



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

MAY 2021

Dear members and friends,

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Wednesday, 5 May 2021 Château Pérouse, Saint-Gilles, Gard

Visit to the botanical garden of Château Pérouse



We will be guided by members of the [Château Pérouse](#) botanical team. The park is immense, and brings together collections of plants such as acacias, eucalyptus, melaleuca, podocarpus, geophytes, ferns, succulents and *Geraniaceae*. Please bring a picnic lunch to eat in the park. Everything will take place outdoors and we will observe social distancing. For members who may be interested, we have planned a short stopover after our picnic, at Henry Nardy's garden in Lunel to visit the little paradise of this former nurseryman and passionate collector.

For information contact [Chantal Guiraud](#)

Read more information about Château Pérouse below.

Wednesday 19 May 2021 at 17.00, via Zoom

The 2021 MGF Annual General Meeting

This year we will hold the MGF Annual General Meeting via Zoom. If you wish to participate, please contact secretary@mediterraneangardening.fr to register. Registered participants will receive a link to the meeting via email. Voting will take place by email and post. If there is any point you would like to see discussed during the meeting, please inform the secretary by the 10th of May. This is an exciting new venture for MGF and we hope many of you will join us on May 19th.

Wednesday 2 June 2021, Simiane la Rotonde, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence

A visit to the gardens of the Abbaye de Valsaintes and a talk on using essential oils in the garden



The gardens are classed as a Jardin Remarquable and include a dry garden, with 350 plant species; an ecological potager, using permaculture techniques and a rose garden, where one follows a path tracing the history of roses (550 species). At an altitude of 600m, the abbey is ideally situated for roses which benefit from cooler nights.

The visit will be divided into two parts: in the morning, a guided 1h30 visit of the gardens (dry garden, roses, potager) with Jean-Yves Meignen.

This will be followed by a 30' guided tour of the church and demonstration of Gregorian chant. In the afternoon Jean-Yves will give us a talk and demonstration on using essential oils in the garden, including making blends for specific uses and how to apply them.

For more information, contact [Frances Horne](#).

Thursday 17 June 2021, Fabrezan, Aude and Cessero, Hérault

A visit to the workshop of sculptor Denis Augé and a garden visit and talk at the home of Liz and Jacques Thomson



In the morning, we will visit the workshop of sculptor Denis Augé (<https://denis-auge.com>) in Fabrezan. This artist will show us some of his works combining stone and light. Under his fingers, the pebbles collected in this Cathar region become contemporary creations for outdoors or indoors.

Then we will drive to Liz and Jacques Thompson's home in Cessero, both longtime MGF members, where we can eat our picnic lunches in their garden. Then, Liz will talk about the "Persian Gardens", followed by a visit to their own garden. Finally, Brunhilda, a local winegrower, will offer us a tasting of wines from her "organic" labeled vineyard.

We will be limited in number, therefore, we ask you to register as soon as possible with Chantal Guiraud. To book, contact [Chantal Guiraud](#)

September

A visit to Daniel Fiala's garden in Tourreilles, south of Limoux

October

A visit to Pépinière Quissac, in the Gard, to learn about their pomegranate collection and to taste some of the different varieties.

Postponed events

We will decide on new dates for these events when future possibilities become clearer.

Beaumes-de-Venise / Le Barroux, Vaucluse

A walk and a visit to Tony Stone's garden, La Jeg.

For information, contact [Tilly Chambers](#).

Grignan and Nyons, Drôme

A guided rose walk and a visit to an ecological fair

For information, contact [Jan Morgan](#)

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

21/22/23 May 2021	Les Journées des plantes d'Albertas	Bouc-Bel-Air (Bouches-du-Rhone)
4/5/6 June	Rendez-vous au Jardin	Discover the events at https://rendezvousauxjardins.culture.gouv.fr/ (English version available)

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](#).

NEWS AND INFORMATION

New on the website



Three nurseries recommended by Sue Shearer have been added to our list:

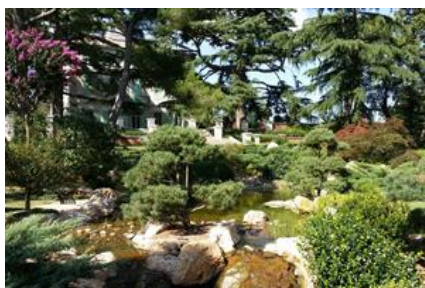
[Pépinières de Montimas](#) (pictured) near Béziers and two near the Hérault /Tarn border, [Pépinières des Cascatelles](#) in Mazamet, which specialises in shrubs which prefer acid soils, and [Les Pépinières de Lalie](#) in Pont-de-l'Arn



The gardens at Villa del Balbianello on the west coast of Lake Como are well worth a visit if you are in the region, particularly for their examples of both formal and informal topiary.

Read the [article](#) by David Bracey

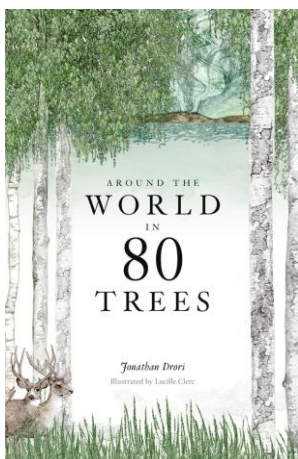
Photo: Clipped elaeagnus



Château Pérouse

Jan-Willem Vos has written an [article](#) for the “Garden Through Time” section which introduces the emerging botanical garden at Château Pérouse. We hope to add updates from time to time as the garden progresses.

See also [Chateau Perouse - YouTube](#) where you can watch videos made by the botanists and gardeners about what is happening in the greenhouses and in the garden.



