



# Mediterranean Gardening France

[www.mediterraneangardening.fr](http://www.mediterraneangardening.fr)

## SEPTEMBER 2024

Dear members and friends

### PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

#### **Thursday August 29, 11.00 am. Montpellier**

##### **Exchange of ideas and plants**

##### **Chantal Guiraud writes:**

“You are invited to a planning meeting. at my home, at 75, rue de la Vieille Poste, 34000 Montpellier to exchange ideas on future activities and garden visits. After our exchange of ideas, I suggest an exchange of plants or seeds for autumn planting. Bring your own picnic and we will provide hot and cold drinks (coffee, tea, wine). Don't forget to bring your plants to exchange with other members. Members who cannot be present can also send their proposals to me by [e-mail](#).”

Please let Chantal know if you will be able to attend.

#### **Thursday 12 September, the Luberon, Vaucluse**

##### **A visit to the gardens of La Citadelle and La Louve**

##### **Organised by Nanouk Pelen and Hedwige Lauwaert**

A trip to the Luberon to visit the Jardin Botanique du Domaine viticole de la Citadelle in Ménerbes, and the Jardin Remarquable of La Louve in Bonnieux. [La Citadelle](#) sits in a green setting extending over 5 hectares, with magnificent views. We will walk for around 1h30, accompanied by the gardener, to discover aromatic plants, edible wild medicinal plants and 'la truffière'.

Lunch either at the estate's bistro or bring a picnic.



Photo: La Louve ©Solange Brihat

In the afternoon we will drive to Bonnieux to visit La Louve, a privately owned garden created in 1986 by Nicole de Vésian, a designer at Hermès, who continued to work on the garden until she sold it in 1996. Having had several owners since then, the garden has had some additions, but the original design remains and is famous for its sculptural clipped Mediterranean plants and trees, stone pathways and benches, and views of the surrounding landscape. We will be given a guided tour by the head gardener.

This visit is fully booked. For a waiting list place contact [Nanouk Pelen](#) or [Hedwige Lauwaert](#).

#### **Thursday 26 September**

##### **Visits to two properties in Vallauris Golfe-Juan, Alpes-Maritimes**

##### **Organised by Jacqueline Potter**

In the morning, we will visit the estate of Adrien Strutynski, a professional citrus grower in Vallauris. He will introduce us to his estate, present different varieties of citrus, share the history of his plantation and his future plans and reveal his secrets for cultivating and maintaining healthy citrus trees.



Next, about a five-minute drive away, we will visit the magnificent garden of Annie Zanini in Golfe-Juan. Annie has an exceptional garden with a wide variety of plants and trees adapted to the mild climate of Golfe Juan, as well as plants suited to colder, inland regions. Before starting the afternoon visit, we can picnic in her 'atelier', which is equipped with tables and chairs.

Photo: The entrance to Annie Zanini's garden

To book a place, contact [Jacqueline Potter](#).

### Other upcoming visits:

- In November, we will visit the Nicole Arboireau's garden, 'Pomme d'Ambre', in Fréjus (Var). Located at the foot of the Estérel massif, this garden, created in 1980, is a true conservatory of the flora of coastal Provence. It features exotic plants introduced during the Belle Époque as well as more regional flora. The Pomme d'Ambre is a garden of bygone memories, a collection of local plants with forgotten uses...
- In early February, we are planning a visit to the 'Forêt des Mimosas' in Pégomas, near Cannes.

## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



**Sunday 20 – Sunday 27 October, Lycia, Turkey**  
**Autumn jewels of the Taurus**  
**Organised by Mediterranean Plants and Gardens**



Photo: *Colchicum stevenii*

A one-week tour in south-west Turkey exploring habitats from the coast to the higher slopes, which still harbour stunning old growth cedar forests. There will be visits to Simena, Phaselis and Termessos, for the wild flora as well as for their history. Participants should see many species of colchicum, crocus and cyclamen and sternbergia. The leader will be Başak Gardner.

