



Top 50 Mediterranean Plants for Pollinators

The best traditional Mediterranean plants
to plant to help our pollinating insects

List Curated by Thomas McBride

From research data collected and collated at the
National Botanic Garden of Wales

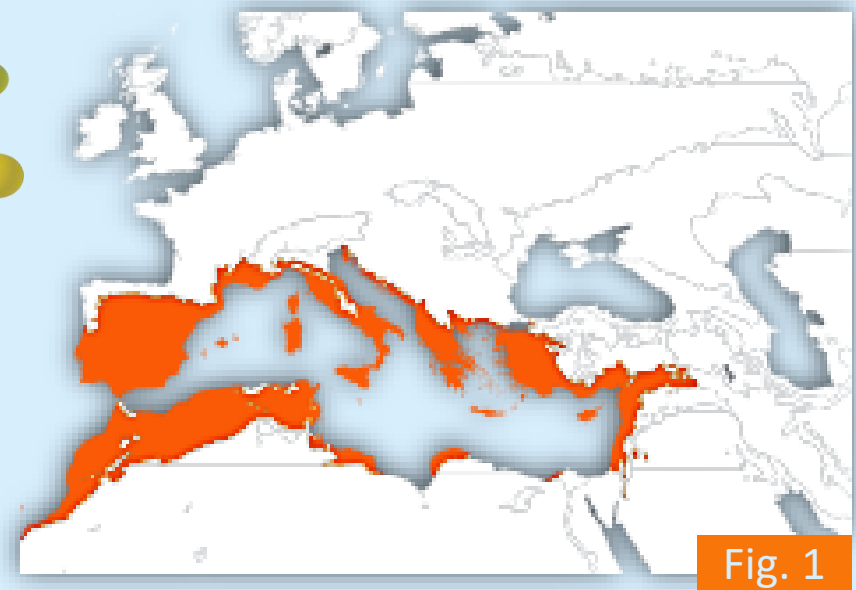
NB: Butterflies and Moths are not studied at the NBGW so any data on nectar plants
beneficial for them is taken from Butterfly Conservation



Introduction



The Mediterranean Basin is the area of Southern Europe, Northern Africa and Western Asia that drains into the Mediterranean Sea. This area corresponds with the botanical region known as the Mediterranean Biome (Fig. 1). Significant countries in this region include Spain, Italy, Greece and Morocco.



Here at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, we have two key designated areas for Mediterranean Plants. In the Great Glasshouse, we have six Mediterranean Climate regions (Fig. 2) of which one is the Mediterranean Biome. We also have a Boulder Garden that features many plants from



this region. Food is important in the Mediterranean and several herbs are native their such as Rosemary and Thyme. You can find these in the Growing the future Garden and Walled Garden.

Creating a Mediterranean Garden

Many plants from the Mediterranean wild grow in the UK quite happily so planting a Mediterranean Garden can be a great way to transport a little of the summer sunshine to sometimes dreary UK. Mediterranean Gardens are all about bold colours, plenty of shrubs and lots of aromatic plants such as herbs, citrus trees and scented flowers such as jasmine, honeysuckle and camomile.

While most are fairly hardy, it is usually preferable to plant a Mediterranean garden in a sheltered spot that is South facing and in full sun. If plants are not as hardy, you can grow them in terracotta pots and bring them into a greenhouse or indoors during the winter months.

When landscaping, consider using a central water feature as a focal point for the garden. Stone paths and ornaments such as terracotta urns will add an authentic feel; as will evergreen trees such as Mediterranean Cypress.



A range of plants from around the world can be used to achieve a Mediterranean aesthetic such as Bougainvillea (Fig.3) and Trachycarpus but this plant selection purely focuses on those plants native to this region (excluding citrus)



Guide to using these pages:

Map

Maps depict the native area of the plant (in green)
They also show areas the plant is naturalised (in purple)

All maps shown are derived from 'Plants of the World Online'; courtesy of Kew Gardens

Flowering Period (this is when it is good for pollinators!)

Plant Family

Growing habit and mature size of the plant

Latin Binomial Name

Lavandula stoechas

Common English Name

French Lavender

Photograph of the plant in flower



Insect groups known to favour the nectar of this plant



* This plant should be kept under glass during the winter (cannot survive below -5°C night temperatures)

Late Spring - Late Summer

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

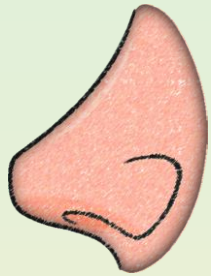
Medium Shrub

Useful knowledge or warnings about the plant

RHS AGM cultivars of this species (or a related species occasionally)

Key to these Pages

Additional information on these garden plants



The flowers and/or leaves have a Pleasant scent

This plant would only be suitable for meadow-style planting



Plant is often used in traditional Herbal Remedies



The plant has edible parts that are commonly eaten or used in cooking



Warnings



Plant tissue is highly toxic if ingested



Sap may cause irritation (Wash hands after touching or avoid touching)

Temperature

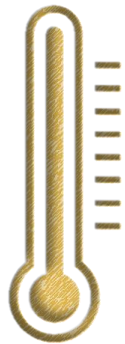
Some of the plants listed in our Top 200 are not fully hardy in all or some parts of the United Kingdom.

Plants without a thermometer symbol are fully hardy in the severest UK Winter; equating to **H5** or hardier.

Plants with a coloured thermometer symbol are hardy to varying degrees as follows:



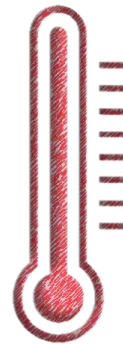
Almost Hardy
(H4)



Half-Hardy
(H3)



Not Frost Hardy
(H2)



Not Hardy
(H1)

RHS Hardiness Scale

H1a	-	Above 15°C
H1b	-	Minimum 10°C
H1c	-	Minimum 5°C
H2	-	Minimum 1°C
H3	-	Minimum -5°C
H4	-	Minimum -10°C
H5	-	Minimum -15°C

Pollinators

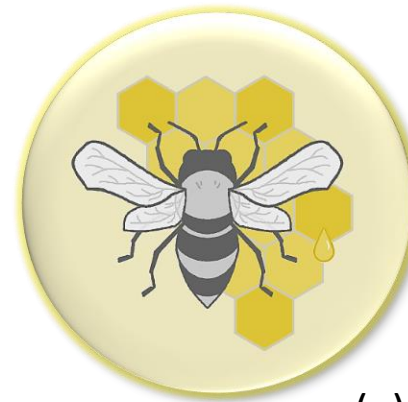
Our data on pollinators has been collected from studies spanning over a decade. Pollinator symbols appear when plants are proven to be good nectar plants for certain insects.

It should be noted that all bee and hoverfly data is ours but lepidoptera data is taken from Butterfly Conservation.

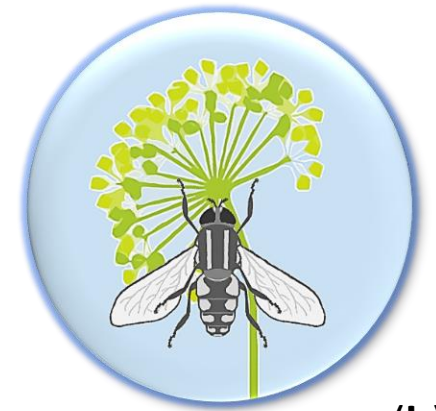
Our data spans a wide range of different insect species. For simplicity, these species have been condensed into six easy icons to represent them:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| a) Honeybees | c) Bumblebees | e) Moths |
| b) Hoverflies | d) Butterflies
(Includes Moths) | f) Solitary Bees |

The next pages will describe each of the insect groups:



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



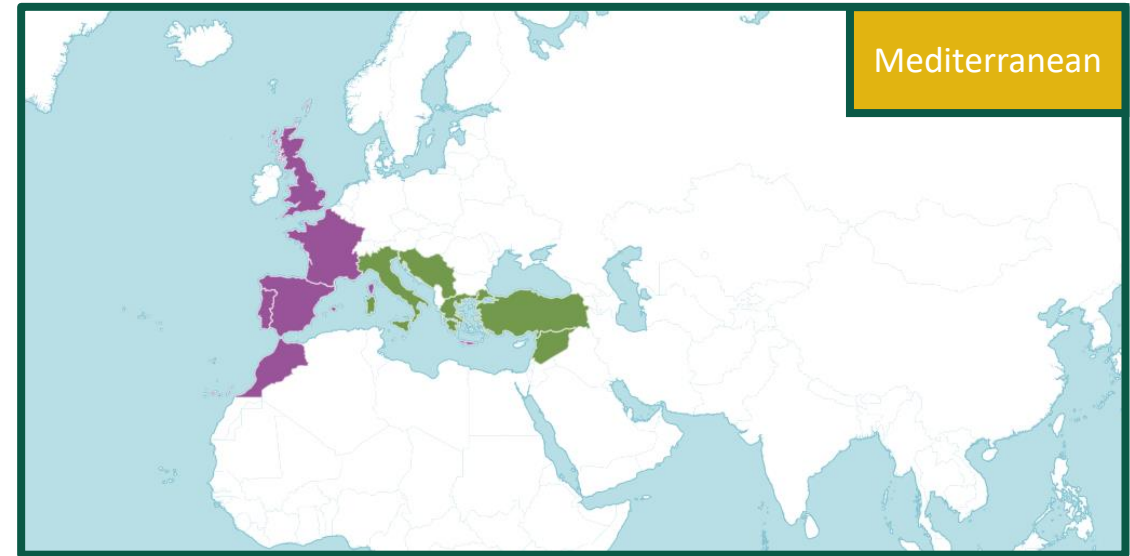
(e)



(f)

Acanthus mollis

Bear's Breeches



'Rue Ledan'



Late Spring
- Midsummer

Acanthaceae
Acanthus Family

4ft Perennial

Achillea tomentosa

Woolly Yarrow



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) Ghislain118



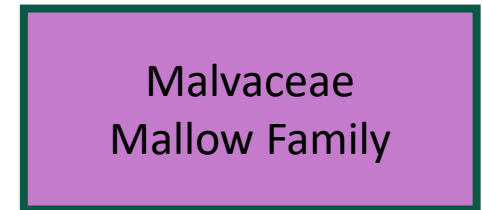
Early Summer
- Early Autumn

Asteraceae
Daisy Family

2ft Perennial

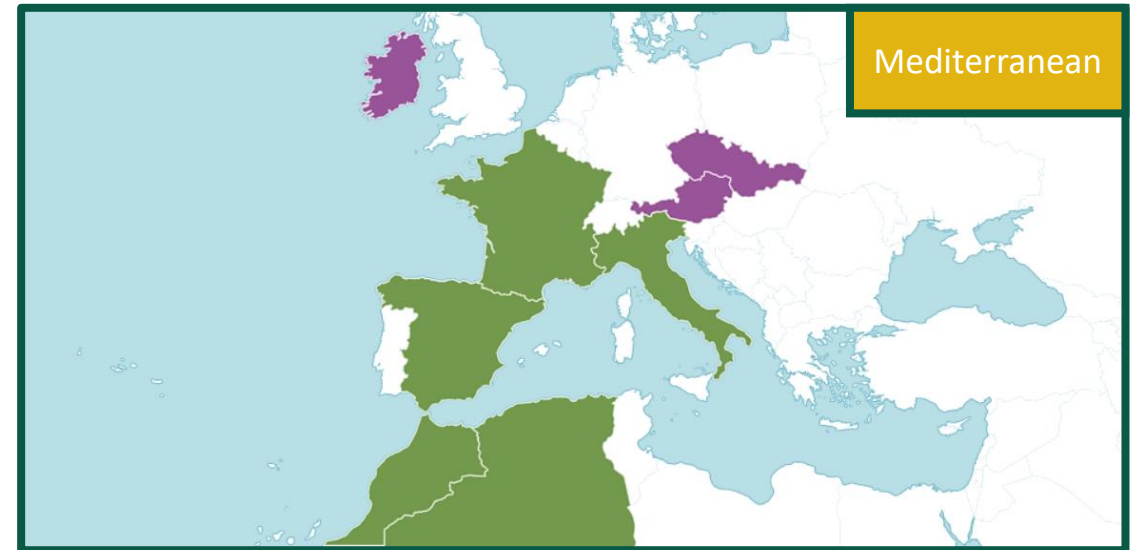
Alcea rosea

Common Hollyhock



Allium moly

Yellow Garlic



Anchusa azurea

Italian Bugloss



'Loddon Royalist'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Boraginaceae
Borage Family

3ft Perennial

Antirrhinum majus

Common Snapdragon



'Montego Pink'
'Liberty Classic'



Early Summer
- Early Autumn

Plantaginaceae
Plantain Family

2ft Perennial

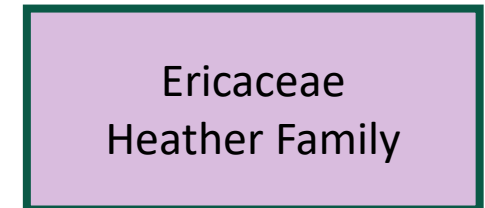
Arbutus unedo Strawberry Tree



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) Umberto Ferrando, Markus Nolf (fruit)



'Atlantic'
f. rubra



Aubrieta deltoidea

Purple Rock-cress



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Adreia



'Doctor Mules'
'Red Cascade'



Spring 

Brassicaceae
Mustard Family

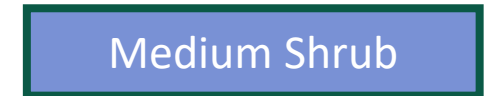
Trailing Perennial

Capparis spinosa

Caper Bush



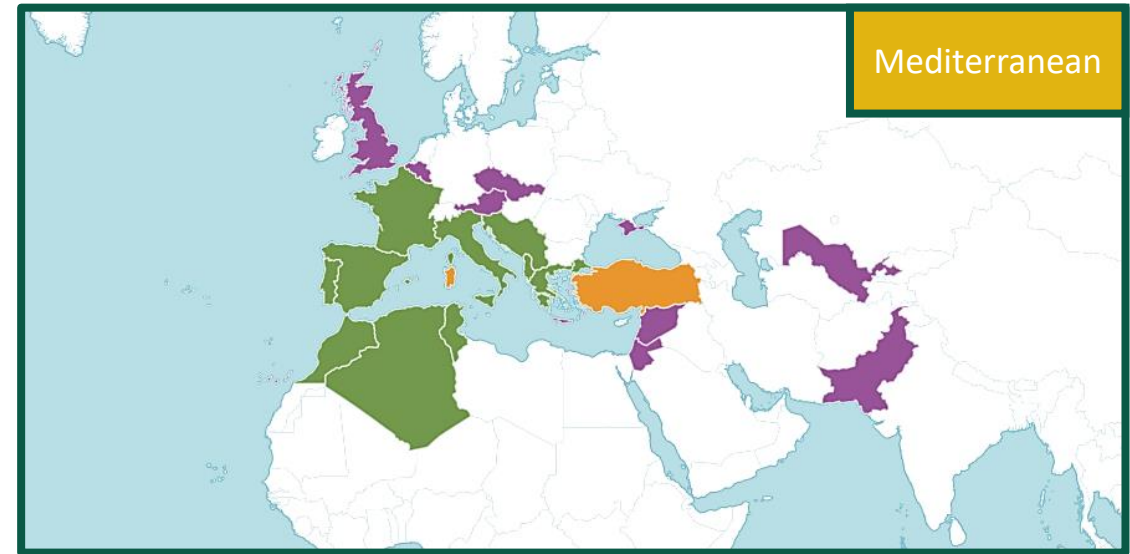
None



* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Centranthus ruber

Red Valerian



None

Late Spring
- Early Autumn

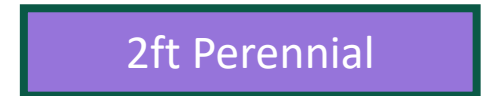
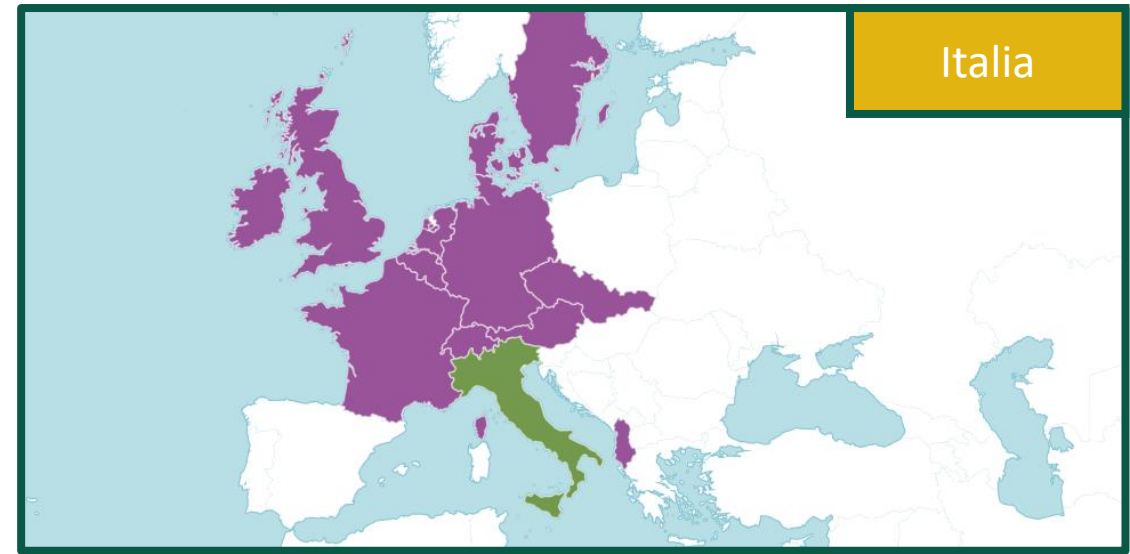
Caprifoliaceae
Honeysuckle Family

