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 jardinagem mediterrânica agradecemos que passa a palavra, ou o favor de dar um destes boletins informativos, e não esquecer que todos estão convidados a participar nos eventos por nós organizados.

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**Wednesday 16th March Planting a Mediterranean Garden with Claudia Schwarzer**
A full day on this important topic. We will focus on the practical aspects of creating a true mediterranean garden with advice on planting techniques, irrigation methods and propagation. Claudia will talk to us in the morning and will be using the new Algarvean garden at Hapimag as an example when creating a Mediterranean garden. The afternoon session will be a practical workshop with Marilyn Kahan, Gardens Manager at the resort, and will include hands on planting, seed sowing and propagation with emphasis on native plants. Claudia is well known to MGS members and friends as an experienced and knowledgeable professional Landscape Architect with a passion for ‘waterwise’ gardens with appropriate planting.

This will be full day at the splendid Hapimag resort near Albufeira, lunch and full bar facilities are available. Full programme and directions available near the date. Numbers limited so please book your place as soon as possible with Rosie Peddle email rosie@thebtf.net or tel. 289 791 869.

**Monday 18th April Euphorbia Study Day with Don Witton**
Don will share his passion for this fascinating plant family with an illustrated talk in the morning followed by a practical session in the afternoon looking at planting, propagation and identification. We hope to have some plants for sale at this event. Don’s web site has a wealth of information on all things euphorbic http://www.euphorbias.co.uk/index.htm Please book your place as soon as possible with Rosie Peddle as above.

**Hapimag is offering a very special deal on accommodation** to members and friends of the MGS. If you would like to stay there for one or both of the above events please contact the resort quoting ‘Mediterranean Garden Society’ Bookings should be made direct with Katrin Geissler at the resort Tel 00351 289 540 561 or katrin.geissler@hapimag.com The Hapimag web site in English is http://www.hapimag.com/en/albufeira-algarve.htm and also see the flyer attached to this email.
Ecoteca de Olhão, Chalé João Lúcio. Contact Fátima Monteiro - ecotecadeolhao@gmail.com
Dia 19 de Fevereiro - uma oficina de Plantas Medicinais com Fernanda Botelho.
Dia 12 de Março - vamos ter um Workshop de Podas e Enchertias.
Dia 19 de Março - o Encontro de Sementes com Workshop de recolha de sementes.

The Ecoteca is also planning a course, in conjunction with MGS Algarve, on ‘Dry Gardening’ – let Rosie know if you wish to take part.

The 2011 International Festival of Gardens of Ponte de Lima, has the theme "The Forest in the Garden." 27th May until 30th October. See the site http://www.festivaldejardins.cm-pontedelima.pt/ing/index.htm The Festival in 2010 had approx. 100,000 visitors.

Centre Algarve aims to be the first holiday centre in Europe to cater exclusively for people with special needs, their carers and their families. But as the property and grounds have been unoccupied for a few years, a lot of work needs to be undertaken. If you can spare any time to help us out, it would be greatly appreciated. We are near Moncarapacho in the Eastern Algarve. Please contact us: W: www.centrealgarve.org E: tom@centrealgarve.org TM: 962 812 230 (Tom, Project Manager)

News from Fiona Primarolo in the Alpujarra, Sierra Nevada, Spain

“Our next Herbalism and Walking week with author and herbalist Julio Donat and Sophie Paulding will take place from 18 - 25 June 2011. This will be the first time we will have run the week in the early summer, which will allow us access to the alpine zones with their rare flowers. Our accommodation in the wooded valley of Padre Eterno in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada includes a swimming pool for refreshing dips. Book before the end of February to take advantage of a 10% early-bird discount and there's also a special students' concession. Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information.”

For more on Bootlace Walking Holidays in the Alpujarra, Sierra Nevada, Spain - www.bootlace.com and Prices and dates 2011 Not just a walk in the park...

A plant fair just over the border - the French border, so to speak. It is just east of San Sebastian in the Basque country and this year will be later - over the weekend of 30 April/1 May. This regular event is highly recommended by Minho member, Chloe Parrott, who has already booked her room !

More detailed information will be available at http://iturraran.blogspot.com

‘Propagation of Mediterranean trees and shrubs from seed’ MGS Member Richard Hickman has sent the following info about a very useful guide printed in 2003. The present publication is the translation of Chapter 12 of the ANPA (Agency for the protection of the environment and for technical services in Italy) Handbook (Propagazione per seme di alberi e arbusti della flora mediterranea). Betti Piotto and Anna Di Noi Editors, 2001 http://www.apat.gov.it/site/_contentfiles/00025300/25382_manuali_2003_16.pdf

It is a 100 plus page .pdf file with details on how to propagate some 120 distinct species and families of common mediterranean plants. If you would like to have the .pdf please send an email to Rosie. This is the entry for the troublesome Caper .... sandpaper anyone ?

