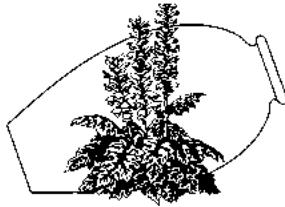


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Cynara scolymus

THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN



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A journal for gardeners in all the
mediterranean climate regions of the world

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The Mediterranean Garden Society is a non-profit-making association which acts as a forum for everyone who has a special interest in the plants and gardens of the region.

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Bearded Iris
and *Lilium candidum*

(M)EDITORIAL

Gardening, it is often said, is an activity which we tend to take up later in life. It is true that many of us have had to wait until the children no longer used the garden as an adventure playground before we could think of growing valuable plants in it. And gardens demand time: time to plan ahead, time to work in them, time to enjoy them. In early life, family and careers may leave us with insufficient leisure to garden as we would like.

This is not to say that gardens are no place for youth. We should not neglect our young landscape designers and plantsmen who have a lifetime of working with plants and gardens ahead of them. If horticulture is to advance in our region, then we shall need the fresh approach and enthusiasm of this younger generation. But the professionals alone cannot change everything. A designer has to respect his client's wishes, and the nurseryman cannot be expected to produce plants which the public will not buy. There has to be a shift in the general climate of opinion before gardening in the Mediterranean reaches a level comparable with that of temperate-climate countries.

Today's children are the gardeners of tomorrow, and it is they who will influence future trends. For this reason we are delighted to be able to publish in this issue (page 29) a report from the Argyroupolis No. 2 Secondary School Environment Group, here in Athens. With the support of enterprising and resourceful teachers, the pupils have not only begun to study their native flora, but have taken the first steps in creating "a model garden for the environment of Attica". The MGS is proud to have been associated with this project, and we would like to hear of any other similar initiatives.

Not everyone is a wild flower enthusiast, and for some of us gardening means a passion for the exotic. But there can be few gardeners in the Mediterranean who have no interest in the natural landscape around them. Jane Miller, writing from Granada, is surely speaking for the majority when she says, "Gardening here is a constant battle against the elements..."

but the wild flowers are magnificent.” Inevitably we find ourselves measuring our frequent failures against nature’s consummate success, and looking over the garden wall for guidance which is lacking in the literature. Nature has much to teach us: which plants require shelter and which will thrive in the open, how to economise on summer watering, the importance of free-draining soil – even suggestions for arranging rocks.

Above all, the countryside – from the abandoned vineyard down the road to the remote mountain summit – is a richly-stocked storehouse of plants which will flourish under Mediterranean conditions, to which we can turn when searching for new additions to our gardens. This, however, brings the gardener face to face with the conservationist, a meeting which can result in either conflict or cooperation. The conservationist has every reason to be concerned about the impact of horticulture. Too many cases are on record of plant populations having been decimated by indiscriminate collecting – and the total world trade in wild plants is numbered in millions. Alien species can escape from the garden and invade local plant communities with detrimental consequences – including the introduction of pests or diseases which have no natural checks in the new habitat.

But there is also a credit side to this balance sheet. The more we garden, the more we come to value plants in general, and seek to understand their requirements. It is no accident that in countries where horticulture is well-developed we find a greater awareness of the need for conservation. And where wild plant populations have been depleted, or are threatened, there are two basic remedial measures which can be taken. Plants can be artificially propagated and reintroduced into the wild. Alternatively (or at the same time), efforts can be made to increase the commercial supply of artificially propagated plants to satisfy the gardener, thus relieving pressure on the wild population and allowing species to regenerate naturally. Both options involve the skills and experience of the horticulturist, working in partnership with the conservationist.

The MGS is a broad-based society, representing horticultural trade and science as well as the amateur gardener. Our policy towards conservation must reflect this diversity.

In this context reference is often made to the CITES* lists which detail species in which trade is restricted. However, most of the plants in these lists (exceptions include *Galanthus*, *Sternbergia* and *Cyclamen*) are not native to this area, and are hence unlikely to be acquired by our members unless purchased from a retailer. As it is virtually impossible to differentiate between wild-collected and artificially propagated plants at the point of sale, we are forced to conclude that CITES (in its present implementation) is of little relevance to the average Mediterranean gardener. (To the select few who may consider travelling abroad on plant-collecting expeditions, we strongly advise that you familiarise yourself in advance with the CITES regulations, as well as national legislation protecting plants in the country you plan to visit.)

If you are concerned about the status of a plant in your area, you will probably find it more useful to contact your local conservation society. Here in Athens we have close links with the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature. The MGS is also in full agreement with the aims of Flora and Fauna International (until recently the FFPS), which believes that “conservation of plant populations threatened by collection can be achieved in many situations by promoting trade based on sustainable use and artificial propagation”. We hope that their “Good Bulb Guide” (enclosed with this issue) will not only serve the interests of plant conservation, but will be of practical assistance to you when seeking out suppliers.

We will be urging our nurseries to produce a wider choice of native Mediterranean plants than is at present available. But this will not happen overnight, and in the meantime it is unreasonable to expect gardeners not to take advantage of the stock of plants growing wild all around them. Collecting plant material is not necessarily damaging if conducted in a

* Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

responsible manner, and we feel that the MGS has an obligation to set a good example in this respect.

Here are some common-sense guidelines for enriching your garden without depleting the natural landscape:

1. Do not dig up *any* plants unless you are absolutely certain that they are under immediate threat from building work or ploughing. Take only cuttings or seeds.
2. Do not disturb isolated specimens of any species. Even if a plant is common elsewhere, the fact that it is rare at a particular site demands that we treat it there with the utmost respect.
3. Do not collect blindly. If you can't identify a plant, leave it alone: it may be classified as 'endangered', 'vulnerable', 'rare' or 'threatened'. A good guide-book will help with identification and classification; otherwise seek advice from your local conservation society or botanic garden. (If it *is* rare in the wild, they may have it in a collection and you just might be able to obtain some seed.)
4. Don't collect plants you can't use. If you live on top of a dry hill, there is no point in collecting marsh plants.
5. Minimise collection. Take only enough seed or cuttings to give you a fair chance of raising one or two plants (you can multiply these later).
6. Maximise propagation. If you end up with a useful introduction to your garden, try to raise more plants from your own cuttings or from seed. If you distribute to your fellow gardeners, they will not need to take similar plant material from the wild.

Finally, we should remember that nature conservation is not merely a matter of what happens 'out there'. Every square metre of your garden was, at some time in the past, a square metre of a natural ecosystem. Habitat destruction is just as damaging as collection, and populations of plants and animals can be simply squeezed out of existence. The MGS does not advocate a policy of 'Mediterranean plants only' – we recognise and welcome a range of approaches – but it is surely worthwhile trying to

include as many native plants as we can in our gardens (even if it is only a 'wild' corner in an otherwise formal ornamental scheme). Flies and ants appear to thrive on anything, but the birds and butterflies we cherish are often unable to exploit alien plants as hosts. The more our plantings include native species, the greater their chances of survival.



DOMAINE DU PRIEURÉ



Joanna Millar

We first saw our house, the Prieuré, in June 1967. It was an old stone *mas*, or farmhouse, nearly 1200 feet above sea level on the south side of a mountain in the Alpes Maritimes. Over 200 years old, it had at that time lain sadly empty for over five years. It was dirty and uncared for, with the sombre maroon paint (beloved of house painters of the Midi) peeling off the windows and doors. There were creeping insects from floor to ceiling. The beamed ceilings themselves were so low that in order to stand up in the downstairs rooms we had to walk between the beams rather like being in tramlines. The staircase was practically vertical, only negotiable by the young and agile. We turned it down flat.

Then we had a look at the garden. The ground around the house was covered with all-enveloping ivy; then it fell away sharply in terraces or *planches* which were originally constructed to prevent the earth from eroding, and for the cultivation of olives and vines. There were nearly 100 olive trees on the property: some were in good condition but others in a poor state as they were choked by the ugly little scrub oak which grows profusely here.

We saw no vines save a climbing one which we were told was a now rare 'Framboise', tasting as it does (with a little imagination) of raspberries, a delight we later sampled.

The garden was a wilderness but it had a wild magic about it. What caught our attention were the scores of beautiful Madonna lilies (*Lilium candidum*) shining translucently and extending

their strong, heady scent. They had not been touched since the house had last been occupied, and they had seeded themselves everywhere.

There were tired old roses straggling over pergolas, whose names I never did discover, and shrubs of ‘Général Schablikine’, a pale carmine perpetual rose well known in this part of the world. The house was flanked by three enormous mimosa [*Acacia dealbata*] trees which we were later to see in perfect flower, savouring the rare scent wafting on the breeze, the herald of warmer days to come and evoking the magic of the Midi as perhaps no other flower does. Later still, we had to stand by and watch them slowly die, victims of a rare late March frost that froze the already risen sap which, on melting, expanded to burst open the bark thus killing the trees. Or so we thought.

After walking around this wilderness we left, having decided that not for anything could we live there.

Two years and fifty horrible houses later we were back, and in February 1969 we saw the three mimosas twenty feet high and once again in their full glory. The vertical staircase, the low beams and low doors, the antique plumbing were all forgotten, and on 28th May 1969 the house was ours. But not only the house – the wonderful old garden beckoned.

We took a long hard look at it. As it is all on *planches* the design options are limited unless one has a bottomless pocket and one can call in a bulldozer and start all over again.

On the east end of the house is a lovely old pergola covered by an immense *Wisteria sinensis*. We trained an ‘Étoile d’Hollande’ rose into it and planted three good climbing vines called ‘Datier de St. Vallier’ which produce excellent white grapes in late August and September. They are not fussy about soil or position, as all ours have their feet in the shade and their heads in the sun. I recommend them to anyone who wishes to plant climbing vines.

We constructed another pergola on the south wall of the house and planted another wisteria together with *Solanum jasminoides*, which afford us shade under which to sit in the summer. Planted against the house, also on the south wall, is a ‘Four Seasons’ lemon which truly lives up to its name. It must

be more than thirty years old, and has been brought practically to the ground on two occasions by heavy frost, but has survived each time and gives us both lemons and blossom at the same time. We are never without a lemon for our gin and tonics!