3ft Perennial



Cerastium tomentosum

Snow-in-Summer

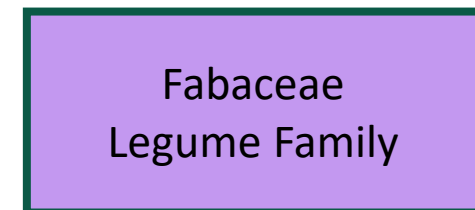


Cercis siliquastrum

Judas Tree

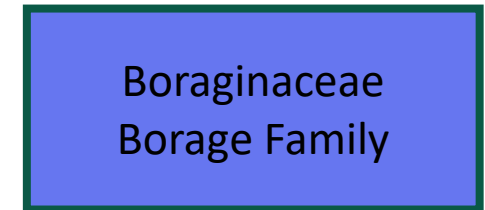


Photograph from Flickr (CC) by Andreas Rockstein



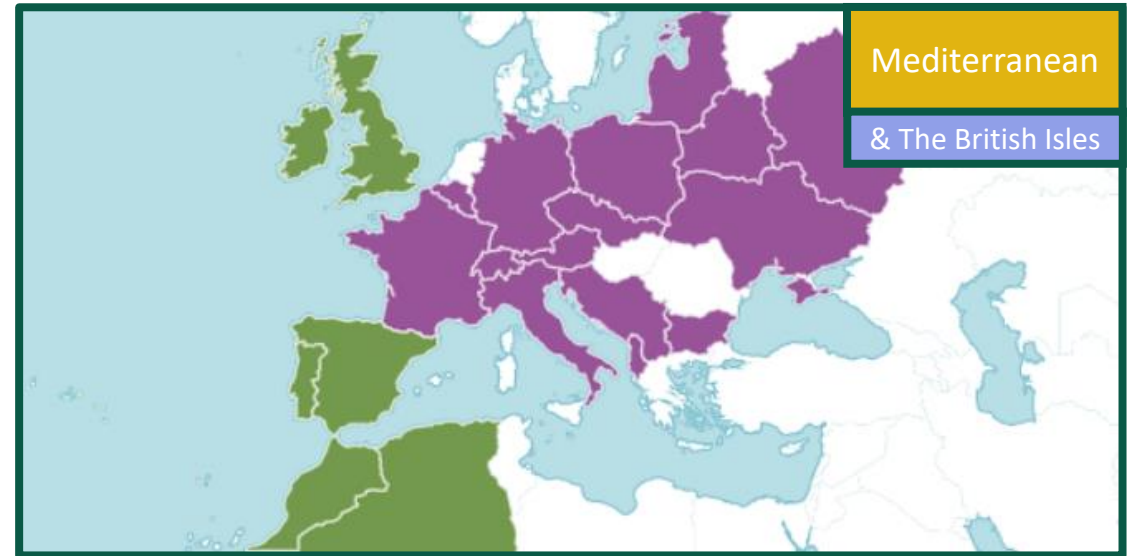
Cerintho major

Greater Honeywort



Chamaemelum nobile

Common Camomile



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Melanie Shaw



None



Chamaerops humilis

European Dwarf Fan Palm



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Alwyn Ladell



Mediterranean

Species



Late Spring
- Midsummer

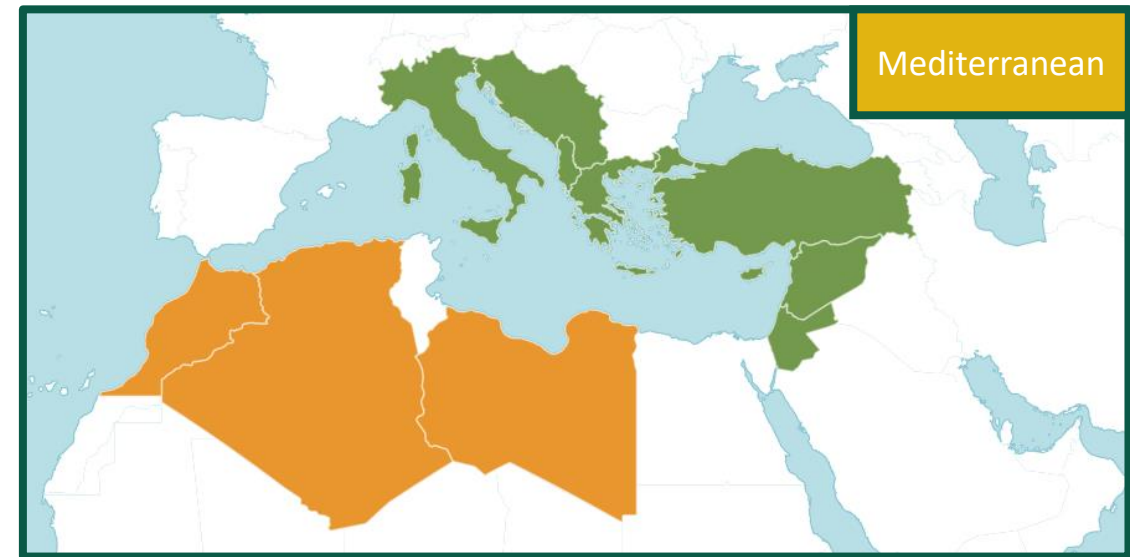
Arecaceae
Palm Family

Large Shrub

* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Cistus creticus

Pink Rock-rose



Related Hybrid:
C. x purpureus

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Cistaceae
Rock-rose Family

Small Shrub

* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Cistus ladanifer

Gum Rock-rose, Laudanum



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Zoë



Related hybrids:

C. x cyprius

C. x purpureus



Summer ☀

Cistaceae
Rock-rose Family

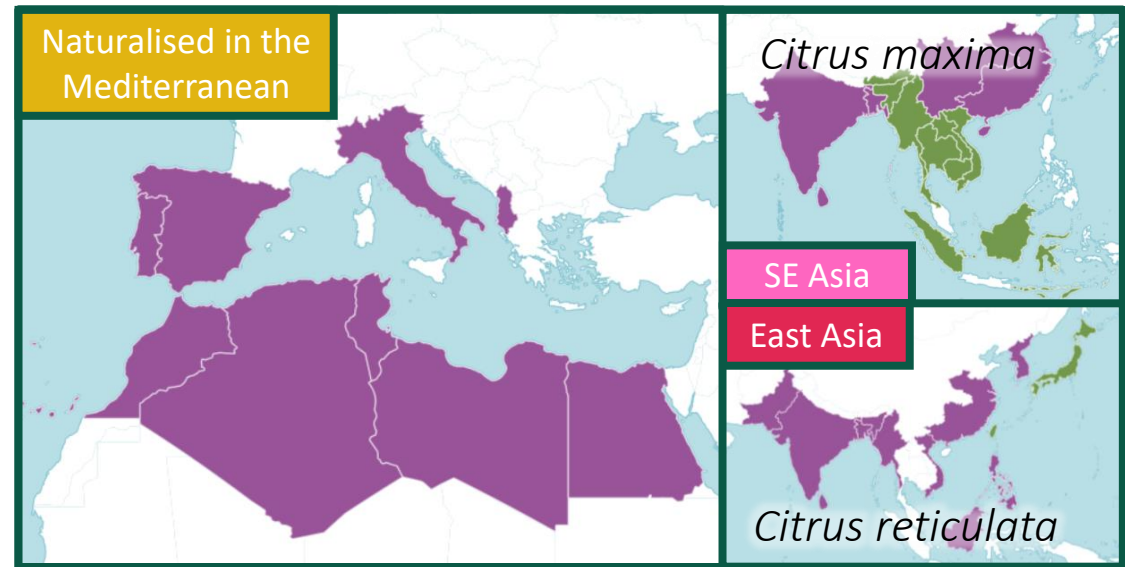
Medium Shrub

* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Citrus x aurantium

Bitter Orange, Seville Orange

Citrus maxima x *Citrus reticulata*



None

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Late Spring
- Midsummer

Rutaceae
Rue Family

Small Tree

* This plant should be kept under glass during the winter
(cannot survive below -5°C night temperatures)

