



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

NOVEMBER 2022

Dear members and friends

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Thursday 2 March 2023, Château Pérouse, Saint-Gilles, Gard

A seed workshop with Chantal Guiraud and the botanists at Château Pérouse



If you wish to come and have any preferences for what sort of plants might be discussed at the workshop, please write to Chantal. For example, a particular type of plant, such as bulbs, annuals or biennials, or a specific genus.

Photo: *Gladiolus italicus* seeds © John Fielding
To book, please contact [Chantal Guiraud](mailto:Chantal.Guiraud@medpag.org)

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Saturday 22 to Saturday 29 April and Sunday 30 April to Sunday 7 May 2023 – Plant hunting in Croatia



Photo: *Euphorbia characias* above Trogir

MPG is offering two primarily botanical tours of Croatia in minibuses, starting in Dubrovnik and ending in Zagreb, starting with a little sightseeing in old Dubrovnik. The second tour will be a repeat of the first, with variations for seasonal changes between the two dates. Some days will be in Mediterranean-climate areas near the sea and others inland in the cooler Velebit highlands and Plitvice National Park. The botanical guide is Chris Gardner. Contact [Heather Martin](mailto:Heather.Martin@medpag.org) to register interest mentioning which week you would prefer.

**Monday 8 to Monday 15 May 2023
Gardens of western Sicily**



This MPG trip to western Sicily will feature visits to public and private gardens in Palermo, including Palermo Botanical Garden, a tour of Racalia, a historic family garden restored by MPG member Alison Richards and visits to the ancient Greek sites of Segesta and Selinunte. The trip will be led by local horticulturist, Sergio Cumitini. Accommodation for the first four nights will be in Palermo, followed by three nights in Trapani.

There are a few places available. More information and a booking form at: [Gardens of western Sicily May 2023 – Mediterranean Plants and Gardens \(medpag.org\)](http://Gardens%20of%20western%20Sicily%20May%202023%20-%20Mediterranean%20Plants%20and%20Gardens%20(medpag.org))
Contact: [Heather Martin](mailto:Heather.Martin@medpag.org)

Saturday 27 May to Tuesday 6 June – Epirus, Northern Greece

MPG is planning an expedition in north-west mainland Greece starting at the end of May, led by Graham Kendall. More information will be available in January.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Hortus Programme

10 December	Visite de la pépinière de Tillandsia Prod	Le Cailar, Gard
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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](#).

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Changes to the MGF Management Committee

At a meeting of the committee on 28 September 2022, it was unanimously agreed to welcome Jacqueline Potter and Frances Horne as members of the MGF Management Committee, in the roles of Secretary and Membership Secretary respectively.

Christine Daniels, who had taken on the role of Secretary on a temporary basis, expressed her intention to formally stand down from the role at the next AGM, and in the meantime, Jacqueline will take on secretarial duties. These appointments will be put to the full membership for ratification at the next AGM.

The 2023 AGM will be held at Château Pérouse on Thursday 1st June. It is hoped that a day of activities can be organised for Friday 2nd, to make this a two-day event.

You can find the minutes of the September committee meeting in the Members section of the MGF website under 'View administrative documents'.

Agave black weevil alert



Roland Leclercq writes:

The black weevil which attacks agaves and also Yuccas, Dracaenas, Dasyilirions etc... was the subject of an article on [the website](#). In the last 2 months I have received several reports of agave attacks in the gardens of our members, which makes me fear an increase of the cases.

Signs of an attack:

- circular necrosis on the leaves
- brown discolouration of the base of the foliage
- foliage wilting
- rotten smell
- excessive inclination of the head of the plant
- presence of adult weevils in the axils of the leaves. When the plant is removed, presence of larvae in the heart.

Photo: larvae of *Scyphophorus acupunctatus*

Many unknowns about this weevil remain. Collecting the experience of MGF gardeners could be useful to a better understanding and limit the extension of this weevil. **Send your experience by mail to Roland Leclercq , rolandlec@wanadoo.fr.** In particular: which plant has been attacked, which agave species seem to be spared, have you tried a treatment?

I recently had an attack on a large *Agave americana* and a *Beschorneria yuccoides* in my garden which I pulled out and burned (Photo of larvae). Young plants do not seem to be attacked.

Chelsea Flower Show 2022

Among the 20 new plants selected for an award at the Chelsea Flower Show 2022, we have identified 8 that are worth trying in a Mediterranean climate. Some are already available in France.



N°1 Plant of the year

x *Semponium* 'Destiny'. An intergeneric hybrid, the world's first cross between *Aeonium* and *Sempervivum*. This succulent plant - with colours ranging from bright green to deep purple in bright sunlight - is drought tolerant, hardier than *Aeonium* but still not very hardy (-2°C). Its distinctive feature is a rosette of 60cm in diameter. It tends to branch out as soon as the main rosette can support new growth, usually after a year or two.

SURREAL SUCCULENTS /RHS



STONEBARN LANDSCAPES/RHS

N°2 *Armeria pseudarmeria* 'Dreamland' Flowering for seven to eight months, able to cope with drought, frost and wind.



