Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardening.fr

NOVEMBER 2025

Dear members and friends

ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

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



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

A 3-day visit to Sanary-sur-Mer, a town awarded the French national distinction “Ville 4 Fleurs” for excellence in landscape and planting. In December, we will be able to enjoy its magical Christmas lights, which illuminate both the town and the harbour.

Programme highlights:

1. Visits to private gardens in full winter bloom, showcasing an exceptional diversity of plants.
2. Discovery of Sanary’s municipal plantings, guided by M. Pierre Lesage, Adjoint au Maire aux Espaces Verts.
3. An evening stroll through Sanary’s magnificent Christmas lights in the port and town centre.

FULLY BOOKED

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

MGi Mediterranean Gardening International
A global horticultural community

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.

Bookings are now closed. To apply for the waiting list, please write to Andrew Mayo.

Saturday 11 to Saturday 18 April 2026
Spring flowers in Gargano, Italy
Organised by Mediterranean Plants and Gardens



The Gargano, in the Puglia region of Southern Italy, has outstanding wildlife, especially orchids. The trip is divided between Rodi on the north coast and Monte Sant'Angelo in the south. The guide is Stefano Doglio, who has specialised in this area for years and knows unique sites for some rare orchids and others. The scenery, much of it unspoilt karst, is splendid.

For more details and to book, go to the MPG website.

Thursday 30 April – Thursday 7 May 2026
Wild plants of the Rhodope, Northern Greece
Organised by Mediterranean Plants and Gardens



The tour starts in Thessaloniki where we will look at cultural sights in the city, followed by a day at Lake Kerkini, a major migratory bird location with good wildflowers. The rest of the time will be spent in the Rhodope Mountains, first in Drama then in Komnina. The guide is Oron Peri. Maximum 13 participants.

More details on the MPG website.

Photo: *Pulsatilla halleri*

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant fairs and open gardens

2 November	Foire Plantes et Nature	Prades (P-O)
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)
29 November	LIVRES AUX JARDINS, le Palais de l'Agriculture	Nice (Alpes-Maritimes)
7 December	Fête de l'Arbre	Carcassonne (Aude)
24/25 January	Mimosalia	Bormes-les-Mimosas (Var)
31 Jan – 1 Feb	L'île aux Orchidées	Vergèze (Gard)

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.**

Calendrier prévisionnel
Année 2025-2026

8 November 14.30	Conférence : « de l'été indien au jardin d'hiver »	Foyer municipal de Montferrier
6 December 14.30	Conférence d'Olivier Filippi	Amphithéâtre Charles Flahaut, Institut de Botanique, Montpellier
24 January 14.30	Conférence : « histoire des plantes médicinales »	Espace Culturel du Devézou
18 April 14.30	Bourse aux plantes	Espace Culturel du Devézou

NEWS AND INFORMATION

New on the website



Photo: *Erica manipuliflora*

Mediterranean heathers to grow in alkaline soils

Roland Leclercq writes:

"Heathers belong to the *Ericaceae* family, which includes many genera such as arbutus, rhododendrons, blueberries, etc. These plants are known for being easy to grow, low maintenance and giving the garden a natural look. However, most heathers thrive in acidic, moist soil. This is the case for summer heathers of the *Calluna* genus. If you have a garden with dry, alkaline soil, all is not lost, as some Mediterranean winter heathers of the *Erica* genus are more tolerant of alkalinity and can withstand dry conditions."

Read the full article, with photographs, in the Plants A-Z section of the MGF website.

Update on the MGF stand at Crestet plant fair

Beata Baran writes:

"On 12 October we took part in a small but delightful local plant fair in Crestet. There were around 15 exhibitors, all, apart from us, selling plants and accessories. Our small stand showcased MGF, and the fair turned out to be very well attended. Many visitors stopped at our stand to learn more about our activities, and several expressed real interest in joining MGF.

It was a wonderful opportunity to share our passion for Mediterranean plants, exchange ideas with other garden enthusiasts, and make new connections. The friendly atmosphere and genuine curiosity of visitors made the day a real success.

We believe that participating in such events is a great way to grow our community and spread the joy of Mediterranean gardening — so we plan to continue taking part in similar fairs in the future."

If you have ideas for future plant fairs where MGF could have a presence, and are prepared to get involved, please contact Beata Baran or Hedwige Lauwaert.