Next to it is a *Jasminum officinale* and beyond this a *Trachelospermum jasminoides*, so that we have a wall of scent from April until July. On this terrace we have also planted an insignificant-looking shrub with tiny, pale green trumpet-shaped flowers – but the moment the sun goes down it gives out a glorious heady scent all night long. It is called *Cestrum nocturnum* or Lady of the Night, and so strong is its scent that some of our guests have to close their windows. As it is tender here we grow it in a large pot which we take under cover in the winter, but down on the coast it will grow freely and flourish.

At the east end of the house we planted a *Magnolia grandiflora* in 1970 when it was about eight feet high. Now after more than twenty years it is nearly sixty feet high. Although



A corner of the garden. In the foreground (l. to r.) *Helichrysum petiolare*, *Iris versicolor* and geranium [*Pelargonium peltatum*] 'Roi des Balcons' (in pot). *Rosa* 'Paul's Scarlet Climber' on the wall (top left) with *Rosa complicata* tumbling down behind angelica (centre). Beyond, between house and cypress, *Magnolia grandiflora* and a weeping willow.

our soil is alkaline it seems to love it here as it has its feet in our *fosse septique* or cesspit. It gives us the joy of its delicately scented flowers as large as soup plates for nearly two months in the summer. Planted at its feet and intertwined in its branches is the charming and curious *Akebia quinata* which brings out its little scented purple flowers in March. Beyond is a large green fig tree which shades this part of the garden in summer and under which we give al fresco lunch parties.

We extended the existing pergola by building two more stone pillars against which we planted *Rosa* × *anemonoides* [now *R. lucidissima*] which we also found here, *R.* ‘Golden Wings’ and a glorious shrub rose, ‘Ispahan’, which in May is covered with small double, highly scented pink flowers. Although ‘Ispahan’ flowers only once I can highly recommend it as it will stand sun or shade, and is not deterred by drought. Next to this is *Ceanothus thyrsiflorus* grown from the RHS seed distribution, and on the terrace below we planted *Rosa laevigata*, one of the prides of the garden. It was one of the six cuttings I obtained from the Hanbury Gardens at La Mortola in Italy, but it is tender and I lost it in the very severe winter of 1985. Another specimen against a south wall has survived and is the second earliest rose to flower – the first being ‘Lafollette’, a very old rose familiar to gardeners in the Midi and not unlike ‘Albertine’. She makes lovely long buds which open into semi-double pink flowers (sadly without much scent) and reaches thirty feet or more by scrambling into cypresses and olive trees. Not much use for picking and prone to mildew, but as an early climber she is hard to beat. She grows well from cuttings taken in August and September, and even in January.

On the lower *planches* at the east end of the garden we have planted rosemary and lavender in keeping with the wilder aspect of the terraces, but also a long alley of agapanthus lilies. We found several roots here and multiplied them. Walking back along this alley – which bursts into deep blue flowers in July – we come to our swimming pool house which is covered by *Stauntonia hexaphylla*, another insignificant-looking bell flower with a wonderful daytime scent in April, and *Rosa brunonii* [now *R. moschata*] also obtained from La Mortola, which looks like a fall of snow at the end of May.

As our soil is very heavy and dries out completely in the summer, leaving the grass arid and brown, we find we cannot grow many hybrid tea or shrub roses, but the climbers do very well, although they are short-lived. We have 'Kiftsgate', 'Souvenir de Malmaison', 'Félicité et Perpétue', 'Wickwar', 'Seagull', 'Bobby James', 'Rambling Rector', 'Alister Stella Gray', 'Frances E. Lester' and, pride of place, in fact in five places, a superb rose from La Mortola which has never been identified. It is a wonderful sight in full flower as it is a sturdy climber reaching thirty or forty feet and hanging in snowy garlands from old olive trees. (This is not *the* La Mortola rose.)

Of the shrub roses which do well we have 'Penelope', 'Canary Bird', 'Cornelia', 'Constance Spry' and 'Buff Beauty' which has completely taken over the east wall of our shed. I notice that all plants facing east and therefore the early morning sun do much better than those facing south or west.

There are many plants which there is no room to mention, but I cannot finish without talking about my passion: the bearded iris. These breathtaking flowers have been developed over recent years by a firm called Anfosso in Hyères, and they are exquisite. The colours range from midnight blue to the palest blues, pinks, whites and yellows. If the weather is not too hot Anfosso can sell you a range that will last for more than six weeks. The earliest is a large yellow iris called 'Xantha', an old one now but nonetheless effective when massed together. Then the bicolours will open, blue and white, yellow and white, lilac and pink, and finally the single colours: pure white, pale blue and translucent pink. I could go on for ever. All these irises, many of which originated in Oregon, USA, have a delicate scent and although they only last for a very short while in water, one vase will scent your whole house.

After the irises are over we have the agapanthus. We have several varieties which I have grown from seed obtained from Kirstenbosch in Cape Town, South Africa: *A. praecox*, *A. inapertus*, *A. comptonii* [now *A. praecox* subsp. *minimus*] *A. coddii* and *A. caulescens*. They are easy to grow from seed, are very showy and love this climate, but do not like the cold. As we are nearly twelve hundred feet high we get our fair share of frosts

but they survive even though we have to cut off yellowing leaves in the spring.

July and August are really 'dead' months for us, as most of our friends who garden in the Mediterranean will know, since it is too hot and dry for anything but geraniums to flourish, but once the autumn approaches we have a season of 'fireworks', with *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple', *Prunus sargentii*, *Malus tschonoskii* and Japanese maples, under which appear the yellow spears of *Sternbergia lutea*.

And finally there is winter with the delicious wintersweet, *Chimonanthus praecox*, and *Lonicera fragrantissima* carefully planted outside the kitchen door to waft its scent into the house.

INSPIRED BY BETH CHATTO'S GARDEN

Caroline Harbouri

This spring [1995] I visited Beth Chatto's garden at Elmstead Market, Essex. While my companion soon wandered off, drawn by the lush damper areas of the garden, I lingered in the dry garden. 'Dry' is of course a relative term – and a lot of the plants suitable for a non-watered dry garden in England would have no chance of surviving in an equivalent Mediterranean garden, where they must withstand not only three waterless months but at the same time temperatures of around 35 to 40°C, day after day, and often strong, drying winds. In my mind I thus preferred to think of this part of Beth Chatto's garden as the gravel garden. So much has already been written about it, not least by Beth Chatto herself, that I shall not attempt here to describe in detail its beauty and richness but shall consider particular aspects of it that could inspire Mediterranean gardeners.

To start with gravel itself: many gardens in the Mediterranean area are made on poor stony soil and the native flora consists largely of species that flourish on rocky slopes. Stone in all its forms – from large boulders to fine grit – could be considered the element most characteristic of gardens in this region. Even where water is present in the garden, it is frequently associated with stone; an English garden might have a pool surrounded by a profusion of marginals and bog-loving plants, while in Italy or Spain, for example, one is more likely to see formal ponds constructed of stone, or indeed stone-built cisterns from which to irrigate the garden in the dry months. One may well also see broad, meticulously raked gravel paths edged with clipped box. Thus gravel is at home in Mediterranean gardens; it never looks out of place, regardless of whether one's point of reference is the natural landscape or the formal tradition.

Beth Chatto's dry garden, of course, does not consist of ordered, defined gravel paths. The entire area is covered with a layer of gravel, so that – although it is obvious to the visitor where to walk and where not to walk – there are no



'...drifts of plants spill forwards onto the paths.'

rigid visual boundaries between paths and borders. Just as the gravel spreads from the walking areas into the planted areas, so drifts of plants spill forwards on to the 'paths'. The impression this creates is immensely satisfying; the garden has a relaxed, flowing feel to it, belying the hard work and the thought which have gone into preparing the ground and planting. The plants look happy.

As indeed so they should. One of the perennial subjects to exercise the minds of Mediterranean gardeners is mulches: not only mulches to improve the soil, but first and foremost mulches to conserve every last drop of moisture. And gravel is an excellent one. In Essex Beth Chatto's garden survives without any watering; in the Mediterranean region many – though not all – plants will need the occasional soak. Yet the principle of gravel as a mulch is the same in both cases. You can put it to the test empirically: if you plant two identical fairly thirsty plants in positions where they receive similar exposure to the sun, one with a gravel mulch and one without, you will find that the plant surrounded by gravel does better and requires noticeably less water than the other. Incidentally, in cases of severe water shortage where you want to save specific thirsty plants you can go a step further: use an auger to remove a plug of soil to a depth of a foot or so beside the plant, fill the resulting hole with gravel, mark the place discreetly with a twig or small cane and then water directly into this gravel sump. In this way you discourage surface rooting and minimise water loss through evaporation, so that your plant gets the full benefit of whatever water is available.

To get back to the gravel garden: although it was spring when I visited Beth Chatto's garden, as I wandered around it I mused that gravel might go some way to solving the other problem which frequently puzzles Mediterranean gardeners, namely what to do about the dead period of high summer when, try as one may, inevitably parts of the garden look unappealingly bare as many plants suspend growth and hang their heads listlessly waiting for the first rains of autumn. For gravel used in Beth Chatto's manner would allow one's eye to view the garden (or a specific area of it) as a unified whole, undistracted by forlorn patches of naked sun-baked earth,

so that those plants which continue to thrive throughout the Mediterranean August would stand out and catch one's attention while their more heat-stressed neighbours would blend more discreetly into the background. *Salvia microphylla*, *S. officinalis*, *Limoniastrum monopetalum*, *Euphorbia characias*, *E. myrsinites*, *Ruta graveolens* and the various lavenders are all plants which would continue to look good among gravel in the hottest and driest of circumstances.

Indeed, Beth Chatto's planting is based upon the principle of selecting plants that 'belong' to a given site and hence thrive in it – seemingly simple, yet how few of us are either humble or disciplined enough to get it right. Her dry garden is thus a very rewarding lesson to the Mediterranean gardener who has seen too many poor, sad, scuffled attempts at lawns and inappropriate, greedy weeping willows. Many of her plants are in fact natives of the Mediterranean region; in theory, then, all we need to do is to take a long hard look at our local flora and start planting. But theory is one thing, and practice another. Apart from anything else, there is no denying the much-bewailed fact that Mediterranean nursery gardens tend not to provide a very wide range of Mediterranean plants. It might seem like bringing coals to Newcastle or owls to Athens, yet Beth Chatto's nursery in Essex is more likely to supply us with the plants we need than our own local one. Hostas and hydrangeas we may find aplenty, yet helichrysums are hard to come by.

