Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardening.fr

SEPTEMBER 2025

Dear members and friends

ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Thursday 2 October 2025
Visit to Château de Thézan, St. Didier, and Villa Datris, Isle sur la Sorgue



Photo: Château de Thézan

Nanouk Pelen and Hedwige Lauwaert are planning a day trip in the Vaucluse to visit two properties and their gardens in the Vaucluse: the Chateau de Thézan, and the sculpture gallery of the Fondation Villa Datris.

In the morning, we will have a guided visit by one of the owners of the Chateau de Thézan, which has very recently been restored and furnished. Built on the foundations of a gallo-roman villa, the property was purchased and developed during the Renaissance by the Marquises of Thézan-Venasque in the 16th century. The chateau was sold to a doctor who transformed it into a hydrotherapy health spa in the late 19th century. Following the guided tour, we will have time to explore the garden, whose layout reflects the favoured « parc à l'anglaise » and was particularly known for its fountains and majestic trees. **www.chateaudethezan.com**.

After a light lunch (venue tbc) we will head for the Fondation Villa Datris in the picturesque town of Isle sur la Sorgue. First, we will visit the small but interesting sculpture garden on the banks of the Sorgue, with the gardener as our guide. The sculptures are part of the current exhibition. Afterwards we will have a guided tour in the villa of the **exhibition of contemporary art entitled "Engagées".**
Full details of this visit will be sent out via broadcast message shortly.

To book a place, please contact
Nanouk Pelen or Hedwige Lauwaert

Sunday 12 October, Crestet, Vaucluse
MGF stand at the Foire aux Plantes
Organised by Hedwige Lauwaert and Beata Baran

This much-loved autumn plant fair, organised by the pépinière, Candice Roses, is a highlight for gardeners and plant enthusiasts alike. Visitors can expect a wide selection of plants – from flowering perennials and ornamental shrubs to rare and unusual varieties – as well as the opportunity to meet passionate growers and exchange gardening ideas.

The MGF will have a stand at the fair, and we would be very happy to welcome our members there. It's a wonderful chance to connect with fellow enthusiasts, share experiences, and enjoy the friendly atmosphere of this Provençal event.

Also in October…

Chantal Guiraud, Event Coordinator for Occitanie, writes:

"In October, we will take a trip to the Cévennes region to visit the Conservatoire de la Fourche, a centre of expertise on micocoulier trees, located in Sauve, and the silk museum in Saint-Hyppolite-du-Fort. This little corner of the Cévennes is well worth a more extended visit, as the medieval village of Sauve is charming and offers superb views over the surrounding rocky landscape. Details will be provided soon."

Wednesday 10 December to Friday 12 December (provisional dates)
Visit to Sanary-sur-Mer (Var)



Photo: Illuminations at the port of Sanary-sur-Mer

At the request of several MGF members, Jacqueline Potter is planning to organise a 3-day visit to Sanary-sur-Mer (Var) in early December, most likely from the afternoon of December 10th to the morning of December 12th. Programme highlights:

1. Visits to private gardens in full winter bloom, showcasing an exceptional diversity of plants.
2. Discovery of Sanary's municipal plantings, recently featured in a new publication (available on Amazon France, FNAC, etc.).
3. An evening stroll through Sanary's magnificent Christmas lights in the port and town center: the entire harbor is illuminated, with each boat adorned in festive lights complementing the city decorations.

Several hotels within walking distance of the town centre will make it easy to explore Sanary on foot. A convivial group dinner at the port will also be arranged to enjoy this magical setting together. The official registration for the visits will open later, probably in October, once the city of Sanary has confirmed the programme of Christmas illuminations.

If you are interested, please email Jaqueline Potter, indicating the number of participants. This will greatly help with planning.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

MGi Mediterranean Gardening International
A global horticultural community

Thursday 2 and Friday 3 October
Gardens of the Perth Hills, Western Australia
Organised by Mediterranean Gardening Margaret River



Photo: Kalamunda National Park

If you plan to be in Western Australia in October, you might like to join this trip to gardens in the hills surrounding the city of Perth. Thursday will focus on the Mundaring region and on Friday the visits will be in the Kalamunda area. The trip is self-drive, and will include lunches, refreshments and possibly a group dinner.