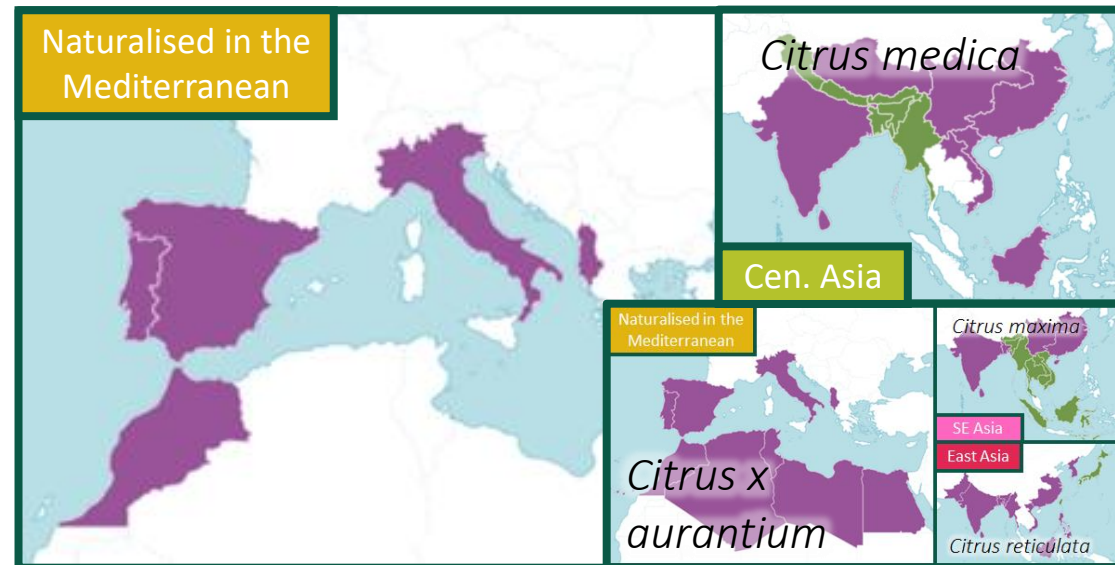
Citrus x limon

Lemon

Citrus x aurantium x Citrus medica



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Jesús Cabrera



'Meyer'
'Variegata'



Late Spring
- Midsummer

Rutaceae
Rue Family

Small Tree

* Will not survive a frost, only half-hardy, bring indoors in winter. Recommended pot plant.

Cotinus coggygria

Smoke Bush



'Ancot' 'Young Lady'
'Royal Purple'



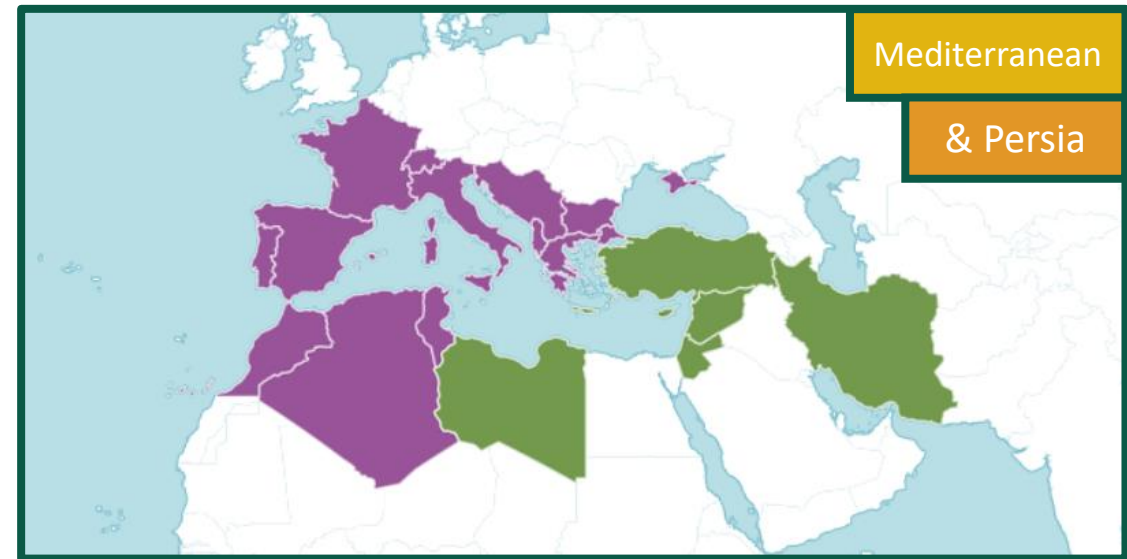
Summer ☀

Anacardiaceae
Cashew Family

Large Shrub

Cupressus sempervirens

Mediterranean Cypress



None



Conifers are not flowering plants

Cupressaceae
Cypress Family

Medium Tree

* Honeybees are known to collect pollen from the pollen cones of cypress species. Conifers do not flower so there is no nectar source.

Dianthus caryophyllus

Carnation, Clove Pink

Photograph of Cultivar from
Flickr (CC) Lawrence Chernin



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) H. Brisse



Many Cultivars

Always Choose Single-flowering Cultivars



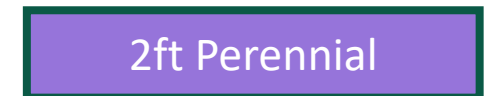
Summer ☀️

Caryophyllaceae
Pink Family

1ft Perennial

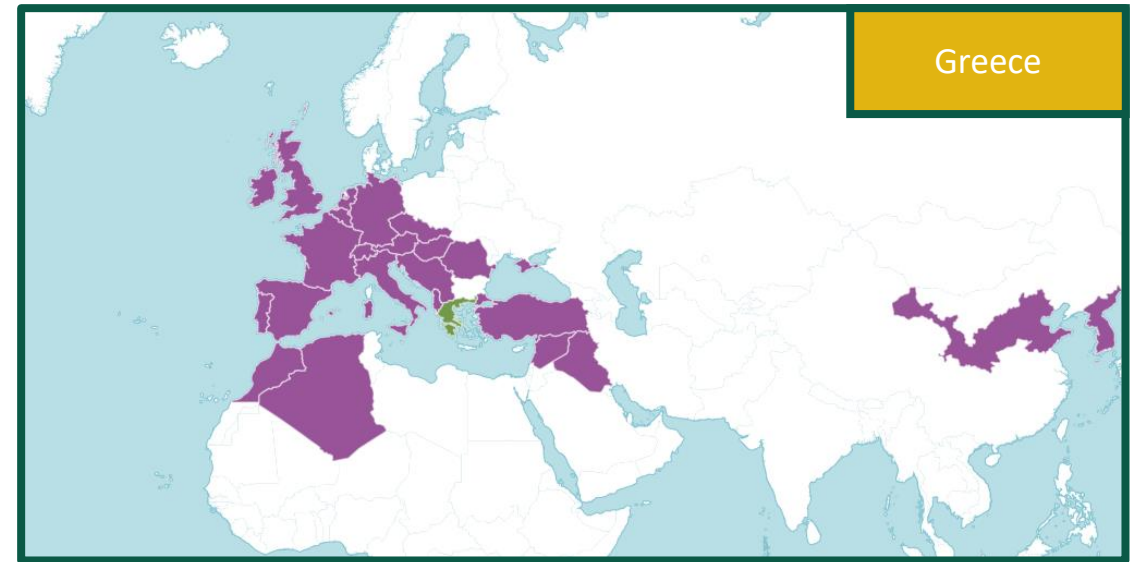
Eryngium bourgatii

Mediterranean Sea-holly



Erysimum cheiri

Common Wallflower



'Persian Carpet'
'Sunset series'



