Welcome to this second newsletter for 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 at our events.

SINTRA VISIT - Details for Saturday 28th May 2005.

10.30am – Meet at the Monserrate Palace parking area where there is plenty of parking space, Pepper Crofoot will meet us there and Gerald Luckhurst will take us on a horticultural tour of Monserrate pointing out highlights, works in progress, and plans for the future. Gerald is a well-known landscape designer and fellow MGS member and has been involved with some of the restoration work on the gardens. At the moment he is working on the rose gardens.

Location - From the centre of Sintra town ('Centro Histórico') follow the signs for Monserrate (about 3km/2 miles). On arrival at Monserrate go to the Visitors' Centre ('Centro de Atendimento ao Visitante').

12.30pm – Lunch at Pepper and David’s home at Quinta do Castanheiro with an opportunity to look round the garden.

2.30pm – Visit to Quinta da Bemposta, Françoise Baudry’s home. Light refreshments served in the garden. Françoise is very much looking forward to welcoming members of the Mediterranean Garden Society to her home and garden.

Overnight accommodation

Estalagem de Colares - details opposite. In the early 1900’s the Colares Inn was opened. Today, there is a cosy and comfortable atmosphere, and pleasant gardens surround the building.

http://www.estalagemdecolares.com

Quinta da Capela, Estrada de Colares, Sintra 2710-502
Tel. 219 293 405 Charming and atmospheric Country Inn, originally a 17th century estate built as the country home of Duke of Cadavel.

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotels-g189164-c3-Sintra_Estremadura-Hotels.html
MONSERRATE – Notes for our visit from Pepperell Crofoot

Situated in the Sintra Mountains, Monserrate is a romantic, exotic, and historic garden with a unique collection of tropical plants, conifers, and trees. It is one of Europe’s best known gardens, and a beautiful example of an English garden abroad. Due to its micro-climate (of which there are only 3 others like it in the world), hundreds of lush species grow and flourish. It is a story of “riches to ruins” repeated over the centuries.

Originally there was a shrine, where the present palace stands, honouring a Christian who was slain by a Moor as the result of a duel. Later, in the 12th century, when the first king of Portugal, D. Alfonso Henriques was on the throne, a chapel was built over this shrine. During the 16th century, the land was owned by the Hospital de Todas os Santos, in Lisbon. By this time the chapel was in ruins; but as a result of a pilgrimage made by the head of the hospital to the famous shrine of the Black Madonna of Monserrate in the mountains of Cataluna, near Barcelona, a new chapel was built and dedicated to Our Lady of Monserrate.

In the early 17th century the property was rented and eventually sold to the Melo e Castro family, in whose possession it remained for four generations. In the late 1700’s they rented it to Gerard De Visme, a descendant of Huguenot nobility who lived in Lisbon. He was fabulously wealthy, and it was he who built the first Gothic Revival Palace on top of the once again ruined chapel. At the very end of the 18th century he rented the property to William Beckford, a brilliant and eccentric dilettante who had come to Portugal after disgrace in England. He began the creation of what were to become fabulous gardens. He created the cascade now known as Beckford’s Falls, which is still a prominent feature of the garden today. His tenure there was short, however, and once again Monserrate fell into ruin.

In the mid-1800’s, Sir Francis Cook, a wealthy English textile merchant, came to Portugal and fell in love with both his future wife and Monserrate. He rebuilt the palace on De Visme’s foundations, but this time it was a Moorish fantasy. He also created, with the help of a renowned English landscape-painter, William Stockdale, the botanist, William Nevill, and his head gardener, James Burt, the masterpiece of Victorian naturalistic landscaping that Monserrate became. He bought much of the surrounding land, enlarging the property considerably. He brought in plants from all over the world, creating collections to represent the five continents. It truly became “A Glorious Eden”, and enjoyed world-wide fame.