After the botanical tour there is an optional cultural extension from 27 – 30 October.

More details and a booking form can be found on the [MPG website](#).

**Saturday 26 – Sunday 27 October**  
**2024 MGAP Autumn Garden Fair, Silves, Portugal**  
**Organised by Mediterranean Gardening Association Portugal**

To help celebrate its 10th anniversary year, MGAP is planning to hold a special Autumn Mediterranean Garden Fair at the end of October 2024. With the support of the Freguseia and Camara of Silves, this will take place in the FISSUL Exhibition Halls in Silves.

Further information from [mgapfairs@gmail.com](mailto:mgapfairs@gmail.com)

## OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Plant fairs and open gardens

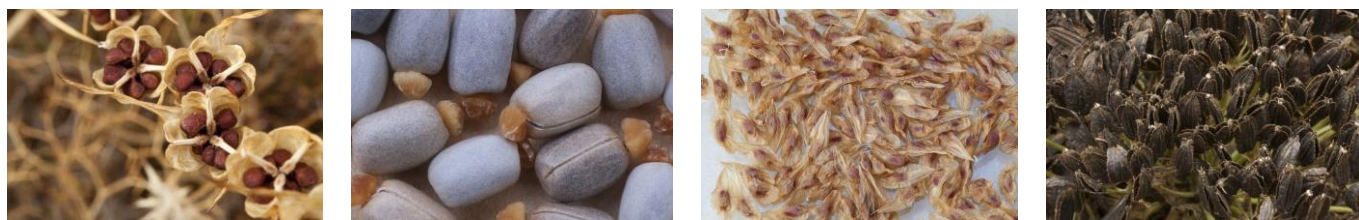
6 – 8 September	Murabilia	Lucca, Italy
8 September	Journée des plantes d'Uzès	Uzès, Gard
14 September	Atelier Nature Biodiversité, Bambouseraie d'Anduze	Généragues (Gard)
21/22 September	Le Jardin Champêtre – open weekend	Caunes-Minervois, Aude
21/22 September	Journées du patrimoine	Throughout France
21 -23 September	Festival des jardins S.E.V.E. Domaine de Grammont	Montpellier (Hérault)
22 September	Salon du livre de jardin - Domaine d'Orvès, 10e Édition	La Valette-du-Var (Var)
4 - 6 October	Festival International Orchidées à Fontfroide	Narbonne (Aude)
5/6 October	Gondwana, la Fête des Plantes méditerranéennes. Domaine du Rayol	Le Rayol-Canadel (Var)
19/20 October	Atelier - L'art de la pierre sèche, Domaine du Rayol	Le Rayol-Canadel (Var)
27 October	Festival des Plantes en montagne noire	Fontiers-Cabardes (Aude)

### 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

### Seed List – Summer 2024 update



Images © John Fielding

As usual at this time of year, Chantal Guiraud has updated our seed list. Thank you to all who sent seeds to add to the collection. Particular thanks to Dave Tivol, a member of our partner association, the California Horticultural Society, who supplied some interesting seeds from the USA, including the following:



*Allium unifolium*



*Magnolia wilsonii*



*Helesia carolina*



*Veltheimia bracteata*



*Romneya coulteri*



*Babiana nervosa*

The updated seed collection has over 460 taxons to choose from, and you can [view the full list](#) on the MGF website. You may order up to 10 packets of seeds each year or 15 packets if you have contributed seed yourself. Send your order to Chantal by [email](#).

### Le jardin du Couvent de la Visitation, L'Hôtel du Couvent, Nice

Mireille Fourie, the Couvent de la Visitation's gardener, writes :



Photo: Jardin du Couvent

Three months ago, a new garden (designed by Tom Stuart-Smith with the involvement of James Basson in the selection of plants) was opened on the abandoned terraces of Le Couvent de la Visitation. Now converted into a hotel, the convent was formerly an integral part of the old town, and the garden retains its role at the heart of the community, preserving the ancient functions of a convent-type garden, i.e. a garden for nourishment, self-sufficiency and meditation.

