost of the trip is expected to be £1,440 for those sharing a room. This includes all accommodation, main meals, guiding and transport within Israel. See the [MPG website](#) for details.

Contact: [Heather Martin](#)

Photo: Part of the Samaria desert (MPG website)

Succulents are the new « in-plant ». Garden centres are full of them...

David Bracey writes:



Succulents are the new « in-plant ». Garden centres are full of them grown in small 80 ml pots. Succulents come in all shapes, sizes and colours. They are inexpensive and make ideal house plants since they require virtually no watering. A few centres sell older more exotic succulents grown into bizarre shapes. I grow small plants with the root ball wrapped in moss which I spray occasionally with water. It is imperative not to spray the leaves since they rot easily.



Sedums, Echeverias, Aloes, Lithops, Aeoniums and Haworthias etc make suitable specimens. A useful book is “ *Plantes Succulentes*” by Yves Delang.

Photos: succulents grown in moss

My favourite plant

You are welcome to send a picture of your favourite plant, accompanied by a short text, to be published in the newsletter. Contributions should be sent to [Roland Leclercq](mailto:Roland.Leclercq). This month, Annie Nivière contributed with *Ptilostemon chamaepeuce*.

A pretty cushion with a strange name: *Ptilostemon chamaepeuce*



Originating from the Eastern Mediterranean Basin (Greece, Turkey ...), it is often found dotting rocky cliffs.

This is a small shrub whose habit results in large dense cushions 0.60 m to 0.80 m in diameter. Its long, narrow, grey leaves with a downy white underside, are halfway between the shape of pine needles and rosemary leaves.

Ideal for fans of dry gardens requiring no watering, it appreciates sunny and well drained positions, such as bordering walls, which echo its rocky natural environment.

In May-June, it flowers in small bright pink heads at the end of long floral stems. But

I prefer it without flowers because the bloom gives it a slightly dishevelled look.



It cannot withstand temperatures below -8°C. But as it reseeds abundantly, young plants will take its place in the garden during very cold winters.

Photos: *Ptilostemon chamaepeuce*

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:rolandlec@wanadoo.fr).

The "What is it?" in the May Newsletter (contributed by David Bracey) was a monkey orchid (*Orchis simia*)



The monkey orchid has flowers which resemble human figures, like other orchids of the same group (*O. italica*, *O. militaris*...). This orchid is widely distributed in Central and Southern Europe, including the Mediterranean, Southern England, Russia, Asia Minor, Iraq, Iran and Northern Africa.

Photo: *Orchis simia*

The new "What is it?" is below (proposed by Roland Leclercq). You can find a clue in the website ("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

Getting started on the forum/May I introduce myself (Pierre Bianchi)

Gardens to visit/London, Chiswick Mall Gardens, 24-26 May 2019

Plants/Sulla

Annual General Meeting/Annual General Meeting 2019

The quote of the month

An optimist is a man who plants two acorns and who buys a hammock (Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny, French soldier, 1889-1952)

Best wishes

Roland Leclercq

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Translation into English: Nanouk Pelen

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