Eventually, however, with two World Wars, it was not possible to continue in the same style. Gardeners became scarce, taxes prohibitive and family fortunes declined. Sir Francis’s great grandson, Sir Herbert, was finally forced to sell. He first offered it to the Portuguese government, which tragically refused to buy it. It was bought by a Portuguese entrepreneur who proceeded to sell off all the furnishings, art collection, and even the lead tiles on the roof. When he began dividing up the land for sale in parcels, the government finally stepped in and bought it. It then went into a state of decline over the next 50 years. In the late 1980’s one attempt was made to restore it to its former glory, when the Canadian government sent over a team of horticulturists to work with horticulturists from Portugal. For two years they worked to clear paths, restored some of the irrigation system, and clear out unwanted plants which had become rampant throughout. Twelve years ago the Amigos de Monserrate was formed with the purpose of bringing the gardens to public attention, raising money, and hopefully to get the restoration project going. They are still very active today. Happily, a group known as...
Parques de Sintra- Monte da Lua, a quasi-public entity was finally cobbled together several years ago to begin the restoration process, and great strides have been made. The exterior of the Palacio has been completely restored and is magnificent. Work on the inside is planned for the not-too-distant-future.

**Quinta do Castanheiro**, home of Pepper and David Crofoot. They have lived there for the past seven years, and have been busily restoring their garden, which had been abandoned for some time. Because the house is built into the side of a mountain, it has a series of terraces, each divided into a series of garden rooms. Each level is fronted with a Pittosporum hedge, for protection from the sea winds, though these hedges were all tall trees. When they were trimmed back to hedge height, it was discovered that there were fantastic views out towards the sea and neighbouring country-side, a lovely surprise, of which the new owners had been unaware. There is a formal, box-edged rose garden, a tanque surrounded with old camellia trees, and many old Portuguese tiles used to decorate steps, fountains and walls. A citrus orchard, with mostly dead or diseased trees, has been replaced with lavender, cistus, rosemary, echium, and other plants that can withstand the lack of water in summers. A shady area has been filled with more camellias, *Helleborus*, and *Geranium maderense*. There is a small swimming pool, overlooked by a shady garden with fern trees, a perfect place for lunch in the summers. The entire garden is of a natural look, partly because of lack of staff, but mostly because that is the way that Pepperrell prefers it.

**Quinta da Bemposta**, home of Françoise Baudry. Françoise is Belgian, an Interior Decorator by profession, and has lived at her Quinta for about 20 years. The garden was established when she bought it, but she has improved upon it over the years. Pepper reports that it has quite a distinct Mediterranean feel to it. Françoise also has a lovely house, which she usually takes one through en route to the garden. There is now a very elegant shop next to the house which is filled with beautiful things for the house and garden, which she collects on buying trips to India.

Members and friends are all most welcome. CONTACT Rosie Peddle TO BOOK YOUR PLACES FOR THE DAY – please let us know before Saturday May 21st at the latest.

**RECOMMENDED NURSERY VISITS IN THE SINTRA AREA** – further details to follow for those booking in for the day.

Quinta da Eira, between Sintra and Estoril on the R9A

Horta Grande Praia between Colares and Praia das Macas, near Arribides

Link with further information http://www.amigosdemonserre.pt

**COMMENT** received from Udo Schwarzer on the extract below from the first newsletter

*Although much of Portugal does not strictly have Mediterranean climate status, we are happy to include the whole of the country in branch activities and feel strongly that shared experience is one of the main benefits of membership of the MGS.*

Udo is a professional botanist working in the western Algarve area of Portugal and he felt that this was not entirely accurate as ".... it depends on 'how you measure' but if you use bio geographical definitions or climate maps: nearly the entire area of Portugal is indeed mediterranean (e.g. more percentages than Spain!). The only exception is the Minho (in the extreme NW of Portugal) this has euro-Siberian climate and vegetation! There is a more or less Atlantic influence but Portugal is much more mediterranean then Atlantic." So, there you
have it, Portugal is more mediterranean than Spain, should make an interesting topic for discussion at the AGM!

