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 mediterrânea 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.

LIST OF FUTURE EVENTS – Details below

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Camellia Extravaganza ! Camellia Garden Tour – Porto area

Friday 31st March 2006

12.30pm - Arrive Quinta Sto. Inacio
A beautifully restored quinta with extensive gardens (a zoo, shop and plant sales included) situated on the southern bank of the river Douro near Porto.

A simple lunch will be served on arrival followed by a guided tour of the gardens by the owner, Mrs Joana Guedes.

Around 3.30pm we will cross the river back into Porto to visit the Vilar d’Allen Garden and Nursery. The owners José Alberto and Isaura will serve us tea and speak to us about some of the oldest known species, their flower forms and cultivars. Many of these we will find on their property.
Evening free

Saturday 1st April 2006

Visit to Mercado Ferreira Borges Exhibition opposite the Bolsa to see camellias on display. Lunch at Taylor’s Port Wine Lodge. A spectacular view of the Old City from the small attractive garden.

Visit to Botanical Garden on Rua do Campo Alegre : impressive camellia hedges.

Gardens of Casa Tait, Museu Romantico and Palacio Crystal are joined together conveniently for a last viewing of camellias, time permitting.
If interested in joining this tour, please contact Marion ter Horst. Tel: 917 850 235, email Arnold.terhorst@netcabo.pt. Further information with directions to meeting place and locations to stay overnight will be provided. See also www.camellias.net/villardallen.htm www.villardallen.com www.quintasi.pt
27th April 2006 visit to Central/Western Algarve with walk to view wild flowers  Rocha de Pena, near Loule, is well known for its display of native flowers at this time of year. It is also hoped to include a visit to the botanically rich Cape St Vincent area and a visit to an established private garden containing many palms, cycads and unusual plants the following day, 28th April. Further details to follow. Leader - Wim van Putten


On Friday 7th October some twenty MGS members and friends gathered chez ter Horst in Barril de Alva. That Marion and Arnold are charming hosts we know already but their Quinta Santo Antonio was a fascinating plus. The first impression was of extensive rambling buildings in a warm slate stone with massive granite door and window frames, all steeped in history. Repeated inspection revealed an attractive layout with many quaint byeways. Almost everything needs restoring but work has started and the effect of renewal is very encouraging.

The gardens, lying mainly to the south of the house, are neatly terraced. The task set for the meeting was to take a 50m x 12m enclosed terrace and create – a garden ! Wim van Putten kicked off with a brief analysis of garden design, emphasising the special problems of long hot dry summers. Having been given a cup of coffee and handed the far from easy problem of designing a new garden we all retired for lunch. The quantity of frango and chips was enormous so it is a wonder that when we returned to the fray anyone could concentrate at all.

We were divided into four groups of four with Wim, Sophia, Marion and Arnold wandering around asking discrete questions. Time was short and none of us reached the detail of plant choice and layout that Wim had outlined. Instead what emerged was a clear division tending either to a formal cloister style walk with associated lawn and/or flower beds. There were some cut throats who wanted to bulldose the area and start from scratch while others tried to retain some sense of the existing features and plan additions and modifications.

Each group presented their findings, explaining their accords and discords within the group. At the conclusion, Marion thanked everyone for their input but she and Arnold have yet to reveal what they are now going to do.

On the Saturday we visited two private gardens and a nursery in and around Arganil. Adrian and Henny Raaijmakers garden was newly planted on a series of small terraces and great attention had been paid to the stonework integrating house, garden, ponds and local environment. The garden will, in a short space of time, be intimate with selected trees providing broken shade. Of considerable interest (and pride to the owners) was the water recycling programme which not only used all waste water but used the heavy growth of bullrushes (Typha latifolia) and Parrot’s Feather (Myriophyllum aquaticum) in ponds to remove excess material and provide a clean source of water for irrigation.
Before lunch we visited a new nursery in Arganil run by Carolina Barreto Leite (www.agroargus.com). This is a tidy operation with modern equipment. A very appealing set up with many plants appropriate to the area. There was no time to see her father’s apple and pear orchards and their impressive cold store. Some of us happily went away with succulents, ferns, pyracantha, clematis and roses.

