



Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org

MARCH 2023

Dear members and friends

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Thursday 27 April, Le Barroux, Vaucluse

Visits to a domaine viticole and a member's garden



Photo: Domaine Les Baies Goûts

Hedwige Lauwaert and Nanouk Pelen are organising a one day visit in Le Barroux in the vicinity of the Dentelles de Montmirail.

Starting at 1030 am we will take a guided walk in one of the vineyards of the Domaine Les Baies Goûts - with views on the Dentelles de Montmirail - owned by Isabelle and Frédéric Begouaussel (www.lesbaiesgouts.com).

There should be a profusion of wild flowers at this time of year.

Isabelle writes "The farmer shapes the landscape like the gardener his garden. During our walk we will discover the importance of natural grassing, mulch, the richness of the soil, the richness of the landscape".

After the walk we will have time to enjoy our picnic and a wine tasting prepared by the Domaine Les Baies Goûts (cost for guided walk and wine tasting:10€).

In the afternoon, we will visit the garden of our member and MGF Membership Secretary, Frances Horne. The location of this garden, with breathtaking views of the Dentelles, is unique.

Frances writes: "When we bought the property, there was no garden, just an area of rough grass, where ducks, hens and peacocks roamed freely. I knew nothing about gardening in the conditions I found here: "soil" that was mostly a mixture of stones and clay; weather that ranged from searing heat to biting, windy cold and low rainfall. I made many mistakes!

My garden has been described as an experimental garden. It is true that I often buy several of a particular plant that I like and put one in each of three or four different areas of the garden, to see which location they like best.

Shrubs dominate, as the summer heat fries the foliage of most herbaceous plants. I like finding colours that contrast happily, mixing different shapes, ensuring that there is always some interest in the garden (flowers or foliage).

To book please contact [Hedwige Lauwaert](mailto:Hedwige.Lauwaert@mediterraneangardeningfrance.org).

Tuesday 16 May, Montvendre, Crest and Chabeuil, Drôme Irises, peonies and the Jardin des Sables



Photo : *Paeonia sp.*

Nanouk Pelen and Hedwige Lauwaert are planning a day trip to the Drôme south of Valence to visit two specialist plant nurseries cultivating irises and peonies, and a visit to a private garden. Each nursery grows over 600 varieties which should be at their best at this time of year.

We will start our day visiting Pivoines Rivière, where we will be given a guided tour and talk. This specialist peony nursery near Crest, in the Drôme, was established in 1849 and has belonged to the Rivière family since then.
pivoinesriviere.com.

We will then visit the Jardin des Sables in Montvendre, a lovely private 12000 sq m garden owned by Mme Annie Amoretti. She will explain to us how she and her husband created the garden in 1997 on a plot of empty land. Inspired by the natural look of English gardens, it is now well established with a variety of interesting and rare trees and shrubs. We will have time to enjoy our picnics in the garden.

Our day will end with a visit to a nursery specialising in a huge variety of more than 600 irises. The owner will take us around the nursery and answer questions about planting and care of the plants.
les-iris-du-grand-barbu.com

Those wishing to visit the Jardin Zen d'Erik Borja could stay on an extra day, as this stunning garden is in the vicinity.

To book, contact [Nanouk Pelen](#).

Thursday 18 May, Antibes, Alpes-Maritimes Garden visit, Domaine de l'Orangerie

Set in the hills above Antibes, the owners of this property have, since 2018, been transforming what was a traditional heavily irrigated lawn and annual planting to a dry garden (designed by James Basson). They have taken the bold step to replace the lawn with a garden that comprises flora from around the Mediterranean basin. This garden now relies on the natural rainfall of the area. The entrance of the property has been planted with local oak and pine, and the area around the house is now a haven for bees, birds and insects. Neither pesticides nor herbicides are used on the property.

For more information and book, contact [Gill Clarke](#).

Wednesday/Thursday, 31 May/1 June, Château Pérouse, Saint-Gilles and the Nîmes area The tenth MGF Annual General Meeting and visits to gardens



Jardin de la Chapelle



Château Pérouse



LUMA's landscape park

Wednesday 31 May – Visits to gardens near Nîmes and a dinner

On the day before the AGM, we will visit three gardens:

- A private garden to the north of Nîmes, created by Emmanuel de Sauveboeuf, a passionate collector and gardener, who also created the Jardin des Oules, near Uzès.
- The Jardin de la Chapelle, a small romantic garden in Garrigues-Sainte-Eulalie, which has a great variety of roses and interesting flowers.
- The garden of Mas de l'Agave, in Moussac, where we will have a picnic.

