From the Branch Head

In recent weeks I have been re-reading parts of T.R.N. Lothian *The Practical Home Gardener* (Lothian Publishing Co., Melbourne, 1955) and found that Noel, as he was best known, had quite a bit to say about the subject that interests MGS members greatly ie, climate compatible gardening. Lothian was remarkable for his ‘softly softly’ approach to his community leadership role as Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, now the Botanic Gardens of South Australia.

Writing this book just seven years after his appointment to the Director’s position at the botanic gardens, Lothian already had a considerable base of background knowledge having been trained at Burnley, Christchurch, Kew and Munich and gained experience across a very wide range of horticultural fields in those places. During WW2 Lothian served as a lieutenant in charge of the 3rd field unit of Australian Farms Corps in Papua-New Guinea where he was responsible for producing food crops to feed troops with fresh vegetables.

He was confident of his ‘authority’ as an author when he wrote in the Introduction to his book “All gardeners in Australia must realise that their local conditions are quite different from those a few miles away, or in the next state. The need is urgent for information dealing with gardening under dry and hot climatic conditions, such as are found in South Australia (except for the cooler and moister parts), the North-west, the Centre, western N.S.W., western and south-west Queensland and certain parts of western Australia. It is over seventy years since any book was published which gave details of plantings for South Australia.” (That book was *Amateur Gardener for South Australia* by Ernst B. Heyne, 1877).

Lothian offered his readers a few more telling insights too:

“In South Australia and adjoining regions, hard-water – frequently mineralised, alkaline or lime-stony soil and harsh climatic conditions do not make is easy for the would-be-cultivator of plants to grow his favourites.”

“Further, one must be continually on guard against accepting a method that is suitable for English conditions but unless modified will not prove useful here.”
“Under South Australian conditions, and places of similar climate, the terms “hardy”, “tender”, and “half-hardy” as these terms are used in overseas literature, have little relationship to the plants as we grow them. These terms are used in temperate and cold climates……”

“…… it is important in a Mediterranean climate such as we enjoy, the plants selected are capable of withstanding the hot dry summers.”

Clearly Lothian had well-formed ideas about the natural parameters imposed by the climate in South Australia on the ways of gardening successfully here but apart from these few expressions of acquired insights he chose, for whatever reason, not to push them on the general public. By his staff appointments to positions of various state and local government boards he did exert a subtle influence that still shows today. It is fascinating to ponder how far that influence extends.

It is our happy circumstance as members of the Mediterranean Garden Society to carry forward a strong agenda based on much the same considerations. Is it a philosophy we espouse or simply a way of gardening? We certainly seek to educate people about climate compatible gardening in a Mediterranean climate. We certainly provide public demonstrations of our ideas through garden visits and sponsoring various gardens in the community eg., the Garden of Discovery at Waite campus and the SA Water Mediterranean Garden within the botanic gardens. Do we advocate our practice? Well, many individuals amongst us do in one way or another as garden designers, garden historians, nurserymen and conservationists and as home gardeners too. Do we publish our practice? Yes, indeed. Consider our quarterly newsletter and our book ‘Gardening in South Australia’ – a resource book for climate compatible gardens.

It looks to me that we pretty much do have a lifestyle philosophy. Just bring me some olives, a ciabatta and a glass of sangiovese.

Trevor Nottle

**Templetonia retusa**

Anne-Marie Holland (Summertown)

*Templetonia retusa*, or Cocky’s Tongue, is a medium shrub, very hardy, and worthy of a place in the water-wise garden. The genus is in the Fabaceae family and named after John Templeton, an 18th century botanist. Retusa refers to the blunted ends of the leaves.

The flowers are beautiful, large pea-shaped and vivid red, which flower in winter and spring. *Templetonia retusa* is naturally occurring along the coast from Western Australia through to Kangaroo Island and extending into the Flinders Ranges. They grow 3m x 3m and require a well drained position in full sun for best results. Flowers are attractive to birds and butterflies.

Look out for *Templetonia retusa* around the streets of Adelaide where they are currently in flower.

For more information visit the Australian Native Plant Society website: [www.anps.org.au](http://www.anps.org.au)

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**A Garden Odyssey in San Marino**

Cordelia Donnelly (California, USA)

This is the first of four articles submitted to the Editors in response to Ines’ invitation to those overseas and interstate members of the MGS who receive an electronic copy of our newsletter.

Cordelia provided the following as background information to her article on page 3.

My essay and illustrations were published in the Mediterranean Garden Society’s Journal in April, 2015. Part of this San Marino garden pursuit is my fascination with plants and drawing them -- which had its origins in my childhood and further, on our family’s sailboat. My teacher-mom asked me to study a plant, its botany, economic, cultural, and culinary uses, and then write illustrated essays for the family newsletters sent home to Los Angeles from various ports, during our 2½ year journey to Hawaii, Tahiti, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia and back (1979 to 1981). We flew to Australia from New Zealand for a visit along Australia’s east coast, as my dad had a healthy caution about navigating through the Great Barrier Reef. We had no radar, no computers, no phone, no TV -- and no formal schooling -- instead, we had 21 lineal feet of bookshelves. Later in college, I took a course in botanical taxonomy, and studied briefly with a prominent botanical illustrator. Our water supply was finite on board, and this early training in water conservation set the stage for my later interest in this subject -- so timely today. Soon I will install an Australian-designed gravity-fed gray water drip system (Aqua2Use) in this San Marino garden.

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**Photo courtesy Brian Walters**
My first garden renovation represents a Homeric voyage. Rather than circumnavigating the Mediterranean of Odysseus, however, this voyage traversed the politically complex and increasingly parched landscape of San Marino, a suburb of Los Angeles. The journey began with the purchase of a Spanish-style house built in 1926 on a plot of land measuring 57 x 119 feet (17.4m x 36.3m) -- an average size for smaller homes in the neighborhood. The home required significant renovation, involving contracts, building codes, community design review and legal expenses. I resolved to create a garden which would reach beyond convention, using my creative energy, a small crew, and a backhoe -- our trireme. After a couple years of adventure in renovating house and garden, we reached our Ithaca -- and demonstrated that sustainability and aesthetics need not be antithetical to each other, but are in fact closely wed. We also navigated waters filled with intrigue, adversity, surprise and difficulty, and this is a brief story of that journey.

I was educated in liberal arts in the true sense: fine art, applied design, education, ecology, land and water management. Work in these fields helped prepare me for this garden voyage. I authored grants for a university consortium of student engineers, economists, and scientists for eighteen water reclamation projects around the Three Valleys Water District near Claremont, California. Sixteen of these projects received California state funding to provide sustainable irrigation to green spaces along freeways. Today these humble freeway spaces are verdant and are marked by signs stating "Reclaimed Water Used Here."

Much of California is experiencing Scylla and Charybdis mega drought conditions in frightening proportions, with no end in sight. Many people are unaware of this impending sea-change and its ramifications. Sustainable water use is imperative -- it is the only way to sail through treacherous water shortages. As I planned my garden, I hoped it would serve as a model, allowing fellow garden voyagers to escape the jaws of the mega drought. Attending a course taught by Lili Singer at Theodore Payne convinced me to rip out the grass lawn as a first step.

San Marino's Planning and Building Department supported my renovation ideas, for which I am grateful. Such local government entities play a primary role in implementing sustainability, and California state government has led by making major changes in California's building codes. But tensions certainly exist because of the need for change, and certain laws soon may apply sustainability mandates to all homeowners, not just to those doing new renovations. Water use restrictions apply to all water users, so more people are beginning to learn and apply this new knowledge to their gardens, at residential, commercial, and municipal levels.