Of course a garden's effect depends not only on the choice of plants but also on their positioning. Among the rivers of gravel Beth Chatto has set her plants with a masterly eye for the subtle combination of texture and structure, height and shape. Many Mediterranean plants are hummocky – the santolinas, ballotas and so on – or mat-forming like the creeping thymes, and thus cry out for something tall and dramatic like, for example, the various species of *Verbascum*. With the exception of *V. olympicum*, I am not sure to what extent the verbascums grown in Beth Chatto's garden would be able to withstand Mediterranean conditions without water; however, Aaron's rod, *Verbascum thapsus*, is a great drought-resistant standby in hot gardens, as also are the yuccas and agaves that Beth Chatto employs for

spiky shape, or perhaps the tenuous, elegant grasses that she uses such as *Chondrosum gracile* or *Stipa gigantea*.

As I wandered around the gravel garden under the big, wide April skies of Essex I thought of spring in Greece. And spring in the Mediterranean area is the season *par excellence* for bulbs. I thought of olive groves filled with *Muscari* species and *Anemone blanda*, or with the various Mediterranean tulips, or later still with wild *Gladiolus*. If one were lucky enough to have an old olive tree in one's garden, I mused, one could surround it with all kinds of small bulbs set in gravel; in spring one would have a profusion of delicate forms and colours, while throughout the summer one would enjoy the dignity of the olive on its own. I have to admit, as I came down to ground again, to slight feelings of envy for Beth Chatto's fritillaries: *Fritillaria camschatcensis*, *F. verticillata*, *F. pyrenaica*, all showing to great effect among the gravel. I could imagine the *Sternbergia lutea* looking equally well in autumn.

I came away from Beth Chatto's garden full of ideas. Beth Chatto herself explains that, "Designing a garden is like learning to speak. You begin with odd words – learning the individual plants. Then you create a simple phrase, finding two or three plants that look well together, next comes a sentence and finally the complete story – with embellishments still to come". Continuing with this analogy, one might say that in our Mediterranean tradition of stony gardens and in our rich natural flora we already have the letters of the alphabet. Faced with hot, arid conditions, all that remains is for us to learn to speak the right language.

PROPAGATING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

Jeff Irons

This piece is really a collection of random thoughts in response to some of the problems which Mediterranean gardeners encounter when propagating Australian plants.

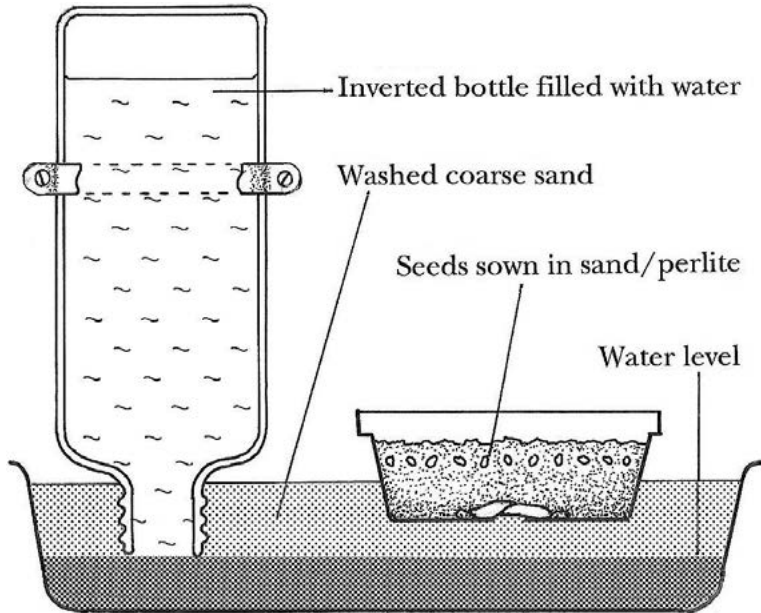
Temperature and low humidity are not the principal causes of failure; a more serious problem is the lack of suitable composts for plant propagation. The ideal seed/cutting medium is open, and yet the seed mix is water-retentive. The 'river sand' used by Australians is simply salt-free sand which is angular in grain shape, not rounded, and thus holds plenty of interstitial water. At the same time it is also free-draining, and the combination of these characteristics means that there is an optimum mixture of air and moisture to promote healthy root development.

Soils which are pure clay will compact when watered, and humus-rich composts, such as those based on peat, tend to become too waterlogged for most Australian plants. One possible source of suitable grit is a pile of coarse builders' sand which has been standing in the rain: you may find you can skim a thin layer of clean grit off the top. Dry river beds in summer usually contain patches of grit mixed with larger gravel, which can be separated by sieving. But ensure (by a second finer sieving) that the grit you collect does not contain too much silt, or it will also tend to compact.

The surface of a gritty compost will obviously be prone to drying out between waterings in dry weather. Many species (such as *Melaleuca*) which have very small seeds will be sown right on this surface, with the consequent danger of 'stop-go' germination. To avoid this you can stand the pots in water: the Australians call this the 'bog' method, and often use a constant head device. But remember to revert to normal watering as soon as germination has taken place.

Bear in mind that Australian plants will cause problems if you insist on trying difficult ones. Sturt's Desert Pea (*Swainsonia formosa*) is considered difficult even in Australia. Recently it has been discovered that smoke will trigger germination of many species. The Australians are trying to work out which of the

2000-odd chemicals in smoke are effective. The South Africans sell paper impregnated with Fynbos smoke.



A Simple Constant Head Device (Adapted from *How to Germinate Native Tree and Shrub Seed*, Greening Australia Pamphlet, 1991)

The other problem in the Mediterranean is the alkaline soils. There are no calcifuge or calciphobe plants, it is simply that there are different degrees of lime tolerance. Here is a selection of Australian species which are fairly tolerant:

- *Alyogyne hakeifolia*, *A. huegelii*
- *Calothamnus quadrifidus*
- *Chamaelaucium* – all
- *Darwinia micropetala*
- *Eremaea beaufortiioides*, *E. rosea* [now *E. fimbriata*], *E. violacea*
- *Eremophila alternifolia*, *E. crassifolia*, *E. denticulata*, *E. freelingii*,
E. glabra, *E. longifolia*, *E. maculata*, *E. polyclada*, *E. scoparia*
(eremophilas have a very low percentage of viable seed)
- *Geijera parvifolia*

- *Grevillea aspera*, *G. ilicifolia*, *G. lavandulacea*, *G. leucoptervis*,
G. pinaster, *G. thelemanniana*
- *Hakea adnata*, *H. bucculenta*, *H. francisiana*, *H. leucoptera*,
H. multilineata, *H. nitida*, *H. nodosa*, *H. petiolaris*, *H. purpurea*,
H. rugosa, *H. scoparia*, *H. suaveolens*, *H. sulcata*, *H. vittata*
- *Halgania cyanea*, *H. lavandulacea*
- *Hardenbergia comptoniana*
- *Hemiandra* – all
- *Hibiscus farragei*
- *Kunzea baxteri*
- *Lagunaria patersonia*
- *Lasiopetalum baueri*, *L. behrii*, *L. schulzenii*
- *Leptospermum laevigatum*
- *Melaleuca acuminata*, *M. armillaris*, *M. cordata*, *M. decussata*,
M. ericifolia, *M. gibbosa*, *M. halmaturorum*, *M. lanceolata*,
M. megacephala, *M. nesophila*, *M. uncinata*
- *Melia azedarach*
- *Myoporum deserti*, *M. insulare*, *M. oppositifolium*, *M. parvifolium*,
M. viscosum
- *Olearia ciliata*, *O. magniflora*, *O. muelleri*, *O. pimeleoides*,
O. pteridifolia, *O. rudis*
- *Pittosporum phillyraeoides*
- *Senna artemisioides*, *S. nemophila*, *S. sturtii*
- *Templetonia retusa*
- *Viminaria juncea*

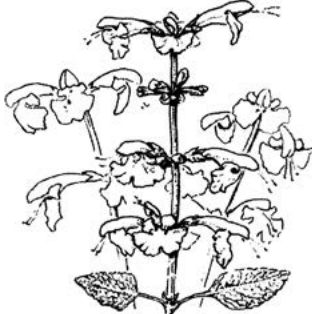
Most *Banksia* and *Melaleuca* species almost certainly need soil with a pH in the range of 5.5-6.5. The only banksias listed as tolerating alkaline soils are the two eastern species *B. integrifolia* and *B. marginata*. They also withstand wet, heavy clay soil. They would probably be all right up in the higher parts of Spain and Portugal, but not in many other places.

EASY FLOWERING PLANTS

John Calderwood

Understandably Mediterranean gardeners have an interest in plants which will grow, flower well, and possibly naturalise, with the minimum of water and attention. The recent note on *Acnistus australis* [now *Iochroma australe*] is an example of such a plant.

Two plants which have satisfied these conditions, from seed, are *Salvia coccinea* and *Asarina barclayana* [now *Maurandya barclayana*]. The soil in this terraced garden, a raised seed bed, is low in humus, stony and of neutral pH.



Salvia coccinea

Salvia coccinea, from tropical South America, is a perennial, branched sub-shrub growing about 45 to 70cm high. The flowering season is from May to October, with attractive spikes of narrow, tubular to 17 mm vermilion red flowers. The smallish, ovate to deltoid, hairy leaves are a good mid-green. The overall effect is delicate and the shade of red blends with other colours, either as single plants or massed. *Lilium regale* enjoys growing through its light shade. Plants last several years and are best cut down in the winter to promote new flowering shoots. Self-sown seedlings appear about April and are easily transplanted. This *Salvia* has not been affected by insects or fungi. Best propagated from seed.

