



Gardens and Wildflowers of Corfu - Study trip April 2024

Ideas for Turn End's dry garden





Turn End is the home and garden of architect Peter Aldington and his wife Margaret, created by them in the 1960s in the village of Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, south central UK.

We have long grown many Mediterranean climate zone plants in Turn End's 'dry garden', which is south facing, enclosed by walls and with free draining alkaline soil. For example, *Punica granatum* (Pomegranate), *Epilobium canum* (California fuchsia), *Asphodeline lutea* (King's spear), *Phlomis italica* (Balearic Island sage) and *Cistus* and *Helianthemum* (rock rose) cultivars thrive here.





With climate forecasting predicting that UK summers could become up to 6°C warmer and 60% drier and winters 4.5°C warmer and 30% wetter, I am keen to discover plants that may grow in this changing climate. I'd long hoped to visit Corfu and I was interested to investigate plants in cultivation that grow in the island's hot, dry summers and wet winters—Corfu's 1170mm annual precipitation is nearly twice that of our region. The study tour organised by Mediterranean Plants and Gardens offered a special opportunity to learn from gardeners and designers about their plant selection and management techniques. I was also able to see wild plants growing in varied environments to help inform cultivation requirements, particularly native species that grow on exposed headlands and in the hilly north, which can experience sub zero temperatures.

Considering our success with Mediterranean species and having observed growing conditions in Corfu, these are the plants that I admired in cultivation and in the wild, which I think could be worth growing at Turn End. Of course, they may not appreciate our lower light levels, year-round rain, increasingly frequent and intense weather extremes and hungry molluscs. But it is enjoyable to experiment!

Many thanks to Anne Keenan, Joanna Fortnam and Mediterranean Plants and Gardens for organising the tour and to Jane Furse and the owners, gardeners and designers we met in Corfu for their generous knowledge.

Annuals and biennials	Name	Location in Corfu	Native range and habitat	Cultivation notes (flowering times in UK)
	<i>Crepis rubra</i> Pink or red flowered hawksbeard	Paleá Perithia, village near the peak of Mount Pantokrator. In meadows on open and sunny, rocky ground.	Southern Europe to north-west Türkiye. Rocky fields and meadows.	Hardy annual. Rosette of toothed leaves and dandelion-like pink flowers. Full sun, well-drained soil. Sow seed under cover in March, April or September, cover lightly with compost, ideal temperature 21°C. Germination takes 1-2 weeks. Or direct sow in free draining soil after last frosts. Will self sow, but not invasive. Hardiness RHS H6 (USDA 6b/7a).
	<i>Orlaya grandiflora</i> White lace flower	Rou Estate, 500m above sea level, in stony ground and full sun.	Mediterranean. Dry meadows, vineyards and olive groves.	Hardy annual. Multi-branched with jaggedly divided leaves. White umbel flowers with smaller inner flowers and larger outer rays. Surface sow seed onto moist well drained compost, lightly cover with compost. Propagate at 18°C. Keep moist. Germination takes 21-30 days but may take longer. If germination has not occurred in 6-8 weeks cold stratify. Full sun, well drained soil, drought tolerant. Hardiness RHS H7 (USDA 6a-1)
	<i>Tragopogon porrifolius</i> Salsify	Paleá Perithia and the Old Fort, Kerkyra Town. Open and sunny, rocky ground.	Southeast Europe - north Africa, widely introduced.	Hardy biennial. First year - edible long tap root with an oyster-like flavour. Young shoots and flowers are edible and can be added to salads. Flowers in second year are pink-purple dandelion-like, followed by spherical 'clock' seed heads. Best sown directly in ground in spring. Or sow under cover with gentle warmth (15-21°C) from late winter to early spring. Full sun, deep, moist but well-drained soil. Hardiness RHS H4 (USDA 8b/9a)
	<i>Leiotulus aureus</i> syn. <i>Malabaila aurea</i>	In dappled shade of olive groves in sloping, stony ground at Kanonas and Strongilo and Villa Zetouna	South east Europe to north west Türkiye. Grassy and rocky places.	Biennial. Golden-yellow umbel flowers followed by clusters of flattened circular seeds. Sow seed at 4mm depth in well drained compost. During germination keep moist, in bright conditions. Grow in sun or dappled shade.