Spring 

Brassicaceae
Mustard Family

2ft Perennial

Erysimum linifolium

Mauve Wallflower



'Bowles Mauve'



Early Spring
- Midsummer

Brassicaceae
Mustard Family

3ft Perennial

Euphorbia characias

Mediterranean Spurge



'Tasmanian Tiger'
'Blue Hills'



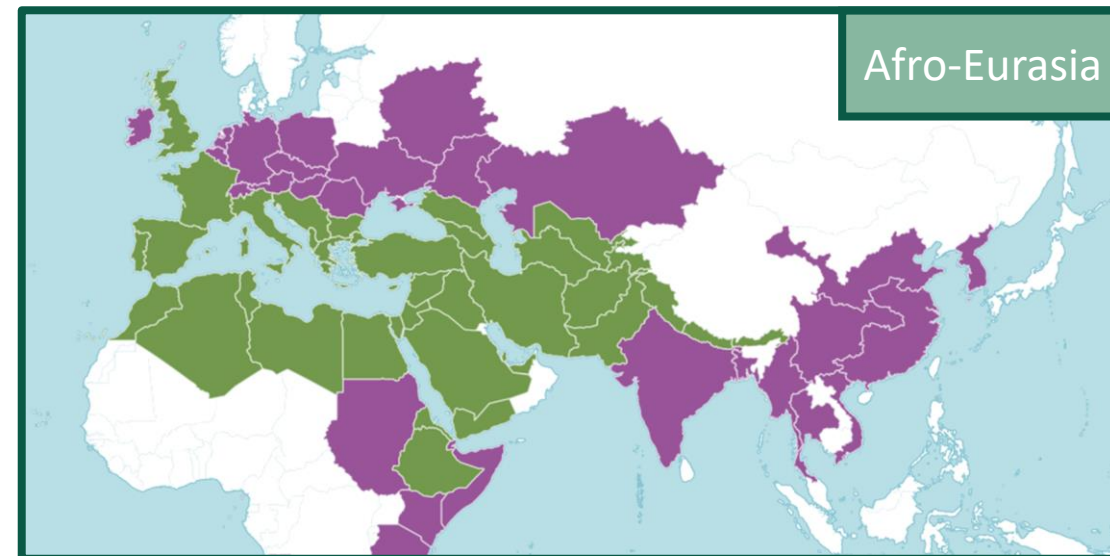
Mid Spring
- Early Summer

Euphorbiaceae
Spurge Family

3ft Perennial

Foeniculum vulgare

Common Fennel

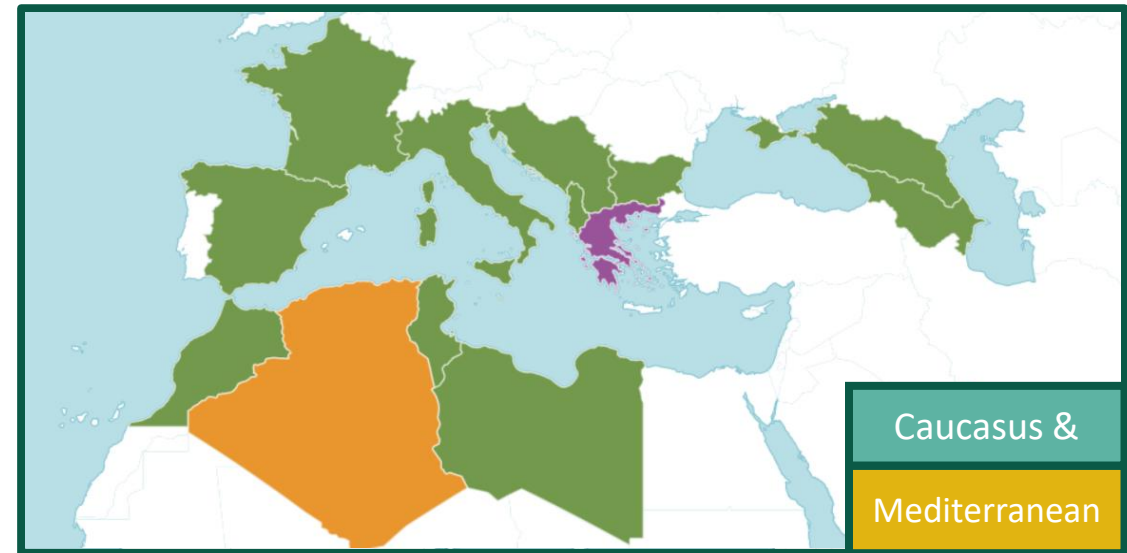


Photograph from Flickr (CC) Katy Wrathall



Gladiolus communis

Eastern Gladiolus



Subsp.
byzantinus



Mid Spring
- Early Summer

Iridaceae
Iris Family

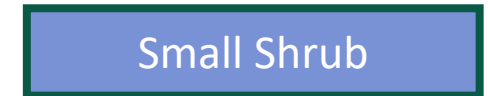
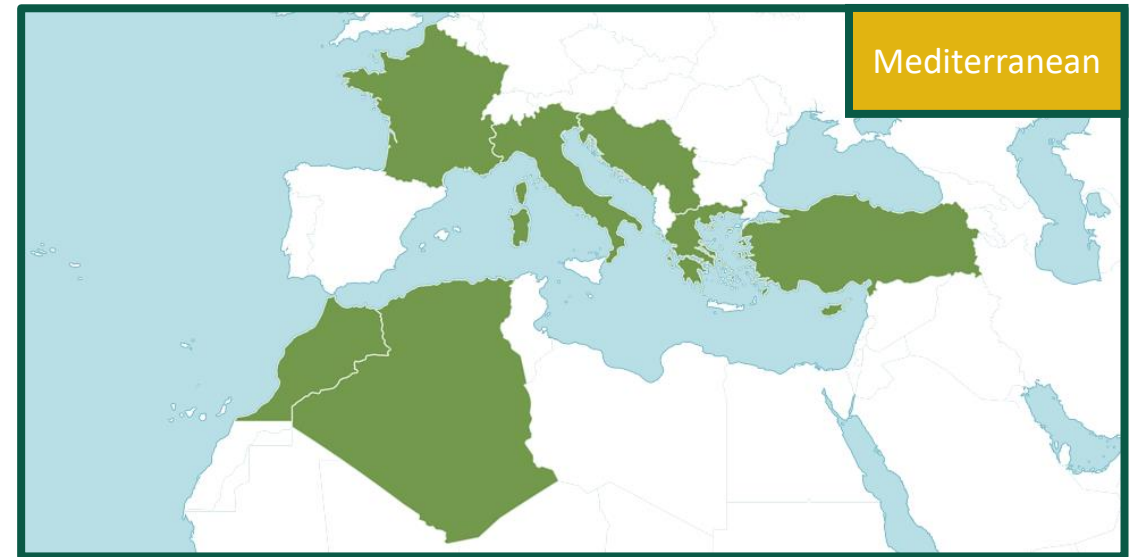
3ft Cormous

Helichrysum italicum

Curry Plant



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Keith Williamson



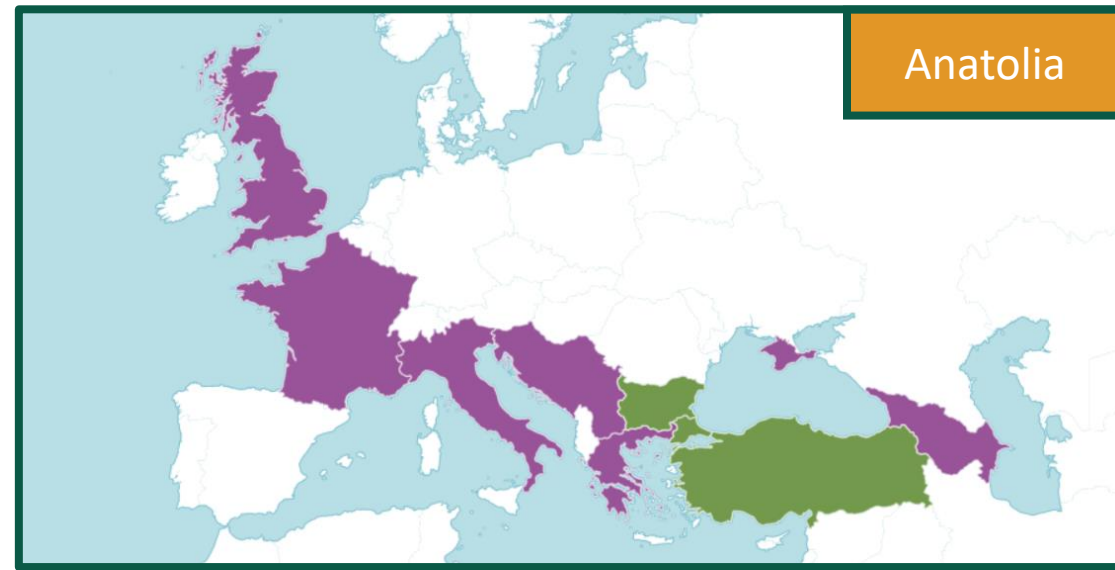
* Leaves may be used in cooking to impart flavour but, like bay leaves, should be discarded before consumption.

