

Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

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View from outside the hotel at Quinta do Furão

Madeira

13 – 18 November

This is a report of my 'reccy' trip to Madeira, ahead of Honeyguide's first holiday on Madeira in February 2008. I was there for two days less than the full week of the holiday being planned, but was able to visit most of the areas that the group will visit. For much of the time I had the pleasure of the company of holiday leaders Catarina Fagundes and Hugo Romano from Madeira Wind Birds. Many of the birds we saw, waders especially, they photographed and the pictures can be seen on their website www.madeirabirds.com

Chris Durdin
November 2007

Daily diary

Tuesday 13 November – Funchal airport to Quinta do Furão

It seems to be a tradition to clap as the plane landed safely – maybe a hangover from the slightly hairier landings before the runway was extended by more than a kilometre in the year 2000.

The easyJet flight was early arriving so it was still light as I collected my hire car. Six little finches buzzed around, sounding like something between a greenfinch and a serin, and as they settled on a fence I could see they were canaries – which were abundant on the island. A starling flew through, which I thought nothing of at the time, but they are an ‘occasional visitor in winter’ (in Clarke, T – see book notes) so quite a good record. A blackbird sang from a cross in the cemetery over the road. I noticed that the trees in a small park by the hire cars were labelled: an interesting selection of tropical gums, palms, cypresses and others.

The directions on the hotel website proved clear for newcomer to the island. It took as exactly half an hour to drive there, under the massive pillars supporting the runway then north to reach Quinta do Furão, helped by recognising the hotel as I approached from the pictures on the website. It’s an extraordinary landscape: steep hills, but somehow civilised by a scatter of smart white houses and first class roads, the latter cutting through 10 or 12 tunnels on the short drive to the north of the island.

First impression, which remained, was that it’s a classy hotel. The restaurant is two minutes down the hill as is a bar and the small (and, when visited later, rather poor) shop. The pool and a games room are at the hotel. A fairly warm evening.

I was on half board, as the group will be, for which there is a choice of two starters (soup or starter, that is), main course and desert. Jose, the Benfica-supporting waiter tells me that they are very good at special diets. Bread (of which more later) and olives are always provided. My starter was a local soft cheese from nearby Santana, half cow’s / half sheep’s I gathered, with yoghurt and honey. Then squid on a skewer in prawn sauce, followed by crème brûlée.

Wednesday 14 November – Quinta do Furão and boat trip from Funchal

A robin was singing in the dark at 7 am, somewhere in the vines between the hotel and the cliff. A distinctly cool start to the day, pre-breakfast: outside the hotel there were blackbirds, one starling and several canaries, the canaries reminding me of a long tailed serin. A chacking *Sylvia* warbler was a blackcap: the Macaronesia subspecies has the intriguing name of *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*: presumably the blackcap that reaches parts that other blackcaps don’t reach. Then a chaffinch: these are a Madeira subspecies, more green on the back but otherwise less colourful than those in the UK, as often happen with island forms.



After an excellent breakfast, it warmed up quickly as I explored the area around the hotel, and butterflies were on the wing. Speckled woods – *left*, a recent colonist – were the commonest, closely followed by small whites (the Madeiran large white is thought to be extinct), plus clouded yellow and painted lady.

On reaching the first road junction, I went straight across down a short dead end, where a roughly made stone goat shed had at least 28 Madeiran wall lizards basking or moving in and out of cracks. A flock of 20 goldfinches landed on wires and canaries were everywhere.



The vegetation is a curious mixture of planted crops, like sweet potatoes and sugar cane; escaped garden plants like nasturtiums and montbretia; exotic trees, especially palms; fruit trees, such as loquat and custard apple; planted flowers and shrubs like hydrangeas along the roadsides; plus patches of bracken and bramble. Some field weeds are from northern Europe like ribwort plantain, smooth sowthistle and wild radish (popular with small whites); others are familiar from the Mediterranean, like Bermuda buttercup and field marigold.