The final visit of the day was to the home of Robert and Virginia Kuchta. Robert has established a business installing photovoltaic cells and gave us a brief but illuminating guide on how to sidestep the vagaries of the EDP (our national electricity supplier). Virginia is the gardener and showed us a variety of endemic and sub tropical plants growing in and around the house. Influenced by her Kenyan home she has created a farm garden with animals as well as plants. They had to give up the rare breed chickens because of foxes and hawks, but still have two emus. Virginia likes semi-tropical plants, passion fruit and strelitza. She has a fine old black Mulberry (Morus nigra) and they have removed some of the eucalyptus and planted olives. Sadly the huge lake was low, but it gives an excellent view from the terrace. She generously allowed members to take cuttings and collect seeds so we returned home with some real treasures including the interesting four angled winged seed pods of Sesbania tripetii.

Peter Eaton/Marion ter Horst

Mediterranean Garden Society Annual General Meeting – October 2005

The MGS AGM for 2005 was based in Carmona, some 30km east of Seville. The programme extended over four days with a further two days of optional visits to Seville & Granada. Five members of the Portugal branch attended this year. A detailed description of the complete programme is in the latest copy of the Journal and there are pictures on the http://www.mediterraneangardensociety.org web site news and views pages. Those representing Portugal (where were the rest of you ??) offer some highlights

From Peter Eaton

English gardeners have the quaint conceit that they can improve on nature. I have learned to live with this, but the Andalucians, perhaps because it is in their nature, seem to attack their gardens. It is true to say that we saw virtually no bushes that had not been severely pruned. Not really in the sense of topiary, but more to make hedges and small conifers conform as architectural adornments to the adjacent buildings. Citrus trees were grown against walls allowing the tree only 50cm of depth but with unlimited height. Cypress hedges were uniformly cut into geometric shapes; in one garden C. Glabra had been shaped into 3m diameter cylinders reaching up to 5m in height. The commonest street tree was the orange, all of which had been crown lifted to produce a 2m bare stem with a mushroom shaped top knot.

Day 1 took us about 100km by bus to Cordoba. We travelled across extensive arable farmland with barely a tree in sight. The big alluvial plain of the Guadalquivir river is intensively farmed (including rice, corn and cotton) but is aesthetically unattractive. Our first call was to the Botanic Garden and was of great interest. It was only established in 1985 and already has an impressive list of accomplishments to its credit. The management is divided between the city Council, (financial support) and the University of Cordoba (technical and scientific resources). In addition to the normal displays, the garden has Ethnobotanical and Paleobotanic museums and, of particular merit, an Andalucian Plant Germplasm Bank for the conservation of wild/indigenous phytogenetic resources.

Our visit was regrettably short. The arboretum, sited next to the river, has a good mixed collection of deciduous and conifer trees showing both European and sub-tropical specimens. The generous water supply has allowed the trees to achieve gigantic proportions in the few years since the gardens were established. The central greenhouses (1000m2) provided humid conditions for a detailed display of plants from the Canary Islands including, for most of us, novel succulents. The agricultural school also had a demonstraton garden in which a trial of various species of hedge plants was of interest.

Should you have the opportunity to visit Cordoba allow yourself at least half a day (a week would be better) to visit this modern and dynamic garden.
Visit to Granada with the MGS in October 2005

The Palace of Charles V and the Alhambra

From Christine de Roo

Charles V, grandson of the catholic kings, married Isabelle of Portugal in the Alcazar of Seville. They then came to Granada after passing through Cordoba. (Coming from Carmona, we followed some of the same route in our bus.) They had an apartment prepared for them in the Alhambra. Charles V was so impressed by the place that he thought of moving the capital of his empire to Granada and that hope took shape in the construction of his palace. He then decided to go to Rome to see the Pope. Actually, he never saw the palace which he ordered to be built, because he did not return to Granada.