Hypericum calycinum

Rose of Sharon



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Turin Boy



'Brigadoon'

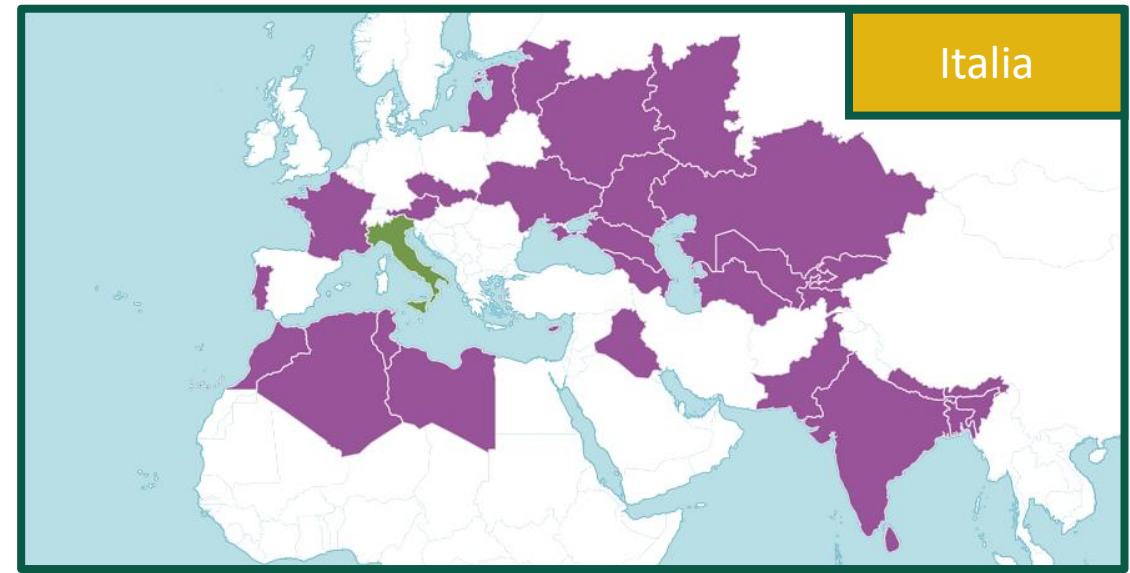
Summer ☀

Hypericaceae
St Johns Wort Family

Small Shrub

Lathyrus odoratus

Sweet Pea



'Lipstick' 'Bristol'
'Solway series'



Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Fabaceae
Legume Family

6ft Climber Annual

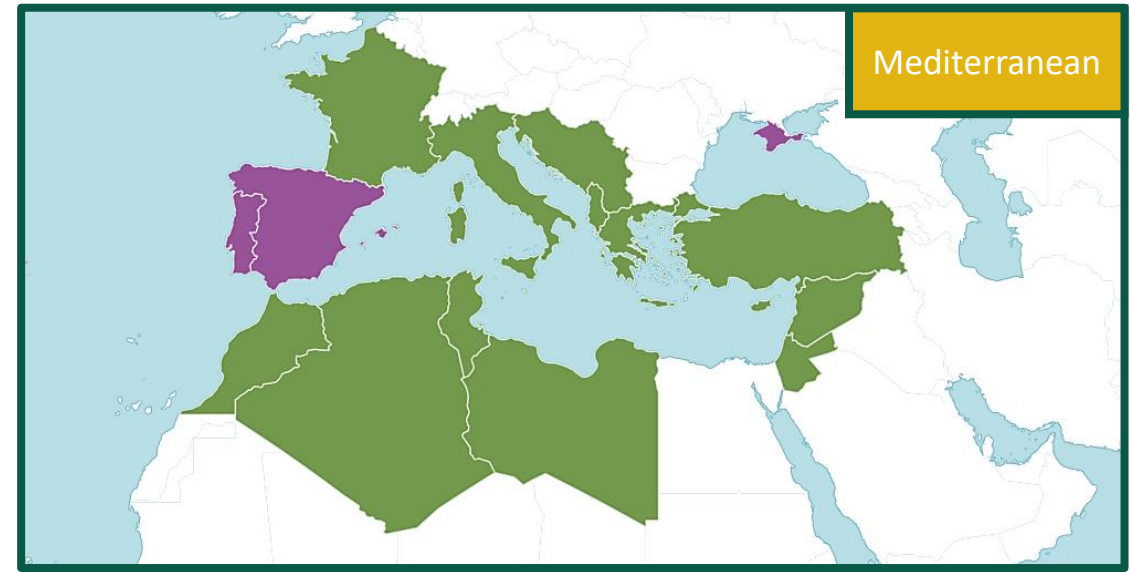
* This plant, if sown early, should be sown inside during winter (cannot survive below -5°C night temperatures)

Laurus nobilis

Bay Tree, Laurel



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Jeremy Cherfas



'Aurea' -Species-
f. angustifolia



Spring 

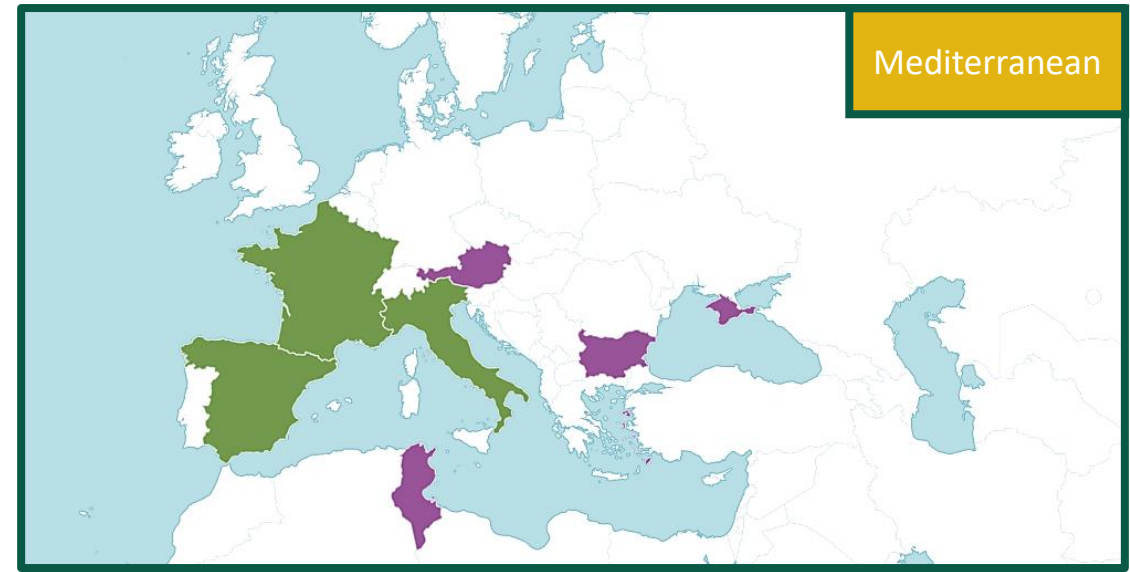
Lauraceae
Laurel Family

Large Shrub

* Not to be confused with a shrub, often referred to as a laurel, which is actually a poisonous species of cherry. Its flowers are also white but without yellow pollen and occur on spikes.

