

MGAP / APEJECM 2018



First and foremost a very happy gardening New Year to you all. Another year has sped by with its usual incredible speed. Not that we at MGAP have been idle. It has been a particularly good year for us as we had bumper turnouts for both our Spring (Silves) and Autumn (Sao Bras) fairs, the former despite a torrential downpour of 'welcome' rain in the early morning. Our AGM in April was also well attended as was the walk which followed Sue Parker's talk on local ground orchids. Another of our main events was the successful launching of the Botanic Garden on the Quinta da Figueirinha in Silves in May after months of preparatory work by an inspirational team of volunteers. Although barely born, the garden put on a dazzling display of Centaureas for the enthusiasts that were there. Since then the botanic garden has been developed further by volunteers who have continued to maintain, tidy and plant. Subsequently we have become members of the European Botanic Garden Association and we will be attending their congress in Lisboa in May.

This year too we published our first book in Portuguese *Orchideas Selvagens no Algarve* translated from the English by Teresa Chuva with another book in the pipeline.

There have also been other developments. In addition to our already established international links ([MGI Website](#)) with mediterranean gardening groups in the UK, France, Cape Horticultural Society in S. Africa and Margaret River Australia, 2017 also saw us becoming affiliated with the Mediterranean Garden Society . In practical terms this means giving us electronic access to their quarterly journal 'The Mediterranean Garden' as well as opening up contacts with their established membership around the world. We have already started to put this into effect with joint local members recently meeting up with, Caroline Davies, the president of the MGS in Melbourne. Sharing gardening experiences and knowledge on this scale can only be a good thing and I am hoping that our members will

actively contribute at a personal level to these gardening links, old and new, with their views, news, new plants and projects.

All of these developments have of course been initiated first of all by our love of gardens and our wish to improve them. Looking round my garden this morning I am gratified to see how the plants have flourished despite the searing summer and low rainfall so far. The flowering antlers and leaves of my magnificent *Aloe Thraskii* are succulent and strong and the *Canarina canariensis* couldn't look better - if you have never tried to grow the latter it is definitely worth it. That *Clematis cirrhosis* which was totally neglected in summer has surprised me with a cascade of white bells in the branches of the small almond tree next to it. They all remind me that these are plants that have survived our dry summers. Not that we always learn, I am making a mental note to plant *Scilla peruviana* in the dry shade this autumn after various other experiments with more exotic plants have failed dismally.

In conclusion I hope that 2018 will be a good gardening year for us all. We look forward to seeing and talking with you at our AGM and other events. I feel that together we are making our way forward to more sustainable gardening in Portugal and hopefully influencing others in the process.

Burford Hurry
President APEJECM / MGAP