Welcome to members and friends in Portugal of the Mediterranean Garden Society. If you know of any others who may be interested in Mediterranean gardening please pass this along to them and remember all are welcome to attend our events.

Queremos dar as boas vindas aos sócios e amigos do Mediterranean Garden Society em Portugal. Se souber de alguém que esteja interessado em jardimagem mediterrânica agradecemos que passa a palavra, ou o favor de dar um destes boletins informativos, e não esquecer que todos estão convidados a participar nos eventos por nós organizados.

April 2011
Talk & Workshop on Euphorbia by UK National Collection holder
Don Witton

Don is an experienced & popular speaker with practical knowledge of this fascinating plant family

Following this notice in Newsletter No 11, I received a couple of queries about the above date, I am sorry to say that I can confirm that I have indeed had to book Don for 2011 as he is so popular!! Don’t miss it!

Plant Sale – Bring & Buy!

Saturday, November 7th 2009 11.00am – 3.00pm


There is B&B accommodation available on site and evening meals can be booked.

Members and friends of the MGS are invited to gather to swap seed, seedlings and plants. November is the start of the planting season – if we have had some rain! Come along with your spare plants, seed and seedlings and exchange them on the MGS Plant Stall. Buy rare & unusual plants from your fellow gardening enthusiasts!

Several small and specialist nurseries have been invited and were selected to cover a full range of plants suitable for waterwise gardens. A list of exhibitors is available on request. There will also be short master classes with the opportunity to ask questions running throughout the day on topics such as ‘Grasses for Dry Gardens’ and Soil & Fertilisers.

I have small and large posters for this event which I can email to you if you are able to help in advertising or promoting this as widely as possible – email Rosie for any further info.

HELP NEEDED!
PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH ROSIE IF YOU CAN HELP ON THE PLANT STALL FOR A SHORT PERIOD ON THE DAY

The MGS plant sales table is available for your larger plants. Please use the following system to ensure that you get your money back!

TWO LABEL PLANT SALES

Plants for sale on the MGS sales table should have TWO labels. One which has the name of the plant and one which has your name and the price you want for the plant. When the plant is sold the label with your name and price on it is placed in the till. At the end of the sale these labels are counted up and the money and labels returned to the named person. Any donations or a small percentage of plant sales to the funds of Portugal MGS gratefully received – we hope to be able to offer some expenses to speakers in future.
There will be a table for seed swaps, please bring your cleaned seed in small packets (so that packets can be swapped without the need for opening larger packets or envelopes). Please clearly mark the packet with the name of the plant and the year it was collected. I hope to have a supply of paper packets available for sale on the day and could also send these out beforehand.

There will be a table set aside for **seed swaps** and for **seedling/rooted cuttings swaps**. Please try to ensure that you have named your seed packets and seedlings for those taking them home. If you are not sure of any plant names then it would be helpful to indicate conditions, for example, shade, sun, summer water req’d, no water req’d, etc. etc. Again, it would be helpful if your name is on seed packets for follow up enquiries. All enquiries in the first instance should come back to Rosie Peddle for forwarding.

We will have a delivery of plants from a specialist lavender nursery in the north of Portugal which includes some species rarely offered on the Algarve. There will also be some of the clematis grown as a result of the Clematis Day held in 2008.

We also hope to have a few experts around who may be able to identify your UPO’s – Unidentified Plant Objects! So please bring along any plants, photos or bits which we may be able to help you identify.

**PLANT POT RECYCLING** – please bring along any unwanted plant pots, large or small, there will be a designated point for collecting these. Please feel free to have look and take away any pots that you need. All pots left over will be recycled.

**CARRIER BAGS RECYCLED** – please bring along any unwanted supermarket type carrier bags for use on the plant stall. All bags left over will be recycled.

Please get in touch for any more information. Directions & map available on request Rosie Peddle 289 791 869 email rosie@thebtf.net

**NEWS**


*Above is the link to an exciting new web site, a forum for Members and friends of the MGS in Portugal and for gardening activities and information in general.*

Irene Shepard had set up and has been hosting an Algarve based native plant web site but, on her move back to the USA, handed over management of this site for us all – her site is accessible via this link [http://www.geocities.com/algarveflowers2002/homepage.html](http://www.geocities.com/algarveflowers2002/homepage.html)

This was the springboard for the concept of the new web site. We are very grateful indeed to Irene for permission to use her lovely and original art work and information as part of this new site. Members of the Mediterranean Garden Society in Portugal are involved in the management of the site and information on all MGS activities will be included.

Content – will be kept simple at first but growth will be encouraged and an editing group formed to keep content up to date. Our aim is to use Portuguese and English to share our experiences, both successes and failures, of gardening in Portugal. A link to this site has been added to the Portugal branch page on the main MGS web site.

Any contributions or multi-lingual items are welcomed and actively encouraged. We are looking for someone to offer help with translations or checking submissions before posting on the site.

New pages will be added via the editing group. The site is still in development and contributions and comments are welcomed. This independent website is intended to provide a means of communication for anyone seeking information on waterwise gardening.
Starting from Scratch - Talk by Burford Hurry  14th September 2009

(Pictures of this event are on the new web site http://oth4.com/portugal/ There was much useful information in the talk by Burford and also much was contributed by the audience during the discussion following the talk so here is a rather fuller than normal report.)

Fortunately it was a cooler morning than of late for our event at the home and garden of Burford Hurry. Thirty keen gardeners assembled to see this unique Algarve garden and hear advice on ‘Starting from Scratch’.