Asarina barclayana [*Maurandya barclayana*], from Mexico, is a charming twining climber spreading 1 to 2m. The 2cm mid-



Asarina barclaiana

green cordate leaves are borne on thin twining stems. The tubular flared flowers about 4cm long and 2cm wide, rather antirrhinum-like, are usually shades of purple. Flowers are continuously produced from June to December. Plants may survive winter cold but self-sown seedlings appear about April to May and again in September. This inland valley garden often has a few nights of frost at the end of December and in early January. Seed should be sown thinly, in either September or March, in a well-drained compost. Young seedlings don't like disturbance. The twining plants need some sort of support and are effective growing through low shrubs or up other climbers. This *Asarina* has not been affected by insects or fungi.

The abundant, small seeds of both plants often survive composting, seedlings appearing in many parts of the garden.

I have seed available for *Salvia coccinea* and *Asarina barclaiana* if anyone wishes it.

KANKERBOS

Tom Wellsted

In the search for scorched earth plants, able to survive in the rather harsh Provençal climate of my garden, one plant which stands out as offering fine foliage, bright blooms and rattling good seed pods is *Sutherlandia frutescens*. Fortunately this shrub has not suffered from a mass of botanical name changes but in its native South Africa it is known as Kankerbos, or Cancerbush, from its reputed power to cure cancerous growths.

Easy to raise from seed, young plants may flower well in their first year when only a few inches high. Indeed, with judicious pinching out a splendid small, bushy plant will show off the striking bright red flowers brilliantly against the greyish leaves. The large vetch-like flowers, rather reminiscent of *Clianthus* species, appear for a few weeks in late spring and early summer and are followed by bladder-like seed pods a few inches long, at first a light, shiny green but gradually ripening to a pure, untreated silk colour with a similar sheen. When the seeds are ripe they rattle when the pods are brushed against or caught in gusty wind. A leguminous plant, the leaves are divided into many small leaflets at first very silvery, the green deepening with age.

Grown in full sun here it makes a bush 60-90cm high but may grow elsewhere up to about 2m. Reputedly requiring well-drained fertile soil, this shrub will still accommodatingly thrive in all sorts of nooks and crannies and, as here, in pretty awful soil where at least sharp drainage is assured. In lush conditions it seems to be more frost-tender, but it has come through several degrees of frost here. Slugs and snails also find the plant attractive under moist conditions. Where allowed, it will self-seed readily but has not proved the invasive danger posed by *Coronilla valentina* subsp. *glauca*. Maybe *Sutherlandia* can be hedged as *Coronilla* but I have not tried this yet. The plant does not seem to be widely known in this region but is now proving a success at some Provençal flower shows. My seed originally came from an RHS seed distribution; however, some seed firms as well as a few plant nurseries in the UK also list it.



AGAPANTHUS FOR YOUR GARDEN

Trevor Nottle

Nearly everyone who makes a garden in a climate where summers are warm and dry is grateful for the hardy *Agapanthus* or Nile Lily. The common name is a matter of curiosity since the plant originates many thousands of miles south of the Nile. Perhaps it is a name transplanted to Europe by 19th-century travellers to the sites of ancient Egypt. Travellers putting up at the Cataract Hotel and other watering holes no doubt saw these hardy plants growing apparently naturally in great drifts in the gardens and drew the erroneous conclusion that they were native to the Nile valley. This may be a romance, who knows? In Australia and elsewhere outside Europe the plants are almost universally known by their generic name – agapanthus. They seem never to have carried with them the common term associated with them in Europe.

Where they grow well, unaffected by heavy frosts and with ample sunshine and warm summer weather, the plants thrive. Frequently they will set masses of small black seeds, slightly winged and with a rare determination to populate. Seedlings frequently appear in almost any spare patch of soil, or more often in cracks in paving, among the leaf clusters of clumping perennials or in the tight spaces between rocks. The most common forms are evergreen, tall (to 1m), with majestic flower stalks that rise up 1.5m or so, bearing large umbels of campanulate sky-blue or white flowers in mid-summer.

The nomenclature in common usage is both confused and confusing. The common variety widely grown in gardens everywhere is *Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *orientalis*, though it is just as often found in plant nurseries and catalogues as *A. africanus* or *A. orientalis* – both of which names are properly

linked with other distinct and more rare kinds. As a general rule the evergreen kinds of agapanthus come from areas where winter rains are predominant; the deciduous kinds come from areas where summer rains are the rule. For the purposes of 'Mediterranean' gardeners (wherever they live) the evergreen kinds are the most drought-tolerant and the best garden plants where water conservation in summer must be a watchword. Most evergreen varieties will stand light frost and will recover well from what appears to be severe foliage damage as a result of frost burn.

Agapanthus have almost no pests that I can think of. If growing conditions are poor – too much shade or very poor drainage – the succulent rhizomes and roots may rot, but otherwise the only problems are likely to be caused by the snails and slugs which make their homes in the dense clumps of leaf fans. Agapanthus can survive with little summer watering and almost no fertiliser, but flowering can be significantly improved by mulching with stable litter and a light application of 'Superphosphate' or some other balanced nitrogenous fertiliser. Division is easy and the best means of increase. The plants seem not to be too particular about when this is done, and plant divisions can survive for weeks without being replanted so long as they are protected from frost or extremely hot weather. Seed-raised forms sold by some European seed merchants are not always sufficiently uniform in colour, habit or flower form to be reliable for display but seedlings could be lined out and re-selected to provide more closely matched plants. I find the dwarf *A.* × 'Swan Lake' particularly bothersome in its variety of habits.

From the more than thirty species and cultivars now available in commerce in Australia I have selected these few favourites as offering diversity of habit and colour, and hardiness in warm, dry climates.

'Adelaide': a dwarf-growing plant with pale blue flowers with a deeper blue central stripe on each petal. It is a variety which will tolerate, even prefers, some shade. It is sometimes listed as a cultivar of *Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *minimus*.

‘Blue Baby’: a very prolific dwarf which has supple, arching flower stems and grassy leaves. The flowers are a uniform pale blue and carried in open umbels that add a degree of airiness to an already graceful plant.

‘Blue Giant’: a massive plant in all its parts; strong foliage and stout flower stems with very large heads of sky-blue flowers. It seems to take light frosts without damage. The powerful, dense root system can be far-reaching, and soil dehydration due to its voracious appetite for moisture can be a problem for other nearby plants.

Agapanthus campanulatus ‘Albus’: very long-stemmed flower trusses held in a compact round cluster of florets. Neat arching leaves produce a very compact clump.

A. campanulatus ‘Isis’: with a form similar to the above but in this cultivar the flowers are a solid deep blue. Prolific and handsome.

A. inapertus: a very impressive plant that reaches 1.5m at flowering in mid-summer. Large umbels of pendant dark blue flowers with a narrow campanulate form. The foliage can be damaged by light frosts but the plants quickly recover.

‘Inky Tears’: a dwarf hybrid from Ireland (I think) with dark inky blue flowers that have a narrow tubular form and are held above the slender foliage on slightly curved stems. Can take some time to settle down after transplanting. It flowers most reliably when supplied with a little fertiliser in late spring or early summer.

‘Lilliput’: one of the smallest of all agapanthus at about 30cm. Fine grassy foliage and delicate slender stems that hold up tubular flowers of darkest blue.

‘Loch Hope’: big, bold, blue and beautiful. One of the most garden-worthy of all agapanthus. Though usually deciduous,

it grows very strongly and produces a striking display of azure bells.

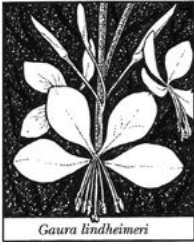
A. praecox 'Plenus': a very old curiosity that has a long history of cultivation in gardens. The individual flowers are globular in form and do not open wide, so the numerous petals packed within the bud are hardly ever revealed. When water is short at mid-summer the flower stems will be stumpy, and in times of drought at flowering the young buds may abort.

'Storms River': is sometimes listed as a cultivar of *A. praecox* subsp. *minimus*; it produces medium-sized flower clusters of very pale blue.

'Wavy Navy': something of a novelty but not as garish as the name might suggest. An average plant in appearance, evergreen and vigorous. The mid-blue flowers are open and campanulate and distinguished by petals whose edges are waved or crimped.

Useful reading

- *Bulbous plants of Southern Africa* by Neil du Plessis and Graham Duncan, pub. Tafelberg, Capetown, 1989.
- The Genus *Agapanthus*, by F.M.Leighton, *Jnl Sth Afr Bot. Suppl* Vol. No.4, Cape Town, 1968.



PROBLEMS OF ACCLIMATISATION: WATERLESS GARDENS – GARDENS OF THE FUTURE?

Piero Caneti

Water continuously evaporates from the oceans and falls again in the form of rain, yet all the water in circulation throughout the entire world is always the same water. However, while until the 19th century it was so abundant – like air – that it was not considered especially valuable, today it is becoming a strategic resource, like petroleum, with a market of its own. This phenomenon is due not only to an increase in the number of water consumers, but also to a sharp increase in the amount of water that they use, especially in the so-called developed countries. If these trends of water use conformed to the Western pattern, then the inhabitant of Madagascar, who consumes five litres of water a day, would need 500 litres a day like his counterpart in the USA. We all know that water for domestic use represents only 10% of total needs; industry in fact consumes 20% and agriculture 70%. However, it is now time to combat waste in any form and each of us must play his or her part. Mediterranean gardeners, for example, if they have not already done so, will have to start being very strict in their choice of plants, since not all the plants suggested to us are suitable to our climate and soil. A summer drought lasting three or four months is hard for plants to adapt to, if after careful irrigation in their early years they are left to fend for themselves. Does the future, then, lie in succulent plants? I do not believe so, because although these need very little water they are highly sensitive to frost and to winter damp, and therefore can be grown only in limited geographical areas. We can aim at a much wider range of plants and if we adopt the technique of mulching around the base of each plant it becomes possible for us to achieve varied and satisfying Mediterranean gardens.

Among carpeting and hanging plants we should mention the most common, such as *Rosmarinus officinalis* Prostrate Form,

Santolina viridis [now *S. rosmarinifolia*], *S. chamaecyparissus* and *Felicia amelloides*. All these plants have the capacity to spread, forming thick and luxuriant mats of vegetation which can easily reach more than one metre in diameter. Moreover, they all produce abundant flowers for many months of the year. They are thus suitable for rapidly covering sunny banks or other sites which otherwise would remain bare. They also make important focal points, creating stupendous borders and cascades of flowers over walls, invariably much admired.