Lavandula angustifolia

English Lavender



'Folgate' 'Hidcote'
'Miss Katherine'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

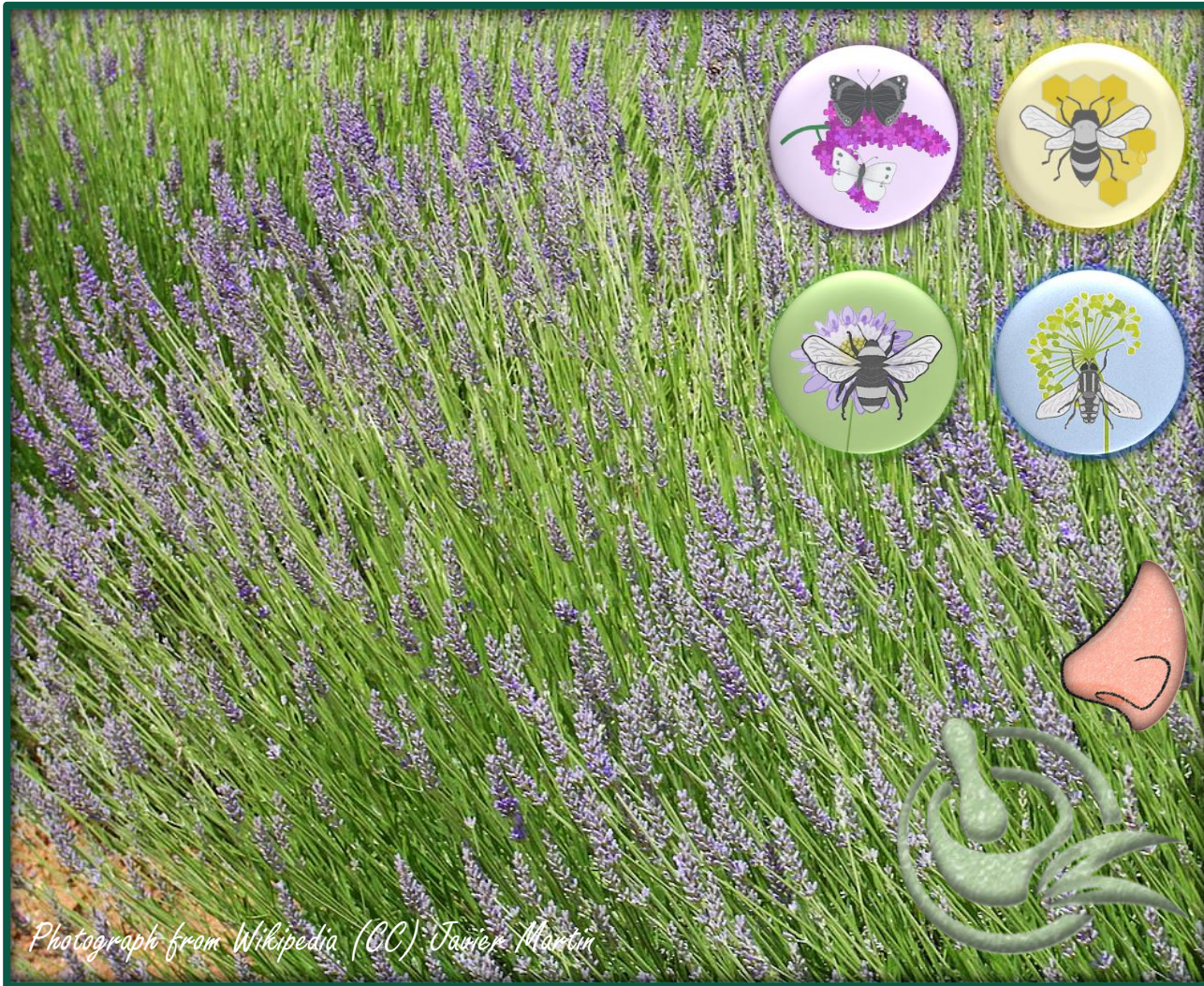
Summer ☀

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

Small Shrub

Lavandula latifolia

Portuguese Lavender



Related Hybrid (x angustifolia)—L. x intermedia

'Alba' 'Sussex'
'Hidcote Giant'



Summer ☀

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

Small Shrub

Lavandula stoechas

French Lavender



'Pretty Polly'
'Willow Vale'

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Late Spring
- Late Summer

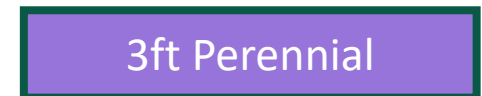
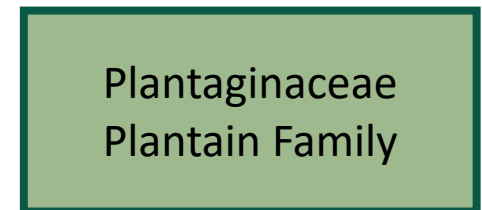
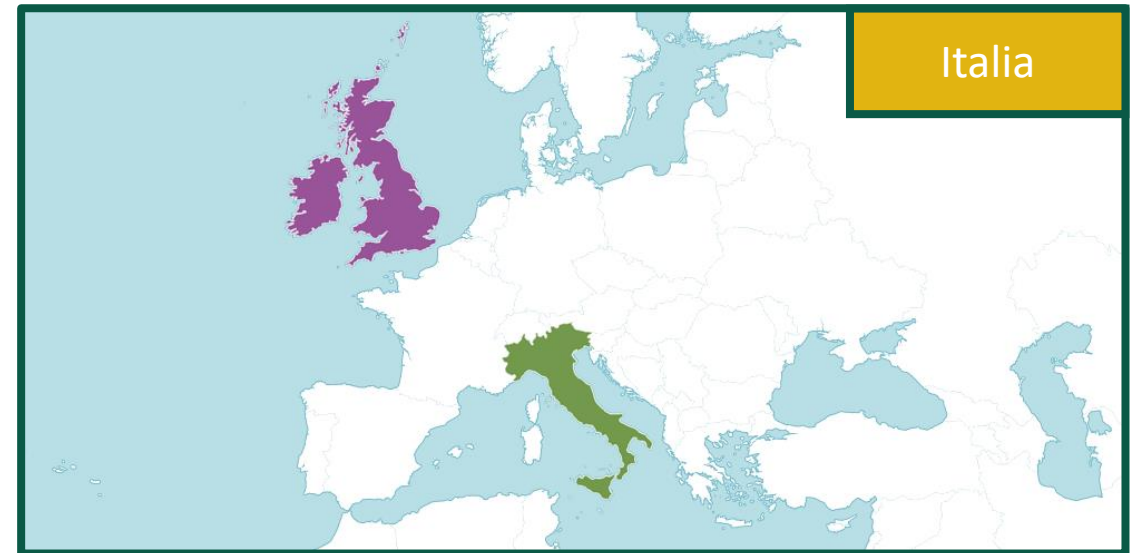
Lamiaceae
Mint Family

Medium Shrub

* This plant should be kept under glass during the winter
(cannot survive below -5°C night temperatures)