Perennials

	Name	Location in Corfu	Native range and habitat	Cultivation notes
	<i>Verbascum phoenicum</i> subsp. <i>rechingeri</i> Purple mullein	Paleá Perithia, village near the peak of Mount Pantokrator. In meadows on open and sunny, rocky ground.	Subspecies endemic to Corfu?	Biennial / short lived perennial. Spikes of bronze flowers in late spring to early summer. Species (purple flowers) available as plants or seed. Sow seed under cover February-March at 15-18°C, lightly cover, keep moist. Germination can take 2-4 weeks. Allow compost to dry a little after germination. Harden off before planting out after last frosts. Full sun / part shade, free draining soil. Hardiness RHS H6 (USDA 6b/7a).
	<i>Glaucium flavum</i> Yellow horned poppy	In pebbles on the beach at Avlaki, above the tide line.	Seashores of Europe, Northern Africa, Macaronesia, temperate zones of Western Asia.	Short lived perennial. Rosettes of deeply-lobed, blue-green leaves. Branched, grey stems bear bright yellow or orange poppy flowers in summer, followed by long, narrow, upright seed pods. Sow seeds at any time but best sown in winter or early spring for a cold spell in moist compost to break dormancy. Cover seeds thinly with sand or fine grit. If no germination in 6-12 weeks, cold stratify. Grow in full sun and light, free draining or stony soil. Hardiness RHS H4 (USDA 8b/9a).
	<i>Asphodelus ramosus</i> subsp. <i>ramosus</i> Branching Asphodel	Widespread, in phrygana, woodlands and hillside meadows	Canary Islands, Iraq to Mediterranean. Often grows near coasts and areas affected by occasional fires and grazing. Greece's most common asphodel.	Herbaceous tuberous geophyte. Rosettes of fleshy green leaves. Numerous white starry flowers, brown central streak on petals, on strong, branching stems in spring. Species available as seed. Sow seeds at any time, cover lightly with compost or grit. Keep cool and bright and enable chilling of the seed. Grow in hot, dry spot, with excellent drainage. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).
	<i>Acanthus spinosus</i> Spiny bear's breeches	Gastouri Estate, in dappled shade of old olive groves	Southern Europe, Italy to West Türkiye. Woodland margins and scrub.	Herbaceous perennial, to 1.2m tall. Large, deeply lobed, spine-tipped, glossy leaves. Erect spikes of white flowers with spiny purple bracts late spring to summer. Propagate by division or root cuttings. Full sun, partial shade, moist but well drained, fertile soil. <i>Acanthus spinosus</i> 'Spinossisimus Group' has finely cut leaves with white veins. Hardiness RHS H6 (USDA 6b/7a).

Perennials

Name

Location in Corfu

Native range and habitat

Cultivation notes



Verbena lilacina
Cedros Island verberna

Agnos House, in sun-baked raised bed.

Cedros Island and Baja California. Mountain slopes, silty flats, narrow ravines, mostly in shaded areas.

Herbaceous perennial / sub-shrub. Loose mounds of delicately dissected narrow foliage. Pale purple star-shaped flowers on erect stems spring-late summer. Attractive to butterflies. Trim plants lightly in summer to maintain compact form. Propagate by softwood cuttings in early summer. Light, well drained soil in full sun or part shade. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a)



Oenothera speciosa syn. *Oenothera berlandieri*
Mexican evening primrose

Gastouri, in borders alongside the house

South central United States, northern Mexico. Rocky prairies, open woodlands, slopes, roadsides, meadows and disturbed areas.

Herbaceous rhizomatous perennial. Basal rosettes of lance-shaped, toothed leaves. Scented saucer-shaped pink flowers summer-early autumn. Full sun, well drained soil. May be invasive, spreads by runners and seed. Propagate by division or seed in early spring, softwood cuttings late spring to early summer. Cultivated varieties: *Oenothera speciosa* 'Siskiyou' and 'Pink Petticoats'. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).

