

## Joseph Buhagiar B Ed (Hons), MPhil

( and student Daniela Attard)  
Assistant Lecturer (Biology) and Director,  
Argotti botanic gardens University of Malta

### Personal Profile

Joseph was born in Zejtun. He received his primary education at the local primary school and secondary education at St Augustine College. and educated in Malta. Joseph graduated with a B Ed (Hons) degree in the teaching of biology and science from the University of Malta, further specializing in Botany and soil science abroad before moving on to an MPhil from the faculty of Medicine and later reading for a PhD with Nottingham University both on the bioactive compounds from local plant species. Joseph is married and the father of four children and presently lives in Marsascala. His older two children have followed their father's footsteps, his elder daughter becoming a biologist and his son taking up medicine. Joseph presently holds a post at the University of Malta's department of biology as well as being

Isolating extracts from dried plant material.



the director of the Argotti botanic gardens, playing a role in studying the diverse endemic plant species of Malta

### Research Profile

Joseph's research mainly focuses on isolating extracts from various endemic and indigenous plants. He then studies the effects of these extracts on induction of apoptosis in cancer cells and also tests them for any anti-microbial effects. He has done considerable research on the national tree, *Tetraclinus articulata* and has supervised numerous students, encouraging them into the world of botany and cell biology. He will soon be concluding his PhD.

Since taking up his post at the University, Joseph has been involved with botanic garden research with a number of European countries as well as participating in a European projects including Semclimed.

### Other interests

Joseph loves plants and nature and is also involved in performing environmental impact assessments for building projects to help protect Malta's limited and fragile wilderness.

Daniela Attard was born in Gozo and received her primary education in Gozo and Australia. She received her secondary education at the Agius de Soldanis Girls' Junior Lyceum Gozo before moving on to her university education. She graduated with a BSc biology/chemistry in 2007. Daniela is presently studying towards an MSc in the bioactivity of a group of plants in the Mastic family under Joseph's supervision. She works full time as a technical officer at the Argotti Herbarium on plant related research. She started work at the Argotti gardens as a project assistant on an EU funded project by the name of SEMCLIMED. As the name implies, this project assessed the effects of climate change on seed germination. As she pointed out in the X-lab programme, Daniela particularly likes her job as she spends much of her time working in a place surrounded by living plants as well as the normal laboratory setting.



## Relevant Links or info

Further information about the SEMCLIMED interreg project may be viewed <http://www.semclimed.org/en/pagina.aspx?i=15>