“3.2.17. *Capparis spinosa* L. (caper, caper bush) - *(Capparidaceae)*

Average germination: 70-95% Number of seeds per kg: 80,000-160,000

The ripe berries are collected from July to September (from May in the hottest regions) and are dried. Each plant can produce from 1 to 5 kilos of fruit, according to the seasonal trend. The seeds are extracted, washed and dried for storage. Fully ripened seeds are usually dark brown in colour, while unripe ones are much paler. The seeds are dispersed by ants, lizards and birds.
The seeds have impermeable seedcoats (physical dormancy) that hinder moisture uptake. If they are mechanically scarified immediately after collection, a moderate level of germination can be achieved. Some authors theorise that some other type of dormancy may develop following seed dispersal.

Mechanical or chemical scarification (with sulphuric acid for 15-30 minutes) is suggested; following this the seeds are washed with water and soaked for 60-90 minutes in a solution of gibberellins (GA4+7, 100 ppm or GA3, 400 ppm). When this technique is employed, in which the gibberellins have a secondary synergic effect upon the abrasion to the seedcoats caused by the scarification, germination percentages above 70% have been achieved.

Scarification by immersion in hot water (from +55°C to +85°C) proves to be generally ineffective. Partial or total removal of the seedcoats performed by hand results in very high percentages of germination; this demonstrates the fundamental role of the seedcoats in the caper’s germination.

The pre-treatment described above, although not practicable at the nursery level, suggests which path should be followed for improving the germinability of this species' seeds. After dormancy has been broken, germination is favoured by alternating temperatures, but good results have also been achieved with constant, and comparatively high, temperatures (+25°C) and a 12 hours photoperiod.

With regard to other species of the Capparidaceae family, abrasion of seedcoats or clipping off a small portion the seed is suggested, followed by germination in the substrate moistened with a 0.2% solution of potassium nitrate. When the seedlings are large enough to be handled they can be transplanted into containers. Vegetative propagation is possible."

REPORTS OF EVENTS/news of upcoming events are available on www.gardeninginportugal.com with photos. There are also pages available for you with information on various gardening topics.

REQUEST FROM MGS GARDEN ASSISTANT, SPAROZA, ATHENS

“My name is Miyon Yoo and I am currently working as gardening assistant at the MGS Sparoza garden near Athens. I am in search of job placements in Portugal. I have majored in biodiversity and landscape management in France. So far I have worked as a scientific consultant in numerous french organizations involved in nature preservation.

My main goal is to work at an institution involved in the preservation and the development of Mediterranean plants and landscapes. Working in Sparoza is certainly a valuable experience for my professional achievements. I am willing to widen my horizons and search for a job throughout the Mediterranean region, mainly Greece, Italy, France, Spain, and even Portugal. This is the reason why I would like to ask your contacts or if you know of any institutions or organizations involved in botanical gardens, natural parks and anything involved in the preservation of plants in the Mediterranean that I could approach. I would very much appreciate your help and suggestions. My CV is available on request for more details.

For further inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me through email (miyon.yoo@gmail.com) or phone (+30 210 664 6985). I look forward to hearing from you. Best wishes to everyone in Portugal for a happy, colourful and blooming new year!”
**Membership survey feedback**  Many thanks to all those who returned the survey information circulated at the end of last year. This has proved to be a worthwhile exercise and has provided valuable insight into what you all want from your group here in Portugal. It was no surprise that garden and nursery visits came out near the top of wanted events together with lectures and practical workshop sessions. It was pleasing to see that educational and scientific activities would also be well supported. Our first two events this year should hit the spot!

**Discussion groups – update from MGS Administrative Ctte.** Member and **UK MGS Branch Head, Heather Martin**

During the 2010 MGS AGM in Crete there were two optional sessions to initiate discussion of members’ ideas in a slightly more formal way than happens over meals and during trips on these occasions. There was a general session to identify topics and the following day five simultaneous 40-minute brain-storming sessions took topics further. Summaries were presented to everyone at the General Assembly. Since the AGM, internet forums or email groups have been set up to explore the topics further. The sessions were efficiently and light-heartedly organised by Anna Ritsatakis, Christine Savage, Oron Peri and Lars Vestergaard. Any member who would like to join discussions may contact Heather Martin email [hma@clara.net](mailto:hma@clara.net)

**Discussion Group 1**
External communication and expanding contact with the public so as to increase membership. Leader: Richard Tiede