Numbers are limited, so if this trip could be of interest, please contact pamelamgmr@gmail.com to register and for more details.

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 October
Autumn Mediterranean Garden Fair, Municipal Park, Lagoa, Portugal
Organised by Mediterranean Gardening Association, Portugal



This fair is organised by our sister organisation in Portugal, and will include talks and workshops, specialist growers selling native plants and seeds, succulents, trees and aromatic plants suitable for Mediterranean gardens and an MGAP area with books, bulbs and plants.

New this year:

- a specialist salvia grower, who will bring a wide range of these excellent plants
- Orchard of Flavours information stand
- a producer of garden sculpture

Keep an eye on the MGAP event page for more information as it comes available.
Any questions, contact mgapfairs@gmail.com.

Wednesday 25 February to Wednesday 4 March 2026
Tour of Western Cyprus
Organised by Mediterranean Plants and Gardens


Photo: *Cyclamen persicum* on the coast of Cyprus

Based in two locations in western Cyprus, the tour will focus on spring flora, including orchids and geophytes, lovely scenery, walks and some historic sites. Spring comes early to Cyprus, and sunny clear days are expected. Two archaeological sites in the ancient city of Paphos are included – both of which are also rich in plants. Activities are mostly on the coast but there will be one day in the mountains, with spectacular scenery and many interesting plants.
The tour will be led by local expert, Yiannis Christofides.

To gauge demand for this tour, MPG is asking those interested to let the organisers know by completing an on line form. Any questions can be addressed to Andrew Mayo, at andrewjmayo@gmail.com .

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

5 – 7 September	Murabilia	Lucca, Italy
7 September	Journée des plantes d'Uzès	Uzès, (Gard)
20/21 Sept	Journées du patrimoine	throughout France
20, 21,27,28 Sept	Le Jardin Champêtre – open days	Caunes-Minervois (Aude)
21 Sept	Salon du livre de jardin - Domaine d'Orvès	La Valette-du-Var (Var)
3,4,5 October	Festival Orchidées, L'Abbaye de Fontfroide	Narbonne (Aude)
4/5 October	Gondwana, la Fête des Plantes méditerranéennes.	Domaine de Rayol (Var)
11/12 October	Jardin du Réal, Fête de l'Automne	Puget Ville (Var)

26 October	Festival des Plantes en montagne noire	Fontiers-Cabardes (Aude)
13, 15 November	Atelier - Découverte des concepts de Gilles Clement	Domaine de Rayol (Var)
15/16 Nov	Les Journées de l'Arbre de la Plante et du Fruit	Quissac (Gard)
15 November	Atelier - La taille au jardin par Jean-Laurent Félizia -	Domaine de Rayol (Var)
22/23 November	Atelier - Initiation à la Botanique par Jérémy Tritz	Domaine de Rayol (Var)

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 on the Hortus programme, contact Chantal Maurice.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

New on the website



L'Assemblée Générale 2025, Le Barroux, Vaucluse

Three days of guided visits to members' gardens, a talk on biodiversity, a visit to a rose nursery and the AGM, set in the beautiful landscapes of the Dentelles de Montmirail and Mont Ventoux. Read illustrated descriptions of our visits to Le Jardin des Papillons, Le Jardin des Mille Fleurs and Le jardin de la Tourelle.

Photo: Picnic lunch at a member's garden



Attract butterflies and other insects into the garden

As a follow up to the guided visit to the Jardin des Papillons in May, Martine Grillet has written an article about attracting butterflies into the garden. She lists some of the local plant species you can introduce, or allow into your garden, using Nicholas Maurel et Yves Doux's book, *La saison des papillons de Provence*, as source material.

Photo: *Iphiclides podalinus*

List of gardens in Occitanie

Chantal Guiraud writes:

"Following a request from one of our members, I have listed all the gardens mentioned in magazines, books, and anything else I could find. Before adding them to the list, I checked to see if they still existed. However, some of them may not be particularly interesting to visit. This is only a compilation. It is up to each individual to do their own research and decide whether or not it suits them. If you know of a garden that is worth visiting, please let us know and we will add it to this non-exhaustive list.

Visiting a garden in all seasons is extremely rewarding and necessary, whether to help create your own garden, improve it, or glean ideas on a particular way of gardening. You always learn something, even for someone like me who has been gardening for over 40 years!."