Alhambra means "red Arabic fortress". Initially, it was a defensive construction, but later it was used as another weapon: diplomacy. It was used to impress the Christian ambassadors by its beauty. The Room of the Ambassadors is indeed extraordinary with its individual niches for the sultan and his ministers with shutters against the sunlight operated by pilot wheels. The ceiling of this room represents the sky and the stars and is of magnificent build, geometrically assembled cedar and mother-of-pearl – incredibly resisting centuries of heat and light.

For that period, the great innovation was ventilation and hygiene. There was running water, a sewerage system, steam baths, and the fountains ran with scented water. Undoubtedly, heritage of the Roman world. Nomadic origins are betrayed in that the tent is reborn in the rooms of the Alhambra. Spaces do not have disproportionate dimensions. The ground was not decorated because it was intended to be covered with carpets, the walls being covered mid-height with mosaics for reasons of hygiene.

Mural decorations are in moulded stucco with strong reminders of honeycombs. Intricate wall plaster calligraphy of verses of Koran, poems or odes of the sultan. In the basin bordered with myrtles the patio of los Arrayanes reflects this refined architecture. For the Moslems of this period, the building is the extension of the garden and not the reverse. Around the court of the lions the apartments were laid out for the harem. Currently, there are no gardens around the basin surrounded by stone lions, this is in order to prevent water penetration into the foundations of the palace, the conservation of which is supervised by UNESCO. From many rooms of the Alhambra there are splendid views of the Albaycin (a very old district of the city) and it’s carmines (gardens in terraces particular to Granada). Alhambra was a place totally ignored until romantic foreign visitors such as Hans Christian Andersen and Washington Irving caught the passion for this place. Washington Irving, at the time of his visit, lodged in the apartments of Emperor Charles V.

We left the palace by crossing the garden of Daraxa with its cypresses, sages and hedges of myrtle to find ourselves in front of the stables. We walked along the same byways as the guards of old. A characteristic of the Alhambra is that since the beginning of its construction it was inhabited by people who were afraid - of being conquered - of being betrayed. The Alhambra symbolizes the decline of the Moslem Empire of the Iberian Peninsula but also the apogee of its refinement, even it’s swan song. By the time the catholic kings arrived in Granada the empire had weakened - they did not need to destroy the city in order to conquer it.

We then found ourselves in gardens with Italian style hedges of cedars, pergolas, tunnel alleys of rose laurels and many rose trees. The enclosed area of the Alhambra is 440 hectares, with 50 gardeners employed there. The monument is economically self sufficient because visitor numbers are 2.5 million people while the Prado museum has 1.5 million visitors.

We went past the open air theatre used for ballet at the festival of Granada to arrive finally at the Généralife ("garden of the Arabic architect") with its marvellous garden where water circulates in the channels and feeds the basins, refreshing the air with its soft murmur. Water jets emerge laterally out of the famous rectangular basin.

Water jets would be characteristic of Italian gardens, enabling us to listen to the song of water. But, in the Arab tradition, it is the murmur of the water which counts. Alhambra receives all its water from the Sierra Nevada. The summits can be seen in clear weather and one can easily imagine, for these descendants of people from the desert, the richness that this abundance could represent. To
be in the cool shade and to contemplate a green garden where water continually runs... Currently
the garden has been remade with a surface allowing a complete vision of the architecture of the
two buildings  (harem, summer residence and refuge in the event of disorders with the Palace).
Curiously, the Généralife was a private property until 1932, it was then repurchased by the Spanish
state.

After this visit we set out on foot to visit the Rodriguez-Acosta Foundation located in an imposing
building dominating the South-western part of the city. After lunch, we descended to the terrace
which overlooked the gardens. We found symmetrical dimensions and a traditional layout with
columns and statues, cypress and green hedges. This was not a typical Carmen garden compared
with those of the other houses but it was chosen for our visit  because it could accommodate our
large group.

The Albaycin is located on a ridge separated from that of the Alhambra by the Darro river. The
house was imposing, with a water feature framed with a hedge of cedars evoking an amphitheatre
which faced the principal entry. In front of the staircase entry was  the eagle of St Jean,  as there
was in almost all the gardens which we visited. At the back, the inevitable terraces with the
trimmed cypresses, myrtles, rose trees, some orange trees and fruit trees  as well as flowers.