Headed off towards Funchal, but inland rather than the coast road. Paused to watch some plain swifts north of Ribeiro Frio: thinner winged than common swifts, and without white on the throat. Roads are fringed with *Agapanthus* plants, mostly in seed but a few in flowers; it's quite an invasive non-native here. Stopped in Ribeiro Frio, where I found my first small copper butterflies (Madeira subspecies) and some blues, which must have been long-tailed. Paused in the village to eat lunch, and noticed my first a Madeira firecrest in a holly, which then flew into an oak (no idea what species, but not native anyway) over my head.

To Funchal, via Monte. First impression: Funchal is big, reinforcing that the decision to stay at the more rural Quinta do Furão is good. Into the Marina shopping centre car park – found, thank goodness, just one car parking place marked *livre* (free), the rest in the bit I was in were all *privado* (reserved). Met Catarina for our boat trip out on the *Gavião* – Portuguese for sparrowhawk. The day in the itinerary will take us to the Desertas islands, but the winds today would have prevented that and we took a shorter trip under the big sea cliffs west of Funchal.



At the bottom of the cliffs, here and there, are small, cropped patches of land that look hardly worth cultivating, yet they are complete with elevators and basket systems to move produce. No dolphins or whales, but some good views of Cory's shearwaters at sea. Though fairly warm today, the sea was distinctly choppy, so we retreated to the rear end of the boat for the return trip to keep drier. A couple of black-headed gulls in Funchal harbour on our return, in addition to the ubiquitous yellow-legged gulls, plus a few turnstones.

With Catarina as a guide, Hugo joining us along the way, explored Funchal on foot. I asked about greenfinches on Madeira as I'd seem them on the list and she said there had been reports of some in Funchal, but she hadn't seen them. At this point a flock of finches appeared and 14 settled on a palm tree and even in the fading light were plainly greenfinches, and there were other finches flying around too. Tried the same trick with lammergeier but that didn't work. There was a rather tired bar-tailed godwit on some amenity grass here too. Walking into town, there were at least four grey wagtails going to roost in some plane trees among the

buildings, reminding me of the big pied wagtail roost that used to be in Norwich near M&S, but a habit I've not come across before for grey wagtails. Visited the bookshop in the Marina shopping centre – see list below!

Back at Quinta do Furão, opted for the starter of a pastry parcel mozzarella with tomato, kingklip (white fish) with shrimp sauce, followed by fruit salad (too full for the apple pie). I asked Jose – different waiter, same name – about the wonderful rustic off-white bread, with chewy texture and thick crusts. It's baked by a lady in the nearby town of Faial in a wood-burning oven and delivered daily; the recipe includes sweet potato. Splashed out on some white wine made in Madeira, by the name of Enxurros; very good.

Thursday 15 November – tour of western Madeira

Had Madeira cake for breakfast: how decadent is that? There was a skylark at Quinta do Furão: a bird Catarina and Hugo haven't seen on Madeira. Rendezvoused with them at the Tivoli Ocean Park west of Funchal, one of the few places around with free all day parking. This was their regular west of the island birdwatching tour, on which I was joined by another client of theirs, Paul, a former Hell's Angel turned health & safety manager and author, in Madeira to free up some time to write a book, but giving himself a day off birdwatching as a reward for hard work.

First stop was Lugar de Baixo (*right*), described as a 'semi-natural coastal lake' but a large man-made pond would be more apt, but nonetheless a magnet for those few birds that do drop into Madeira, far out in the Atlantic. The small island had a little stint, two dunlins, snipe, curlew sandpiper, common sandpiper, bar-tailed godwit and ringed plover – not a bad little selection of waders. Some characteristically bad views of waxbills, but a very confiding monarch butterfly. Other birds included little egret, coots and moorhen, the last a new colonist on Madeira, plus a motley collection of muscovy ducks.