My first Design Review application in 2010 met with the Cyclops of resistance: inflexible attitudes toward change, much less sustainability. The City sought to promote design preferences for homes and gardens through documents such as the "San Marino Residential Design Guidelines" and groups such as the Design Review Committee (DRC), which work to ensure that new renovations have architectural compatibility and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods. The DRC arbiters review proposed changes such as pouring cement for front yard hardscape features. Neighbors cited the Guidelines and Front Lawn Ordinance as evidence I was doing something wrong. Unlike the Odyssean version, few initially realized this garden would return riches to their fold, rather than stealing them away.

Tricking Polyphemus involved reframing the current Guidelines as an opportunity to demonstrate how garden beauty can be created using concepts of sustainability. I did not pour cement in the front yard garden because cemented hardscape is viewed as unsustainable -- thus avoiding DRC scrutiny. Concrete for my house renovation was poured only where required by Building Codes. As a foundation for steps leading into the garden from the street, green-treated wood beams are skewered into the slope by steel rods, a method used for building steps on hiking trails in US National Parks. The next layers use Stabiligrid tile, clad with copper as the riser material, hardwood planks for treads, finished by quartzite pavers set in sand. A liquid acrylic polymer was used to harden the sand while also providing permeability. The impermanent nature of the front steps allows pipes to run underneath and remain accessible in case of maintenance or breakage, obviating the need to demolish concrete.

I felt a solidarity with my Chinese neighbors, who comprise a majority of homeowners within San Marino, and who supported me from the very beginning. I decided to align my aesthetic values for this project to honor the rich heritage of Chinese gardening. Chinese landscape design's majestic history brings together Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist influences. The spiritual depth appeals as much as the aesthetics and the interdisciplinary wisdom thrills. This path of mastery involves concurrent mastery of poetry, calligraphy, and landscape painting -- understanding the influences each of these disciplines has on the others, thus making a garden a living vignette of nature's lyrical beauty. I fell in love with the idea of views in a Chinese garden unfurling gradually to the viewer, much like the scrolls of a Chinese landscape painting. The viewer must take a journey through such a garden in order to enjoy the
This garden design weaves together aesthetic, metaphorical, multicultural, and engineering concepts. This garden articulates metaphorical and physical journeys: my inner journey, a Chinese garden journey, an Australian Dreamtime journey, and a sustainable garden journey. My journey led me out of restraints to freedom and then to forgiveness. Walking up the front path begins the journey. As visitors move from the street to the front door, they experience their own journey through beauty. A dry stream bed, using native granite rocks rescued from the basement excavation, invokes the memory of water and recalling the original native landscape. The front garden was made more mountainous by adding soil to match the slope of the neighbor's garden, as allowed by the Grading and Drainage Permit. The aim was to create a relationship between mountain and water, and to honor the spiritual significance of this relationship as articulated by Confucius.

The journey of sustainability involved working with drainage issues. A great influence in this matter was Brad Lancen's "Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond," which I received from my sister. He gives the formulae to calculate run-off coefficients and volumes, so I did the engineering to secure a Grading and Drainage Permit. My sister encouraged me to add a unique water feature to the drainage system. So, I designed a "sound sculpture" in the front garden. Rainwater flows passively from house and garage gutters, collects in a large underground basin and is pumped up into the sound sculpture. Sufficient rain creates the sound of rushing water in the sound sculpture. Then this water drains passively underneath the entire front garden through a perforated drainage grid. A key feature of the sound sculpture is that it only works when it is raining. The driveway was made permeable using gravel and Stabiligrid tiles to hold the gravel in place. The Stabiligrid tiles filled with gravel also give the driveway and garden ADA-compliant wheelchair accessibility. And indeed, less concrete allows greater permeability: there is no runoff from the property. An outdoor soaking tub, relying on zero chemicals, is tied into the drainage system. A backyard pond, containing chemically treated water drains itself separately from the drainage system, and is designed to drain passively into a deep French drain. This is the first house in San Marino to have such a drainage system. Integrated drainage systems have been built since ancient times across diverse civilizations, and at different levels of complexity and cost. Even if we are not building drainage for a palace, such as found at Knossos on Crete, we need to do whatever we can to save water. These ideas are ancient, but feel new to our suburban gardening culture in California. Our building codes will make residential drainage mandatory within ten years.

The garden was completed -- Ithaca was reached at last, in 2011, though of course the broader voyage is just beginning. The garden increasingly serves as a tangible example of melding sustainability with beauty. The City of San Marino has not only informed me that the Design Guidelines will be rewritten to embrace concepts of sustainability as well as aesthetics, but also has invited me to assist. There are high hopes that the new Guidelines will encourage more freedom of interpretation for gardens, and incorporate regular garden tours to educate and inspire via examples, instead of relying on thumbnail sketches. San Marino has begun to require sustainable front yard gardens, limiting grass lawns to 25% of the front yard as a condition of completing building permits for major renovations. I made sure to exceed these standards to stay relevant so this garden can educate people into the future.

This garden is influencing a growing awareness about sustainability. I was invited to speak about my garden at UCLA's ArtSci Center in March for International Water Day. A new community effort is underway to guide San Marino residents toward integrating sustainable ideas into their gardens, and I have been asked to guide them. San Marino students have been inspired by my garden to develop sustainable gardens at their school. Over a thousand visitors have seen my garden and I hope for many more.

Reflecting upon this garden odyssey, these journeys within journeys, I realize I have honored not only great cultural and aesthetic traditions, but also those of my ancestors. My great grandfather and grandfather developed diverse industrial uses of diatomaceous earth, an ingredient in the cactus mix I use for planting. I also have honored my parents. My mom was a teacher, and my father, a builder-developer with a law degree who spent his career in...
Pasadena, California. This garden honors the global community, which is embarked on a perilous voyage as climate change reshapes our lives. This garden also honors my immediate community, with misunderstanding dissolved and anger transformed into wide-eyed wonder, admiration, understanding, and even friendship. Ultimately, such voyages honor beauty, which transforms awareness, invites conversation, and inspires!

Views of Cordelia’s garden illustrating the design features she describes so well in the preceding pages.

Note the Wollemi pine at left!
Starting again at sixty-seven
Winnie Pelz (Normanville)

"A society grows great when old (people) plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in".

I loved this quote from an old Greek proverb which was featured in the autumn newsletter. I now have it inscribed on the wall: it gives me inspiration and hope in those moments when I think I have been out in the sun just a bit too long. There is a fine distinction between avid gardening and madness. My friends who are moving into retirement villages shake their heads at my folly.

But just as I was beginning to think they might be right, the Easter rain came. Light and steady, not enough to soak far into the soil, but enough to give that first blessed hint of green to the pasture and provide a promise of things to come.

The plant catalogues have come out and I am making long lists!

After selling the 'Garden on the Edge' at Cape Jervis, I bought four acres on top of a hill overlooking Normanville and have built a new house. Whilst it doesn't have the spectacular views of the Cape, it does have a sea view and I can watch sunsets from my deck, with G and T in hand at the end of a day's digging. The big benefits are that it has mains water, soil I can actually dig without dislocating my shoulders and neck (after the rain has soaked in), and some protection from the south-easterly winds.

At the moment, the 'garden' comprises ten Pyrus calleryana 'Capital' that I planted last spring - after the rains had stopped, so I've had to hand-water them with buckets all through the summer. They have survived well, although one was bitten almost in half by a kangaroo. Six Acer x freemanii 'Autumn Blaze' have been totally denuded by the wind and had their tops bitten off by sulphur crested cockatoos which I am sure have followed me from the Cape. I try to console myself that this will make them spread rather than grow upwards. It's not very consoling and I fantasize about sending all the cockatoos and corellas to the gardens of those people who wail in protest when anyone talks about culling their populations!

A platanus x hispanica has exactly two leaves left and a crab-apple is suffering season-confusion after a kangaroo stripped its leaves. It has put on new leaves along with new spring blossoms.

The biggest disappointment has been two lagerstroemia which I thought would thrive down there, but are looking decidedly sick. They will get a severe reprimand and warning and will be put on notice.