**Discussion Group 2**
Internal communication, including the journal, website, possible use of Facebook to attract younger members, possible members’ directory. Joint leaders: Jerry Tilston and Rosemary Halford

**Discussion Group 3**
Looking at the future, including possible increased involvement of branch heads in running MGS, the desirability of a business plan, strengthening Sparoza's contribution, further attention to accounting, and analysis of whether the Charter is too restrictive. Leader: Patricia Cullinan

**Discussion Group 4**
Gardening best practice, including possible demonstration gardens (perhaps a Branch-compiled list of recommended ones), attention by journal, website and leaflets to composting, water-wise gardening, etc. Leaders Alison Richards and Carole Cross

**Discussion Group 5**
Attractions, practicalities and costs of an online forum linked to the MGS website, available 24 hours a day, to provide communication about Mediterranean gardening. Leader: Oron Peri

**For those suffering losses from the Red Palm Weevil**, an article about British trees by Oliver Rackham (who gave a talk at the AGM in Crete) in the Christmas issue of the Spectator has been noted in the UK Branch MGS newsletter. It reads like a nightmare list of tree diseases, is nothing safe ?? See [http://www.spectator.co.uk/essays/all/6543578/leaves-on-the-line.html](http://www.spectator.co.uk/essays/all/6543578/leaves-on-the-line.html)

**PLANT OAK TREES** and forget about the palm weevil!
There is a magnificent specimen of *Quercus canariensis* on the EN 267 east of Monchique/Alferce. The acorns from this tree have provided most of the current stock available for sale here. The 'carvalho de Monchique' or 'Algerian Oak' is protected and listed as having national importance.

Oaks are notoriously susceptible to hybridisation which nevertheless often results in viable seeds. Thus there are no genuine / *Quercus canariensis* / left in Portugal. But the Monchique tree is considered the country's purest specimen of an increasingly rare taxon. Every effort should be made to propagate this beautiful native.

Some examples have been available at the small nursery near Casais on the same road west of
Monchique towards Aljezur and the coast, the EN 267. The nursery has a good selection of succulents/cacti and some other trees and shrubs. It is approximately five kms from Nave and the junction with the EN 266. Seek them out, and get planting! For more information please contact Antonio Lambe, Acção Ambiental para o Barlavento, E-mail: info@AAmbiental.org

Orchids in Portugal – the early rain and damp autumn seems to have encouraged lots of orchids to put their leaves up, with the promise of flowers to follow, in our garden here on the Eastern Algarve anyway. If you are looking for a good web site for identifying orchids in your area of Portugal, have a look at this one. Excellent quality photos and brief description – Portuguese language throughout but good old Latin plant names are the same for everyone. http://www.orquideas.pt.vu/

FEEDBACK REQUESTED It would be extremely helpful to have some news of how your bulbs and roses from last year’s orders have fared over the last 12 months as this could give very useful guidance on what plants/bulbs do best here. I will post this up on to the gardening site www.gardeninginportugal.com as they come in.

There were some negative comments on the orders made with Natura Garden Centre here on the Algarve. I have contacted them and they have apologized for any confusion. The information I received about the plants and ordering was not correct and will be much more carefully checked in the future, by them and by me! Apologies to those disappointed by the response to their orders. If there are specific plants you are looking for, please let me know and I will try to put people in touch with the plants they want. I also have some leaflets from the November Garden Fair with full contact details for all the nurseries attending. If you would like a copy, please let Rosie know. This local nursery information can also be sent via email.

NEW BOOK! The Gardens of Madeira by Gerald Luckhurst has now been published. A review by MGS member George Everett follows. George has visited Madeira many times. Gerald Luckhurst is based in Lisbon and is a landscape architect who has designed and built many gardens on the island. He is an expert plantsman with an unrivalled knowledge of subtropical flora. Each year he leads a number of specialist garden tours of the island.

The Gardens of Madeira, by Gerald Luckhurst, Published by Frances Lincoln, 176 pages, £30 (£15 at Amazon).

“This should be read by anyone interested in gardens or flora in Portugal. However it is not really for those just fixed on MGS-style waterwise gardens as Madeira is a water-rich semi tropical paradise. Well known Sintra-based Gerald Luckhurst has written enjoyably and informatively and his photos are stunning. Almost all the gardens can be reached on foot or by bus from Funchal.

Throughout the book there are numerous snippets which I enjoyed, and just a few are: ‘muehlenbeckia can clothe a wall’ (p 50), ‘succulents are ideal for planting design’ (p 46), ‘hollyhocks can thrive among bananas and palms’ (p 56), ‘long-suffering house plants retired from duty…given a new lease of life in massive drifts’ (p 155), ‘Portuguese gardens … characterised by their liberal use of azulejos’ (p 83), ‘tree ferns light up the darkest corners’ (p 81), etc., etc.