Thursday 1 June - Château Pérouse, Saint-Gilles and Luma in Arles

09.30 A guided tour of the garden of Château Pérouse, led by the botanical team

10.30 The tenth Annual General Meeting of Mediterranean Gardening France

12.30 Lunch – freshly made sweet and savoury pancakes

15.00 A guided tour of the LUMA landscape park in Arles. The Belgian landscape architect, Bas Smets, has transformed a former industrial site into a vast park with hundreds of trees and a large pond.

We will make suggestions for hotels near to Château Pérouse and organise a dinner for the evening of Wednesday 31 May.

Members are welcome to join all, or just some of the elements of the programme and a booking form will be circulated at the end of March.

In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact [Chantal Guiraud](#)

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Saturday/Sunday 25/26 March Spring Garden Fair, Silves, Portugal



The MGAP Spring Mediterranean Garden Fair will be held at the FISSUL Exhibition Hall in Silves. Native plants and seeds from specialist suppliers will be for sale as well as ornamental and container plants and succulents. The Fair will include a display garden and sales of fruit trees and herbs. MGAP will have a plant sales table with plants from members gardens and advice about how to use them together with a bookshop and advice on sustainable gardening.

Further info: mgapfairs@gmail.com or on [MGAP Facebook](#).

Saturday 22 to Saturday 29 April Plant hunting in Croatia



MPG is offering a primarily botanical tour of Croatia in minibuses, starting in Dubrovnik, and ending in Zagreb, starting with a little sightseeing in old Dubrovnik. 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.

See: [MPG Plant hunting in Croatia](#).

Contact [Heather Martin](#) to register.

Photo: *Euphorbia characias* above Trogir

Sunday 28 May to Tuesday 6 June
Epirus, Northern Greece



Photo: Meteora

This MPG expedition in north-west Greece will be led by Graham Kendall. Participants will see both Mediterranean and Balkan plants, including a relative of the African violet, *Ramonda serbica*, the lizard orchid, *Himantoglossum jankae*, and native horse chestnut trees. The scenery is outstanding, with beautiful old stone bridges, villages, chapels and monasteries. Visits include the Unesco World Heritage site of Meteora where monasteries are built on immense natural pillars. For more information: [MPG Epirus 2023](#)
 Before booking, please contact [Heather Martin](#) to check availability.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens 2023

11/12 March	Expo-Vente Plantes, Nature & Terroir	Nîmes (Gard)
12 March	Fête du Printemps	Brouzet Les Quissac (Gard)
18/19 March	Journée des Plantes Méditerranéennes et de Collection, Domaine d'Orvès	La Valette-du-Var (Var)
19 March	Le Printemps de L'Isle	L'Isle sur La Sorgue (Vaucluse)
19 March	Primavera - Jardin des plantes	Montpellier (Hérault)
19 March	Troc de plantes, de semences et de boutures, Baudouvin	La Valette du Var (Var)
2 April	Festival des Fleurs et des Plantes	Sommières (Gard)
2 April	Foire aux Fleurs	Beaumes-de-Venise (Vaucluse)
2 April	Foire aux plantes	La Garde (Var)
8/9 April	Fête des plantes au MUCEM	Marseille (B-du-R)
9 April	Les Florales	Figanières (Var)
9 April	Foire aux fleurs	Lauris (Vaucluse)
9 April	Pernes en Fleurs	Pernes les Fontaines (Vaucluse)
9 April	Fête des jardins	Forcalquier (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence)
9 April	Fleurs en fête dans le parc du château	Pignan (Hérault)
15/16 April	Floralies de Château Campuget	Manduel (Gard)
16 April	Les Floralies de Saint-Andiol	Saint-Andiol (B-du-R)
16 April	Foire Plantes et Nature	Prades (P-O)
22 April	Marché aux plantes	Ginestas (Aude)
22 April	Marché aux fleurs	Bédoin (Vaucluse)
23 April	Fête de Printemps au Château Val Joanis	Pertuis (Vaucluse)
29/30 April	Portes ouvertes chez Tillandsia Prod	Le Cailar (Gard)
30 April	Foire aux fleurs	Montvendre (Drôme)
30 April	Floralies de Florensac	Florensac (Hérault)
30 April	Journées des Jardins et de la Nature	Anduze (Gard)
30 April	Marché aux fleurs	Carpentras (Vaucluse)

Hortus Programme

11 March	Echanges sur nos plantes de jardin	Montferrier sur Lez (Hérault)
22 April	Bourse aux plantes	Montferrier sur Lez (Hérault)
4-6 May	Voyage annuel dans le Var	Var

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

Management Committee meeting

Minutes of the committee meeting which took place on 10 February 2023 are available on the website in the 'Administration' section of the Member area.