The far western point of Madeira is Ponta do Pargo, a semi-natural grassland now threatened with a golf course development despite being noted as an Important Bird Area. Three birds here with Madeira subspecies: three kestrels at least (noticeably dark), Berthelot's pipit and spectacled warbler, plus buzzard. The last were especially pleasing: often a difficult bird to see, but there were five at least showing well in their favoured habitat of very low scrub. Notable invertebrates were long-tailed blue butterflies, red-veined darter, caught by Hugo in my butterfly net, and a huge black and white spider. Catarina knows this as Zebra Spider, elsewhere *Argiope trifasciata* is known as Banded Garden Spider (it's common in the USA) or Banded Argiope. It's in the same genus as the Wasp Spider that is spreading north in the UK. Anyway, we saw the large female, perhaps five times the size of the male on the edge of the web, catch and wrap two of the grasshoppers that are abundant here. Plants included purple vipers bugloss, Hottentot fig (not in flower) and pitch trefoil.

Moving north, we saw large areas of eucalyptus and pine burnt in forest fires. Catarina explained that the native laurel forest is much moister and fires are rare. She pointed out the leaves and seedheads of the highly invasive alien ginger lily – a wonderful name that sounds like a gangster's moll. This was on route to Porto Moniz, a popular tourist spot on the north-west corner of Madeira, where we stopped for lunch: scabbard with banana – excellent.

Moving a little farther east, next stop was a pool by a power station next to the sea at Ribeira da Janela. More muscovy ducks and Aylesbury ducks too, rather incongruous company for a long-staying green-winged teal on the wrong side of the Atlantic.

Moving a little inland, we took a walk into the edge of the laurel forest at Chão da Ribéria, all very pretty, despite the barking dogs. The hope was we'd see trocáz pigeon, and twice one flew across, brief but rather poor views. There were much better views of Madeira firecrest.



Here, in this more natural setting, the brown butterflies were Madeira speckled wood: one less spot on the hind upperwing, but easier to distinguish from speckled wood by being a little bigger and darker and generally flying higher.

Final coastal stop was at the river mouth at São Vicente, where a tame whimbrel wandered around some amenity grass. On the river were ringed plover, sanderling and bar-tailed godwit, and growing from the rocks over the beach were any number of endemic disc houseleeks (*left*).

Following my starter of crab salad, the *espetada* (kebab) of mixed meat was on a stick of bay laurel, a nice sustainable use for a local species, then ice cream.

Friday 16 November – Ribeiro Frio and Monte

Catarina and Hugo's other bookings today were two couples, one Dutch, the other American, the latter from a cruise ship calling at Funchal, all keen naturalists with the gents exchanging notes on bird photography. I met them at Poiso, just south of Ribeiro Frio, which was where we then went. It's quite a popular tourist spot in the hills, where the coach parties stop to look at the trout farm, but they tend to arrive later in the day, so it was pretty quiet on the open and easy short walk alongside a *levada*. *Levadas* are irrigation channels, originally built, from the 1600s onwards, to bring water from the west and northwest of the island to the drier southeast. The best of these, like here, also provide flat and accessible walks.

Chaffinches were calling: it's a weird sound, here more like a woodpecker or bid of prey. We had excellent views of Madeira firecrest: the limited range of birds on the island probably means they are relatively common and occupying the niches of tits, warbler and trecreepers, and they can be quite tame. Hugo picked up an extraordinary snail with a flexible shell that it lowered and raised, while twitching its tail. These glass snails or 'semi-slugs', of the genus *Phenacolimax*, have a reduced and transparent shell into which they cannot fully retract. Madeira geranium *Geranium palmatum* was flowering here and there.

The walk took us to the wonderful and today sunny viewpoint of *Miradouro dos balcoes* (balcony) over the laurel forest. No trocáz pigeons, but there's a birdtable onto which very tame chaffinches came (*female, right*), and plain swifts flew round. There are two modest tourist shacks on the walk, serving drinks and snacks and selling some underwhelming souvenirs, but I paused to buy some roots of *Agapanthus* on the grounds that to take some of these off the island was a small service to local plants. Back in Ribeiro Frio tourist numbers were building up. We briefly went round the trout farms where there are labelled pots of endemic plants, all very helpful.



Cloud was appearing and we went into it as we drove to the top of Pico do Arieiro (1818m – Ben Nevis is 1344m). So we weren't there long today, but paused to look at a large flock of canaries on the way down. Next stop was the 'Ecological gardens', where there were more helpfully labelled endemics. A big flock of finches in pine trees included a siskin, the rest being canaries, goldfinches and greenfinches.