A similar pleasing effect, because of their low growth and intricate and interesting spring and summer flowering habits, is created by other less widely grown carpeting plants, such as *Aptenia cordifolia* [now *Mesembryanthemum cordifolium*] with its minute and fleshy leaves and *Drosanthemum pulchellum*, a generous plant, indispensable in the garden for hiding even high walls, making them a mass of flowers for months. Few people know that this plant is hardy in places with temperatures falling to -10°C and can therefore also be used in areas with a sublittoral climate.

Erigeron mucronatus [now *E. karvinskianus*] is delightful with its small rosy-white little daisy flowers which will bloom profusely for 10 months a year. It self-seeds everywhere, preferring cracks in walls like the caper plant, and for this reason, although it originates from Mexico, it quickly became naturalised in Mediterranean countries after its introduction more than a century ago. If one wants something light which will spread its delicate branches among other plants, its flowers adding the most beautiful blue imaginable, *Convolvulus mauritanicus* is ideal. It has multiple uses, from the rock garden to small patches, but it excels when spilling out from huge pots in full sun. In narrow borders and along the sides of paved paths, or around a bed of old roses, or again as edging plants for formal parterres, *Teucrium chamaedrys* is incomparable. How it manages to maintain such glossy green little leaves all summer long without receiving any watering is inexplicable, but one should recognise it as one of our most valuable native plants and hold it in great respect. As if all this was not enough, *T. chamaedrys* is covered with tiny vivid pink flowers at the beginning of the summer, and it is thoroughly hardy.

All aromatic plants like our soils and our climate, and they are all to be recommended for our gardens. Among them, however, two stand out because of their autumn and summer flowering. *Satureja reptans* [now *Killickia pilosa*] forms a wide low hummock, highly aromatic when one brushes against it, its white flowers appearing in September and October. It is an excellent groundcover plant in full sun which adapts to every soil and suppresses weeds. Of a similar nature, with small round leaves smelling of lemon when crushed, is *Thymus pulegioides*. This is a low-growing plant, capable of spreading rapidly and regularly. This beautiful plant is incomparable for forming a “lawn”, though not one suitable for walking upon, which will flower from May to November more or less continuously.

Very different in its behaviour is a sympathetic perennial herbaceous plant, *Gaura lindheimeri*, which has shown a surprising adaptability to the mediterranean climate, so much so that it does not require any watering, not even in its first year – a truly exceptional quality. It develops long untidy shoots which cannot support themselves and it therefore needs a wide area over which to spread; ideally it should be planted among spring-flowering low shrubs to give it light support and to show off its unusual tiny white-pink flowers with their long and narrow petals. These flowers are short-lasting but produced continuously, like *Cistus*, and you will never see it devoid of colour from May to November.



BRING THE PLANTS OF THE MOUNTAIN INTO YOUR GARDEN

Argyroupolis
Secondary School
Environment Group

Our group has been involved this year in the creation of a small botanical garden in the school grounds. The idea was suggested by pupils who were with us last year (and who have since moved up to the lycée), and they were the ones who did the preliminary work.

The initial plan was for a garden which would contain plants from nearly all the families covered by our textbook, so that pupils would be able to observe the characteristics of each plant, and also study the life of plants in general. We also thought that a garden would enhance a corner of the school.

But we have a further aim: in addition to being a study area, this should become a model garden for the environment of Attica. Since in Greece we have little rain during the summer months and water must be used sparingly, we felt that a Greek garden should comprise plants which can survive with very little water, such as those plants which grow on mountain slopes.

As we have said, the preliminary work was undertaken by last year's pupils, who began by applying to the Municipality to have a section of the concrete playground dug up and the area fenced off. This event caught the attention of the media, with articles in the daily press and a feature on breakfast-time TV.

Before we could start planting we had to ask the Municipality to bring us some soil, which we mixed with some manure before digging over the plot. We ended up with calloused hands! One of our teachers, Mrs. Katsaouni, provided some stone slabs which we used to set out paths in our garden.

A trip to the Diomedes Botanical Garden enabled us to make the acquaintance of the staff there: in particular Mr. Stelios



Soulios and Mrs. Irene Vallianatou. They provided us with much useful information, advising us on what to plant and how. A request to the Director of the Diomedes Garden, Professor K. Mitrakos, resulted in the arrival of our first plants.

After we had planted them, we put a label by each one giving its common (Greek) name, its botanical name and the family to which it belongs.

Our plant list for this first season is as follows:

Phrygana (garrigue) plants

Anthyllis hermanniae

Teucrium capitatum

Phagnalon graecum [now *Phagnalon rupestre* subsp. *graecum*]

Phlomis fruticosa

Thymelaea hirsuta

Coridothymus capitatus [now *Thymbra capitata*]

Succulents

Sedum sediforme

Grasses

Brachypodium retusum

Piptatherum miliaceum

Bulbs and corms

Asphodelus aestivus

Cyclamen graecum

Muscari neglectum

Anemone coronaria

Urginea maritima [now *Drimia maritima*]

Trees and shrubs

Pyracantha coccinea

Ceratonia siliqua

Olea europaea subsp. *oleaster*

Quercus ithaburensis subsp. *macrolepis*

Quercus coccifera

Quercus ilex

Laurus nobilis

While work on the garden was progressing, we tried to learn as much as we could about the plants we had acquired and about those we hope to introduce in the future. We went up on to the slopes of Mt. Hymettus behind our school, and there we found the plants in our garden growing wild.

The Mediterranean Garden Society encouraged our efforts. Mr. Derek Toms came to the school and gave us advice on how we could irrigate, how we could spread stones between the plants to retain moisture, etc. Mrs. Sally Razelou invited us to Sparoza, and she and Mr. Toms showed us the plants in the garden there, the majority of which are native and collected from many parts of Greece.

Using books from the Sparoza bookshelves we were able to identify the plants we had seen. We learnt how to press herbarium specimens. Back at school we made ourselves a flower press on the lines of the one we had seen at Sparoza. From the hillside of Sparoza we collected plants to compare with those which grow around Argynroupolis – we found that we had some plants in common, but there were some which were not found in our own locality.

We visited the ancient Agora (marketplace) beneath the Acropolis to see the efforts which have been made to replant the

site with trees and bushes that would have been planted there in antiquity.

This visit was made within the framework of the Ministry of Culture's "Let's Go With A Book" programme. We were guided by Mr. Pitsanis and Mrs. Alevra of the Goulandris Museum. We saw the plants and heard many interesting facts about the plane tree, the carob, the laurel, the lentisk, the acanthus (the leaf form was used by the ancient Greeks to decorate the capitals of the Corinthian columns) and others. Finally we were given a set of questions to answer – and were pleased that we got the right answers.

The visits we made and the discussions we have had with these specialists have helped our understanding and have given us plenty to think about.

This coming autumn we plan to introduce some of the plants which should be in our garden but are absent. Last year the planting season had passed before we were able to plant everything we wanted. We also intend to create a special nursery where we will sow seeds of the plants from the hillsides, and from the ongoing propagation programme to enrich local slopes which have an impoverished vegetation. It will become, in other words, a process of exchange of plants between garden and hillside.

As much as possible, in Greece we should plant the minimum of species which originate in moist climate regions and which require a lot of water. With our native Greek species we can have beautiful gardens which don't depend on rich soil, heavy fertilising or frequent watering. Our slogan is: "Bring the plants of the mountain into your garden!"

We propose that the Argypoupolis Municipality should give a lead in this by gradually substituting some of the plants which they are now growing in green areas. Equally important, lawns should be done away with.

There should be a campaign of public information to make people aware of these issues. We are distributing a poster which we have designed, but this, of course, is not enough. The Municipality must find a way to set up a service which will provide citizens with advice, and supply them with suitable seeds.

As from the next academic year we will be collaborating with pupils from a school in Cyprus, as part of the Cyprus “Golden Green Leaf” scheme, in which we will be studying the flora and fauna of the areas around our schools and comparing notes. We believe that we will accumulate more interesting evidence concerning the plants which are endemic to the Mediterranean landscape.

We would be very happy to hear from other school groups in Mediterranean climate regions who are involved in similar projects, and to exchange experience.

The staff:

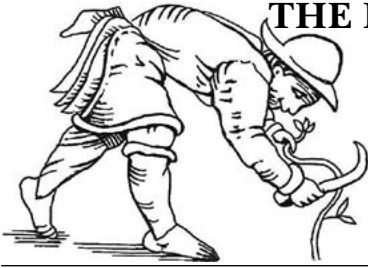
Rea Paleopoulou, Vassiliki Damba, Eleni Ephraimidou

The pupils:

N. Alexopoulos, N. Alipherakis, M. Georgomanoli, V. Demenagas, G. Ephraimidis, D. Zacharias, S. Theodotos, D. Kagioulis, I. Karamichali, V. Mercouris, Ph. Papavasiliou, Z. Papageorgiou, A. Papadopoulos, K. Petreka, A. Sigala, D. Stathouli, P. Apostolakis, M. Vasilopoulou, P. Vlachos, T. Dakoronia, A. Thanou, S. Theodorakos, Ch. Kazilas, A. Koutmou, M. Kypraiou, K. Stinga.

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THE HISTORIC GARDENS FOUNDATION

Gillian Mawrey

The Historic Gardens Foundation is the first international organisation to be concerned solely with historic parks and gardens. The Foundation provides a forum where all those interested in historic gardens – owners, gardeners, landscape architects, garden historians, specialist journalists, legal and fiscal experts, officials and elected representatives in local, national and European heritage departments, as well as interested amateurs – can share their expertise and discuss matters of mutual interest. The aim is to work together to foster the understanding and appreciation of an element of our cultural inheritance which can all too easily be taken for granted.

Initially the Foundation will concentrate on parks and gardens in Europe, including those in the east. The first project will be the publication of a magazine, *EUROPEAN GARDENS*, which will appear twice a year in English and French starting in autumn 1995. It will contain articles written in non-academic terms on:

- gardens that have recently been restored;
- gardens that are at risk from development or neglect;
- new gardens in historic settings;
- techniques of conservation and restoration, including historically correct planting;
- efficient management of historic gardens, including opening to the public;
- analysis of the quality of restoration work;
- information about legal and fiscal matters, and the availability of grants;
- the documentation of historic gardens and the preservation and study of archives;

- education for those working in historic parks and gardens;
- information about forthcoming events.