Photo: *Sulla coronaria* (Wikipedia)

Sulla

David Bracey writes:

"Sulla's honeysuckle, *Sulla coronaria* syn. *Hedysarum coronarium,* is native to the Mediterranean islands, where it is cultivated as fodder. It has distinctive red flowers, which can be seen in places on these islands. It is also known as French honeysuckle, Italian sainfoin or Sulla's honeysuckle.

It is a source of food for bees. Sulla honey is very famous on the islands and is sold alongside myrtle, eucalyptus and asphodel honey. It should be a valuable garden flower for Mediterranean gardens, but I have not seen it for sale as an ornamental plant.."

Onobrychis vicifolia (common sainfoin), another drought-tolerant legume of European origin, is similar.



Photo: *Corokia virgata* 'Sunsplash'

Corokia sp. as an alternative to boxwood. Yes or No?

Roland Leclercq writes

"I recently met Mona Abboud, who runs the *Corokia* collection in the United Kingdom. I told her how disappointed we were when, during a trial proposed by David Bracey, we tested this plant as an alternative to boxwood in dry climates (see the January 2023 newsletter).

Mona had a house in the south of France (Minervois) and was able to grow some species there. She gave me the following advice, though it should be noted that the climate in New Zealand, where the plant originates, is much less hot in summer and much less dry than in Australia.

So, for this plant to thrive in your garden, it needs more shade and regular watering during the first year and during weeks of high temperatures. A water-permeable mulch is also essential, such as gravel, wood chips or similar.

I think it's worth trying again, perhaps as part of a mixed hedge with other plants from the Antipodes, including *Pittosporum* 'Tom Thumb', *Olearia haastii, traversii, solandri* and *paniculata*, among others, and *Coprosma propinqua* or *rugosa*.
Small-leaved corokia are more robust, including *Corokia cotoneaster* or *Corokia* 'Silver Ghost', among others..."

News from MGI group and partner associations

This is an abridged version of an article published in the October edition of the SAMGS magazine. It's an interesting subject, and the writer makes reference to an initiative in France.

Flowering Footpaths

By Helen Fulcher, South Australia MGS

"How do we encourage our communities to improve the diversity in their neighbourhoods as our streetscapes are increasingly dominated by medium density housing, with building right up to the footpath?



Some of our local councils in South Australia actively encourage and support residents to plant and maintain their verges, after application and permit processes.

The city of Unley has a programme called Greening the Verge which recommends hardy and native plants that will build habitat. It produced this planting guide to help residents design, plant and maintain planted spaces in the footpaths outside their homes.

Photo: Ulney, South Australia

I was also really inspired to read about a local council encouraging an increase in biodiversity on footpaths in the town of Tours in the Loire Valley, in France. The town started A Fleur de Trottoir in 2016.



Photo: Ville de Tours

Much of the town consists of narrow 2 to 3 storey townhouse style housing: no gaps between buildings, no backyards, front windows open onto the street, narrow one way streets lined with cars. Tours Council gives free permits to participating residents, help with digging and preparing the soil, checks on underground services, and free plants. The residents take on the ongoing responsibility to water, weed (without pesticides) and trim plants to ensure sufficient space for pedestrians, strollers and wheelchairs.

Photos show slithers of gardens in footpaths, often only 20 cm deep by 5 metres wide, filled with mostly tough Mediterranean style plants: salvia, hollyhocks, cistus, marigolds, viburnum, star jasmine, bulbs, even dwarf fruit trees. Occasionally folk had added small, upturned pots being filled with fruit and veg scraps for a very modest form of compost.

I think that local insects, neighbours and visitors alike are delighted by these small demonstrations of biodiversity, as well as the social interaction on the street inevitably generated with gardeners out tending their patch. It would be interesting to hear from members about other examples, sanctioned and otherwise, which encourage people to contribute to biodiversity in public spaces, especially in areas of dense urban infill."

MGF would be interested to know if there are similar initiatives in local communities in Mediterranean France. If you know of any, and especially if you participate in efforts to make public spaces more floriferous, please send information and photos to Christine Daniels so we can publish a compilation on the MGF website.

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.

QUIZ



What is this plant?

A *Puya mirabilis*
B *Lilium martagon*
C *Chasmanthe floribunda*
D *Sisyrinchium striatum*

Answer below

AND FINALLY

When I finally took the time to look at a flower, a whole new world opened up... As if a window had opened to let in the sunshine (Princess Grace of Monaco, American actress and Monegasque sovereign, 1929–1982) (quoted by Patrick Mouliane)

QUIZ answer: A

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