On a brighter note, two David Austin 'Windrush' roses are doing fine, with wonderful hips and good foliage.

But judging by the volumes of rabbit droppings around their cages, they are destined to spend their lives behind bars. 'Windrush' is one of my favourite roses - a lesser known David Austin, but tough as old boots with beautiful blooms and a wonderful perfume.

I plan to plant more, behind rabbit-proof fences, along with Rosa brunonii, Rambling Rector, Lamarque and Wedding Day. I have visions of my demented old age spent wandering through drifts of perfumed white roses! And probably getting caught up in the thorns.
Coastal challenges
Sonia Green (Brighton)

Well, I have finally made my way back to where I was born – the beach – and I am absolutely loving it. And with that move come fresh gardening challenges which I’m relishing.

Firstly, I am renting while I find my ideal new abode, which means that I have some restrictions on what I can do, and I also have much smaller lawns and gardens, and that means I’m focusing more on pot plants. For the first time in years, I have planted up several pots with ranunculi, pansies and freesias. And I’m waiting with breathless anticipation for the tulips to be chilled enough to plant. I can’t remember the last time I had time or mental energy and enthusiasm to plant these beauties.

Getting to know your soils

One of the most intriguing things I’ve noticed is that the soil here (less than 500m from the beach, at Brighton), is far more water retentive than our garden at Clarence Gardens, about 20 minutes inland from the beach. I puzzled at this apparent incongruity until a friend who also lives here told me that this area used to be market gardens – that certainly explains it. One of my biggest bugbears at Clarence Gardens was the constant need to add wetting agents, despite reasonably heavy mulch, as the soil seemed so sandy and water repellent, which meant lots of watering and lots of lost plants – including a crepe myrtle, believe it or not.

Here, there is surprisingly no mulch but when I water I can still see where the soil is damp the day after. It’s meant that keeping things alive is nowhere near the struggle it was at Clarence Gardens, and a lot less time is spent watering, even allowing for the much smaller gardens. It’s also meant that I’m spending more time on the ‘creative’ side of things, rather than what I call the boring ‘housework’ aspects of gardening – weeding, mulching, feeding, that can take hours of work but show little for all the effort.

I’ve been delighted to see that I’m far enough inland to have beautiful, healthy roses and even a camellia. The roses in the front garden bed are underplanted with osteospermum which needed a very severe pruning as it was incredibly woody. At least three green bins later, it’s now a sea of lush green with occasional deep mulberry or white daisies. These are interspersed with a carpet of calendula, providing bright spots in what will soon become a forest of sticks. These were one of those lovely surprises of new gardens – the delight of seeing new additions that you’ve had nothing to do with. There is also a patch of freesias which I’m hoping will be the old-fashioned perfumed ones, but that remains to be seen.

I’m itching to add a couple of nasturtiums to really provide a pop of color until the multi-colored roses and the two pink crepe myrtles come into flower again.

Salt, the enemy of delicate roses

With the storms we had last week came another new experience – the discovery that roses do not take kindly to salt-laden winds. They lashed the delicate petals and burnt the edges to a crisp – ouch! Next time, I will pick all the large blooms rather than see them burnt like that. I’ve also noticed that the potted lomandra (Tanika) that looked lush and green at home has also had its ends burnt by that salt.

I wonder what winter will bring?

Another thing I’d like to try in the front garden is to plant some statice around a large pot I’ve put in the middle of this garden (currently planted with pansies and awaiting those tulips). Statice is a traditional coastal plant and I have seen some spectacular drifts in nearby gardens – a striking and cool highlight in the blazing heat of summer.

Back garden

In the back garden, there is a mixture of liriope, mint, a glorious mulberry colored rose and a reddish camellia. I would like to remove the mint, which is looking a bit scruffy, and divide and replant the liriope so that it forms a hedge around the whole garden. I would also love to plant Chinese star jasmine below the camellia, which is currently bare earth, and also up the back fence, but that will be a request for another time.

In the meantime, as I sit on the couch and gaze out the huge picture window soaking up the sunshine, watching the clouds scudding by and enjoying the changes happening in the garden just three feet from my front window, I am enthused and inspired to really get stuck into gardening again in a garden that I’m finding small enough to be well and truly manageable and where even half an hour of deadheading brings a visible change and a great sense of satisfaction.
In 1994 I commissioned a Landscape Masterplan for the gardens of the Waite Historic Precinct at the University of Adelaide’s Waite Campus at Urrbrae. The collaborative team was garden designer Viesturs Cielens, architect Susan Phillips and artist Berenice Carrington. The Masterplan was a unique synthesis of landscape design, the history and heritage of the site and innovative story-telling about the people who lived and worked at the site.

The Garden of Discovery is one of four thematic artists’ gardens developed from the Masterplan: the others are the Sensory Garden referencing the original kitchen garden, the 20thC Rose Garden reflecting Peter Waite’s love of roses, and The Mallee with its sculptural narratives relating to Waite’s innovations as pastoralist in the arid far north of South Australia.

The development of the artists’ gardens proceeded with community consultation and many of the workshop participants became long-standing volunteers caring for the gardens. After vigorous fundraising from a variety of sources, the Garden of Discovery was implemented and opened in 2001 by Sir Eric Neal AC CVO, Governor of South Australia.

The narratives in the Garden of Discovery were researched and developed by historical consultant Denise Schumann and acknowledge and celebrate some of the early scientific work at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute in the fields of plant breeding, soils and trace elements, plant genetics, biodiversity, biological control viticulture, horticulture and oenology. The stories are told through soundposts - interviews Denise conducted with early scientists, outdoor metal books written by Denise, inlaid pavers and sculptures. Much of the pioneering early scientific work in the 1930s – 1950s related to defining homoclimes and understanding the South Australian soils and climate leading to sustainable agricultural, horticultural and pastoral practices – topics just as relevant today.

Mediterranean Garden Society (SA) committee member and artist Lynn Elzinga-Henry has been involved with the Garden of Discovery from the beginning and it was Lynn who proposed in 2009 that the SAMGS be involved in the garden’s rejuvenation to demonstrate climate compatible gardening for our hot, dry SA conditions. Apart from two historic pepper trees (Schinus areira) dating back to the late 1800s, the annual display of historic wheat cultivars developed at the Waite and Roseworthy Campuses, the cork oak (Quercus suber) relating to the Wine and Vine story, and a group of pre-existing crepe myrtles (Lagerstroemia indica), the rest of the plants are Australian natives.

Over the last six years the SAMGS has given grants, donated all the plants and held four working bees a year. I
gratefully acknowledge this invaluable input and ongoing assistance to maintain the informative and beautiful Garden of Discovery which delights all visitors to the Precinct.

I look forward to the next working bee 9.00 to 11.00 am on Sunday, June 14. See you there!

If you are a resilient self starter with plenty of energy and a passion to learn more about Mediterranean plants and gardening practice, then you could be the person we are looking for.

An overgrazed, bare, Attic hillside which, nearly half a century later, has become an oasis of beauty, simplicity and horticultural interest and a haven for the annual and perennial flora of Attica.

Description of the garden at Sparoza by custodian Sally Razelou

The SAMGS is offering a scholarship to enable an enthusiastic member of our branch to train for a month in November at Sparoza, the society’s four acre estate in Greece. This “second spring” is a busy time in Sparoza because the late autumn/winter rains come, plants start growing again after the long hot summer and it’s time to plant.

The $2,500 scholarship aims to make a substantial contribution to the cost of a return flight from Adelaide to Athens and travel insurance for a month. There is also the possibility of attending the society’s international AGM on the island of Ischia in Italy from October 22 to 26 – our contribution should cover the registration fee for the event.