The Foundation is working closely with other heritage organisations and will publicise their achievements and concerns. The Council of Europe has endorsed the work of the Foundation under the Parks and Gardens section of its Cultural Routes programme.

From 1996 the Historic Gardens Foundation will organise lectures, seminars and conferences, and when resources permit hopes to expand its activities to cover non-European countries.

The Foundation is based in London and is a UK registered charity, funded by individual donations and the sale of advertising in EUROPEAN GARDENS.

The Foundation welcomes contact with anyone interested in historic gardens – wherever they may live. Practical help would be appreciated, as would information about interesting gardens or garden-related events, and suggestions for projects the Foundation might undertake in the future.

If you support our aims you can become a Member for £25 annual subscription or a Life Member for £250. UK taxpayers can increase the value of their contribution by 33% by using Gift Aid or a covenant. To become a member or for further details contact:

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London SE1 9PE.
Tel: (44) 171 633 9165
Fax: (44) 171 401 7072.

THE DAY TRIP

Russell Read

“Gordon, are you sure this is the right place?” It was more of an accusation than a question. Mrs. Bickley peered past her husband at the improbable mirage of a garden in the middle of the desolate expanse around them.

“It has to be,” insisted Mr. Bickley, grasping the steering wheel of the parked car with both hands and staring through the dusty windscreen. “We followed the old man’s instructions to the letter.”

“Exactly. An old man in a bar who knew about ten words of English; probably gaga and drunk since lunchtime.”

“Anyway, it’s where he said it would be, and there’s nothing else like it for miles around.”

That was true enough. No other living greenery interrupted the monotony of the terracotta landscape which stretched away to the horizon on either side of the ragged tarmac road.

“But it looks derelict,” she said. “The walls are falling down in places, and the gate is half-buried by some kind of ivy.”

Mr. Bickley shifted himself around in the driver’s seat and followed her gaze. “That wall is centuries old by the look of it. You can’t just patch up something like that. Probably got a preservation order on it. And the gate’s open, so there must be someone inside.”

“Don’t be silly, Gordon. That gate hasn’t moved for years with all that weed growing up it. If you ask me, someone left in a hurry and forgot to close it after them.”

“Hmm... I see what you mean, Janet, but somebody must work there. Just look how green everything is. Plants have to be well irrigated to grow like that in this climate.”

The faces of the two children in the back seat had registered total boredom up until this point in the morning; and now began to display mounting discomfort.

“Dad, are you two going to sit here and argue all day? I’m hot.”

“Justin, your mother and I were not arguing – we were appraising the situation. And I think that having come this far, we ought to get out and have a look at the place.”

A choking wind hit them as they crossed the road, and they could feel the heat of the tarmac through the thin soles of their light summer shoes. The garden offered a refuge of deep, cool shade – but still they hesitated in front of the great iron gates.

“There’s no notice about it being open to the public,” said Mrs. Bickley. “Do you think it’s all right to go in?”

“Don’t see why not. We’ll find one of the gardeners and explain what we’re doing here. Anybody can see we’re bona fide visitors.”

“I think it’s boring,” said Samantha. “Why don’t we just turn round and go back to the hotel?”

“What she means,” said her brother, “is that she’s stuck out here while Julie Wilson’s in the pool getting off with that French git with the Raybans.”

“Oh shut up, you little pillock!”

“That’s quite enough of that. Can’t your father and I enjoy a day out without you two bickering all the time?”

“You heard what your mother said. And do mind your language! Anyone would think you’d been brought up in the jungle.”

“Looks like we’ve come to the jungle,” muttered Justin.

The main path was ankle-deep in lush grass studded with tiny flowers, the borders of this verdant carpet drifts of pastel-tinted petals shed by overhanging bushes in full bloom. Out of these shrubs rose vine-braided tree trunks which supported a dense canopy overhead. Rank on rank the trees receded into the background of dappled shadows and dancing light. In one place a shaft of soft sunlight fell diagonally upon a larger-than-life angel.

“Hey – see that? It’s fluorescent!”

“Don’t think so, son. More like white marble. Wonder how that got out here? Must weigh a ton!”

“It’s just like something out of David Attenborough!” exclaimed Mrs. Bickley, who hadn’t seen the angel.

“Well, if he did come this way, he didn’t leave any footprints.” A bright green lizard scuttled off into the undergrowth. “Mind what you’re stepping on!”

“What’s that?” asked Mrs. Bickley.

“That’s a hibiscus.”

“Are you sure?”

“Er... it’s very much like a hibiscus, but I could be wrong. Malvaceae, anyway. To be honest, there’s a lot of stuff here I’ve not seen before. Whoever built this place must have scoured the four corners of the earth to put together a collection like this. Just think what it would cost today! And now look at it. God, I’d love to get in here and do a spot of pruning!”

“I’m kicking myself for not bringing a plastic bag with me. I’m sure a lot of these things would do well in the greenhouse.”

“You’d end up with another Kew Gardens before you knew where you were. There’s far more here than we saw at the Malaga Botanics.”

“Yes, but at least at Malaga they looked after their plants. And there were proper paths to walk on.”

They were halted by a fallen tree, and decided to take a smaller track which led off to the right. The garden was a labyrinth. They brushed against walls of leaves of every size and shape, and passed under trees bearing strange fruits. Birds flashed brilliant plumage as they flitted among the branches, apparently unconcerned at the intrusion. They stooped in single file through green tunnels, emerging into bright clearings where butterflies and a myriad flowers competed in a dazzling kaleidoscope. Every clearing had several exits, and after a time Mr. Bickley made a point of bearing left. But still they didn’t return to a spot they could recognise.

Janet Bickley had never bothered herself with Latin names, and was quite content to describe a plant as “that one with the pink flowers”. She kept up her usual commentary of “That’s nice!”, and “Just look at that!” Gordon Bickley was nonplussed. He liked to provide a stream of botanical information for the benefit of his family during these garden tours. This time he had even borrowed copies of Post and Tackholm from the Public Library when they booked the holiday, and had made notes. But apart from a few obvious things like figs and date palms, there was very little he could identify with any certainty. The extent of his ignorance dented his confidence to such a degree that he lapsed into silence, and concentrated on the role of pathfinder.

In yet another clearing he paused to give the children a chance to catch up. Janet was looking thoughtful.

“It’s funny not meeting a soul,” she said. “And where does all the water come from? You said that someone would have to water this garden – but we haven’t seen a single hosepipe.”

“It is a bit odd. But once or twice I thought I heard water running somewhere. I suppose we must have missed it.”

“Yes, I thought I heard water. But then when I listened, I couldn’t tell which direction it came from. And then sometimes it didn’t sound like water at all; more like music somewhere in the distance.”

The children appeared.

“Come on, you two – don’t get left behind!”

“I hate this place Dad, the branches keep catching me!”

“Don’t be silly, Sammy. Just watch you don’t get a branch in your eye, that’s all.”

“Why have you stopped, Dad? We’re lost, aren’t we!”

“We are not lost, Justin. You can’t get lost in a garden. It’s simply that the paths are laid out so as to make you believe that it’s bigger than it really is.”

“So how do we get out?”

Mr. Bickley pretended not to hear the question.

“Well, Justin, what do you think of it? Quite some place, eh?”

“It’s boring.”

“What d’you mean, ‘boring’? Don’t you kids have eyes in your heads?”

“It’s boring. There’s nothing to do in here. Just a load of old trees and things. I thought a park was supposed to have videos and train-rides and stuff like that.”

“Dad, where can we get a coke?”

“I’m sure we’d all like a drink, Sammy – but you’ll just have to wait till we get back into town. I never said I was bringing you to Disneyland. And come to think of it, I wouldn’t want to see that crowd move in here. But you kids do have a point. You can’t keep a garden like this up to scratch without income – and that means a cafeteria, entry tickets, a shop for catalogues, t-shirts and gifts. And your video, Justin, would be a very good way of explaining to visitors what they’re about to see. But it’s not surprising that they don’t have any visitors when they don’t make any effort to sell the place. I’ll tell you what I’d do if I were in charge. First of all, you can’t have things growing just

anywhere. You have to group them under some kind of general theme – “The World of Flowers” for example. Over here you have the Brazilian rainforest, over there an alpine meadow, and so on. Display boards in front of each section, and information on headphones. But then to get people out here, they’d have to build a decent road. And a car park. These days it’s not enough to get people out for the day, you know. You want them to stay on a bit and spend some money. With all this cheap land around here there’d be nothing to stop them putting up a hotel next door – even a golf course. You could floodlight the garden at night. But all these third-world countries can think about is throwing up concrete Benidorms. Give them a place with potential like this and they don’t know what to make of it.”

“You’d think they could at least have installed a toilet,” said Mrs. Bickley, “And a few signposts.”

“Yeah,” said Justin, “Then we’d be able to get out.”

“We can,” announced Mr. Bickley, who had been surveying the exits from the clearing. “Look through there. See... we’re behind that fallen tree we met when we came in. The gates must be straight ahead.”

Everybody showed visible signs of relief.

“Hey, Dad!” called Justin, “Big red apples!”

“Where?” Mr. Bickley turned. “They’re not apples, son – they’re pomegranates. The ‘pom’ comes from the French. Which is why you mistook them for apples.”

“Can you eat them?”

“Of course you can. Don’t tell me you’ve never seen pomegranates in the greengrocers!”

“The greengrocers closed down when Justin was a toddler,” said Mrs. Bickley, “And the supermarket doesn’t stock them.”

“I wouldn’t eat fruit off a tree,” said Samantha, “It could be all full of worms and nasty... Aaaah!”

“Sammy – what is it?”

“Oh Mum... I saw a snake! A huge green snake up in that tree!”

“Where’d it go?” cried Justin, pushing forward. “Hey, I bet it’s one of those monsters they make with lasers, like in that dinosaur exhibition!”

“Was it really a snake, Sammy?”

Samantha, close to tears, nodded. Justin looked disappointed. “Gordon, if anything happened out here we’d be quite stuck for first aid or anything...”