Around the World in 80 Trees

by Jonathan Drori

Gill Clarke writes: This book is a must read. It profiles eighty trees, each with its own beautifully illustrated entry, details some amazing facts, and describes the astonishing way a tree manages its own wellbeing.

Read the full [review](#) on the MGi website.

A facebook page for Mediterranean Gardening France



Mediterranean Gardening France has now a Facebook page! We publish content relating to Mediterranean gardens and we relay the activities organized by the association in the same way as the newsletter. We invite you to subscribe to the page if you use this network and to share, if you wish, your best photos of gardens or plants adapted to the Mediterranean climate. We reassure you that no identifying photos of members or personal information will be disclosed on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/mediterranean.gardening.france/>

News from Chile



Aristolochia chilensis

Alfredo Unda has added a new Flower of the Month to the MG Chile website. It is a low growing creeper, useful for groundcover, and its common name is 'Fox ear'.

The caterpillar of the butterfly, *Battus polydamas archidamas*, the largest native butterfly in Chile, develops exclusively on this plant. Read more [here](#).

And from South Africa

Here are links to two short talks organised by Cape Horticultural Society and a view of their monthly 'Plant Table' where members share information on plants of interest which are currently in flower in their gardens.

Ornithogalum – Froth on the Bird's Milk

<https://youtu.be/qf8ygEYDCG4>

Gifberg and Goegap

https://youtu.be/2nEp_kUMQ0o

March 2021 Plant Show and Tell

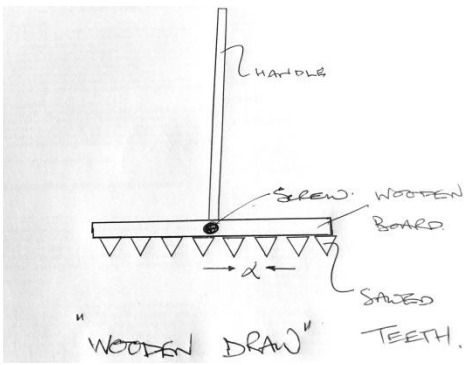
<https://youtu.be/5IfCuKM4NYo>

Grow your own vegetables, intensively

David Bracey writes :



You do not need much space to grow your own vegetables! Plant or sow seeds as close as possible, in beds. This slows weed growth, optimises space, nutrients, and water and eases rotation. Hand weeding, if necessary, can be done from the path which is simply the footfall between two beds.



To create the beds, make a simple 'draw' from a strong piece of wood screwed at right angles to a handle. The draw has many teeth, cut, say every 5-10 cm, depending on the drill distance. Simply pull the draw through the soil to create the bed and drills.

Tree of the year



Each year, the magazine Terre Sauvage and the Office national des forêts (ONF) organize the "Tree of The Year" competition. In 2021, the winner is a black poplar growing in the county of Marne (East of France). This tree is 200-300 years old, has a 9.6 m circumference and a 38 m height. It is said to be the incarnation of a nymph, daughter of the sun, who mourned for her dead brother by the river. It was a sentinel during world war I, soldiers watching the enemy from her heights.

Every member of MGF (or any other person, as well) may nominate a remarkable tree each year at <https://www.arbredelannee.com/>
You can also vote for the "European Tree of the Year" at www.treeoftheyear.org.

Information provided by David Bracey

Your future coffee?

David Bracey writes

Scientists at CIRAD, Montpellier and Kew Gardens have identified *Coffea stenophylla* from Sierra Leone as a possible replacement for *Coffea arabica* and *C. robusta*. *C. arabica*, the most popular coffee, suffers from climate change preferring a cool climate.

Horticultural adviser



Gill Pound, member of the MGF management committee, is available to answer any technical questions about gardening, You can contact her on the website or at this address gillpound@gmail.com

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:Roland.Leclercq).

The "What is it?" in the March Newsletter (proposed by Pierre Bianchi) was *Aechmea gamosepala*.



Aechmea gamosepala (Matchstick plant) is a bromeliad endemic to southern Brazil. It bears upright inflorescences with pink bracts and bluish purple flowers which last a long time. It is certainly the Bromeliad that represents the best compromise between exotic and decorative appearance / hardiness (-5 ° C / -6 ° C) and availability in the nurseries. It grows in the ground, in the shade or partial shade, or in trees (epiphyte) and is also suitable in pots.

Like many bromeliads it needs frequent watering.



The new "What is it?", is proposed by Roland Leclercq. A clue: our Australian readers, in particular those living south of Perth, will easily find the answer.



MY FAVOURITE PLANT

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



Roland Leclercq writes

My favourite plant might be called "The Plant That I Hate" by other gardeners. Indeed, *Teucrium fruticans* is not universally popular, due to its pale blue flowers, its spiky branches and its untidy appearance. Who wants to have a plant in one's garden which is often seen on roadsides and roundabouts?

The time has come to rehabilitate *Teucrium fruticans*. Some cultivars like "Ouarzazate" produce magnificent deep blue flower from January to June and again in autumn. The one shown in the photo grows close to a pine tree in partial shade and is never watered.

In order for *Teucrium* to remain compact, it must be pruned severely after flowering. If pruned when young, perfectly formed graphic shapes can easily be obtained (photo).

Finally, it tolerates limestone, but the soil must be well drained.



AND FINALLY

Don't forget that the first Saturday of May is a special day for gardeners who are invited to celebrate the **World Naked Gardening Day (WNGD)** an annual international event. For more information see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Naked_Gardening_Day, and please, don't catch a cold.



Best wishes

Roland Leclercq

Newsletter editor

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