This is a great opportunity for the right person to learn more about plants indigenous to the Mediterranean and to work under the guidance of the custodian of the garden, Ms Sally Razelou. Our scholarship recipient will then be able to return to Adelaide with that knowledge and rich experience to share with our members.

But this scholarship is not for the faint hearted. The estate is in a rural location, two kilometres from the nearest village of Peania and the accommodation at Sparoza is adequate but simple.

Interested members should apply in writing to Branch Head, Trevor Nottle, (trevor.nottle@adelaide.edu.au) outlining what they have to offer in terms of their background, experience and interest in being considered for this scholarship.

Applications close on Monday, June 22, 2015

We have a video of Sparoza which you might like to borrow if you are interested in applying for this once in a lifetime experience.
The MGS Garden at Sparoza

The garden was developed by the environmentalist and town planner Jackie Tyrwhitt. She spent her retirement building the house and creating a terraced garden devoted mainly to indigenous plants that thrive in shallow soil and dry conditions.

The Mediterranean Garden Society was founded in 1994 with Sally Razelou becoming its first president and under her care, the garden has been extended and developed. Succulent and herb gardens now form part of the garden and a major reforestation of the hillside has been undertaken.


SAMGS sends 10% of your annual subscription every year (between $400 and $500) on behalf of our group to help support Sparoza and its important work.

Today the work of volunteers in the garden is directed by Sally Razelou who has lived in Greece most of her life and gardened Sparoza for 12 years. She has an in depth knowledge of Greek flora and gardening conditions. In addition Sparoza has an extensive library of botanical books and journals available.

Sally also maintains a small seed bank of plants native to Greece.

The day starts at 8.30am and runs until 5.30pm with an hour for lunch. The weekends are free. The programme for each day is decided in discussion with Sally. Sparoza has a small nursery where volunteers can help with propagating by seed and from cuttings.

Although Sally supervises the work in the garden, our scholarship recipient would be expected to take initiatives and be able to work independently. It is advisable to keep a diary whilst at Sparoza to record what has been achieved. A programme of lectures and garden visits are organized throughout the year and our scholarship recipient would be welcome to attend any activities during his or her stay at Sparoza.

The accommodation at Sparoza is on mains water, electricity and telephone – with volunteers responsible for their own telephone bills. The nearest village of Peania has a supermarket and post office and Sally is happy to provide transport for weekly shopping trips.

A new highway links Attica to Athens. Fast bus and train services are within easy walking distance of Sparoza, giving access to the airport and the city centre. Nearby is the Philosophical Forest – a private botanic garden for Greek endemics on the slopes of Mt Hymettus which is owned by an MGS member. MGS members in and around Athens also own a range of distinctive gardens ranging from balcony gardens to courtyards and quiet suburban gardens which may be visited by private arrangement.

Kate Chattaway
Allelopathy is a relatively new science. The term has been used since the 1930s to describe chemical interactions between plants which can be inhibitory (negative) or stimulatory (positive). It can also exist within the same species e.g., *Thymus vulgaris* which over time stops re-seeding, so established plants do not regenerate.

The word allelopathy derives from two Greek words - *allelo* meaning ‘of each other’ and *pathos* which means ‘to suffer’. It was first coined in 1937 by German plant physiologist Professor Hans Molisch, during his research into chemical behaviour between plants. Since then, research has been mainly in the field of agricultural science with a view to the development of natural weed control to reduce and replace chemical pesticides. The phenomenon has been studied very little so far in the field of horticulture.

At his nursery near Mèze where he has a large collection of Mediterranean species, Olivier Filippi is making a study of allelopathic plants. On a recent visit, Olivier showed me the new ‘observation’ bed in the experimental garden, where he is studying how allelopathy may be useful for natural weed control in both private gardens and public planted spaces. He has chosen a number of species considered to be allelopathic and will be monitoring their behaviour over the next few seasons. Neither watering (except for initial establishment of the plants) nor mulching with gravel will be carried out, to provide the most natural growth conditions possible.

Allelopathy is the chemical interaction between nearby plants, where one plant can inhibit and disturb the growth and germination of another. Allelopathic plants produce bio-chemicals known as ‘allelochemicals’ which can be found in any part of the plant – the leaves, stems, flowers, fruits and roots. The allelochemicals are released in different ways, with some plants using a variety of methods and others one or two.

Not all plants have allelopathic properties. Some plants that one thinks may be exhibiting allelopathic tendencies are naturally aggressive, but not in a chemical way. The consensus amongst botanists is that allelopathic plants are those which use chemical compounds to inhibit seed germination and growth of another species close by.

There are four main methods of allelopathy:

**Roots** – the plant exudes the allelochemicals through its root system into the soil. These toxins can affect adjacent plant species by inhibiting germination of seeds, development of seedlings and shoots, root growth and nutrient uptake. Most pine tree roots are allelopathic. *Pinus halepensis* deposits allelochemicals into the soil that prevent germination of certain plants as does *Juglans nigra*, the black walnut tree. Drought tolerant *Hieracium pilosella* secretes allelochemicals into the soil which suppress competing weeds and is a useful lawn alternative as it spreads quickly and creates a dense evergreen ground cover.

Examples of allelopathic plants useful for ground cover are *Hieracium pilosella*, *Thymus ciliates* and *Achillea millefolium*.

**Leaves** – toxins are slowly released into the soil by the decomposition of shed leaves under the plant. Phlomis can grow into large bushes, under which lie a carpet of leaves depositing allelochemicals into the soil. Most cistus varieties behave similarly. *Cistus x ledon* creates a ball of evergreen foliage with highly scented leaves and shoots, but is able to support the competitive root growth of pine and oak trees when growing close-by.

Pines needles gradually decompose, depositing allelochemicals into the soil under pine trees, inhibiting the growth of other plants although some, such as *Pistacia lentiscus*, have developed their own immunity.

* Photographs by Catriona Mclean and Olivier Filippi
Plant aroma – though a flower's scent is primarily to attract pollinators, the allelopathic properties in the aroma from the leaves can both deter herbivores and have other effects. Fluctuation of temperature during the day or night can stimulate the production of ‘volatile monoterpenoids’, a sort of perfume ‘bubble’ that is emitted into the atmosphere around the plant. These ‘volatiles’ condense in the dew on the soil around the plant releasing toxins. Some salvias, in particular *Salvia leucophylla*, behave in this way.

A scientific study of this plant growing on the coastal scrublands of California found that very little was able to germinate or grow around the shrubs, suggesting that allelopathy was a significant contributory factor. The study found that allelochemicals in the scent of the plant are absorbed into the soil through humidity and dew inhibiting germination and seedling growth of surrounding annuals, leaving zones of bare soil around the thickets of *Salvia leucophylla*. The key chemicals are camphor and eucalyptol (also found in rosemary, bay and eucalyptus).

**Allelochemical solution** - by rainfall and humidity. Toxins are washed from the plant's foliage and enter the soil as rainfall or dew. Or, temperature and humidity can cause allelochemicals to vaporise from leaves, stems and flowers. Many aromatic garrigue plants such as rosemary, ruta, salvia and santolina use this method.

*Ruta graveolens* ‘Jackmans Blue’ has allelopathic properties

Olivier explains that these different methods of allelopathic ‘action’ are neither total nor equally effective on all plants. In Australia, some plants have developed immunity to the allelopathic properties of eucalyptus trees and grow well beneath them. In the Mediterranean garrigue, *Viburnum tinus* can thrive under *Nerium oleander* and beneath *Pinus halepensis* despite both being allelopathic.

**How can we use allelopathy in our gardens for natural weed control?**

Olivier Filippi's research and findings are summarised in his 2015 plant catalogue which includes an extensive list of allelopathic ground cover plants and shrubs of different spread and height ideal for weed control. Olivier’s allelopathic observation bed was planted in 2014, and it will take several seasons to show how the chosen allelopathic species perform against each other and compared with non-allelopathic plantings. When out walking in the garrigue or countryside and in our gardens we should look out for species that may have allelopathic properties.

