

The Global Picture

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation's 2020 vision says "*Without plants, there is no life. The functioning of the planet, and our own survival, depends on plants.*" In April 2000 the International Botanical Congress produced a Convention on Biological Diversity with the aim of providing a target-driven strategy for plant conservation. Following further work, in 2010 an updated version was adopted, the famous Nagoya Protocol. With Five clear objectives and Sixteen targets the Global Strategy provides the road map for the urgent action needed to prevent further losses of our natural heritage.

Much conservation work appears to be the responsibility of government agencies and global organisations but local associations and groups have a huge part to play in this important work. Field botanists, land managers, teachers, gardeners (both professional and amateur) and many others have a strong desire to see plant life continue and thrive. This needs our individual contributions and support and our Association aims to provide a local focus by leading the Barrocal Botanic Garden project.

What is a Botanic Garden ?

Botanic gardens hold documented collections of living plants for the purposes of scientific research, conservation, display and education. Botanic gardens are visited by 200 million visitors each year and so are clearly well placed to enthuse and educate by raising public awareness

Why a Barrocal Botanic Garden ?

Located in the South-West of the Iberian Peninsula, the Barrocal is one of the three ecological areas of the Algarve (Serra, Barrocal and Litoral) and has the most distinct plant community. The Barrocal zones

are an acknowledged biodiversity hotspot with a well documented flora of 1001 taxa, 461 genera and 101 botanical families. The area runs along the Algarve from Cape St Vincent to Castro Marim, and comprises an extensive range of mesozoic carbonated soils, located in the Central part of the Algarve coast, situated between the Serra and the coastal strip. This area holds the potential for making beautiful natural gardens. The demonstration gardens mix cultivated and managed natural areas.

Aims of the Barrocal Botanic Garden

- Demonstrate to professionals and amateurs involved in horticulture, design and research the enormous potential of the native plants of the Barrocal zones .
- A resource for training and demonstrating to those (and especially those embarking on their careers) in the gardening/landscaping/horticultural industries the benefits of using native plants.
- Provide a major aid to developing existing and future links to Government, academic and training institutions where teaching, research and practice combine to pass up-to-date knowledge onto the next generation.
- Demonstrate the use of native plants to deliver beauty and diversity with minimum interventions and low to nil water use - restoration ecology is just like gardening, a process not a product.
- Engage all ages and nationalities in the life of the garden, throughout the year and in all seasons, through various activities including workshops, planting and open days and identification sessions.

Our links to international organisations also dedicated to Mediterranean gardens and landscapes present an opportunity to share this resource not only locally in the Algarve and nationally in Portugal but also internationally to those in Mediterranean climate zones worldwide.

Why this site in the Silves area ?

The most common structural land forms of the Barrocal are the coastal type mono inclines, which occur between Silves and S. Bartolomeu de Messines. These dolomite formations, near to Messines, are iconic zones where the native flora can flourish. Our chosen site has been abandoned land for many decades, allowing native plants to recover and with the typical vestige woody plants of carob, almond and olive trees present on the site. The area currently involved in this project is approximately 1,000 sq m and slopes away to the east and north east at the highest point in the Quinta da Figueirinha – a typical Barrocal site but with lovely views out over the surrounding landscape. Themed botanical gardens already exist and are being developed following evaluation of the Botanic Garden . These could include other Mediterranean climate zone plants and creating dry/arid zone gardens together with fire resistant plantings.

Our Approach

Following surveys of the large variety of existing plants in the botanic garden we are enriching it with specimens which are found in the Barrocal but which are not presently represented in the garden. Planting commenced in February 2017 and will continue.

If you wish to contribute to the development of the garden please contact Rosie Peddle, Algarve contact below.

References

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The listing for plants recorded in this area
Web site www.flora-on.pt
http://flora-on.pt/#/1nb31*nb31*silves

Botanic Gardens Conservation International

The Garden is a Member of BGCI
web site www.bgci.org

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS at Quinta da Figueirinha, Silves www.qdf.pt

- Drought-resistant plants
- Exotic fruit garden
- Cypress Plantations
- Experiences with oaks and other tree species



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Mediterranean Gardening Association – Portugal

Who are we ?

We are a group of people who have an interest in Mediterranean horticulture - gardens, vegetable gardens and plants. We are also part of wider network of likeminded people from around the world -

www.mediterraneangardeninginternational.org

What can you do?

Promote and share knowledge and interest in Mediterranean plants and gardening, particularly in climates relevant to the topic. This includes aspects of education and research with environmentally friendly ethics as a major objective.

Attend events - these include garden visits, tours, educational visits, demonstrations, lectures and social events.

Promote a friendly, sociable and democratic relationship between our members and other groups with the same interests.

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Cover drawing – *Myrtus communis* by Burford Hurry

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Barrocal Botanic Garden



"To promote Mediterranean plants and gardens, through education, culture, conservation and recognition of their community, environmental and economic importance in our everyday lives."



Plants for the Planet