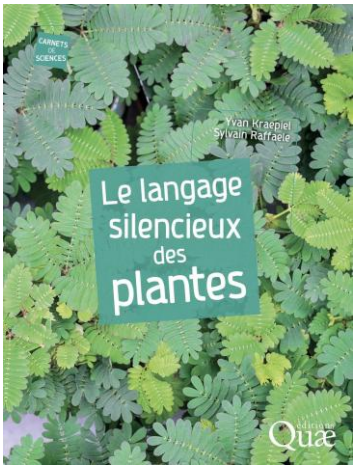
The MGF library



Since 2009, MGF has been collecting books of interest to Mediterranean gardeners. The nucleus of the collection arrived as a gift from the horticultural magazine, *Lien Horticole*, and this was followed by gifts from members, notably Louisa Jones, writer of some of the best books on gardens in the south of France. As new and interesting books are published, we use MGF funds to make purchases and we currently have over 150 volumes, in both French and English. Until recently, the library was housed in Montpellier, at the home of Chantal and André Guiraud, however in August, Chantal and André moved to an apartment, so a new home had to be found for the books.

The library has been moved to the Vaucluse and will be managed by Frances Horne. To borrow a book, make your choice from **the catalogue**, then send an email to Frances. You can collect your books from her home in Le Barroux, or she will bring them to the next MGF activity. Books can be returned next time you attend an event or be passed on to another member for return.

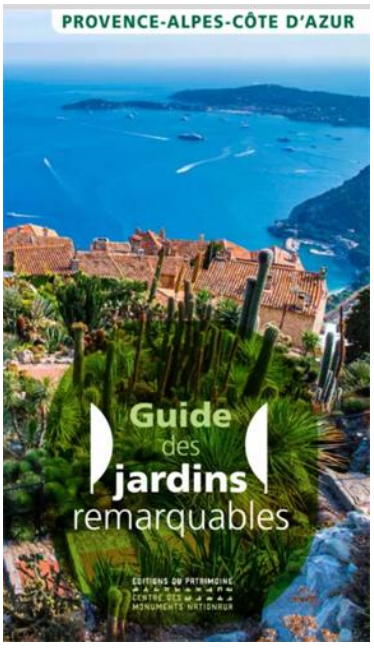
Recent additions:



Le langage silencieux des plantes
Yvan Kraepiel et Sylvain Raffaele
Editions Quae 2023

This book invites you to tune into the information and communication networks of the plant world.

The book received the 2024 P.J. Redouté prize in the Botany category.



Guide des jardins remarquables-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
Brigitte Larroumec
Éditions du Patrimoine 2024

This guide presents the 51 gardens in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region that have been awarded the 'Jardin Remarquable' label, with the information you need to visit them.

The 'Jardin Remarquable' label is French government certification, awarded for a renewable period of five years, based on strict criteria relating to the design, integration into the surroundings, noteworthy features (water, structures, plant architecture, etc.), botanical interest, historical interest, visitor reception, and maintenance in accordance with environmental quality standards.



Le Pavillon de Galon
Guy Hervais
Garden-Secret 2022

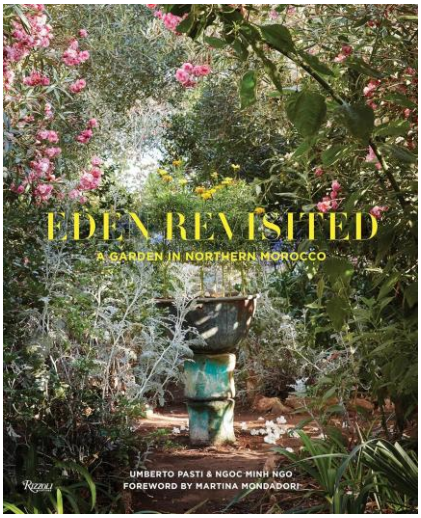
Guy Hervais, owner and designer of the gardens surrounding Le Pavillon de Galon, an 18th century hunting lodge near Cucuron, in the Luberon, has created this book of photographs of the garden, a 'Jardin Remarquable de France'.
Some of the original trees, planted in 1720, still remain, together with a new 'blue garden', a kitchen garden and fig and olive groves.