SARAH CUTTLE/RHS

N°3 *Salvia* PINK AMISTAD Developed by Rolando Uria, from Argentina, this is a pink version of S. 'Amistad'.



OTTERSHAW CACTI / RHS

N°8 *Aeonium* 'Jubilee' Named to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, strong growth and dark glossy colouring. Hardiness similar to other aeoniums.



ALSTROEMERIA SELECT / RHS

N°9 *Alstroemeria* 'June Ferelyth' (Little Miss Series) A reliable garden hardy plant, easy to grow. Provides good flower coverage compared to older cultivars.



SPARSHOLT COLLEGE / RHS

N° 13 *Geranium pratense* 'Storm Cloud' Hardy geranium forming a bushy mound of dark green finely cut foliage, with stems of vibrant purple-blue flowers. It blooms from June to October.



SURREAL SUCCULENTS / RHS

N°17 × *Semponium* 'Diamond' Named due to the perfect form and jewel-like pointed leaves of this variety. Can grow up to 35cm across. Hardy to -2°C.



MOORE & MOORE PLANTS / RHS

N°18 *Geranium* × *cantabrigiense* 'Intense'. A compact, semi-evergreen variety with vivid pink flowers. Mass planting makes for excellent ground cover.

New on the website



[A new botanic garden in the Alpes-Maritimes – first steps](#)

Two young British horticulturalists have decided to create a botanical garden in the village of Gréolières. Le Jardin Botanique de la Flore des Alpes-Maritimes will be dedicated to raising awareness of the incredible diversity of flora, habitats and biodiversity of the surrounding mountains, forests and valleys, including rare and endangered species. The garden will include a nursery where visitors can select plants suitable for cultivation in their gardens.

Photo: *Veronica austriaca* subsp. *teucrium*



[Vines and wine in Marseillan](#)

Patricia Prévot, Roland and Liliane Leclercq, Jock Shearer and Chantal Guiraud have created an illustrated article about the early September outing on the theme of vines and wine. Read about the link between the INRAE vine collection and the Bagnas National Reserve, and learn about how Noilly Prat is made.

Photo: The Bagnas reserve after the canicule



[Gardens in Puget Ville and Giens](#)

In October, Gill Clarke organised visits to two gardens in the Var. Le Jardin du Réal, described as a haven of peace, is open to the public by appointment. Le Jardin exotique du Château Noir is a private garden where the owner is creating a forest of cycads and dracaena.

Sandy Graham and Kevin Creed have written an account of the day.

Photo: Grasses at the Jardin du Réal



[Mucem - Le Jardin des Migrations](#)

“Located at the entrance to the port of Marseille, within the walls of Fort Saint-Jean, the Jardin des Migrations offers a journey of discovery of the history of Mediterranean vegetation and its uses.”

Read more of this illustrated article by Erwan Jehanno in the Gardens to Visit section.

FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Mediterranean Gardening Chile



Alfredo Unda writes:

“With the spring rain, showy flowering perennials and geophytes native to La Aurora have reappeared, as well as ferns and native shrubs covering broad expanses with flowers that can be seen from afar, especially in sunny terrain and with northern exposure. Among the meadow-forming white flowers, the huilles and ‘virgin’s tears’ stand out, alternating with a yellow sorrel, the ‘little vinegar’, that covers many mountain slopes.”

Read more and see pictures of the spring flowers on the [MGChile website](#).

Photo: *Tropaeolum brachyceras* (the yellow little soldier)

California Horticultural Society

The video from our [October 17 all-plant-forum meeting](#) is now available for viewing on our [YouTube channel](#).

This was one of our meetings devoted entirely to members sharing and discussing their plants and gardens.

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. Contributions should be sent to [Roland Leclercq](mailto:Roland.Leclercq).

The September "What is it?" proposed by David Bracey was a 'weed': *Rubia tinctorum* (right) or *R. pelegrina* (left), madder. David writes: "Both plants produce a red dye known as rouge garance or Turkey red. It was used to dye French képis, Turkish fezzes and British redcoats.

Garance was traded in the Rouen market in the 6th century and was to become a valuable 'cash crop' in the French economy. Louis XV decided that garance should be grown in France rather than import it from Turkey and tests were run to find the best location.

It was a difficult crop to grow. The roots which contained the dye had to be harvested, dried, peeled to collect the bark, pulverised, sifted to collect the wood (bark?), fermented with sulphuric acid, and left to dry.

Althen des Paluds, close to Avignon, was the chosen location. By the 19th century at least 10 watermills on the Sorgue river were grinding the roots and this had increased to 50 factories by 1839. They were good times in the Vaucluse. Unfortunately, the chemical industry invented a synthetic dye, alizarin which effectively killed the production of madder. By 1884 the agricultural statistics for the region showed no mention of rouge garance."



The new "What is it" corrects a mistake made in the July "What is it" which was supposed to be *Hardenbergia violacea* (thanks to Jacqueline who spotted the mistake). The photo on the right was correct but the photo on the left showed a different plant. What is this plant (now both photos show the same plant)?



AND FINALLY

Communicated by David Bracey



Roland Leclercq
Newsletter editor

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