Bulbs



Leopoldia comosa (syn. *Muscari comosum*)
Tassel hyacinth

Stony ground beside coastal and hillside footpaths.

Canary Islands to Central Europe and Iran. Rocky ground and cultivated areas, e.g. cornfields and vineyards.

Clump forming bulbous perennial. Narrow leaves to 20cm long. In spring bears upright flower spikes to 50cm tall, with urn-shaped, purple-brown flowers on the main stem, topped with upright tassels of bright purple sterile flowers. Plant bulbs 10cm deep in autumn in any moderately fertile, well-drained soil. Flower spikes up to 50cm tall in late spring. Divide congested clumps when dormant in summer. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).







Scilla hyacinthoides
Hyacinth squill

Gastouri, in a sunny flower bed with drought tolerant plants.

Southern Europe to northern Iraq. Poor, stony soil.

Bulbous perennial. Up to 100 small violet-blue starry flowers on 1 metre stem in late spring. Strap like leaves die away over summer. Plant bulbs 2-3 times their depth in autumn. Full sun, free draining, poor soil to encourage flowers rather than offsets. 'Blue Arrow' is a cultivated variety. Hardiness RHS H6 (USDA 6b/7a).

Bulbs	Name	Location in Corfu	Native range and habitat	Cultivation notes
	<i>Loncomelos narbonense</i> syn. <i>Ornithogalum narbonense</i> Narbonne or southern star-of-Bethlehem	Rocky coastal footpath	Mediterranean Basin, Armenia, Balearic and Canary Islands, Turkiye, north-western Iran. Woodland and garrigue.	Bulbous perennial. Pyramidal spike of white flowers, with a prominent green stripe on the outside of each petal. Flowers mid spring on stems up to 90cm tall. Plant bulbs 10cm deep in open, sunny position in well drained, moderately fertile soil in autumn. Hardiness RHS H4 (USDA 8b/9a).
	<i>Gladiolus italicus</i> Italian or field gladiolus	Gastouri, in the dappled shade of ancient olive groves.	Southern Europe to parts of Asia. Rocky hillsides, grassy areas, open forests and fields.	Upright, cormous perennial, to 1 metre. Fans of erect, sword-shaped, dark green leaves. In early summer bears loose spikes of up to 20 magenta-coloured flowers with paler lower petals. Plant 10 -15cm deep in spring, on a bed of sharp sand in fertile, well-drained soil. In cold areas lift when foliage dies back, discard old corms, store new corms dry and frost-free then plant in the spring. In milder areas, apply a thick dry winter mulch. Hardiness RHS H3 (USDA 9b/10a).
	<i>Drimia maritima</i> syn. <i>Urginea maritima</i> Sea squill	Meadows at Strongilo and Kassioplia Estate	Europe, western Asia, northern Africa. Rocky coastal habitats.	Bulbous perennial. Spikes 50-70cm tall bearing many white, star-like flowers in late summer-autumn. Leaves grow in spring, die back over summer. Plant in autumn with the top 3cm of the bulb protruding above the soil. Full sun, poor stony soil. Hardiness RHS H3 (USDA 9b/10a).
	<i>Tulbaghia violacea</i> Society garlic	Rou Estate and Agnos House, in large clumps on border edges.	South Africa Grasslands, forest margins, stream banks.	Rhizomatous perennial. Grey-green basal leaves and fragrant pale purple flowers in large terminal umbels in late summer and early autumn. Grow in any moderately fertile, well-drained, loamy soil. Except in mild areas, protect over winter with a deep dry mulch. Or grow in containers and over winter in an unheated greenhouse. Hardiness RHS H3 (USDA 9b/10a).

Climbers



Name

Clematis flammula
Fragrant virgin's bower

Location in Corfu

Scrambling over fences and shrubs in olive groves, Furnia.

Native range and habitat

Mediterranean to Pakistan.
Shrubland.

Cultivation notes

Perennial, deciduous climber. Vigorous, to 4 metres. Any aspect, best flowers and scent in a sunny, free draining position, some shelter. Propagate by ripe seed in a cold frame. Softwood cuttings in spring, or semi-ripe cuttings in early summer. Layering in late winter or early spring. Type 3 clematis, prune to a pair of strong buds 20cm from ground in spring. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).