“With you there, Mum,” said Mr. Bickley. “Come on, troops – time to head back to base!”

He gave his wife a steadying hand as they all scrambled over the fallen tree. They brushed themselves down and made their way back to the rented car which sat cooking in the midday sun. The angel watched their departure impassively. It had been a long time since he had expelled anyone from the garden: nowadays they left of their own accord.

THE GARDEN IN AUTUMN

Jenny Bussey

POT PLANTS

Daffodils, narcissi, hyacinths, tulips and muscari can all be grown in pots, and different types can be mixed in layers with the larger bulbs at the bottom and the smaller ones planted less deeply. After flowering they can be planted out in the garden to die back naturally so that the goodness is returned to the bulb – feed well at this time. Narcissi, hyacinths, etc. can be planted now to flower at Christmas and in the New Year, if you ‘cold condition’ them. This means keeping the bulbs at a temperature not exceeding 10°C for a period of at least 10 weeks, while they are forming roots and starting to show a shoot. This may involve putting the bulbs in the fridge in a plastic bag with a little moist peat and potting them up when you take them out. Be careful when handling not to damage new roots or shoots, and keep them at no more than 18°C until they come into flower.

As *Amaryllis* [*Hippeastrum*] bulbs and coloured *Arum* tubers show signs of dying down, turn the pots on their side, outside in a dry place, to complete the ripening process. Remove dead leaves when necessary and watch out for slugs or insects which may eat the bulbs. Keep them dry until the spring.

THE FLOWER GARDEN

There is quite a lot of tidying up to do now, getting rid of dead material and straggly growth. Lightly prune roses to encourage a further flowering before Christmas. Make sure tall plants are securely staked to withstand winter winds. Hoe round plants and incorporate manure or a general fertiliser if required, then mulch the ground so that the winter rains do not cake the surface. Many hardy annuals can be sown *in situ* now, and perennials can also be sown in pots, boxes or in the seed bed. Evergreen trees transplant best now, but may need some protection from strong winds and sun until they get established. Keep a watch out for fungal diseases as the weather gets cooler – insects are not usually such a problem at this time of year as predators are well established to deal with pests.

THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

Again, there is much clearing up of finished plants to do, digging over the beds and incorporating manure or a general fertiliser. (Even legumes, which fix their own nitrogen, may appreciate a little feeding in 'hungry' soils.) Where the soil is dry, watering the day before makes it easier to work. Sowings of many vegetables can start now, including salads, chard, spring cabbages and cauliflower, winter spinach, root vegetables, peas and broad beans.

THE FRUIT GARDEN

Soft fruit plants will be growing now and will need feeding and watering – avoid excess nitrogen so that they don't get *too* soft. Tie in canes as necessary to prevent wind damage. Fruiting trees also make some extra growth for a while and can be given a light feed now of a fertiliser low in nitrogen. Remove any diseased fruit left on the trees. Make sure young trees are securely staked if in exposed positions. Treat any fungal infections of the bark. If the ground is hard from watering, break up the surface – a green manure of rye grass or a legume can be sown now to be dug in in the spring.

Citrus trees will need continued irrigation if there is no rain. They have higher nitrogen requirements so a general fertiliser can be used. Spray against cochineal bugs and Mediterranean fruit fly, or use traps for the males. Likewise, olive trees need protecting now from the olive fly.

These seasonal tips first appeared in the newsletter of the Costa Blanca Gardeners' Circle.

SUNDRIES

SECOND THOUGHTS ON SLIDES

On reflection it seems that our appeal for slides to build up a slide library (Spring Newsletter) was not such a good idea after all. Copying and posting slides involves an expense which could be avoided if you simply sent us a list of slides which you are prepared to make available to fellow members. The Costa Blanca Gardening Circle has already submitted a list of nearly 850 slides in their collection (plus a number of interesting videos). By keeping a general register of slides, we can direct enquirers to the source, and leave you to make arrangements between you – a much more practical proposition. Where we don't know of anyone who has a slide of a particular subject, we can publish requests for pictures in our Letters section.

THE PLANT FINDER GROWS

Heidi Gildemeister's proposal for a Mediterranean Plant Finder (*The Mediterranean Garden* No. 1) has already met with a positive response, and we are beginning to accumulate some useful addresses. Remember that if we are going to produce such a guide, it really needs to be comprehensive: we need to know which nurseries in *your* area are stocking healthy plants suitable for Mediterranean gardens. Do please try to find a few minutes to jot down the relevant information and post it to us so that we can follow it up.

SEEDS

We can offer our members seeds of the following Australian species, donated by Trevor Nottle: *Doryanthes palmeri*, *Eucalyptus caesia*, *Eucalyptus pyriformis*, *Eucalyptus youngiana*, *Hakea francisiana*, *Hakea laurina*, *Hibiscus trionum*, *Melaleuca elliptica*, *Melaleuca filifolia*, *Melaleuca suberosa*.

The MGS also has seeds of *Ptilostemon chamaepeuce* and *Cerintho retorta* available for members.

A member of the Compositae family [now Asteraceae], *Ptilostemon chamaepeuce* is a beautiful evergreen drought-resistant

cliff-dwelling shrub with thistle-like flowers and pine-like leaves. It blooms in the summer and the dried flowers remain on the plant in an elegant fashion after flowering. It is well worth introducing to the driest, stoniest parts of the garden.

Cerintho retorta, a member of the Borage family, is the loveliest of the honeyworts, with its curled violet-coloured leafy bracts. It flourishes in all situations and is self-seeding, flowering from mid-January to early May.

Quantities are limited, so it's first come, first served. There is no charge, but donations are always welcome to cover postage.

COME TO THE FAIR

A new annual garden fair is being planned, beginning in April 1996, to be held in the garden of the Villa Landriana, just south of Rome. It will be known as Primavera alla Landriana, and promises to become an important horticultural event in our region. The MGS intends to participate – so please make a note in your diary. (Why not combine it with a spring garden tour of Italy?) For further details contact:

Emanuela Giannuzzi-Savelli
Amministrazione Taverna
Via di Monte Giordano 36
00186 Roma, Italy.
Tel: 0337-743075
06-91010350, Fax: 06-6872839



BOOKS

Heidi Gildemeister, *Mediterranean Gardening: A Waterwise Approach*, Editorial Moll, 1995, ISBN 84 273 0749 7.

A glance at the dust jacket might lead you to expect another opulent coffee-table book for gardeners who like to keep their fingernails clean. A skim through the chapter headings, on the other hand, might suggest a basic manual on gardening. But by the time you have read a little way into *Mediterranean Gardening*, you will realise that both descriptions are inadequate. Though certainly well-illustrated and full of practical instruction, this book is something more. Its uniqueness derives from the distinctive Mediterranean environment which permeates every paragraph, and from the personality of Heidi Gildemeister herself.

Opening chapters on climate, plant life and soil are a standard feature of most general introductions to gardening, but here they serve to make us freshly aware of the conditions which dictate the nature of our gardens. Once this essentially Mediterranean scene has been set, the subsequent sections on waterwise planning, design and management make perfect sense. And if reducing water consumption seems to you to be a restrictive approach, Heidi Gildemeister sees things in terms of “assets and challenges”: the result is a book which spells out, page after page, the enormous potential of the Mediterranean garden.

This is not a book to be recommended as bedtime reading for insomniacs – on the contrary, you may well find yourself

lying awake all night replanning your garden after reading it. Heidi Gildemeister is one of those teachers who brings not just knowledge but passion to bear on her subject. Her somewhat idiosyncratic style (practical advice leavened with a touch of poetry) is the inevitable expression of her personal involvement with a garden which she has been creating for twenty years. We catch a glimpse of her at dawn in winter, locating likely frost patches, or splashing around in a rainstorm to discover how the surface water runs. Down on her knees, she checks her plants from “root-to-crown”, yet takes into consideration the blue of the sky or the parched summer hillsides when planning her plantings. There is enthusiasm here, but also a touch of urgency, for there is so much that needs to be said. Sometimes she abandons formal sentences for quick notes – and then the ideas come so thick and fast that we have to be on full alert.

Experienced Mediterranean gardeners will find much to discuss (even argue about) between these densely-packed covers, while newcomers are given a wealth of guidance – not least a selection of 1000 drought-tolerant plants. (I particularly welcomed the checklist of ‘fire-retardant’ trees and shrubs.) The copious illustrations are not merely decoration, either: whether demonstrating a design approach or for plant identification, every photograph (the majority taken by the author) has a point to make. It is good to see plants displayed not only in gardens but in their natural setting, so often an inspiration when we are landscaping.

The timely appearance of *Mediterranean Gardening* is yet further confirmation that horticulture in our region is beginning to assert its own identity.

D.T.

Mediterranean Gardening: A Waterwise Approach is available from bookshops in most European countries. In South Africa it is available from the Kirstenbosch bookstore, in New Zealand from Touchwood Books, Hastings 4215, and in California from VLT Gardner, 025 East Victoria Street, Santa Barbara CA and from the bookstore at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. If you have difficulty finding it, please contact the MGS for details of stockists in your country.

Trevor Nottle, *Roses for Every Garden*, The Australian Women's Garden Guides, ACP Publishing Pty. Limited, 1995, ISBN 1 86396 035 X (Australia \$A 9.95, UK £4.99).

It would be hard to imagine a better introduction to the growing of roses for those who are doing so for the first time. The clarity of the presentation, the quality and originality of the illustrations and the choice of roses that are recommended make this book a model of its kind.

Taking the last point first, I found, as a grower of old and species roses, that it was a great relief to see the old roses fitted into a general context of available material, rather than having them treated as cult objects as they so often are.

This idea is carried over into many of the illustrations where one can see an extraordinarily original and tasteful use of roses in the garden. Finally, the highly structured format of the book and the exemplary clarity of the lay-out will make it easy to use.

It must be said that the book is not directed exclusively or even specially at rose growers who live in warm climates. Nevertheless, after several decades of growing roses in Attica and in the Aegean islands I enthusiastically endorse Mr. Nottle's list of recommendations for hot climates and could add many more – as I'm sure he could.

