



Le Jardin sec – The Dry Garden 2nd – 7th May 2010

Itinerary

Sunday 2nd May You will be met at your airport or station of arrival (see getting here) and taken to the Hotel La Bastide in Cabezac. Alternatively, if you are arriving by car, you will be given instructions on how to reach the hotel. The hotel is situated adjacent to a wine domaine in the heart of the Minervois region. It provides a high standard of comfort and decor and has a restaurant and swimming pool. Dinner at the hotel.

Monday 3rd May We will drive to Les Ecuries conference centre in Cesseroas for a seminar and discussion about gardening in summer dry regions – focussing on how to recognise plant adaptations, the implications of climate change and reducing watering and maintenance requirements in our gardens. We will also look at the garden at les Ecuries, which operates on dry climate gardening principles. After a buffet lunch, we shall travel to the village of Caunes-Minervois for a guided tour of Gill Pound and Cei Cochrane’s garden. Gill has an extensive collection of plants from dry climate regions of the world and is continually experimenting with new and unusual varieties of plants to see how they fare in the Languedoc climate. This will give further opportunity for questions and discussion. Evening free.

Tuesday 4th May Our morning visit will be to the Jardin Botanique de Foncaude in the eastern Corbières, a garden which was established between 1991 and 1994 on a hot, dry, windy site. It is divided into three zones: the first area is an arboretum of over 300 species, then there is a Mediterranean garden with over 300 native species, as well as an area devoted to hardy cactus and succulent plants with over 1300 species, including one of France’s premier collection of agaves. We shall go on to the stunning Abbaye de Fontfroide, a former Cistercian monastery, for lunch before our afternoon visit to the newly restored terraced gardens at the Abbey. Still a work in progress, these gardens are being developed without chemicals and with minimal watering. Evening free.

Wednesday 5th May In the morning, we will drive westwards to an area of wild countryside near the village of Conques sur Orbriel for a walk over limestone garrigue with its fascinating wealth of wild flowers, allowing us to see a number of garden plants in their natural habitat. There are many familiar Mediterranean shrubs – Cistus, Buxus, Amelanchier, Kermes Oak and many bulbs, orchids and other sub shrubs and perennials. Lunch will be at the Domaine Gayda at Brugairolles. The afternoon will be spent at Le Jardin de la Bouichère in Limoux, famous for its perfumed plants and “forgotten” vegetables and herbs and where they have also recently planted a dry garden. This two hectare site is home to a fascinating 2,500 perennials, trees and shrubs. Evening free.

Thursday 6th May This morning we will travel to the garden of the world famous Filippi nursery at Mèze for a guided tour. This garden and nursery was established over fifteen years ago and Olivier Filippi has made an extensive study of plants and their resistance to the summer heat, the wind and the winter cold of the Languedoc. There are particularly interesting collections of Cistus, Teucriums, Phlomis, oleanders, rosemaries and many other plants which are adapted to waterwise gardening. Olivier Filippi is the author of *Pour un jardin sans arrosage*, published in Britain as *The Dry Gardening Handbook*, which came out in 2008. We shall lunch at Le Quai restaurant in the picturesque port of Marseillan before returning to visit the nursery and its wonderful selection of plants. Dinner



at Le Chantovent restaurant in Minerve. Sacked by Simon de Montfort, in 1210 during the crusades against the Cathars, Minerve is dramatically perched on a rocky promontory formed by the rivers Cesse and Briant.

Friday 7th May Breakfast and transfer to your railway station or airport.

Price € 995

Single room supplement € 225

If you wish to pay in a currency other than euros, the exchange rate for the cost of the holiday will be fixed at the rate on the day of booking.

For reference: <http://markets.ft.com/markets/currencies.asp>