Afterwards, we retraced our steps through some lanes characteristic of the Albaycin  and returned
to Carmona. Our marvellous visits to the gardens of Andalusia was completed.

Associação Portuguesa de Jardins e Sitios Históricos  A. P. J. S. H.
The Portuguese Association for Gardens & Historical Sites was established with the main objective
of helping private or public owners with the conservation and evaluation of their gardens and
quintas. Its first objective is to contribute to achieving protection of the gardens, taking into account
historical, landscape, cultural, natural, aesthetic, archaeological and recreational value.

This project started to take form in the 1990’s, when the Arquitecta Paisagista Cristina Castello
Branco (current President of the Association), was responsible for the restoration and subsequent
opening to the public of the Botanical Garden of Ajuda. She was a project leader for the study of
gardens with potential for tourism. It was then that a survey of 150 gardens was undertaken
in the country, in the process, getting to know the owners  and hearing their concerns and desires.
Later, this research was made into a book "Gardens with History - poetry behind walls". During the
work of research for the book, throughout 2001, the need for an Association became clear. An
Association that would support owners in their task to preserve and bequeath to the future
generations the heritage in their ownership. The Association was established in 2002.

You can support this important work by becoming a member of the Association. More information
about membership and events from email contact: apjsh@netcabo.pt Tel: 213 93 36 95

MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY - MALLORCA BRANCH  An invitation has been
received from the Mallorca Branch for any members of the Portugal branch to attend their events
over the coming year. Last summer Portugal branch member, Tony Beck, took part in a summer
weekend of events and his report below gives inspiration and encouragement for a visit to Mallorca
in 2006.

Saturday 11th March 2006 Lectures " How Mediterranean Plants Overcome Drought Limitations "
by Prof. Hipolito Medrano from Universitat de les Illes Balears, Departament de Biologia.
"The Hispano-Islamic garden" by Meye Maier from Madrid. Place: Can Anjuta, south of Manacor,
Mallorca. Language for both lectures is English - further information from Signe Groos as below.

Monday 3rd & Tuesday 4th April 2006 Plant Exchange & Flower-painting workshop given by
Freda Cox from UK. "The History and Development of Botanical Art" by Camilla Stewart from UK.
Place: Can Mel, Santanyi, Mallorca. Language is English. For further information please contact
Marianne Beith. marianne.beith@terra.es fax +34 971 654184 mobile 649 637025
Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st May 2006
Lecture and visits "The Hispano-Islamic Garden" by Meye Maier, as part of the conference "Entorn a l’Art" organised by Ajuntament d’Alcudia, Fundacion Yannick y Ben Jakober and CEP d’Inca, Centre for teachers, Inca. Place: Conference Hall at Sa Bassa Blanca, Fundacion Yannick and Ben Jakober, near Alcudia. Language is Spanish. Followed by a guided visit through the Hispano-Islamic Patio Garden of Sa Bassa Blanca and the Rose Garden (languages English and German). Visits to private gardens: Succulent, cactus and palm garden in Mancor de la Vall belonging to MGS members Valerie and Howard Janes. Garden near Pollenca - a garden without work by Caroline Menzel Language is Spanish and English. further information please contact Signe Groos. SigneGroos@gmx.de fax 0049 89 98 51 26

We sometimes have to limit the number of participants for the events on a first-come, first-served basis. The invitation is to members; non-members may take part if space is available.

GARDEN VISITS IN MALLORCA JUNE 26 - 28 2005
This "symposium" was a delight, in the friendly and hospitable company of members of the newly-formed branch of the MGS who live and garden in Mallorca. The occasion was their June meeting, superbly arranged and led by Signe Groos (joined recently as co-Head by Marianne Beith). Not surprisingly it was over-subscribed - a common problem for MGS organisers - and I was too late to be included for some gardens where the group size was limited. But this was my first visit to Mallorca and I was happy to spend other days in exploration of this remarkable island, where great, bare limestone crags tower above the orchards and fields of the flat-lands - and megalithic, prehistoric buildings still stand from the Bronze age. Being June and mid-summer it was dry and very hot, with most plant species not showing at their best, but there was much to see - and certainly not least, the Soller Botanical Gardens. For gardeners the dominant feature of the Balearics is that all the islands are calcareous - not formed at all by volcanic action - and soils therefore tend to be alkaline.