A major problem for rose growers in southern Europe is not so much how to grow the roses as where to find any but the most fashionable varieties. For modern roses, the problem is doubtless less acute; for those of us who prefer the older varieties, the great English nurseries of Peter Beales and David Austin provide the best sources known to me. Even they, however, cannot provide several of the choicest varieties recommended by Mr. Nottle, and I for one would be very interested to hear from members elsewhere of good sources for tea-scented roses, Noisettes and others that revel in the heat.

All in all, an approachable, sophisticated treatment of its subject by a great expert. Highly recommended.

“R. Besso”

Readers recommend:

Joanna Millar's piece (*The Mediterranean Garden* No.1) about South African plants reminds me of a newish book which may be of interest. It is simply called *Cape Bulbs*, and makes a sensible introduction to that area. It is written by an American, James Doutt, but there is an English edition published by Batsfords (at £27.50).

Tim Longville

Two books you may not have come across that I can recommend are:

- Keith Kirsten, *Complete Garden Manual for South Africa*, 1992, ISBN 0 7981 2923 9. This describes many indigenous species and has climate details, so plants from the area of the Cape which are suitable for the Mediterranean can be identified.
- Gwen Elliot, *Australian Plants Identified*, 1990, ISBN 0 9470 6263 7. This describes 1000 commonly grown Australian native plants. The descriptions are botanical (elementary) and there is no gardening information.

Richard Dight

Your readers may be interested in some of the Southern Californian gardening books from my library:

The one I most enjoy is *Southern Californian Gardening* by Pat Welsh, 1992, ISBN 0 87701 629 1, U.S. \$19.95. It is a light-hearted yet very informative and straightforward month-by-month guide to gardening in this climate. A remarkable resource.

The first reference to turn to for most California gardeners is the *Sunset Western Gardening Book*, Sunset Publishing Company, ISBN 0 376 03851 9, about \$20.00. A completely new edition just appeared in March 1995. For those who are computer oriented, they also offer an edition on a CD-ROM complete with quick look up of some 6000 plants, video demonstrations and beautiful colour illustrations of many plants, all for about \$30.00 in either Mackintosh or Windows formats.

For native plants, a good comprehensive pocket book is *Growing California Plants* by Marjorie G. Schmidt, ISBN 0 520 03762 6, about \$15.00.

For growing your own plants I like *Seed Propagation of Native California Plants* by Dara E. Emery, ISBN 0 916436 03 9, about \$10.00. This easy to use little book was prepared by our very own Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, one of the region's leading centers for information and examples of local native plants.

More expensive, but excellent references are: *Landscape Plants for Western Regions* by Bob Perry, ISBN 0 0605988 4 7, about \$45.00. This is an illustrated guide to plants for water conservation. And *the* reference book for all who want to know almost everything about California native plants is *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*, edited by James C. Hickman, ISBN 0 520 08255 9, about \$50.00.

Peter Worsley

Two books which I have found of great use here are *Flowers of Europe*, Polunin, Oxford, 1969, and *Flowering Plants of the Riviera*, Longmans, 1914. This latter book is regularly still available in second-hand bookshops in the UK and describes some 1800 species.

Tom Wellsted

LETTERS

In the spring Newsletter Mr. Irons states that it is 'a common misconception that Australian plants need mycorrhiza to thrive'. He may have overlooked that I said 'many' Australians and not 'all' Australians.

Mr. Irons assumes that the failures I encounter with many Australian seedlings are associated with poor compost structure and with too high a pH. However, our soil is well-provided with vegetative matter and has a pH of 6.5-6.8. I wonder how other Mediterranean gardeners fare in this respect.

The editor recommends for further study about mycorrhiza *The Plantsman* 1981. While not all readers may have this excellent source at hand, most may somehow gain access to *The New RHS Dictionary of Gardening* (1992) which reads '...many Australasian plants are adapted to soils which are extremely deficient in phosphorus, and these suffer toxicity when planted in more ordinary substrates.'

Heidi Gildemeister,
Spain

On a short trip to the Aegean island of Syros, ten years ago, I came across a beach which had been excavated by a bulldozer that had wrought havoc on a colony of *Pancreatium maritimum* (the white sea lily). I managed to salvage a few bulbs which I brought back to our house in the Athenian suburb of Ekali (elevation 350m).

I planted them in our small rock garden, adding some sand later on. They have been blooming in September ever since. I have even collected seeds from them which I planted individually with a dibber on beaches of Mt. Pelion and the island of Euboea.

I wonder whether I shall see any results from my efforts in a few years' time.

Myrto Aperghis,
Ekali, Greece

Heidi Gildemeister should be encouraged to persist trying with *Thevetia peruviana* [now *Cascabela thevetia*] (Letters, *The*

Mediterranean Garden No. 1). It grows (and flowers) well as a shrub in the garden here as long as it is protected from the winter tramontanas and is well irrigated.

Hamish Warren,
Menorca, Balears.

In this region of Attica, just north of Athens, *Thevetia peruviana* would have little hope of surviving the winter outside. However, I have been growing it in a largeish pot for five years; from March to November/December it enjoys the hot sun on a west-facing balcony (though in this position it requires daily watering), while it spends the remaining winter months in front of an east-facing window in an unheated room of the house. During this time it sheds all its leaves and is watered very sparingly, *i.e.* about once a month. Under these conditions the plant is going from strength to strength. By April each year it has broken into new leaf and it produces its lemon yellow flowers generously throughout the summer.

Caroline Harbouri,
Kifissia, Greece.

Here are some subjects I am hoping to see dealt with in future journals: 1. How does one propagate oleanders? It is so frustrating to have examples of the best colours around but be unable to get them from nurserymen. 2. What is the best system of administering water to plants in beds? Are the surface minitubes good or bad? 3. Is it worth attempting to make compost in our climate?

In an attempt to make a positive contribution: I find I can glean leafmould and surface topsoil from our evergreen oak woods and this is a good substitute for the absurdly expensive baled peat moss for enriching poor sandy soils. It also renders usable the 'topsoil' which I bought, not cheaply, and which seems to contain no humus and sets like cement in summer. Topsoil buyers beware! Best see it *in situ* before buying.

David Fairhall,
Menorca, Balears

Readers' comments on our first issue:

Congratulations on a splendid No. 1 issue of *The Mediterranean Garden*. It is so well done and I am sure will become required reading for us all after our extraordinarily hot summer.

Rosie Atkins,
Editor, *Gardens Illustrated*

The Mediterranean Garden is not only honest and unpretentious (and nowadays that's quite something anyway) but also quietly and unassumingly handsome... I think you have done wonders with what must be a pretty stringent budget... Many congratulations to all of you involved with it.

Liz Robinson,
Stroud, UK

I do congratulate you on the first issue of *The Mediterranean Garden*. It is excellent and full of interest and I find the beautiful line drawings so much preferable to garish colour photos.

Rachel Hood,
Great Milton, UK

I much enjoyed your first issue of *The Mediterranean Garden*; it is quite a work of reference. I particularly liked articles describing plants that do well but cannot be got easily, i.e. without growing your own from seed. The Acacias, and South African plants by Joanna Millar are excellent in this respect. The garden history articles are worthwhile. My only criticism is that it should be a monthly periodical!

Richard Dight,
Malaga, Spain

What a wonderful pleasure to receive as my very first new member communication the delightful first edition of the MGS

Journal. It was lovely to read and a joy to the eye. You are to be congratulated.

Peter Worsley,
Santa Barbara, California

Now we are in our element and we know what we need to talk about, what to expect – we are part of the club in the sunshine, we have a communal voice... I for one walk more confidently in my garden since reading your No. 1 issue. Thank you.

Virginia Scaretti,
Fratocchie, Italy

Our thanks to all of you who wrote or telephoned to tell us how much you had enjoyed issue no. 1 of *The Mediterranean Garden*.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

JENNY BUSSEY founded the Costa Blanca Gardeners' Circle in 1990. She is Chairwoman of their committee and edits their monthly newsletter.

JOHN CALDERWOOD is well known to gardeners on the Costa Blanca through his talks and articles on a wide range of garden topics. PIERO CANETI is a landscape designer and gardener at Vallettri near Rome. His book *Il Giardino Mediterraneo Secondo Natura* is published by Edagricole.

CAROLINE HARBOURI's garden not only contains a fine collection of plants, but also tortoises, terrapins and toads – a reflection of her long-standing concern with the wildlife of Greece.

SPYROS HARBOURIS is a Greek poet who writes mainly in English (but equally well in Greek!).

JEFF IRONS is Secretary of the Australasian Plant Society, based in Britain.

GILLIAN MAWREY is a garden historian who divides her life between London and the Loire valley.

JOANNA MILLAR, when not tending garden and guests, writes and lectures on the gardens of the Midi.

TREVOR NOTTLE is a garden historian, writer and consultant living in South Australia. Both he and his garden have recently been featured on Australian television.

RUSSELL READ describes himself as a very private gardener who rarely visits public gardens.

DEREK TOMS is a garden designer and artist who began his Mediterranean gardening in Turkey, but now lives in Greece.

TOM WELLSTED gardens in Provence on poor soil and specialises in ornamental shrubs.

GETTING IN TOUCH

The following members are interested in forming local active groups:

Gard/Languedoc-Roussillon – Edna Price (Tel.33-66-77-38-67)

Tuscany – Judith MacDonald (Tel.0575 837 221)

Rome – Piero Caneti (Tel.06-9637765)

Corfu – Marjorie Holmes (Tel.91411)

For mainland Greece, contact Sally Razelou at Sparoza until further notice.

For information on affiliated societies in the following areas, contact:

Costa del Sol – Asociacion de Jardineria, La Cappelliana
(Richard Dight, Tel.(345) 259 55 90)

Costa Blanca – Costa Blanca Gardening Circle (Paula Hall,
Tel. 648 2060 or Jenny Bussey, Tel. 346 640 5365)

Mallorca – ESRA Gardening Club (Ann Manning,
Tel. (3471) 530850)

Skiathos – International Women’s Gardening Club
(Norma Ashley-Smith, Tel. 0427-23543)

MARE NOSTRUM

The Romans said it,
we can also say it: *Mare Nostrum*
bordered by hills
where cypress trees and thyme,
anemones and wild garlic
grow in profusion
under the afternoon sun.

Let us then be concerned:
may this ancient landscape be preserved
and the wild flower never die
till the evening of time.

Spyros Harbouris