New on the website



[Create a herbal spiral in your garden](#)

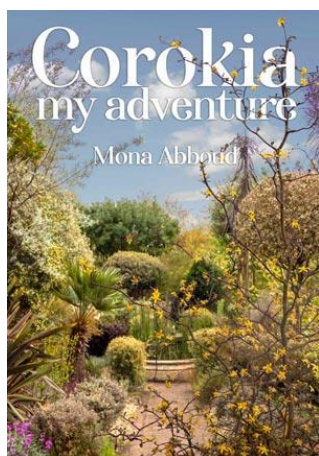
A herbal spiral is a three-dimensional raised bed for the cultivation of aromatic garden herbs, and an example of permaculture techniques. Read Roland Leclercq's article in the 'Good Ideas' section, where he explains the principles, and how to make a herbal spiral in your garden.

The MGF library

Chantal Guiraud writes:

I'd like to remind everyone that MGF has a library, which is available to all members. It contains more than 400 books, some in English, some in French and has its home in my house, 75 rue de la Vieille Poste, Montpellier, in Hérault. You can borrow books, either by coming to my house, or by ordering them by email before an event you are planning to come to, and I'll bring them with me.

Here is a link to the recently updated list: [Library catalogue 2023](#) and information about some recently acquired books.

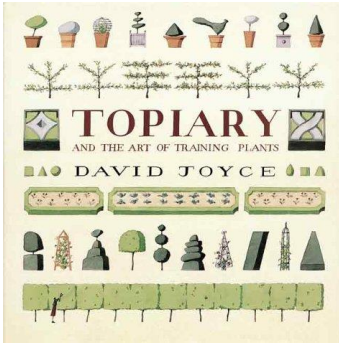


Corokia – my adventure by Mona Abboud, published 2020

Mona Abboud has spent 20 years in London creating an award-winning garden, which is home to the National Collection of *Corokia*. She is both amateur garden designer and hands-on gardener and is often to be found at far-flung nurseries searching for the perfect new plant to complement her designs. She is equally likely to be found at the top of a tall ladder, pruning an old favourite into shape, or barrowing in tons of grit to improve drainage. Mona's garden reflects her cultural background and is heavily influenced by the flora of the Mediterranean. It emphasizes contrasting textures, shapes and foliage colour.

It could be interesting to consider this genus as an alternative to box hedges and some species could be used for topiary. One of our members has given the library a beautiful book on topiary art.

*See in the January newsletter the report by David Bracey on the test of corokia in members' gardens.

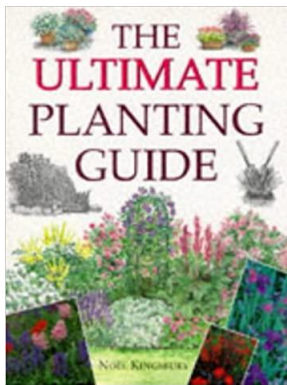


Topiary and the art of training plants by David Joyce, published 1999

This book is essential for anyone who dreams of enlivening the garden with living ornaments. A sculpted bird or a neat box obelisk, a sweet-smelling rambler rose twisting over a pergola, an apple-tree elegantly fan-trained against a wall - topiary and the ornamental training of plants are stylish ways of enhancing the character and structure of any garden, large or small. The book includes how to:

- sculpt topiary shapes, balls, pyramids, animals and abstracts
- rejuvenate neglected trees, shrubs and hedges
- train fruit trees into espaliers, fans, cordons and festoons
- train climber to make fragrant, colourful arches and arbours
- create patterns for knots and ornamental edgings
- train tender plants for the summer terrace and conservatory
- shape easy mock topiary for quick results

A directory gives details of the many plants suitable for shaping, training and topiary.



The Ultimate Planting Guide by Noël Kingsbury, published 1996

This book explains:

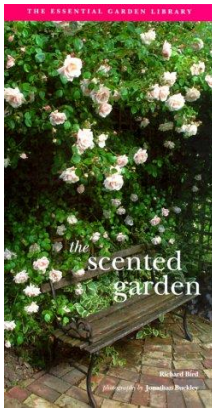
- how to create beautiful planting schemes for every part of the garden and how to assess every site, situation and soil.
- where to use every type of plant, from climbers to groundcover
- how to combine plants successfully in all areas of the garden

It includes a vast selection of planting plans, from one-colour borders to ideas for shady corners.