Firstly, getting to Palma from the Algarve was very simple as there are flights every day from Faro, Malaga or Seville, predominantly by Air Berlin because Palma is its southern European base. I went from Seville (after a splendid day with the Algarve branch of the MGS, as it happened!), staying for a night in the Ibis hotel near the airport, and leaving my car in its car park whilst I was in Mallorca. Palma airport is gigantic - handling, they say, ten million mostly German and British visitors annually. Palma itself of course has an ancient history and a few mediaeval buildings remain around the great Cathedral, but the climate and the beaches are what attract holiday-makers and high-rise hotels are very much in evidence in the south and north.

Through Centauro, the cut-price Spanish rental company, I had booked a baby Ford - costing just 198 euros for 13 days - and this was ready and waiting. Also on the internet I found a peaceful cottage in the hills behind Port de Soller on the west coast, and this became my base. The steep mountains and valleys of the west would be my choice again even though roads are few and tortuous and narrow, and there are not many beds for rent.

Day One and the first of the visits was to the north of the island, to the "trade only" nursery of Helmut and Marianne Michi near Sa Pobla, in the alluvial area of Albufeira. Soil conditions there are neutral to slightly acid enabling them to grow easily an exceptional range of high quality plants and shrubs, and this was a very good introduction to plants which might be expected in private gardens. And prior to a late lunch in the shady gardens of the Hotel Reserva Rotunda near Manacor, we made a short visit to a well-kept one, complete with a vineyard.

The afternoon began seriously with an uphill walk in the grounds of Francesca and Christian von Duerckheim's estate. Around a luxurious modern guesthouse they have created a fine conventional garden, but this is separated from their own, older-style home by a hectare or more of zero maintenance woodland plantings linked by winding paths. Their soil conditions are very poor - merely a dressing of soil on rock - but they have aimed for at least one new flowering every month of the year, and we were assured there were many summer dormant species beneath our feet. This first afternoon concluded with refreshments and a book-signing of her innovative book "Gardening the Mediterranean Way" by the very charming Heidi Gildemeister, who lives on Mallorca most of the year.
The next day was restricted to small numbers and my application was made too late - though of course Mallorcan members of the MGS would have taken priority anyway. What I missed were two Palma "town houses" with formal gardens in older architectural settings. Another time, I hope!

The third day began in Portol close to Palma in the landscaped gardens of Wiebke and Mahmoud Amrani. Their large, traditionally-styled house is magnificent and the four-year old surrounding gardens strongly show their preferences for traditional European plantings. Especially there are a great number of roses, with many young shrubs and small trees, set in rolling lawns and pools, with fine views of the western mountains. Artificial irrigation - especially of the young plants and the lawns - is essential, and a comprehensive system is tuned to plant requirements. This is in no sense a wild garden but one where individual plants are individually cared for.

Portol was “founded on clay” and at least from Roman times it has had many potteries. As a relief from pure horticulture, we were led to one of the last of these for demonstrations of a craft which has remained unaltered since the invention of the wheel and we were shown, not surprisingly, some excellent pots and tiles. We returned to the Amrani's home to gratefully join them in a sumptuous lunch on its deep verandas.

Back to business (we were not there to enjoy ourselves) there came a talk from a member of the Departament de Biologia of the Universitat de les Balears on the work being done to encourage Mallorcan youngsters in appreciation of their environment. In fact for all three days of the visits, the Head of the Department Dr Hipólito Medrano Gil joined the MGC party and we had the benefit of his wide knowledge and penetrating comments.