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION from Burford Hurry, Loule, central Algarve.

On a mediterranean note, I wonder whether in the next Portuguese newsletter I could ask members if they know where plants like *Rhamnus alaternus* [Italian buckthorn] and *Euphorbia dendroides* could be found. They would be useful additions to our plant list here. The garden is looking very nice - despite the lack of rain. I have a wonderful *Buddleja salvifolia* [S. African] flowering at the moment.

**PORTUGAL BRANCH PAGE** now on the Mediterranean Garden Society web site.

We now have our branch page alongside those of the other international branches. This is our opportunity to communicate with other members of the MGS and with each other. If you have any contribution for this page please send to either of our branch heads or to Rosie Peddle.

The next Journal (due out in April) will have our branch listed with two contact addresses, Marion ter Horst and Pepperrell Crofoot, as Co-Heads. All contact details are given at the end of the newsletter.

The April Journal should also confirm details for the AGM which is taking place in Carmona, near to Seville in Spain from 20th - 23rd October 2005 and will include garden visits in the areas of Seville, Cordoba and Carmona followed by one or two optional days. The registration forms should be available next month and full details will be on the MGS website. As this is being hosted by one of our neighbouring branches we hope for a good representation from Portugal.

**LIST OF FUTURE EVENTS**

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<tr>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Coordinator(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 May</td>
<td>Sintra area visit, newly restored Monserrate Palace &amp; gardens as focus <em>(date now confirmed)</em></td>
<td>Pepper Crofoot</td>
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<td>June/July</td>
<td>Algarve visit to Hemerocallis collection</td>
<td>Wim van Putten</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Workshop in Central area (garden design suggested)</td>
<td>Marion ter Horst</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20-23</td>
<td><strong>AGM to be held in Carmona, Spain</strong></td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Lisbon area event</td>
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<th>2006</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>February/March</td>
<td>Visit and talk – Camellia garden, Northern area</td>
<td>Marion ter Horst</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Algarve visit with walk to view wild flowers (Rocha de Pena, Loule area suggested)</td>
<td>Win van Putten</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Visit to Porto area – gardens and guided tour</td>
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<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Western Algarve, Aljezur area, Monchique bio-park and visit/talk on swimming ponds (piscina biologica)</td>
<td>Udo &amp; Claudia Schwarzer</td>
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**NURSERY CONTACT** recommended by members

**Pépinière Filippi, RN 113 34140 MEZE FRANCE**
Tel : 0033 (0)467438869  Fax : 0033 (0) 467438459  Email. olivier.filippi@wanadoo.fr
Web site. **www.jardin-sec.com** The price of their catalogue (128 pages) is 10 euros, including postage. You can send credit card details by fax or by phone, but their email is not secured.

This nursery in the south west of France specialises in plants for dry gardens and has a large range of plants, bulbs, shrubs, trees etc. They hold the French National Plant Collection of *Nerium oleander*. You can access their catalogue on line via the web site. The web site is in French but botanical names are used throughout. I have been in touch with Olivier to check on possible deliveries to Portugal and below is a message from him. It may be possible that members living in different regions of Portugal could get a joint order together and arrange delivery to a single address.

“Yes, we do send plants by post to Portugal, but we have little experience concerning the Algarve region. If you have delivery problems with your local post, it is probably best to group several orders with your friends and to have plants shipped by carrier. By carrier delivery is easier because you can call the carrier (we would give you all the necessary details) and have precise information on where the order is and when it will be delivered.

*If you have a severe drought problem, my main advice would be to plant in September rather than now: planting conditions will be much better, and in the end you will be much happier with the result.*

*Best wishes, Olivier Filippi*”

**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

Members of the MGS are part of a large 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 course of 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 (€30) to The Secretary, The Mediterranean Garden Society, P.O. Box 14, Peania GR-190 02, Greece. New members 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.mediterraneangardensociety.org](http://www.mediterraneangardensociety.org). There is a membership page and application form 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.

**Branch Co-Heads**

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