The renovated terraces have been transformed into several individual gardens, from the wild terraces at the top, to the herb, vegetable garden, and washhouse terraces, then the orange tree courtyard, at the ground floor level of the building, and the tropical garden terrace, the last and lowest. In this way, the visitor travels from a garden inspired by mid-mountain flora (*Cistus sp.*, *Ballota sp.*, *Lavandula sp.*, *Globularia sp.*), to Provençal food gardens (a vegetable garden, wild plants found which grow naturally with agricultural crops, fruit trees), and finally to shady gardens evocative of the mixing of species in a mild maritime climate (*Hydrangea serratifolia*, *Tetrapanax sp.*, *Hedichium sp.*).

The terraces are planted according to the principles of agro-ecology, doing "as much as possible with and as little as possible against" (Gilles Clément). Gardening techniques include the introduction of green manures, annuals, edible plants and medicinal plants between the perennials, and very selective weeding (which I would describe as intelligent weeding). So weeds also find a place to take root.

All in all, the result is a garden that is truly wild. The aim is to bring the gardener back into the garden, and indeed visitors to the terraces, which have become a meeting place for plants, the environment and people.

## Sad news



Members who attended the 2024 MGF General Meeting probably remember visiting Jean-Marie Rey's beautiful garden. We were informed of his death at the beginning of August. He was a nurseryman, a leading figure in local and French horticulture and a member of MGF and numerous international botanical associations. He leaves behind some magnificent gardens and has helped us on a number of occasions to organise garden visits. We will not forget him.

## New on the website



Tulip fields



Château de Brantes



Le château de Bournazel

### Reports on our spring outings:

#### [A visit to tulip fields in Jonquières](#)

In March, a group listened to a talk by Gilles Grillet then visited the colourful Triflor tulip fields in Jonquières, where tulip bulbs are cultivated before being sent to Holland for sale.

#### [Visits to Château de Brantes, the Harmas de Jean-Henri Fabre and a Naturoptère](#)

In April, we learned about the history and development of the gardens of the Domaine de Brantes in Sorgues, then visited the last residence of Jean-Henri Fabre, the famous 19th century Provençal naturalist, entomologist, and botanist.

#### [Nurseries in the Drôme](#)

In May, the outing in the Drome commenced with a visit to Pivoines Rivière, a specialist peony nursery, established in 1849, which grows over 600 varieties. In the afternoon the group visited, Iris du Val de Drôme, which has open days during the flowering period.

#### [Un voyage en Aveyron](#)

Also in May, Liz Godfrey organized a three day trip to gardens in the Aveyron and Tarn-et-Garonne. Five gardens were visited, three open to the public: l'Abbaye de Beaulieu-en-Rouergue, le Jardin de la Mothe, le Château de Bournazel, plus the private gardens of MGF members Liz Godfrey and Margaret Guérit.

Click on the links to read reports and see photographs.



### A talk - [Le jardin, entre symbolisme et rédemption !](#)

Gilles Grillet, a former Director of the Agriculture School of Hyères and a teacher of landscaping, gave a talk to MGF members in Le Barroux in March. He explains: “The history of gardens is the history of humanity and its search for paradise lost”.

Michael Ingledew made a video recording of the talk, which you can watch, via Vimeo, on the website.

Artwork: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden by Wenzel Peter

## The 2024 Assemblée Générale – minutes and photographs



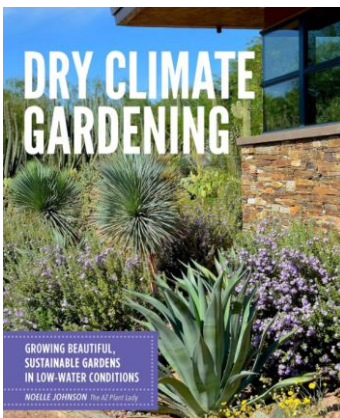
The 2024 Assemblée Générale was held on 29 May, in Hyères, in the Var. Minutes of the meeting are now available in the ‘Members’ section of the MGF website.