The tour was over at 2:30 as the American couple had a ship to catch, so that gave me a chance to look at options for the 'free day' in the itinerary. A short drive to Monte, above Funchal. Walked past the town square, past the entrance to the Tropical Gardens, and watched the celebrated toboggan run – dapper dressed chaps with straw boaters pushing basket cars on



wooden runners down the steep streets. From Monte there are two cable cars. The first takes you to Funchal, but I took the second (cost €13.50) to the Botanical Gardens. The view from this, as it descends over a huge gorge, is terrific, or terrifying, depending on your perspective, and it takes you straight to the Botanical Gardens (€6), based on a garden set up by a Scotsman called Reid in the 19th century. Pleasant enough, apart from the motorway noise, with stunning views over Funchal (including the departing cruise

ship). There are many fine ferns and cacti, but the endemic plants weren't as good as those labelled at Ribeiro Frio and the ecological gardens, and over all I was disappointed. Perhaps it wasn't helped by a rather grey afternoon – the cloud had descended – and that I needed a cup of tea.

Back to Quinta do Furão in time for the thrice-weekly free tasting of Madeira – the fortified wine that is – in the cellar of the quinta (which, by the way, means farm – like Finca in Spanish). Excellent stuff, if pricey, but how does one safely take it home in these days of liquids banned in hand luggage? Dinner was melon with ham for starters, turkey (*perú* in Portuguese) then pineapple.

Saturday 17 November – local, then eastern points

Rain overnight, but soon clearing up, though humid. A morning spent locally. Drove to São Jorge to see if the coastal walk in my guidebook from there to Quinta do Furão is practical for the holiday itinerary. It's a good path and the navigation straightforward, but the quoted time of two hours looks wildly optimistic with a steep downhill section followed by the inevitable uphill slog. Perhaps that was simply the humidity and weakness on my part! São Jorge has a pretty church with a superb gold-leafed altar, but is otherwise unremarkable. Tested a short circular walk back at Quinta do Furão instead. Plain swifts abundant today, both at São Jorge and Quinta do Furão. Eight coaches in the restaurant car park at lunchtime: Quinta do Furão is plainly on the coach tour itinerary and it must be good business. According the visitors, our good weather here today wasn't shared with the south of the island: apparently this (or the reverse) is quite typical, depending on which way the wind is coming.

Returned my hire car to the airport ready to be picked up at 3 pm by Hugo and Catarina to look at some sites on the east side of the island. First stop was a rather birdless reservoir, then the English style gardens of Santo da Serra. This at first also seemed to be rather birdless this grey and slightly damp afternoon, but an unfamiliar call in a small group of deciduous trees

caught our attention. This turned out to be a yellow-browed warbler, thought to be the second this century for Madeira.

At the mouth of the river in Machico there was a greenshank along with sanderlings and singles of dunlin, curlew sandpiper, common sandpiper, little stint and ringed plover. The commonest waders as usual were turnstones – I counted at least 25 – plus a couple of grey herons and a little egret. All these good birds meant it was dusk by the time we reached the viewpoint at Ponta de São Lourenço, too late to see the rock sparrows that are supposed to be here, though we did note a Berthelot's pipit on route near Caniçal. The viewpoint allows a view of both the north and south of Madeira from where the more rugged nature of the north is apparent. Then back to eat in a fish restaurant at Caniçal: limpets, roe of scabbard and scabbard bits.

Sunday 18 November – towards the green cauldron and home

Rain at night again, but clearing to be warm and sunny, at least for now, for my final local potter. Hugo and Catarina collected me at 10 am, and we drove through Santana past the thatched houses on many a tourist itinerary. They are a little lost among less interesting houses in the town; the example by the gate at Quinta do Furão is nicer.