Then it was back on Mallorcan roads - their ancient meanderings now irretrievably changed by an Iberian-style M-way system which straddles the island - to the foothills of the mountains north of Inca: to the home of David and Lorna Hillman. Another fascinating experience. On a steep site of over two hectares, with old olive trees on terraces, they have gently modernised a village house and have given identities to more than twenty separate areas in the garden, with plantings which mostly have no special grouping but are meaningful to them personally. Overall the feeling intended is that of a wild garden - or perhaps of a cultivated garden which is at one with the surrounding countryside - linked internally with wailing, steps, and paths. Distinctively there is a classical-style modern pool with columns and cypresses which is a sharp counter-point to much of the rest. The Hillmans produced for us a generous catalogue of the botanical richness of their garden, area by area, delightfully illustrated by his pen drawings and appropriate poetry. On the cover they quote As You Like It .... "and this our life...exempt from public haunt ... Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks ..... Sermons in stones .. and good in everything".

This was the conclusion of the visits and an excellent place to finish. We were by then very happy to sit and reflect on all that we had seen with a hospitable glass of Rosé. Altogether and separately the programme for these three days set a very high standard of organisation and fulfilment.

I finish with a note on the Mallorca Botanical Gardens which are in Soller and are excellent, though already reaching the limits of existing land. At least four hundred species are represented, arranged by habitat, a splendid place for the student of Mediterranean plants. I was told that - within unspecified limits - cuttings and seeds might be available on request. Tony Beck

**Back Copies of the Mediterranean Garden Society Journals** are now held by Branch Secretary, Rosie Peddle. If you wish to have photocopies of any articles then please send a large stamped addressed envelope together with a note of which articles you would like to have copied. An Index for all the Journals is available on the MGS web site. The recently received January 2006 Journal has the Index included for Volumes 39 – 42.
From Ann and Tim Claye on their new nursery and B&B project in Elvas

Blessed with ignorance passing for optimism, Ann and I have just bought an old but failing nursery in the Alentejo, Portugal’s driest and poorest region, two hours east of Lisbon in Elvas. This explains our recent membership of the Med Garden Society just before coming here in August 2005 to a romantic Italian style home with lofty rooms, some Gothic in style, revealing almost daily a state of decrepitude. The once lovely, but now overgrown garden has some interesting plants and gives lots of shade with mature trees. Water for the house and the nursery comes from a large old walk down well. Having come from the Chilterns we are at home with the hard water here, but have to find ways of preventing calcareous deposits on those plants currently watered by hose. We have two non-English speaking Portuguese employees; a lovely couple, tough practical Chico who drives the tractor, does minor construction with cement and shovel and operates the chain saw and other bits of severe overgrowth control kit and his wife Deolinda, chief propagator and saleswoman both to customers on site and at the fortnightly market below the 400 year old aqueduct outside the walled city of Elvas.

Our experience consists of our creating a garden in suburban England and running a garden maintenance business there for a couple of years. Getting to know our stock and how to manage it is a slow business, as is getting to know the plants’ very different response to the Portuguese climate to that of the UK. Trying to source nursery products is also an added interest, hence the cry for help to the MGS for a supplier of hormone rooting powder. (see below. Ed.)

September is bringing forth wonderful flowers (e.g. Buddleia and Bignonia rosa) after arid times of August. We’ve weeded and treated outside plants (mainly trees and shrubs) and our ‘shade house’ and our two polytunnel greenhouses. We’ve become familiar with the aphid problem on hibiscus. We are trying to create some sort of sense of display and welcome in the arrival area of the nursery with appropriate plants in season for customers and announce the nursery’s existence to passers by with flags at the entrance.

We are having major building works to the house undertaken in order to turn the top floor of our 3 storey house into a bed and breakfast. Two bedrooms are now ready with two more to be completed by the end of February and we would be happy for people visiting the area to come and stay.

We’ve had a novel experience of weed clearance in the lower parts of the land with the local shepherd’s flock nibbling the plants to nothing, including a patch of land that is looked after by Senhor Antones, 84, who grows melons of all sorts and which we get given by the crate load.

We are newcomers, so obviously have challenges in all directions because apart from the nursery and this year’s olive harvest, there are the immediate needs of the house, the language, formal paperwork and a small business in the UK.