There was time to tour the garden and to see the flowering caper plants, Zephyranthis bulbs in full flower, and the wonderful collection of succulents in pots on the different terraced levels of this streamside garden. Some lucky people even went home laden with cuttings!

Below is a report of Burford’s useful guidance on the tricky subject of gardening in the Algarve. Also included are some details of the discussion which followed the talk and recommended contacts for plants and bulbs.

“No one really starts from scratch because there should be some trees and shrubs on any piece of land which you are looking to make into a garden. Any mature tree and shrub cover is the treasure around which you can start your planning. Look carefully at what existing tree cover you have, look at the neighbouring areas. What trees are there which you might wish to use in planning your garden views?

Many elements make up a garden, but it is best to start with the basics, and the most basic of all is the soil. Check for the main characteristics, clay, chalk, sand or schist. It is acknowledged that there are about 200 different kinds of soil on the Algarve, from the very acidic volcanic soils in the west to the chalky Barrocal clay in the east.

Drainage will become a major factor during the wet months of the year. Check for water run off, soil erosion and potential soggy points which will rot most mediterranean plants. Consider mound planting or the addition of grit or gravel in any potential wet ground.

So you have your vision of what you have in the garden and what you would like it to look like? Now is the time to think about long term issues. Irrigation systems and access for maintenance to the house, drainage systems, pathways etc. Also think about future points needing electricity, any garden and path lighting, fountains etc.

Now it is time to think about planting. Finally getting the chance to fill spaces created around and between existing trees, pathways and view points. Try not to be tempted by the many exotics available, go for the more appropriate and less water hungry plants which will sit well in the landscape. By all means have some exotics and choose from the many plants around the world which will grow on the Algarve but, do not let these dominate your plantings and keep them close to the house. If you must have a lawn, keep it small and it will be easier to look after.

Consider the many lawn substitute plants now available from the specialist dry garden nurseries such as Olivier Filippi in France http://www.jardin-sec.com/ He recommends a mix of small low growing plants which can be walked on and which will contribute throughout the year – each type of plant taking centre stage as their flowering season comes and goes. For example, Phylla nodiflora and Achillea millefolium. He has recently published and English edition of the ‘Dry Gardening Handbook’ – a complete guide to having a garden with no irrigation. Remember too that bulbs are a classic mediterranean plant, look out for what grows locally. Paperwhite narcissus and Sternbergia lutea in the Barrocal, Pancratium maritimum on sandy soils. A recommended specialist in bulbs for the Mediterranean is Lauw de Jagar of Bulb’Argence http://www.bulbargence.com

Timing for planting can be critical and the recommended main planting season is the start of the mediterranean gardening year in November. As soon as the first serious rains of the winter have soaked the ground, that is the ideal time to plant. This gives a good chance for
acclimatisation and good root development before the next dry summer months come along. Make large holes, 75 x 75 x 75 cm and put in good compost, super phosphate fertilisers and consider placing a tube or cut water bottles into the hole leading directly to the roots. Filling these with a hose pipe or watering can will get the water straight down and not leave it to evaporate on the surface.

Long term maintenance including feeding and mulching will help establish plants and encourage good growth. Use manures and gravel or organic mulches to improve soil conditions. Chicken, sheep and cow manure are all good sources of food for the plants. Sheep manures are available from some garden stores and Cooperativas Agrícolas. Organic controls for plant pests and diseases are available from Mat Diver in Conceição de Faro, just off the N2 between Faro and São Bras. They stock the German Koeppert products and also neem oil for use as an organic insecticide – mix this with a little drop of washing up liquid before spraying to help it adhere to the foliage.

If steep slopes or banks are bare and eroding then consider using vetiver grass for stabilising the ground in a non-invasive hedge which follows the contours of the slope. For more information see www.vetiver.org

Pruning is important for the long term health of many local trees such as carobs, olives and pomegranates. Take out dead or dry branches and suckers forming at the base of such trees. Do not let carobs develop very long overhanging branches as these will split at the main trunk and damage the tree. Keep branches shorter for young healthy growth. Tip prune soft stems on shrubs and fruit trees to keep the shape you want and take out crowded central stems to let in light and air.”

Web Site recommendation – sit back and enjoy the show !
I have found this amazing web site with lovely pics of habitat and close ups of flowers from many areas of the world. I recommend the one called Bulbous Plants of Southern Europe and the Med. It works it’s way round from Portugal to Greece and the photos are lovely. It is a joy to find good pics and accurately named plants. Phil Phillips, former treasurer of the UK based Alpine Garden Society, and well known for his photography of Alpine plants in the wild, is currently digitising his slide collection and making them available in the form of slide shows and photo galleries on his website. To view Phil and Gwen’s website, click here: http://www.wildplantgallery.co.uk/Index2.htm

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
Members of the MGS are part of an international group of amateur and professional gardeners, horticulturists, botanists, and others who appreciate the unique climate called ‘mediterranean’. Annual subscriptions are payable in January. New members joining during the year will receive all four issues of the journal published in the year of joining. To join the MGS, fill out an application and send it along with your membership fee (£40) to The Secretary, The Mediterranean Garden Society, P.O. Box 14, Peania GR-190 02, Greece. New members who live or garden in Portugal will be automatically added to the membership list with this Branch. Further information about the MGS can be found on the main web site www.mediterraneangardenersociety.org. There is a membership page and application form with payment facilities available on the website, if you would prefer to receive these in the post please let Rosie Peddle know and confirm your address or fax number.

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