One of Madeira's most famous *levada* walks is towards the *Caldeirao Verde* – green cauldron. It gives a good feel for the extent of the laurel forest and extraordinary engineering feat of the *levadas*, though a reminder that the laurel forest has a very limited range of birds. We had amazingly close views of Madeira firecrests; no need to use binoculars even for such a tiny bird. But the green cauldron – sounds like something from Harry Potter – was too far to reach, not least as the heavens opened, so we retreated. Then to the café behind the church in São Jorge for soup *in bread*, a large roll from yesterday that is less absorbent. Then to the airport, some dry clothes and a late departure, but still arriving back in Stansted ahead of schedule.

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Birds

Scientific names given for Madeira and Macaronesia (Atlantic Islands) species and subspecies races only.

Cory's shearwater *Calonectris diomedea borealis*

Macaronesia subspecies (or species if you regard the Mediterranean Scopoli's shearwater as a separate species). Several from the boat on 14/11, and a very sick bird at Lugar de Baixo 15/11

Little egret

On coastal wetlands on 3 or 4 occasions. Occurs year-round, not breeding.

Grey heron

On coastal wetlands on 2 or 3 occasions. Frequent visitor.

Green-winged teal

Long-staying vagrant at Ribeira da Janela

(**Mallard**. Several domestic ducks descended from mallards but none looked wild)

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus granti*

Madeira subspecies. Seen just once at Quinta do Furão.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo (harterti?)*

Formerly considered a Madeira subspecies. Several sightings.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus canariensis*

Macaronesia subspecies, noticeably dark. Many sightings.

Moorhen

Recent colonist at Lugar de Baixo.

Coot

Winter visitor; 10 or so at Lugar de Baixo.

Ringed plover

Occasional visitor. Singles at Lugar de Baixo, São Vicente and Machico.

Sanderling

Regular winter visitor. Lugar de Baixo (1, 15/11), São Vicente (1,15/11) and Machico (2, 17/11).

Little stint

Thought to be very scarce visitor, but as one seen at both Lugar de Baixo 15/11 and Machico 17/11, presumably not so scarce.

Curlew sandpiper

Thought to be very occasional but, like little stint, as one seen at both Lugar de Baixo 15/11 and Machico 17/11, so presumably not so scarce.

Dunlin

Scarce but regular visitor. 2 at both Lugar de Baixo 15/11 and Machico 17/11.

Snipe

Uncommon winter visitor. One at Lugar de Baixo 15/11.

Bar-tailed godwit

Occasional. Singles at Funchal 14/11, Lugar de Baixo 15/11 and São Vicente 15/11.

Whimbrel

Passage and winter. One at São Vicente, 15/11.

Greenshank

Passage migrant. One at Machico, 17/11.

Common sandpiper

Passage migrant. Singles at Lugar de Baixo 15/11 and Machico 17/11.

Turnstone

The commonest wader, especially as a winter visitor. Largest group was at least 25 at Machico 17/11.

Black-headed gull

2 Funchal harbour, 14/11.

Yellow-legged gull *Larus cachinnans atlantis*

Macaronesia subspecies. Common, especially at Funchal.

Trocaz or Long-toed pigeon *Columba trocaz*

Species endemic to Madeira. Poor views at Chão da Riberia only.

Feral pigeon

Couldn't find any good rock doves.

Plain swift *Apus unicolor*

Macaronesia species; may breed in adjacent coastal Africa. Seen several days, especially dozens around the tropical gardens in Funchal 16/11 and both São Jorge and Quinta do Furão 17/11.

Skylark

Supposed to be a regular winter visitor in small numbers, but not a species Hugo and Catarina have seen on Madeira. 1 at Quinta do Furão, 15/11.

Berthelot's pipit *Anthus berthelotii madeirensis*

Madeira subspecies. Commonest at Ponta do Pargo.

Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea schmitzi*

Madeira subspecies, and regular around farmland, watercourses and in towns. Interesting to see at least four roosting in plane trees in Funchal.

Robin

Resident breeder. In song daily at Quinta do Furão.

Blackbird *Turdus merula cabrerae*

Madeira and Canaries subspecies. Fairly common.

Spectacled warbler *Sylvia conspicillata orbitalis*

Madeira subspecies. Five at Ponta do Pargo 15/11.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla heineken*

Macaronesia subspecies. Mostly seen around Quinta do Furão, males and females.