A visit is made to the famous Madeira laurisilva, which covered the Mediterranean area in former times. There is also a fascinating account of garden history, the introductions from South America and other regions, and most particularly the experiences that Gerald had when setting out gardens of various hotels.

With a low-cost airline it is now not expensive to reach this lush microclimate, and on my next visit I will take up the challenge (p 122) of sipping gin and tonic in a wicker chair at the Quinta do Monte. One little problem is that the book is rather large, but it will not stop me carrying it around on my visit.”
NEWS OF MEMBERS GARDENS and some recommendations ....

"I'm forwarding the pictures of our changed garden (see www.gardeninginportugal.com). We have now been members of the Mediterranean Garden Society for about a year, which has inspired us to change our garden with traditional lawn (requiring lots of watering), into a waterwise Mediterranean garden. The project took place in October 2010 and took three weeks. All the grass was removed and replaced with larger flowerbeds and gravel/sand. Approximately 350 new plants were planted - all of them naturally very draught tolerant. So far we have saved a lot on the monthly waterbill (there has been a lot of help from above though !) We are very pleased with the result both visually, economically and regarding maintenance.

We also found out that you can get very good compost from Algar. Their website: www.nutriverde.pt They will also deliver directly to you. It cost 33€ for a big bag. (approx. 800kg) plus transport. 1,08€ pr km. We talked to a very nice lady Susana Oliveira tel. 289 894 480, Best wishes Poul & Vibeke, Almancil."

There are now eleven members gardens from Med climate zones around the world which are featured on the MGS web site - with some text from the owners and photos, inspiring stuff ! http://www.mediterraneangardensociety.org/members-gardens.html

Oscorna Animalin (Organic fertilizer) and Oscorna soil activator “I am a gardener with special diploma from Germany here independently in the Algarve. I order for my clients gardens organic fertilizer from Germany. My MGS member clients like it. It is number 1 for healthy gardens in Germany. It is a small company that sells only fertilizer in Germany since 1935. I have already worked in Germany with these products. They are really great. Here on Algarve I have found no good organic fertilizer. Perhaps you or other members of the Garden Club are interested in using a supply of these fertilizers."

Product information sheets available on request from Alexandra Hoffmann [hoffmannalexandra1@gmx.de] and Mobile: 965 860 202

For sturdy stainless steel garden structures, canopies, car ports etc: www.algarve-welding.com


SAVE OUR BEES ! You may have seen recent reports of the impact on bee populations of the neonicotinoid pesticides Quietly, globally, billions of bees are dying, threatening our crops and food. But a global ban of one group of pesticides could save bees from extinction.

Four European countries have begun banning these poisons, and some bee populations are recovering. But chemical companies are lobbying hard to keep all killer pesticides on the market. A global outcry now for a ban in the US and EU, where debate is raging, could provoke a total ban and a ripple effect around the world.

Let’s build a giant global buzz calling for these dangerous chemicals to be outlawed in the US and EU until and unless they are proved to be safe. Sign the petition to save bees and our crops and send this to everyone: http://www.avaaz.org/en/save_the_bees/97.php?cl_tta_sign=ba01e3f99e0cebd49e630642482029b7

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Mediterranean Algarve Gardeners is an informal group for everyone who has a special interest in the plants and gardens of the Algarve and who wishes to learn more about appropriate ‘waterwise’ gardening. The aims of the group include encouraging the exchange of information and of experiences. The newsletter & web site www.gardeninginportugal.com contain articles on diverse aspects of mediterranean gardening as well as news, notices, practical information and comment. All information is normally distributed via email but can also be posted on request.
If you are interested in taking a more active role in the organising of events or the running of the Group please contact Rosie Peddle – the success of the group depends on the participation of members and should reflect their interests and needs. Some members of this group area also members of the Mediterranean Garden Society. Further information about the Mediterranean Garden Society can be found on the main web site www.mediterraneangardensociety.org There is now a facility for joining and paying subscriptions online.

**Regional MGS Contacts:**

- **Lisbon area** – Ben Weijers, Tel: 219 291 841 Email: quintadocorvo@yahoo.com
- **Beira area** – Marion ter Horst, Tel: 235 721 193 Email: arnold-terhorst@netcabo.pt
- **Algarve area** – Rosie Peddle, Tel. 289 791 869 Email: rosie@thebtf.net
- **Minho area** – Chloe Parrott Tel. 966971275 Email: chloe@meo.pt

**Contact & Newsletter Compiler:** Rosie Peddle, Quinta das Sesmarias 275-M, Fornalha, Moncarapacho, OLHÃO 8700-091 Tel. & Email as above.