Olivier’s new garden should, over time, show us how best to use allelopathic plants, either as weed suppressants in borders or as ground cover plants for paths, lawn alternatives and open spaces. By understanding the behaviour of allelopathic plants and the different ways in which they work we as gardeners or horticultural professionals can not only reduce the need for commercial weed control products, but also the time consuming hard work of hand weeding - though some of us find this enjoyable and therapeutic!

The following photographs show allelopathy at work in Olivier’s nursery and demonstration garden.

In the steppe garden the ground cover is *Achillea crithmifolia* with *Psephellus bellus* forming a dense cushion. The silver leaves of *Tanacetum densum* subsp. *amanii* are starting to spread and *Geranium sanguineum*, which is able to support root competition from its neighbours, has self-seeded in several places. Few other unwanted seedlings or weeds in sight..
In the main garden, mature bushes of *Phlomis* (below left) and *Cistus* (right) inhibit unwanted seedlings.

Below *Ballota acetabulosa* in the foreground, *Achillea clypeolata* (left) and a silver river of *Tanacetum densum ssp. amanii* interweave naturally to create a dense carpet of plants.

As the results of Olivier’s study emerge he will be better able to advise us on how to use plants with allelopathic properties in useful and beneficial ways. This will be of particular interest to professional gardeners involved in design and maintenance of public gardens and green spaces.

Olivier and Clara Filippi’s observations from their own gardens and from their extensive experience of plant hunting where they can see allelopathic behaviour in the wild will bring gardeners a huge amount of new knowledge about this rather secret and sometimes insidious life of plants. I am very grateful to Olivier for generously sharing his time and knowledge, though he is the first to point out that he too is learning all the time and is far from being a qualified expert.

An overview of the subject and a list of the allelopathic plants that he has identified to date can be found both in the latest catalogue and on the website [www.jardin-sec.com](http://www.jardin-sec.com).

Other references include:

- [http://www.allelopathyjournal.org/](http://www.allelopathyjournal.org/)
- [http://mssoy.org/blog/allelopathy-grain-sorghum-4/](http://mssoy.org/blog/allelopathy-grain-sorghum-4/)

*Monoterpenes of Salvia leucophylla* by Atsushi Sakai and Hiroko Yoshimura
Beware Les Saints de Glace – perils of the Languedoc spring
Kate Chattaway*

Emerging from winter in the Languedoc is the garden of Christine Savage, Mediterranean Gardening France. She and her husband Anthony Daniels, who together organized the very successful pre-conference tour in the south of France last October, garden on two acres close to Malaucène, a village in the Vaucluse département of France, 40 minutes from Avignon. Pictured is the view from the entertaining terrace towards the swimming pool with a harbinger of spring, a flowering quince *Chaenomeles* sp. in the foreground.

The hill behind the garden, Arfuyen, has given its name to the house, Mas d’Arfuyen.

A traditional planting of a linden tree is featured on the south side of the house to provide summer shade and oaks and *Genista* sp. grow wild on the terraces which form part of the property.

Here in this Mediterranean climate, winter cold is a killer for plants when plant cells freeze and foliage becomes limp and blackened and even evergreens turn brown. In this region, plants are rated for their cold hardiness - the minimum temperature that the plant can tolerate without damage to the plant tissue. The top growth can be damaged by the cold but the plant can regenerate from the healthy protected rootstock.

Winter temperatures in the Languedoc range from mild coastal regions which only experience mild sub zero temperatures to inland areas at altitude where the temperatures can fall to -10°C, if not more. But cold hardiness of plants is not the only factor dictating survival. The duration of the cold is important too so that a brief hour at -10°C may be tolerated by a plant but many hours of cold over several nights will cause damage. Another important factor is how much the mercury rises during the day. A temperature for instance of -3°C early in the morning followed by daytime temperatures up to 10°C will be much less damaging than if the temperature remains at zero during the day. Survival rates are also dependent on whether or not a plant has a well established root system as compared with an immature young plant or one in a pot. An early winter cold snap when the plant is still growing is more damaging than one later in the winter when plants are dormant. Hence encouraging late autumn growth by irrigating is not a good idea because the sappy growth is not resistant to the cold. This same phenomenon applies in April when a cold snap can cause more damage than a mid winter chill.

Soil can also offer plants protection or contribute to their demise. Plants in a dry well drained soil will throw off the effects of cold much better than a plant sitting in cold damp soil. And issues with frost can be made worse if plants face east so that in the morning, the sun defrosts their cell walls too quickly.

Languedoc folklore warns of late spring frost in the tradition of Les Saints de Glace. St Urbain’s day (May 25) is the last of the four days – so the advice to Languedoc gardeners is to be extremely patient until the end of May when they can be absolutely certain that the last traces of winter are spent.

*With thanks to *Gardening in the Languedoc and Provence*, a bilingual publication produced by MGS Languedoc to celebrate their 10th anniversary – edited by Christine Savage.

A Book Review by Trevor Nottle

*Lâle* by Gül İrepoğlu
Publisher Yapi Kredi Yayinlari 2012

A letter in a garden publication led me to do something rather foolish; I bought a book I have no hope of reading. Written solely in Turkish, this book is about the tulip and its place in Turkish culture. The lavish illustrations are reason enough to buy the book, if like me you are a bibliophile and a gardener. A marvellous array of textiles, ceramics, glassware, arms, jewels, furniture, art works and even architecture show the power of the tulip as an icon of the Ottoman court.

After a lengthy interregnum the city of Istanbul and the authorities in charge of historic monuments such as the Topkapi Palace complex are beginning to revive the magnificent displays of flowering tulips for which the pleasure gardens of the sultans were once celebrated. It is apparent that increasing popular interest in what is almost a national flower has largely been the result of intensive academic research and publication by the author and her compatriots. Objects and plants once enjoyed only by the rulers and their courtiers are now gaining the admiration of the general population and tourists. A culture, once largely hidden from public sight is now revealed, and central to it is the tulip as a Royal symbol of beauty tightly furled that displays its fullest glory only when the sun shines most brightly.

It can only be most fervently hoped that an English translation will be embarked upon by the publisher.
The Grass is Always Greener.....
Lynn Elzinga-Henry (Crafers)

Early in April this year my friend Suzanne and I headed off to Victoria for a trip we had keenly anticipated. Both of us had family in Melbourne that legitimately required visiting (grandchildren's birthdays and that sort of thing) but the shining star of our agenda was nursery visits.

En route, after a day of absolutely foul weather, we were guided by the sometimes unintelligible but ever vigilant instructions of our GPS (nicknamed Miss Loveday) to Lambley Nursery. We were staying overnight in Daylesford and in the remaining hour that the nursery was open we thought to do a quick reconnoiter before returning the following day for a thorough job. As we pulled into the car park there was an all too brief break in rain so we decided to run around the gardens, cameras in hand, to look while we could. We had instructions to see what was looking good, particularly in the dry garden so we dutifully trooped through the interesting but rather grey and purple/pink array of plants but our eyes kept being drawn to just over the hedge where we caught glimpses of spectacular colour. Just because you can't necessarily grow a certain group of plants it doesn't mean you don't really appreciate their beauty.

The autumn display garden was positively brimming with glorious plants that spanned the colour spectrum from yellow to deep cerise set off with a central pathway that had you wading through a sea of Salvia azure. Spectacular. It most reminded me of Monet's garden in late summer and reminded you clearly that this colour palette had the guiding hand of an artist.