Yellow-browed warbler

Very occasional visitor. 1 at Santo da Serra 17/11.

Madeira Firecrest *Regulus madeirensis*

Common endemic; excellent views on several occasions, both in native and non-native trees.

Starling sp. Most likely common starling *Sturnus vulgaris*.

Occasional winter visitor. Singles at the airport 13/11 and Quinta do Furão 14/11. Should have looked more closely!

Common waxbill

Recently established as breeder. Poor views at Lugar de Baixo 15/11.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs madeirensis*

Madeira subspecies, fairly common in laurel forest and parks/gardens.

Canary *Serinus canaria canaria*

Macaronesia species. The commonest land bird, especially on farmland and parks/gardens.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris aurantiiventri*

‘Very rare breeder’ but probably getting commoner; 14+ in Funchal 14/11 and several at the Ecological Gardens, 16/11.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Fairly common breeding bird.

Siskin

Occasional winter visitor. One in a pine at the Ecological Gardens, 16/11.

Reptiles/amphibians

* Madeira wall lizard *Teira dugesii* Abundant

* Perez’s from *Rana perezi*. Heard by Quinta do Furão. Introduced.

Butterflies

* Clouded yellow

* Small white

Madeira speckled wood (endemic: in laurel forest e.g. Ribeiro Frio)

* Speckled wood (cultivated / coastal areas)

Monarch

* Painted lady

* Small copper (Madeira subspecies: *Lycaena phlaeas phlaeoides*)

* Long-tailed blue

Other notable invertebrates

Red-veined darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

* Blue emperor *Anax imperator*

Glass snail or ‘semi-slug’ *Phenacolimax sp.*

* *Argiope trifasciata* - called Banded Garden Spider in the USA, also Banded Argiope.

[The similar looking Wasp spider *Argiope bruennichi* is common in Europe (and spreading north in England); both occur in Madeira. Confusingly Sziemer (see book notes) calls *Argiope bruennichi* the Banded Garden Spider. According to Wikipedia, the prominent zigzag shape called the *stabilimentum*, or web decoration, featured at the centre of the orb is of uncertain function, though it may be to attract insects.]

* at Quinta do Furão

Plants (some highlights)

This scratches the surface but gives a feel for the confusing variety to be found.

Selected plants from around the world

One of the fascinating – but sometimes confusing – elements of Madeira is the huge range of tropical plants from around the world. The formal gardens are well-known but, for me, it was more interesting seeing what was planted in streets, around the hotel Quinta do Furão, growing in gardens or on small-holdings. The usual suspects were there – bougainvillea, hibiscus, oleander, giant reed, poinsettia, various aloes, palms, acacias and eucalyptus – but this is a list of some of those that caught my eye as usual or common. Some are decorative and harmless, others invasive. Many have more than one English name.

Agapanthus or African Lily *Agapanthus praecox* (S Africa). Abundant on roadsides growing in seriously plague numbers. Mostly not in flower but still large numbers of both white and blue flowers seen.

Custard apple tree *Annona cherimola* (Peru, Ecuador). Around Quinta do Furão.

Swan's neck agave *Agave attenuata* (Mexico). Roadside planting near airport.

Norfolk Island pine *Araucaria heterophylla* (Norfolk Island). Occasional, widespread.

Angel's trumpets *Brugmansia versicolor* (= *Datura mollis*)

Loquat *Eriobotrya japonica*. Around Quinta do Furão.

'Wild rosemary' (but not ours) *Eriocephalus africanus* (South Africa). Quinta do Furão

Banana passion flower/fruit *Passiflora x exoniensis*.

Ribeiro frio and elsewhere (*right*).

King protea *Protea cynaroides*. Quinta do Furão

Mauritius nightshade *Solanum mauritianum* Tropical

Africa and tropical America. Several places in the

north of the island, including by Quinta do Furão.

Bird-of-paradise *Strelitzia reginae* South Africa.

Widely planted

Brazilian spider flower *Tibouchina urvilleana* Brazil.

