Mediterranean Gardening France

www.mediterraneangardening.fr

JANUARY 2026

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Senecio angulatus (photo taken on 1st January)

Dear members and friends

ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

Thursday 12 February
Citrus Workshop in Saleilles, Pyrénées-Orientales
Organised by Chantal Guiraud



Photo: Citrus auriantum 'Fasciata' (Bigarade du Vatican)

Pierre Bianchi will welcome us to his magnificent garden, see the article on our website, to talk about citrus trees and explain how to care for them, prune them and pamper them, so they thrive and bear fruit in our own gardens. We will then have lunch at the restaurant 'La Cuisine', located five minutes from his home.

The day will end with a visit to Pépinières Vessières. This family-run nursery (for four generations), located in Saint Feliu d'Avall in the Pyrénées-Orientales, cultivates over 500 varieties of citrus fruit and other rare fruit and ornamental plants https://agrumes-vessieres.fr.

Places for this outing are limited. To book, please contact Chantal Guiraud as soon as possible.

Wednesday 20 to Friday 22 May
13th MGF Annual General Meeting and visits, Anduze, Gard
Organised by Roland Leclercq and Chantal Guiraud


Photo : Jardin du Dragon à la Bambouseraie

The 13th Annual General Meeting of Mediterranean Gardening France will take place in Anduze on Thursday, 21 May 2026.
Roland Leclercq and Chantal Guiraud, with a team of MGF members, are putting together a three-day programme of activities, from Wednesday 20 May at 3pm to Friday 22 May at midday.
The programme will include visits to the Vallons des Cévennes museum in Saint-Jean-du-Gard and its ethnobotanical garden (visit guided by its creator), a pottery workshop in Anduze, the Jardin de Mazet, the botanical park de la Tour Vieille in Alès, and a short steam train ride for those who wish to take part.
The general meeting will take place on Thursday 21 May in the late afternoon following the visit to the Bambouseraie and will be followed by dinner at a restaurant in Anduze.
A detailed programme, registration form and list of accommodation options will be sent to you in February.

Other Plans for 2026

Var/ Alpes-Maritimes

Spring visits being planned by Jacqueline Potter:

1. **Mid February - Mimosa visit**
   During the peak of the mimosa flowering season, probably around mid-February, we plan to visit the Jardin Botanique du Réal in Puget-Ville, a garden awarded the *Jardin Remarquable* label, followed by lunch nearby. The garden hosts approximately 90 different varieties of mimosa.
   If wild anemones are in flower, the visit will begin with a 30-minute wildflower walk in the surrounding countryside before entering the garden.

2. **Late March / April**
   Visits to two gardens and bastides in the Aix-en-Provence area.
   Further details to follow.

3. **April - Le Beausset (Var)**
   A discussion meeting at my home, followed by a visit to my garden in Le Beausset (83330). Shared Picnic. The aim of this gathering is to exchange ideas for future visits and to share feedback on past activities in an informal setting.

Occitanie

Spring visits being planned by Chantal Guiraud:

March/April

A visit to the Jardin des Plantes de Montpellier and to the Montpellier city greenhouses.

Vaucluse/Bouches-du-Rhône

Spring visits being planned by Hedwige Lauwaert and Nanouk Pelen:

1. **March**

   An olive pruning workshop near Merindol in the Luberon, a talk on the history of olive oil and a visit to a mill.

2. **April**

A two day visit to the Forqualquier area to visit the Jardin Remarquable du Château de Sauvan, the Jardin de Salagon and the Abbaye de Ganagobie.

3. **Early May**

   A second visit to Claire and Mark Armour's dry garden designed by James Basson, near St Rémy de Provence. We previously visited this garden in May 2018, shortly after it was planted. See more about this garden in the Garden Diary section of the website. We plan to combine this with a visit to another garden in the area.

4. **Early June**

   A walking tour of the roses of Grignan in the Drome, followed by a picnic at a wine producer.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

MGi Mediterranean Gardening International
A global horticultural community

Wednesday 25 February to Wednesday 4 March
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
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
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

24/25 January	Mimosalia	Bormes-les-Mimosas (Var)
31 Jan – 1 Feb	L'île aux Orchidées	Vergèze (Gard)
1 February	Corso du Mimosa	Sainte-Maxime (Var)
14 February – 1 March	Fête du Citron	Menton (Alpes-Maritimes)
14, 27, 28 February	Festival des orchidées	Menton (Alpes-Maritimes)
28 February – 1 March	Fete des Violettes	Tourrettes-sur-Loup (Alpes-Maritimes)
22 March	Primavera	Montpellier (Hérault)
5 April	Festival des Fleurs et des Plantes	Sommières (Gard)
11/12 April	Plantes Rares et jardin naturel	Sérignan-du-Comtat (Vaucluse)

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

24 January 14.30	Conférence : « histoire des plantes médicinales »	Espace Culturel du Devézou
18 April 14.30	Bourse aux plantes	Espace Culturel du Devézou

New on the website



Photo: Le Pavillon du Galon

Visits to châteaux and gardens in the south Luberon

A short report, with lots of pictures, on a splendid day out earlier in the year when we visited two Jardins Remarquables and a château.

The gardens of both the Château Val Joannis in Pertuis and the Pavillon du Galon in Cucuron, were indeed outstanding, and the guided tour of the Château d 'Ansouis, commenced in the 10th century as a military fortress, then transformed in the Renaissance to an elegant home, was truly fascinating.