Lambley nursery is well worth visiting for the inspiration alone and their catalogues always have a range of tempting plants that are not commonly found in other nurseries. Many of their range are also quite suitable for our tough Mediterranean conditions but it should be remembered that the nursery is primarily for mail order. The display gardens that are put together more like the rich English herbacious borders are a clever mix of mass planted perennials, bulbs and annuals; seeds and bulbs are what they are selling. The dry garden actually is much closer to a household garden with a few small trees punctuating the space but as you gasp in awe at the bedding display you have to also realise the very labour intensive planting and planning exercise that goes into 4 seasons of fabulous displays. It is not realistically achievable to the home gardener with limited means and no full time gardener.

When the rain returned we ran for the nursery shed where we were lucky enough to catch David Glenn the owner who was very generous with his time and information. Despite the gloomy weather we snapped many more photos as we made our way back to the car before putting ourselves in the capable hands of Miss Loveday for our trip to Daylesford. The quiet back roads through the hills are quite beautiful and spotted with nurseries and antique shops that we hoped to visit the next morning.

And visit we did, snapping up some wonderful plant finds along the way that incredibly we hadn't previously realized that we had to have. By the time we arrived back at Lambleys the back of the car was getting rather full. Our purses however were less full and we pruned our shopping list a bit and talked of the next trip.

Used to generous sized pots with big healthy plants brimming with flowers and foliage that are the norm at Tupelo Grove, we were rather taken aback as our small size purchases were trimmed close to sticks, but of course they would bush out when planted. Seeds and bulbs also proved irresistible with their colour photos calling you and visions of their glorious beds still playing in your mind's eye.

Now I sit in the warmth and send grow vibes to the new plants confident in the hope that I will remember where I planted them and not too despondent over loss of small seeds to birds, large seeds to bandicoots and inch high trimming of grasses by kangaroos.

Can't wait for the next trip.
The Waite Arboretum app
Jennifer Gardner
Curator of the Waite Arboretum

The University of Adelaide’s Waite Arboretum is a scientific collection of trees from the world and a valuable resource for research and teaching. Special collections include eucalypts, oaks, dragon trees, pears and pines and species rare or endangered in the wild. The 30 ha Arboretum was established in 1928 on land given to the University by Peter Waite, one of South Australia’s most generous and far-sighted benefactors, and is open free every day of the year from dawn till dusk for the enjoyment of the public. Since 1960 the policy has been not to water trees after establishment. Thus the trees demonstrate performance of up to 55 years on rainfall alone and point the way to better species selection for sustainable parks, streets and gardens.

Every tree has been labelled with scientific and common names, family, distribution, year planted, individual tree number and grid reference. It is a constant challenge to maintain the labels as they are expensive, go missing, become obscured in the growing canopies and names change. Printed maps quickly become out of date as old trees decline and new trees are planted. Even with a grid reference and printed map it has been difficult for visitors to locate specific trees.

The recently released Waite Arboretum app overcomes these challenges and makes the wealth of botanical information embodied in the collection easily accessible to the widest possible audience using the latest technology.

The app contains label information on all 2,300 specimens in the Arboretum and features an interactive map, allowing visitors to readily locate specific trees. The app also allows a user to track his or her current position within the Arboretum and, by zooming in on the map - Near Me - discover label information of every tree in the immediate vicinity.

Other features of the app include visitor information describing facilities, birdwatching and wildlife. In the search function the user can search by three categories: scientific or common names or distribution. The app will return results and drop pins on the map indicating the positions of all results or a selected result.

The user can also choose from a series of self-guided walks with themes such as trees of the Mediterranean, out of Africa and indigenous plant use. A track will appear on the map and drop pins at 10 – 15 stations which include images of features such as flowers or fruit which may not be present at the time of the visit, and descriptive text. All the images in the app are taken in the Arboretum. In addition users can bookmark their favourites on their device to easily find the trees again.

The soon to be released version 1.1 will have additional share functionalities such as Facebook and Twitter, more themed walks and images, and an option to choose the Mandarin translation which will appeal to many of our international students and visitors to the Waite Campus.

The Waite Arboretum app was made in close collaboration with Marian McDuie. Marian scanned and rasterised the paper CAD map of the trees to convert it to a geo-referenced image and manually added all the tree identification numbers to create the geospatial dataset in ArcGIS software. This was then superimposed on a high resolution aerial image and merged with the Arboretum catalogue dataset. Over several months we ground-truthed and updated the electronic map which can now be continually kept current with relative ease. Once completed, the merged datasets enabled the development of the app which was done by app developer Carlos Carvalho of the appropriately named Oak Systems. All three of us had creative input into the design, layout and functionality of the app.

I encourage readers to visit the Waite Arboretum and discover the botanical treasures in the collection, especially those from homoclines of South Australia. First, download the free app from the iTunes App Store or Google Play for an enriched experience.

Rosie Peddle has extended an invitation to an International Weekend Conference in late April, 2016 in Portugal.
Olivier Filippi, the keynote lecturer, will speak on: "Dry gardening: a new inspiration for gardeners in the Mediterranean region"
Olivier’s talk will illustrated with pictures of natural landscapes and dry gardens around the Mediterranean.

Rosie added: More details will be available later but the meeting will probably be held in the Algarve and will include lots of private gardens. April is also a spectacular time for the wildflowers here, particularly the famous south west coast of Portugal. I will be putting more information onto our page on the MGS web-site shortly.

The Portugal group has a new web-site www.mediterraneangardeningportugal.org
The season launch for members only is on August 23 and the first gardens open to the public will be August 29 and 30 with gardens open every weekend up to December with a short summer break and then the summer and autumn season beginning in January and continuing until May.

Already we have over 40 gardens confirmed for the spring season and the promise of around 20 for the summer/autumn. OGSA is interested in hearing from anyone else who would like to open their garden between January and May 2016.

Gardens that will be open in August and September are:

- **August 29-30**: Belleview Succulent Garden, 81 Highland Drive Bellevue Heights
  - The Looking Glass garden, 2 Caralue Rd, Marino
- **September 5 (Saturday)**: Mosaic Workshop with Ann Martin. Bookings via website
- **September 5-6**: Avondale, 146 Avondale Road, Rhynie
- **September 12-13**: Gable Ends, 27 Carrick Hill Drive, Mitcham
- **September 19-20**: Sheringa, 2091 Greenhill Road, Carey Gully
- **September 20 (Sunday only)**: Richwyn, 21 Linwood Ave, Aldgate
- **September 26-27**: Wirrapunga Indigenous Garden, 7 Williams Road, Aldgate
  - St Austell, 364 Glynburn Road, Kensington Gardens

Garden descriptions and photographs of all gardens will be up on the website in a few weeks.

**Gardening in groups**

Merilyn Kuchel

Wednesday May 13 and I have just returned home after spending a cold grey morning painting a fence at Beaumont House. I actually dislike painting and these days I’m a bit of a fair weather gardener so why (I hear you asking) did I find myself in baggy tracky daks and beanie kneeling in the wet mulch trying to cover the bottom of the old fence with charcoal paint? Well the answer is simple. I’m one of a small band of volunteer gardeners who are gradually rejuvenating the gardens at the National Trust Headquarters at 631 Glynburn road and, modesty aside, we are making wonderful progress. Our most recent project is the removal of masses of feral rhamnus, olive seedlings and periwinkle with the aim of re-establishing a patch of local indigenous flora to represent the landscape which had been there when Archbishop Augustus Short first took up residence in 1851. Removing the ferals is progressing steadily which is excellent but the downside is exposing the rather ugly light grey boundary fence, hence the necessity for the painting.

As three of us painted away, we chatted about our plans for visiting summer gardens in the UK and France and in no time it was time for morning tea and a chance to catch up with the other volunteers over a hot coffee and orange cake. Then back to the fence and by midday we had completed more than half. Next Wednesday should see it finished.

The point is that gardening in groups is actually fun even when the tasks are tedious and it is so satisfying to see rapid progress. There is now a lot of published evidence of the physical and mental health benefits of working with plants and gardens (See websites: Open Spaces, Sacred Places, Nature Play SA and the Green Infrastructure Evidence Base) but it has great social benefits too. Gardening alongside other like-minded people is very rewarding as gardeners really are the very nicest people you can meet.