African tulip tree *Spathodea campanulata*. Tropical Africa. Funchal, especially.



Arable weeds / wayside flowers

Hottentot fig *Carpobrotus edulis* (South Africa)

Bony-tip fleabane *Erigeron karvinskianus* (Mexico). Abundant and highly invasive, especially along levadas.

Galactites (= Mediterranean field thistle) *Galactites tomentosa*. Mediterranean.

Morning glory *Ipomoea acuminata* Tropical America

Bermuda buttercup *Oxalis pes-caprae* South Africa

Virginia poke *Phytolacca americana* N America.

Garden knotweed *Polygonum capitatum* India, Himalayas

Castor oil plant *Ricinus communis*. Tropical Africa

Large-veined vervain *Verbena rigida*. S America

Plus many garden escapes such as montbretia, nasturtium.

Native plants

Disc houseleek *Aeonium glabulosum* Endemic

Rock samphire *Crithmum maritimum* (Atlantic & Mediterranean)

Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare* Ponta do Pargo, not in flower. *Funcho* in Portuguese, after which Funchal is named.

Pride of Madeira *Echium candicans* (Endemic shrub – not in flower)

Melliferous spurge *Euphorbia mellifera* Endemic shrub

Madeira storks-bill *Geranium maderense*

Anemone-leaved storks-bill *Geranium palmatum*

White everlasting *Helichrysum melaleucum* Ponta do Pargo, not in flower.

Yellow foxglove *Isoplexis sceptrum* Endemic shrub – not in flower
Black parsley *Melanoseelinum decipiens* Endemic – not in flower
Giant bramble *Rubus grandiflorus* Endemic
Shrubby sowthistle *Sonchus fruticosus* Endemic
Common broom *Cytisus scoparius* Europe
Gorse *Ulex europaeus*. Coastal Europe
Madeira bilberry *Vaccinium padifolium*. Endemic

Native trees

Tree heather *Erica arborea*
Madeira holly *Ilex perado* (= *Ilex maderensis*)
Laurel, Bay tree *Laurus azorica*
Madeira laurel *Ocotea foetans*
Madeira mahogany *Persea indica* (= *Laurus indica*)
'Dogwood' *Rhamnus glandulosa* (but a buckthorn, not a dogwood)

Ferns (need more attention!)

Hard fern *Blechnum spicant*
Maidenhair fern *Adiantum capillus-veneris*
Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*
Chain fern *Woodwardia radicans* (probably)
Southern polypody *Polypodium cambricum* subsp. *macaroneticum* (best guess)

Fungus

Laurobasidium laurii A mass of curly, branched galls on the trunks of *Laurus azorica* produced by this fungus parasitic.

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Notes about books

The following, the first four of which were bought on Madeira, are all now in the Honeyguide library and can be borrowed by those going on the holiday.

Madeira's Natural History in a Nutshell by Peter Sziemer - ISBN 972-9177-31-7. This hardback book is a very good introduction to the geology and natural history of Madeira and describes and has photos of the most common or important species of birds, butterflies, flora, marine life and insects.

Madeira - Plants and Flowers by L O Franquinho and A da Costa (Francisco Ribeiro & Filhos - ISBN 972-9177-06-6).

This book identifies many of the plants species of Madeira, native and non-native. The book has the names of the plants in Portuguese, French, English, German, Danish and Swedish. The best plant book for Madeira, though the species seem to be in a random order rather than grouped by family of colour.

A field guide to the butterflies of the Funchal Ecological Park and Madeiran Archipelago (Cámara Municipal do Funchal, 2001). Well-illustrated and handy paperback in English and Portuguese.

Flowers of Madeira. Text by Roberto Jardim, photography by David Francisco (Livros e livros, 2005). Attractive softback book with a selection of local and planted flowers, shrubs and trees. English names hit-and-miss: many are just a translation from the Portuguese name.

Field guide to the Birds of the Atlantic Islands by Tony Clarke, Chris Orgill and Tony Disley (Helm, paperback). Though not as good a field guide as the Collins Bird Guide, the extra information on which birds occur and when is valuable.