Shrubs



Phlomis fruticosa
Jerusalem sage

Widespread, in phrygana.

Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Monte Negro, Türkiye.

Phrygana, dry cliffs, limestone hills, rocky places.

Small evergreen shrub. Hairy grey-green leaves. Deep yellow hooded flowers in whorls in early summer. Well drained soil in full sun. Leave last year's spent flower heads as a winter insect habitat then trim lightly in spring. To reduce the size of plant trim back to low, strong pair of leaves after flowering. Propagation by seed under cover in late spring or softwood cuttings in summer. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).



Vitex agnus-castus
Chaste tree, Monk's pepper

Kassiopia Estate, in phrygana - inspired plantings

Mediterranean to Central Asia and India (north-west Rajasthan).

Deciduous shrub or small tree. Height 2.5 metres. Aromatic dark green palmate eaves. Panicles of small fragrant lilac to dark blue flowers early to mid-autumn. Flowers on current year's growth, prune in early spring. Full sun, shelter, well drained soil. Has become invasive in USA where seeds freely. Hardiness RHS H4 (USDA 8b/9a).










Salvia rosmarinus (Prostrata Group)
Rosemary

Widespread in gardens e.g. tumbling down terraces at Kassiopia Estate

Cultivated form of Mediterranean native.

Evergreen shrub. 1.5 m wide, 50cm tall. Small, narrow aromatic foliage on cascading stems. Full sun, poor, well-drained soil, some shelter. No regular pruning, trim lightly in late spring to keep compact and encourage fresh young growth. Do not cut back into old wood. Propagate from semi-ripe cuttings in late summer. Cultivar 'Rampant Boule' has bright blue flowers in spring and again in autumn. Hardiness RHS H4 (USDA 8b/9a).

Shrubs	Name	Location in Corfu	Native range and habitat	Cultivation notes
	<i>Teucrium fruticans</i> Shrubby / tree germander	Widespread in newly designed gardens e.g. Agnos House, Villa Velanidi, often trimmed into domes	Western and central Mediterranean Dry, sunny, rocky areas.	Evergreen shrub. Arching white, woolly stems with small, dark green leaves, white beneath. Light blue flowers in summer. Full sun, well drained neutral-alkaline soil and sheltered location. Prune regularly into domes or hard prune annually, in spring, to about 15cm from base, to prevent plants becoming straggly. Propagate by semi-ripe cuttings in late summer/early autumn. Some cultivars bear deeper purple-blue flowers e.g. <i>Teucrium fruticans</i> 'Azureum' from Morocco (more tender) and <i>Teucrium fruticans</i> 'Indyho'. Hardiness RHS H3 (USDA 9b/10a).
	<i>Spartium junceum</i> Spanish broom	Widespread in phrygana	Azores, southern Europe to eastern Mediterranean, widely introduced Sunny sites, rocky areas, dry sandy soils.	Deciduous shrub. Upright slender green stems with sparse, small leaves. Fragrant pea-like yellow flowers summer—early autumn. Prefers poor, well drained soil in full sun, can become leggy in rich soil and shelter. Options to prevent plants becoming bare at base: prune hard circa every 3 years; clip lightly in spring to encourage regrowth, which will flower a little later; trim lightly after first flowering to potentially encourage a second flush of flowers September to early October. Propagate by seed in spring or autumn. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).
	<i>Bupleurum fruticosum</i> Shrubby hare's ear, thorow-wax	Gardens e.g. Agnos House	Western and central Mediterranean Hillsides, walls and rocky places.	Evergreen shrub, to 2 metres tall. Loose spreading habit. Blue-green leaves on long, slender stems. Terminal umbels of tiny yellow flowers July-September. Warm site in full sun, well-drained soil. Leading shoots can be lightly pruned in spring to encourage new growth. Can be hard pruned every 3 years in mid-late spring to keep compact and reinvigorate floppy plants, or to remove any winter blackened leaves. Propagation by seed in spring. Semi-ripe cuttings (with bottom heat) in mid-summer before flowering. Cuttings taken too early or too late in the summer may be unsuccessful. Hardiness RHS H4 (USDA 8b/9a).