Photographs of some of the gardens we visited can be found on the MGF Facebook and Instagram pages.

Photo: The Rue du Repos, Hyères

## Book Reviews

Marjorie Orr has written reviews of two recently published books on dry gardening. You can find them on the [Mediterranean Gardening International](#) website. We’d love to have more reviews, so if you have enjoyed any books, in French or English, which you think would be of interest to other members, please do send a short review to [Marjorie](#). We publish reviews under four category headings: Gardening, Gardens, Plants and General Interest.



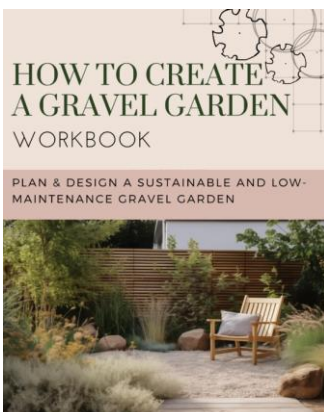
### **Dry Climate Gardening**

by Noelle Johnson

Cool Springs Press, March 2023

Noelle Johnson’s *Dry Climate Gardening*, born out of her experience in the southern states of the USA, points out there are hundreds of plants well-suited to extreme drought and heat conditions. It doesn’t have to mean a yard full of rocks with a few cacti scattered about.

The plant section contains lists of trees, shrubs, ground cover plants, vines, cacti and succulents, grasses and palms which are described with photographs.



### **How to Create a Gravel Garden**

by Alena Samoylenko

Published January 2024, available on Amazon

A simple yet satisfying guide to creating a low-maintenance gravel garden which can produce an elegant, well-planted, drought-tolerant area, free from frequent weeding.

Small trees, perennials and grasses are displayed in group photographs, with informative sketches for small plant collections that sit well together.

For all the latest MGF news, go to

1. What's new on the MGF website: <https://mediterraneangardening.fr/whats-new-quoi-de-neuf/>
2. The Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/mediterranean.gardening.france/>
3. The Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/mediterraneangardeningfr/>

## FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

### News from MGI groups

Reminder:

MGF is part of an umbrella association called Mediterranean Gardening International (MGI).

The newsletters of the partner associations can be found at the following web addresses:

**Mediterranean Gardening Association Portugal:**

<https://www.mediterraneangardeningportugal.org/> (click on Latest News Update)

**Cape Horticultural Society, South Africa**

<https://capehorticulturalsociety.co.za/about-us/> (Click on Newsletters)

**California Horticultural Society, USA**

<https://calhortsociety.org/bulletins/>

**Mediterranean Plants and Gardens (UK)** <https://www.medpag.org> also has a newsletter, which is accessible to members only. Our associate groups in Canada and Chile don't have newsletters but both their websites feature interesting blogs:

**Okanagan Xeriscape Association, Canada**

<https://okanaganxeriscape.org/blog/>

**Mediterranean Gardening Chile**

<https://medgardenchile.wixsite.com/mg-chile/blog> (bilingual Spanish/English, mostly about native plants).

## MY FAVOURITE PLANT

### A rockrose with variegated foliage

Roland Leclercq writes :



*Cistus x hybridus* 'Gold Prize' is a branch sport from *Cistus x hybridus*, H 0.4 L 1m It is a broadleaf evergreen shrub with chartreuse, gold and variegated foliage. White blooms in spring. It illuminates the beds.

To learn more about cistus, read the articles 'Cistus, the rose of the garrigue' [part 1](#) and [part 2](#)

You are welcome to L 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](#)

## AND FINALLY

'What would man be on a bare earth without trees without birds without flowers? The whole world is his deepest memory. To save nature today, right down to the smallest solitary plant, is to fight an incipient

amnesia with no way out other than the drying up of the heart.' Pierre Lieutaghi, (French ethnobotanist and writer, 1939-2023).

Best wishes

Roland Leclercq

Newsletter editor

Please send contributions to this newsletter to [Roland Leclercq](#)