I’ve been working at Beaumont House for six and a half years and when I started we only worked one morning a month but for the last four years most of the dozen volunteers have been meeting every week as we enjoy it so much. Some, however, still only come once a month as they have other commitments and that’s fine too. Other MGS members Margaret Beard and Kate Chattaway come as often as they can and gradually we are giving the garden a distinctly Mediterranean feel.

The other project I am glad to be part of is the Garden of Discovery at the Waite arboretum where SAMGS also started helping out in 2009. It’s wonderful to look back to the photos we took then and see just how much this Australian plant garden has developed since then. We only meet for two hours on a Sunday morning four times a year so it is a very small commitment. Numbers have been dwindling recently so we would like to see more of you at our next working bee on June 14 at 9am.

Jennifer Gardner, Director of the Waite arboretum, is planning to install a water feature thanks to a donation of funds from the Garden Designers’ Society and has asked the SAMGS to also contribute. Several of our members are providing expertise for this exciting project. There is a great sense of satisfaction in contributing to public projects which will provide pleasure to others now and in the future. Please join us and feel the benefits of gardening in groups.
Clematis for Mediterranean Gardens
Mike Brown

In the world there are nearly 300 different species of clematis, many of which already flourish in Mediterranean climates. Large-flowered clematis make up the majority of at least 5,000 varieties worldwide, but this article will be giving particular focus to species of small-flowered clematis, less demanding and extremely favourable for growing in a wide variety of climates and soils in gardens.

Soil Preparation

Soil preparation is critical to the success of long-term cultivation of clematis. We can immediately dismiss a myth: 'the acidity or alkalinity (pH value) of garden soil has little relevance for most clematis'. In fact, far from being "limestone lovers" clematis are actually "limestone tolerant". Any pH between 5.5 and 8.5 is equally suitable for clematis, and making the soil rich in humus, moist but retaining good drainage are far more important aspects of preparation. Poor-quality and sandy soils require regular additions of nutrients and a mulch to retain the moisture, to facilitate the creation of a good root system and to minimize the evaporation of water.

Unlike large flowered clematis, which develop when abundantly watered and fed, species and small flowered cultivars resent being supercharged. In nature, small-flowered clematis grow up feeding on the nutrients naturally occurring in their habitat, along with the resulting humus from the annual autumn leaf fall of the host plants or partners.

Mediterranean-type gardens usually have many native plants and when introducing clematis, their root area should receive some protection from the plants that are already developed.

How to plant clematis

Cut the bottom out of two plastic pots and place one inside the top of the other to make a type of planting sleeve. Ensure that the base drains well (clematis like water but hate sitting in it), fill with a compost rich in humus and include fertilizer in the hole at the base, then plant the clematis into the top pot, adding good compost.

The top of the root ball can be a little below the top of your sleeve as the species of small-flowered clematis need not be planted to as great a depth as their large flower relatives. This is important because the usual advice when planting hybrids with large flowers is to plant them deeper than they were in the nursery pot. This is not required with the clematis species with small flowers.

All clematis growing along with other plants should be grown on the north (south in Australia) side of the host plant that is chosen, so that they can get all the shade available. Leaving the top edge of a sleeve above the ground level means that the roots of adjacent plants do not invade. Water the clematis with at least five litres of water, making sure that water reaches the roots, because only then will they be encouraged to increasingly expand into the planting sleeve in the fresh soil.

Many newly planted clematis are often watered with a little water each time. The roots of these clematis remain near the surface, and quickly perish when the soil temperature becomes too hot for them.

Which clematis to cultivate?

_Clematis flammula_ , _C. viticella_ and _C. cirrhosa_ are native to the Mediterranean regions and are often seen growing freely in nature. _C. cirrhosa_ gave rise to many cultivars that are the most captivating for Mediterranean gardeners. _C. ‘Freckles’_ is by far the best, blooming for 5 or 6 months, displaying flowers that are coloured pink with bright red spots inside the bells. Another is the _C. ‘Ourika Valley’_, which has a creamy colour green with much larger flowers than normal. _C. ‘Landsdowne Gem’_ is red inside and coloured pink on the outside, magnificent colour for an evergreen clematis. All cirrhosas are evergreen through the winter, but many are completely asleep during a long,
hot summer, disappearing until early September, at which time they reappear and may bloom again for about six weeks.

Another evergreen clematis, blooming in autumn and winter is *Clematis napaulensis*. The flowers hang down like coloured tassels in cream and purple. This also goes through a period of dormancy in summer, as with the cirrhosas. *C. viticella* occurs naturally in purple, pink, blue and various other shades. True *C. viticella* has a flower-shaped bell, while many of its cultivars and hybrids have forms ranging from flowers which are completely flat and flowers facing up.

Other species that a Mediterranean gardener can try to grow include the C. ‘Paul Farges’ (a hybrid between *C. vitalba* and *C. potanini*) with white flowers. In fact, there is a wide variety of clematis to choose from, including the beautiful American species such as *C. texensis* and *C. crispa*, which bloom in summer, and another American species, *C. terniflora*, which provides a wonderful fragrance in autumn. The herbaceous clematis should also not be ignored, since they provide pleasant fragrances and colour. *C. aromatica* and *C. mandshurica* together with *C. ‘Arabella’* and *C. ‘Alionushka’* provide colour for months.

International Clematis Society has seed exchange and more information www.clematisinternational.com

Mike Brown is a member of the International Clematis Society and is a past Chairman of the British Clematis Society (BCS); he has written many articles on the genus. Mike is the raiser of the popular clematis ‘Barbara Wheeler’ and has just named a new cultivar ‘Geoffrey Tolver’.

For many years Mike has been involved in organising the annual BCS seed exchange programme and in trialing new clematis for BCS awards. Mike holds the UK’s NCCPG National Collection of herbaceous clematis but his collection extends far beyond this. www.mediterraneangardeningportugal.org

Growing Clematis at Carey Gully
Ines Parker

I share Mike Brown’s enthusiasm for small flowered clematis.

When we first built this house and started the garden fifteen years ago, I planted numerous and assorted clematis along the southern fence line. Fifteen years later, those that are still thriving are the small flowered species, *Clematis cirrhosa* varieties, *C. napaulensis*, *C. maximowicziana*, C. ‘Huldine’ and a number of *C. montana* varieties. These tough plants have done well in spite of strong competition for resources and sun offered by adjacent trees and shrubs. The Australian native clematis also do quite well here, but seem to have a more limited lifespan.

The trees in this region of the garden are deciduous, so the winter flowering *C. cirrhosa* and *C. napaulensis* can enjoy the sun when it appears. Winter flowers are of course very welcome!

In our garden, the napaulensis are completely deciduous in summer, but the cirrhosas remain evergreen. I tried planting summer flowering clematis with the napaulensis to hide the bare vines in summer, but *C. napaulensis* rapidly overtook its companion plants.

![C. cirrhosa 'Freckles'](image-url)
While the individual flowers of *C. maximowicziana* are tiny, this vigorous plant spreads for many metres even after heavy winter pruning and forms a blanket of white flowers in autumn followed by fluffy seed heads, climbing harmlessly through adjacent trees and camellias.

The montanas, also vigorous growers, produce massed displays of flowers in spring. One of the montanas has clambered along the gate to our driveway and happily accommodates the frequent opening and closing of the gate!

So, although not many of the spectacular large flowered clematis now decorate our fence, we are happy to have their smaller friends doing well.

**At Home With Jo Connolly**

In late March garden designer and SAMGS member, Jo Connolly, kindly opened her garden so that other members could see the progress on her own property. Jo’s garden, deep in the Adelaide Hills, was established four years ago. It is a young garden in terms of hills gardens. Its youth however is grounded and balanced by the thoughtful retention of several mature eucalypt species close to the home, and by the wonderful borrowed landscape which lies beyond the realms of the garden.