Shrubs	Name	Location in Corfu	Native range and habitat	Cultivation notes
	<i>Phillyrea angustifolia</i> Narrow leaved mock privet	Gardens e.g. Agnos House, often pruned into domes	Western and central Mediterranean Scrub, coastal and hilly areas.	Evergreen shrub to 3 metres tall. Narrow, dark green leaves. Small clusters of fragrant off-white flowers in leaf axils in late spring and early summer, followed by purple-black berries. Fertile, well-drained soil, full sun, tolerates some shade and coastal exposure. No routine pruning required, or after flowering. Propagate by semi-ripe cuttings in late summer, with bottom heat. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).
	<i>Pittosporum tobira</i> Japanese pittosporum, cheesewood	Mature flowering specimens in Kerkyra Town	Japan, China, Taiwan and Korea. Widely introduced, often found in rocky coastal cliffs.	Evergreen shrub, to 4 metres tall. Dense, broad, slow-growing, medium-sized. Leathery, glossy, obovate leaves. Large terminal umbels of small sweetly-scented flowers that open white and turn yellow, in late spring and early summer. Full sun, well drained soil, shelter from cold winds. Minimal pruning. If required trim to size in spring. Propagate by seed or semi-ripe cuttings in late summer. Hardiness RHS 3 (USDA 9b/10a).
	<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i> Loquat	Gardens and cultivated groves in the Nymfes Valley	South-central China, in cooler hill regions.	Evergreen shrub, to 8 metres tall, Broad, glossy, leathery leaves to 20cm long. Clusters of small, creamy flowers followed by yellow-orange edible fruits. Well drained soil, shelter, fruit need at least 6 hours of direct sun per day. Propagate by seed or semi-ripe cuttings in late summer. No regular running required but can be trimmed to size in spring or wall trained. Hardiness RHS H4 (USDA 8b/9a).
	<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i> Carob	Gardens e.g. Cavo Alkyoni	Mediterranean region and the Middle East.	Evergreen shrub/tree, to 10 metres tall. Dark green, leathery, wavy-edged pinnate leaves. Tiny green-tinted, petal less red flowers in racemes in spring, followed by edible black-brown bean-like pods containing a sweet pulp. Full sun, well-drained soil, shelter. Propagation by seed soaked in water for 24 hours or semi-ripe cuttings in late summer. Minimal pruning, to keep to desired size. Hardiness RHS 3 (USDA 9b/10a).

Shrubs

Name	Location in Corfu	Native range and habitat	Cultivation notes
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*Pistacia
lentiscus*
Mastic,
lentisc

Widespread in gardens, often pruned into domes, in full sun. In the in wild in maquis (shrubland) at edges of vegetation, part shade.

Mediterranean and Canary Islands

Dry rocky areas, coastal areas, maquis, oak woodland and phrygana / garrigue.

Evergreen dioecious shrub / small tree to 4 metres tall. Pinnate, aromatic, leathery green leaves. Small flowers in late spring and early summer. On male plants these are reddish, in small dense clusters. Looser clusters of brownish green flowers on female plants, followed by small round reddish fruits, ripening to black. Moderately fertile, sharply drained soil, full sun or part shade, shelter. Propagation by seed or softwood cuttings in late spring/early summer. Minimal pruning, to maintain size, in spring. Hardiness RHS H2 (USDA 10b).



*Cercis
siliquastrum*
Judas tree

Widespread in woodlands. Flowering in Kerkyra Town.

Northern Mediterranean, France to Afghanistan

Bushy, deciduous small tree, to 10 metres tall. Heart-shaped leaves. Rosy-pink flowers in clusters on older wood, before the leaves, followed by flattened purplish pods to 12cm in length. Full sun or part shade, well drained soil. Propagate by seed or semi-ripe cuttings in late summer. Minimal pruning, to maintain size, in late winter or early spring. Hardiness RHS H5 (USDA 7b/8a).