Gardening in South Australia
SAMGS 2024

A resource book for climate compatible gardens, published by the South Australian branch of the MGS.

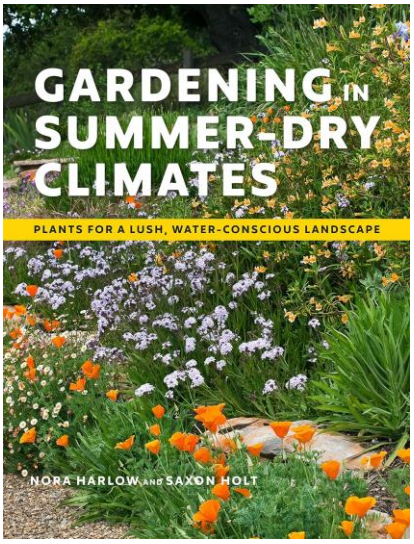
The book brings together the combined wisdom of members who garden in the dry Mediterranean climate of South Australia. It includes plant suggestions for many different garden situations and tips on gardening techniques to withstand the long hot summers.



Eden Revisited - A Garden in Northern Morocco
Umberto Pasti and Ngoc Minh Ngo
Rizzoli Int Publications 2019

Italian writer and horticulturalist Umberto Pasti's garden, Rohuna, is set on a stony hillside above the ocean, to the south of Tangier. With the help of local villagers, Pasti has created a series of gardens filled with plants rescued from construction sites, his aim being to preserve the botanical richness of the region.
Images are by celebrated photographer, Ngoc Minh Ngo.
There is also a comprehensive plant list.

Chantal Guiraud visited Rohuna in 2022 as part of a trip to visit gardens of Morocco. Read her report in the **International Activities** section.



Gardening in Summer-Dry Climates
Nora Harlow and Saxon Holt
Timber Press 2021

Nora Harlow is a landscape architect and gardener with wide-ranging experience of gardens along the Pacific Coast of North America. The book encourages gardeners to choose naturally occurring, climate-appropriate plants, in order to promote healthier ecosystems, reduce impact on water supplies and create spaces that attract and sustain wildlife.

Photographs are by Saxon Holt, member of the California Horticultural Society and Director of the Summer-Dry project. See below for information about his monthly newsletter.

A second life for agapanthus heads





Roland Leclercq writes: "Agapanthus seed heads can be given a second life. Cut the wilted flower at the base, remove the seeds without damaging the stems, dip the head upside down in a pot of paint in the colour of your choice, drain and leave to dry.
Place your creation in a piece of garden hose stuck in the ground. The best effect is achieved in the middle of grasses, simulating garlic heads with red or purple colours.
Do not mix too many colours and only use a small number of coloured heads.
It is also possible to use *Allium christophii* heads."

OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

California Horticultural Society

From the August Cal Hort newsletter:

Consider the Seedhead



Salvia leucophylla (California native purple sage) is one of the many Californian salvias whose seedheads are just as attractive as the flower.
Photo and caption by Saxon Holt/PhotoBotanic.com

"As you eye your garden for seeds to donate to the Annual Seed Exchange consider the beauty of seedheads and the benefit to the local birds. Saxon Holt, photographer *extraordinaire,* author, and long-time Cal Hort member, writes in the latest Summer-Dry e-newsletter, co-written by Nora Harlow, about the aesthetics of seedheads in the garden with photographic examples."

News from MGI group

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).
Mediterranean Gardening Margaret River
Events Calendar available from Pamela Edwards.

WHAT IS IT?





The plant to guess in the previous newsletter was *Adenocarpus anagyrifolius*. This plant, native to Morocco, grows to a height of 1.20 m x 1.50 m. It is hardy (-10°C), grows in well-drained soil, tolerates limestone and is very resistant to drought. It flowers in large yellow spikes in April-May. Its main attraction is the beautiful metallic blue-grey colour of its ornamental foliage.

AND FINALLY

We have forgotten what stones, plants and animals still know. We have forgotten how to be; to be calm, to be ourselves, to be where life is: here and now. (Eckhart Tolle, Canadian writer)

Best wishes
Roland Leclercq
Newsletter editor
Please send contributions to this newsletter to Roland Leclercq