The MGS looks to be a wonderful source of sustenance, inspiration and interest to us. We attended the Arganil event in early October and hope to contribute in return some of our own experiences as gardeners and nursery plant growers in this new environment.

We welcome visits from members and friends of the MGS.

Web site nursery: www.viveiros-quintanna.com
Web site B&B: www.quintavaledemarmelos.co.uk
Email: annietimbo@yahoo.com
Tel: (00351) 268 626 193
BOOK REVIEWS – if members have any books they have found useful and would like to recommend, please send the details to Rosie Peddle

**Plantas Do Algarve com interesse ornamental, Algarve’s plants with ornamental interest**, by Fernando Santos Pessoa, José Rosa Pinto, José Rocha Alexandre 2004 paperback 119 pages ISBN 972 643 136 0

This book was published with EC support to stimulate interest in local wild plants for garden use. The text on each page is in Portuguese and English. The language is somewhat academic and the average gardener might have trouble with some of the terminology. The book describes 82 plants, all illustrated, with some of the pictures poor quality. The plant descriptions give much interesting information. Particularly helpful is that the type of soil required for the plants is given, including an indication of the alkalinity or acidity. This will help gardeners to avoid making mistakes. There are sections devoted to Trees, Shrubs, Plants and Climbers together with a brief description of the Algarve flora.

In conclusion, this is an interesting insight on the plants in the Algarve and the shortcomings are compensated by the very low price. Let’s hope that gardeners start using local plants more in their gardens, but without robbing them from nature. This book may stimulate more nurseries and garden centres to stock these plants and make them available for sale.

*(This book is stocked in some branches of Bertrand Livrand bookshops along the Algarve and is also available from the University bookshop on the Gambelas campus at Montenegro near Faro airport. Ed.)*

**Tropical and Subtropical Trees** – a worldwide encyclopaedic guide by Margaret Barwick 2004 Thames and Hudson, London (512 pages) 2.8kg of A4 format hardback for 75 euros or £33 at www.Amazon.co.uk

ISBN: 050 051 181 0

A well written, clearly laid out and easy to follow guide to over 300 spp. of trees, beautifully illustrated with almost 2000 colour photographs.

The introduction to the book is short but concise. The author summarizes the evolution of trees and underscores the time it has taken to create a variety of individual but interdependent genera and spp. There is a special section on factors affecting the growth of tropical and subtropical trees with a simple but comprehensive table which separates tree type by location (temperature, latitude, altitude), by rainfall distribution and fire sensitive or fire adapted communities, by soil type and by littoral vegetation. There is a clear uncluttered approach to plant classification – a clearer explanation from Kingdom to cultivar you will not find. The tree identification section is a short lesson in systematic observation although you will still need a scientific flora for precise identification of novel spp.

Part 1 of the main text is a A-Z listing. The format, generally, is one page per sp. but with reference to other important members of the genus. A colour coded panel (colours indicate primary use as foliage, fruit, flower, timber or economic value) summarizes the origin, growth habits, cultural requirements, morphology and use in landscape design. The cold hardiness zones are given for each sp. There is a black and white silhouette showing the shape and mature size and spread; the main text gives a general description of each sp. as to how and where it grows based on the author’s experience.

Part 2 has extensive cross referenced lists of trees under headings such as drought tolerance, fast or slow growth, provision of shade, accent plants, showy flowers, showy fruit; a total of 20 pages! There are also clear colour drawings of leaf type, inflorescences, types of corolla and types of fruit.

The author presents her considerable knowledge of trees’ natural habitat in a lively and accessible fashion peppering her text with anecdotes and snippets of information on the trees’ agricultural or medicinal applications, and even their sacred or mystical associations.

*Dr Peter Eaton, Monchique, Western Algarve.*
DEMETER plant recording database
NCCPG (National Council for the Conservation of Plants & Gardens) is the world's leading cultivated plant conservation charity and is responsible for the National Plant Collection scheme in the UK. NCCPG has championed and recently launched a new system for keeping plant records known as Demeter.