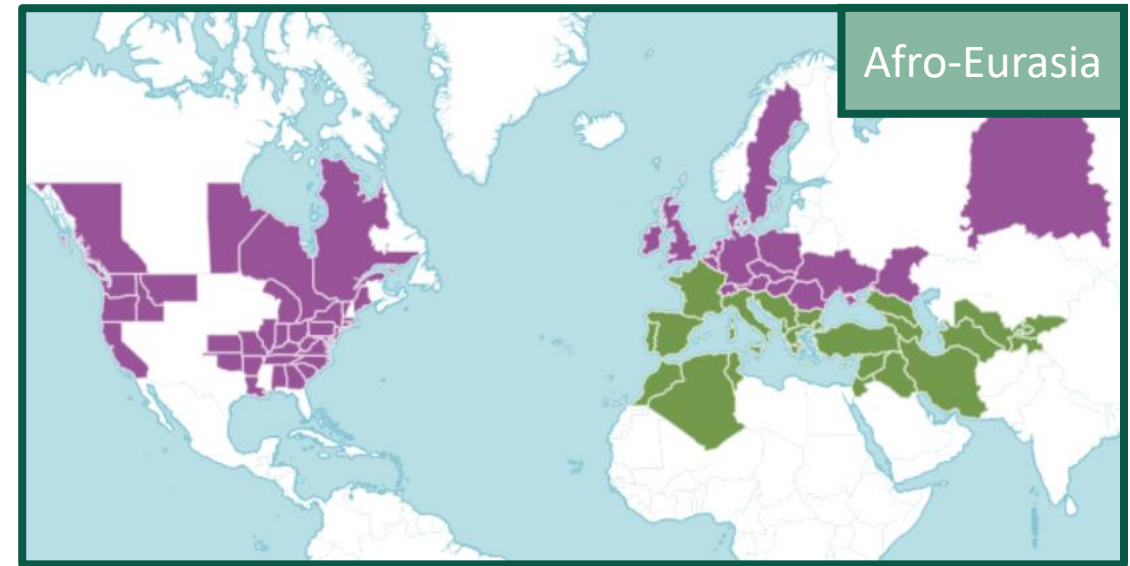
Linaria purpurea

Purple Toadflax



Melissa officinalis

Lemon Balm



None

Summer ☀

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

2ft Perennial

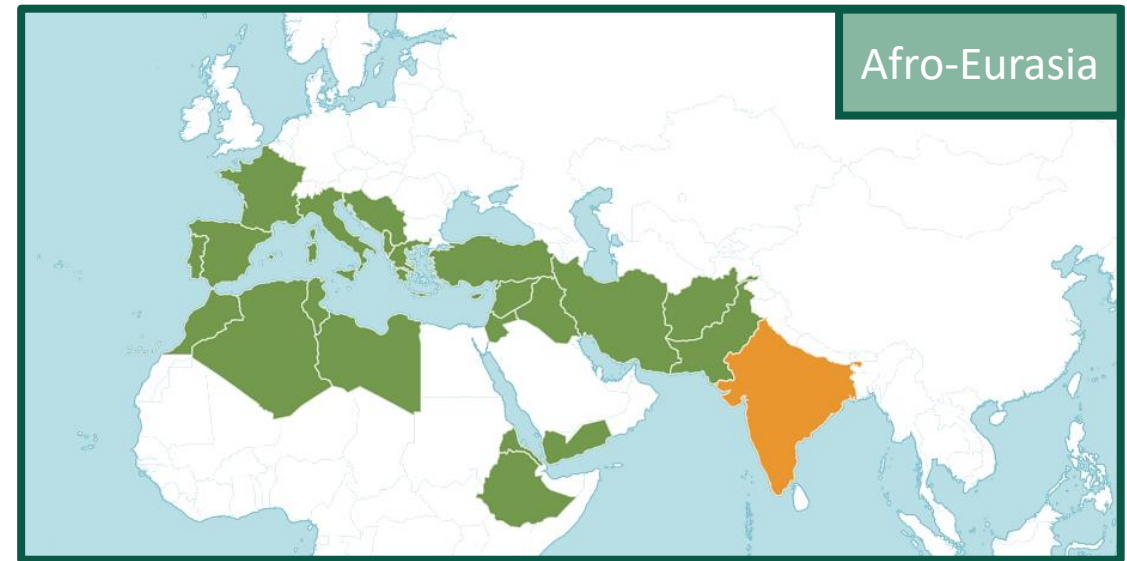


Myrtus communis

Common Myrtle



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Tim Waters



Afro-Eurasia



-Species-

Ssp. tarentina



Midsummer
- Early Autumn



Myrtaceae
Myrtle Family



Small Shrub

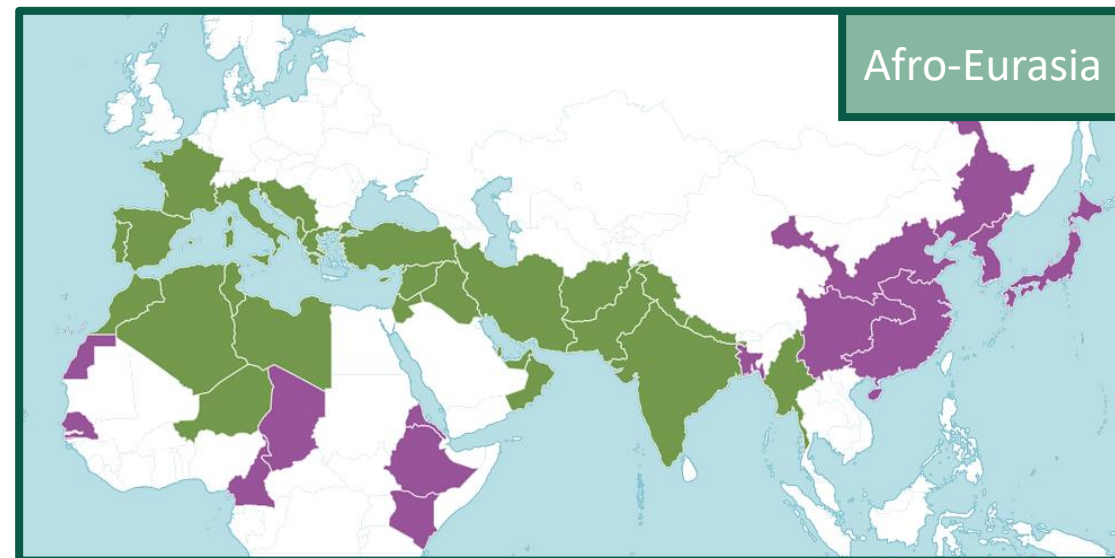
* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Nerium oleander

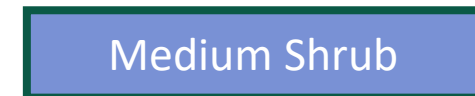
Oleander



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Himanshu Sarpotdar



Afro-Eurasia



** Double flowered cultivars are not good for most pollinating insects so try to buy single flowers when possible

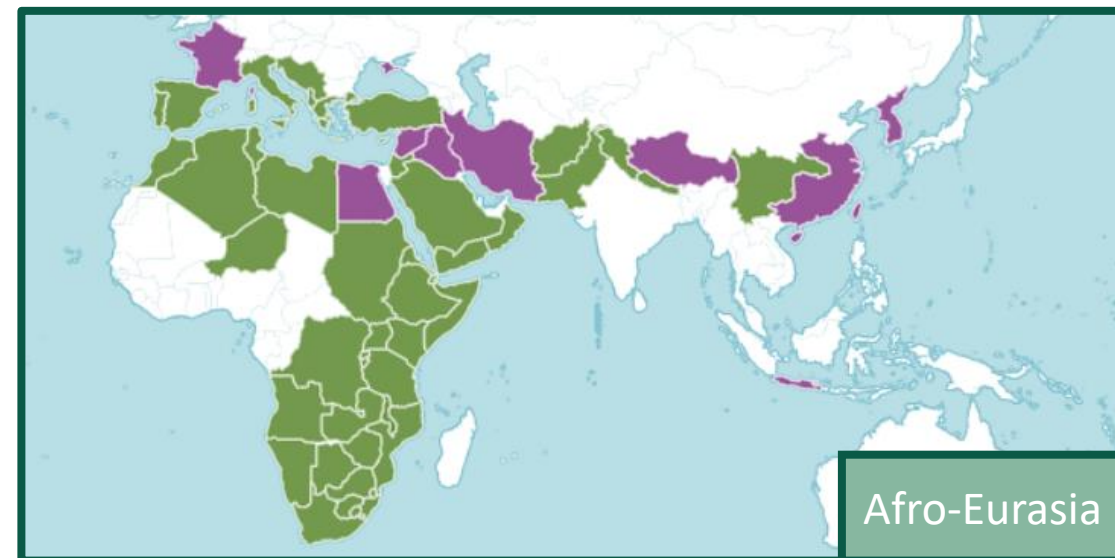
* This plant should be kept under glass during the winter (cannot survive below -5°C night temperatures)

Olea europaea

Olive Tree



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Miltos Gikas



None

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT". To the right is a white silhouette of a tree.

Summer ☀

Oleaceae
Olive Family

Small Tree

* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Origanum majorana

Marjoram



Phlomis fruticosa

Jerusalem Sage



-Species-

Summer ☀

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

3ft Perennial



Phlomis italica

Balearic Sage



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Alwyn Ladell



None

Summer ☀

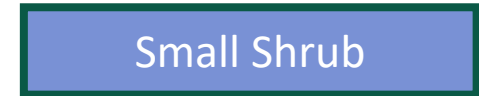
Lamiaceae
Mint Family

2ft Perennial



Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary Plant



Salvia nemorosa

Balkan Clary



'Plumosa' 'Amethyst'
'Carradonna'

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Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

3ft Perennial

Salvia sclarea

Clary Sage



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) Buendia22



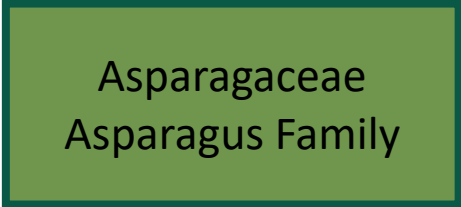
Late Spring
- Midsummer

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

3ft Biennial

Scilla peruviana

Portuguese Squill



Thymus vulgaris

Common Thyme



Tulipa saxatilis

Candia Tulip



'Lilac Wonder'



Spring 

Liliaceae
Lily Family

2ft Bulbous

Vitis vinifera

Grapevine