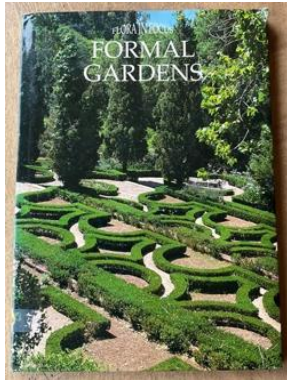
Living with flowers by Jane Packer, published in 1997

This is the first Jane Packer book to focus on flowers in the context of interior design and on the art of combining colours, textures and shapes. The book includes 65 informal yet distinctive arrangements for a range of interiors and lifestyles. Each chapter is defined by a style and mood, captured by the stunning photography of Vogue's Simon Brown: in *City*, clashing colours or elegant neutrals are used with for chic, metropolitan interiors; in *Country* the arrangements have a soft, natural look; for simplicity and serenity turn to *Sea*, awash with pale blues, greys and creams, and for stylish outdoor living dip into *Garden's* eclectic mix of arrangements. There are ideas for everyday as well as special occasions, weddings, Halloween suppers and dining al fresco. Practical advice, including 15 step-by-step projects, makes them accessible to the complete beginner.



The Scented Garden by Richard Bird, published 2000

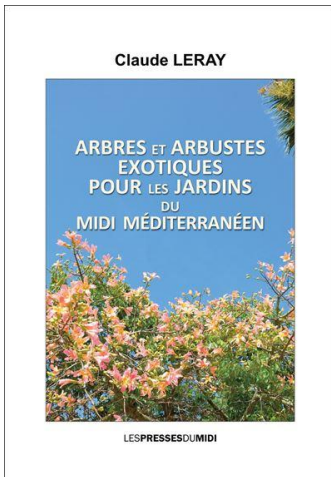
Scent adds an extra dimension to the garden, bringing with it pleasure and evoking memories and associations. With careful planning it is possible to enjoy a perfumed garden all year round. Discover how to make the most of the different groups of scented plants and when they are at their most fragrant; some smell stronger in the early morning while others peak in the evening. 20 projects show you how to bring scent into your garden, from a chamomile path to rambling roses climbing an arbour over a rustic seat.



Formal Gardens by Daan Smit and Nicky den Hartogh, published 1996

During the XVII and early XVIII centuries, garden architecture throughout Europe was widely influenced by the French style. Gardens developed to become an art form in their own right, and often more money was spent on the garden than on furnishing a house. In many cases, the great gardens of the baroque era were designed with the cooperation of architects, water engineers, decorators, and sculptors.

In this volume may be found full-colour photographs of the great baroque gardens and palaces of Europe, allowing the reader today to enjoy the tranquility of plants, water and art which were created by the European nobility.



Arbres et arbustes exotiques pour les jardins du Midi Méditerranéen, by Claude Leray, published 2022

This book brings together 111 exotic species of trees and shrubs from several countries of the world, all of which are suitable for the Mediterranean climate. The choice was dictated by the increasingly obvious need to consider global warming. In 2050, many places along the Mediterranean coast, further inland and in Corsica, will have a climate similar to that currently prevailing in North Africa.

It is therefore urgent to introduce plants that will withstand high summer heat and long periods of drought. Each of the species suggested in this book is the subject of an illustration and a data sheet detailing botanical characteristics, original habitat, optimal growing conditions and hardiness zone.

Death of Erik Borja



Photo : Mr Borja during our visit in October 2022

Erik Borja, creator of the Zen garden in Beaumont-Montoux, died suddenly at home on 28 December 2022 at the age of 81, surrounded by his garden, the work of his life. Hedwige and Nanouk organized a MGF visit to the garden last autumn. Those who went were very impressed. We had the privilege of meeting Mr. Borja in person during the visit - he 'walked' us through his lifetime journey, creating this wonderful garden and gave us precious insights into the history and evolution of Japanese gardening. The garden remains open to the public as before. Participants in the 16 May trip to the Drôme, organized by Nanouk Pelen and Hedwige Lauwaert, who wish to visit Le Jardin Zen d'Erik Borja, could stay on an extra day, as it is in the vicinity.

FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

California Horticultural Society

Dave Tivol writes:

The video of our January [featured presentation](#): « Colloquium on the Impact of Recent Weather Events: Sharing Experiences in Our Gardens with a panel of representatives from six Bay Area public gardens » is now available on our [YouTube channel](#).

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](#).



The January “What is it?” was *Acacia iteaphylla*. *A. iteaphylla*, also known as Willowleaf Mimosa, is an Australian species that is interesting for its small size, low soil requirements and abundant, well-scented, light lemon-yellow blooms that can last from autumn to winter, depending on the region. Not very hardy (-5°C to -7°C) but drought resistant, dense and bushy.

AND FINALLY

A quote from Erik Borja :

“Nature is the master who teaches us: the garden is gradually built as we learn about the climate and geography; it is a perpetual floundering of the creator as he works”. In « Du bon usage du jardin zen », Erik Borja, Paul Meurer, Ed Ulmer, 2019

Best wishes

Roland Leclercq

Newsletter editor

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