This large garden, on an exposed, windy site has made good use of succulents, agave, aloe, a myriad of grasses, clipped westringia and swathes of junipers.

This is a garden for families. Lovely to see large areas of lawn have been retained for teenage sport antics. The adjacent pool area is delightfully simple – here you will find the beautifully tiled pool sits on its own terrace, bordered by a large retaining wall which is softened by convolvulus, and overlooks a vast and very beautiful borrowed vista. Thoughtful and well designed sculptures provide interest and are scattered throughout the garden. A veggie garden at the rear of the property clearly provides ample produce for the kitchen, and completes this lovely garden.

Only a short distance from Jo’s garden is Ian and Robyn Powell’s Tupelo Grove Nursery. Many people made the short trip to Tupelo to indulge in a spot of garden retail therapy, followed by a cuppa in the garden. Many thanks to Robyn and Ian for their hospitality and delicious brews and treats, and to Virginia Kennett for the fabulous date and walnut cake!

*Amanda Stewart*
Gardens of Lucca
Heather Martin (Kent, England)

More than 40 members of Mediterranean Plants and Gardens (MPG) stayed in the walled city of Lucca, northern Tuscany, in mid-April in order to visit 17 very varied gardens in the region. Members divided into two groups of 24 for consecutive five-day tours. This was an opportunity to get into private gardens rarely, if ever, open to visitors, but we also had guided tours of the beautifully maintained botanic garden in Lucca and the enclosed display area of a huge citrus nursery, as well as going to the classic Villas Reale, Oliva, Grabau, Torrigiani and Garzoni in the countryside north-east of Lucca. Some of these villas date from the 1500s.

One of the most surprising private gardens in the area serves as an open-air gallery for a collection of more than 100 contemporary sculptures by Jean-Michel Folon, Igor Mitoraj and others. We were introduced to the Dutch owner and shown round by the landscape architect. Originally this house would have had living accommodation upstairs with the ground floor used for the animals. Today it is beautifully modernised. Elegant cypress trees and dense hedges of *Teucrium fruticans* dominate much of the garden, with *Laurus nobilis* screening off the swimming pool area.

At two large traditional villas – Villa Massei and Villa Benvenuti – we were greeted by the owners. Sir Idris Pearce is a member of MPG and welcomed us warmly at Villa Benvenuti taking us round the gardens himself, then plied us with delicious wine from his estate. Idris has reworked the garden in the 25 years since he bought the place in order to make it low maintenance and child-friendly while also being beautiful. He told us about the problem he has had with box blight and just recently six old trees brought down by exceptional winds. The box has been replaced with a *Lonicera* sp.

Some visits demonstrated what enthusiasm there is for plants among the people of the area. As well as the commercial and botanical expertise of the Tintori family, owners of the citrus nursery, with its magnificent display greenhouse containing several hundred mature varieties of citruses, we were invited to the garden of an Italian teacher, Barbara Mariti, which was gloriously stuffed with plants. Many different roses flourished among borders, climbing trees and pergolas. *Rosa* ‘Pirouette’ was in peak condition near the main terrace and there were cleverly colour-matched irises and aquilegias in clumps around the garden. We also enjoyed a visit to a series of small village gardens in Buggiano Castello which were beautifully presented by their owners.

Lucca is a remarkable place to stay at this time of year. The area is fertile and productive with good local wine and olive oil readily widely available. You can circumnavigate the town on foot or by bike on top of the old walls. Within the walls there is very little traffic, many streets are pedestrian only, there are Puccini concerts every evening from April until the end of October in the church of San Giovanni and there are very good restaurants.

**SAMGS Annual General Meeting**

**July 9, 2015 at 7.30 pm**

**Goodman Building**

With guest speaker Rosey Boehm

Garden and landscape designer and photographer Rosey has been a professional photographer for over twenty-five years. She now combines this with her new career as a landscape designer. At the AGM she’ll be giving an illustrated presentation on how to improve your photography; from the basics of how to focus, simple tips on improving your compositions, lighting, flash and basic camera functions.

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Sam Martin (Kent, England)
For a number of years SAMGS has collected information about plants that have or have not been successful in members’ gardens. The Committee has decided to re-activate the scheme and is asking all members to participate. Each season members will be emailed a survey form that can be completed simply; selected responses will be published in the newsletter. Your responses will be useful as we work to create a new chapter (Colour all the year round) for the reprint of our Branch Resource Book.

Several members have responded to our second survey and I thank them for that. But what happened to the 140 who did not?

Most of the information provided by respondents is reproduced below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best performing</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tree</td>
<td>Ulmus procera - Fagus sylvatica</td>
<td>Amelanchier canadensis</td>
<td>Acer iteaphylla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liriodendron tulipifera</td>
<td>Fraxinus raywoodii</td>
<td>Acer palmatum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acer x freemanii ‘Autumn Blaze’</td>
<td>Gingko biloba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>annual</td>
<td>Petro尼亚</td>
<td>Nemesia</td>
<td>Pansy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbascum thapsis</td>
<td>Lobularia maritima</td>
<td>Lobularia maritima</td>
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<tr>
<td>perennial</td>
<td>Cerastigma plumboides</td>
<td>Salvia leucantha</td>
<td>Bergenia cordifolia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plectranthus ecklonii</td>
<td>Plectranthus ecklonii</td>
<td>Salvia ‘Anthony Parker’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anemone hupehensis</td>
<td>Salvia ‘Anthony Parker’</td>
<td>Salvia semiatrata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sedum ‘Autumn Joy’</td>
<td>Echinops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panicum virgatum ‘Red Prairie’</td>
<td>Salvia semiatrata</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulb/tuber</td>
<td>Amaryllis belladonna</td>
<td>Ornamental oxalis</td>
<td>Kniphofia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Hathor’</td>
<td>Nerine alba</td>
<td>Leucojum vernum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colchicum speciosum</td>
<td>Nerine fothergilli major</td>
<td>‘Snowdrop’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Album’</td>
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<tr>
<td>ground cover</td>
<td>Eremophila biserrata</td>
<td>Euphorbia cyparissias</td>
<td>Correa alba ssp pannosus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convolvulus sabiatus</td>
<td>Prostrate rosemary</td>
<td>Lamiastrum galeo ssp aregentatum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Myoporum parvifolium</td>
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<tr>
<td>shrub</td>
<td>Abuttion</td>
<td>Salvia ‘Waverley’</td>
<td>Salvia semiatrata</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abelia grandiflora</td>
<td>Solanum rantonnetii ‘Royal robe’</td>
<td>Eleagnus europeaus</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nandina domestica and N.</td>
<td>Westringia</td>
<td>Grevillea ‘Robyn Gordon’</td>
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<td>‘Moonbay’</td>
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<td>Banksia</td>
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<td>Rhaphiolepsis ‘Oriental Pearl’</td>
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<td>climber</td>
<td>Jasminium azoricum</td>
<td>Pardocissus quinquefolia</td>
<td>Banana passionfruit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ornamental grape</td>
<td>Ornamental grape</td>
<td>Clemsis napaulensis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clematis maximowicziana</td>
<td>Clematis cirrhosa</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As always, thanks to our contributors, to Anne-Marie Holland who assists with editing, and particularly to friends from overseas. Items will be due in mid August for the spring issue. We’re always looking for quality photographs for the space below, so come on you photographers!

The spectacular *Rhododendron vireya* below flowered in spring and again in May this year. Although its natural form tends to be ‘leggy’, trimming helps to create a more compact bush. It is particularly suited to the cooler climate in the Hills, but can be grown elsewhere in a pot with shade in summer.

*Rhododendron vireya* ‘Simbu Sunset’

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