Demeter® has been developed by the NCCPG to address the plant recording needs of the National Collection holders. The project has been mainly funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and is supported by their partners - the Royal Horticultural Society, the National Trust, the National Trust for Scotland and English Heritage.

This easy-to-use but fully comprehensive computer program is now available and in use by a first wave of National Collection Holders. The program also has very wide potential, as it can be used worldwide by all dedicated gardeners to record their plants. The Demeter® software has been built using the latest Microsoft . Net technology with a fully relational database which will work on a wide range of platforms from Windows 98SE onwards.

Central to the application is a comprehensive plant naming structure endorsed by leading horticulturists and taxonomists.

It has a friendly user interface, is comprehensive to use and employs simple navigation facilities and comes complete with extensive easy to use help pages.

Included are data import and export facilities as well as easy data entry routines and flexible reporting capabilities. In addition there is a configurable set up and user definable areas.

Modules include:
- Plant names
- Trade Names
- Verifications
- Descriptions
- Accessions
- Propagations
- Locations of accessions /propagations
- Plant details/information
- Documents & References
- Plant measurements
- Photographs & images
- Herbarium specimens
- Wild Collection information
- Contacts
- Help pages and tutorials

For further information and demonstrations go to http://www.nccpg.com/demeter/ or contact John Dutton Tel: 0044 1483 479759

THE LAVENDER BAG is a twice yearly (May & November) newsletter for lavender enthusiasts. Its aims are – to facilitate information exchange, to aid identification of species and cultivars, to encourage accurate labelling, to provide a forum for discussion between amateur & professional plantspeople, and to disseminate research findings. Subscription is for a calendar and buys the two issues for that year. Further information www.thelavenders.org or contact the Editor, Joan Head, 0044 (0) 115 989 2718 email: jhead@thelavenders.org

NURSERY CONTACTS recommended by members

Editor's Note I am currently compiling information for a separate leaflet listing recommended nurseries with details of their areas of expertise, opening hours, locations etc. If you know of any nurseries which you can recommend to other members then please send me the details with some contact information so that I can get in touch with them and use their latest information. This leaflet may be produced regionally at first but it depends on how many nurseries you have found you can recommend !!
Note from an Algarve member

I would like to pass on the name of our local nurseryman who is absolutely splendid at looking after my garden while we are away and has found wonderful plants for me - especially trees. Martin goes to local markets with plants, which can range in size from herbs to fruit trees and other trees.

Martin Lucke, Viveiros Eiras Altas, Sta. Catarina, Apartado 101, 8800 Tavira / Algarve
Tel: 00351 281 971 489

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 specialist in plants for dry gardens with excellent illustrated catalogue available

Quinta Medronhal QM Garden Centre, St. Barbara de Nexe, Faro TEL 917 814 261 FAX EMAIL 289 999 633 Email: stuartmerelie@sapo.pt  Selection of plants, pots, trees and shrubs, many unusual specimens.

José Alberto Allen replies to a query from Tim and Ann Claye re. Rooting Powder

I used to buy a product named SERADIX which is no longer available in Portugal (Bayer stopped its production). And I don’t know any substitute available in Portugal, besides some 50gr packets for amateurs sold by Alipio Dias, Lda of Porto and a few others. I’m using now INABARPLANT bought in Spain. Prices : 1 kg rooting powder for herbaceous €19,60  1 kg rooting powder for hardwood cuttings €32,52

I buy this at Suministros Agricola Bacelo, S.L., Carretera Tuy - La Guardia, Carregal, km 70, Tomiño – Pontevedra. Tel. : 0034 - 986 633 409  Fax : 0034 - 986 633 490
They accept payment by cheque in Euro and they can despatch by mail to any address in Portugal. They are nice and hardworking people, and you will enjoy doing business with them. They also sell ANYTHING else a nursery may need, with the advantage that the owner, a young agricultural engineer called MANUEL BACEL0 knows a lot about pest and disease control, and his advice is fast and very dependable.

José Alberto Allen
www.villardallen.com

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 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. 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.

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