Photo: MGF group with a micocoulier fork

A day in the Cévennes

Chantal Guiraud writes:
"On a beautiful, sunny autumn day, our group gathered for a double visit: the Conservatoire de la Fourche in Sauve and the Silk Museum in Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort.

Despite the fact that these visits took place indoors, they still shared a strong connection to plants and the history of the Cévennes, namely the micocoulier tree and the mulberry tree, two emblematic trees of our region."



Photo: *Rosa* 'Roxburghii Pleno' bud

La Roseraie du Cade, Lacoste

Roland Leclercq writes:
"Chantal Von Braun welcomed us to the rose garden. She and her husband, former winegrowers, created the rose garden in 2017. Five hundred different types of roses have been planted across two hectares, mainly old varieties."

This report on our visit in May includes many photographs of the wonderful roses.



Photo: The harbour in Sanary

Three inspiring days in Sanary-sur-Mer

Jacqueline Potter writes:
"Wednesday 10 December began with a guided walk through Sanary's public plantings, led by the head of the town's 'Espaces Verts'. The group was enthusiastic and curious, enjoying both the planting schemes and the stunning coastal views."

See photos of many plants in flower in December and the festive Christmas lights of Sanary.

January 2026 update to the seed list

Chantal Guiraud writes:

"I invite you to take a closer look at **the January 2026 update** to our seed list, so that you can place your orders for the new year.

I would like to thank our generous donors, because without them we would not be able to offer such a wide choice of species, currently around 500 different taxa. Having swapped my villa for a flat, I will no longer be able to harvest as many seeds, so I am asking you to send me seeds from your gardens. Please remember to indicate on the envelopes, the scientific name of the plant, where possible, the date and place of harvest, and your name.

Thanks to your donations, we have added 102 new taxa this time. Amongst these, I recommend:



Acacia baileyana

Produces excellent results when raised from seed. Flowering occurs after 2 to 3 years. Before sowing, pour boiling water over the seeds and leave them to swell overnight.



Antirrhinum siculum

Although perennial, this snapdragon is generally grown as a semi-hardy annual. In a Mediterranean climate, it can be sown in situ in autumn.



Cistus laurifolius

This is the hardiest of all cistus species (to around -20°C). Scarify seeds before sowing. There is no guarantee that the plant will be identical to the parent plant, as cistus have a tendency to hybridise.



Clematis glauca

This clematis, native to Siberia and western China, is a non-climbing species that forms a dense bush. It germinates easily in warm conditions.



Dianthus carthusianorum
This is the Chartreux pink, which propagates easily but needs light to germinate. Simply place the seeds on moist soil without covering them.



Lagerstroemia indica
Crepe myrtle seeds need to be exposed to cold temperatures to break their dormancy. To do this, store them for a month in the fridge in a bag with damp vermiculite. Then soak in warm water for 24 hours and sow in spring.



Phlomis purpurea
All phlomis species are easy to propagate from seed, but they also hybridise very easily. It is not certain that the *Phlomis* 'Tramuntana' seeds we have will come true to the variety.



Rosa rubiginosa 'Lord Penzance'
This species tolerates dry soils. Winter dormancy accelerates seed germination; sowing should be done in trays at least 10 cm high, as the seedlings form taproots.
Photo: *Rosa rubiginosa*



Zephyranthes rosea:
Pour 3 cm of water into a glass and immerse the seeds in it. Place the glass on top of the fridge, where it is warm. As soon as the cotyledons emerge, they can be re-potted.



Zinnia sp.:
These seeds germinate in a week, a record! It is best to sow them indoors in spring.

Photo: *Zinnia elegans*

To conclude, here is a list of the seeds which were most popular among our members in 2025:

Anthyllis barba-jovis
Phlomis purpurea
Achillea umbellata
Borago officinalis
Canarina canariensis
Catananche caerulea
Cerinthe retorta
Crupina crupinastrum
Epilobium canum
Geranium tuberosum
Phlomis leucophracta
Salvia spathacea
Seseli gummiferum
Thymus mastichina

If we were to plant all these plants together, we would obtain a superb flowerbed that would be resistant to our increasingly hot summers and would require very little maintenance."

Extraordinary plants
From David Bracey



"Insectivorous plants are perhaps the strangest adaptation. They grow in anaerobic conditions where nitrogen and phosphorous are in short supply. The exception is the yellow or Portuguese sundew*, Drosophyllum lusitanicum*. This thrives in dry soil in Spain, Portugal and Morocco where nutrients are limited. Sticky pads along the length of the stem trap insects and a second set secrete digestive juices. Coastal mists provide moisture."

Photo : *Drosophyllum lusitanicum* © Franck Le Driant FloreAlpes

Dealing with palm tree pests
Roland Leclercq writes:



"Seen on the NewsJardin TV website (Patrick Mioulane): A gardener shared a recipe for combating palm tree pests. Leave 100 grams of *Melia azedarach* seeds to soak in a litre of water for 3 days. Add a tablespoon of black soap. Pour into the centre of the palm tree. One litre is enough to treat 3 palm trees. One treatment is sufficient. Please note that the seeds are highly toxic, so wear gloves. The filtered liquid is also effective against aphids when sprayed.
Some of you may want to try this. Please let us know how it goes."

Mediterranean Gardening International

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.

AND FINALLY

"When a new rose is born by mutation in the gardens, all the gardeners are thrilled. The rose is isolated and favoured. But there are no gardeners for humans." Terre des hommes (Wind, Sand and Stars) 1938. Antoine de Saint Exupéry (author of "The little prince").

Best wishes

Roland Leclercq

Newsletter editor

Please send contributions to this newsletter to Roland Leclercq