



## **NEXT MEETING**

**Monday, 3 April 2017 at 20:00** at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

The name, Kay Montgomery, is synonymous with all things gardening in SA. But, did you know that there is much more to her than giving advice on how to make your garden grow?

After receiving her Masters from Wits, she lectured in the Dept of Geography and Environmental Sciences for three years but then decided to join the world of media.

Her career began with a five-year stint at the magazine, SA Garden and Home, after which she joined Independent Newspapers. Kay has been the Editor or Editor-in-Chief for seven national magazines. She is still the gardening editor for the Saturday Weekend Argus Home section and her talk will focus on

### **A QUARTER CENTURY OF GARDENING IN THE WEEKEND ARGUS**

Kay's additional claims to fame include, amongst others, developing the Water Wise brand for Rand Water; establishing Life is a Garden (excerpts have featured in our newsletters) for the South African Nursery Association; being a communications consultant to Working on Fire; managing communications for the City of Cape Town relating to the conflict between residents, animal rights activists and baboons; being part of the international Forest Communicators' Network; and serving on the boards of SANBI and the South African Green Industries Council.

A big part of her current work is managing a media and communications campaign for the City of Cape Town's Invasive Species Unit.

*NB: The ladies of the CHS Nursery (the sale of plants) have requested that you not bring any plants to sell until summer is over. They are not able to look after the left-over plants, as well as their own, at this time. We will announce when the Nursery re-opens for business.*

*They would, of course, welcome any amount of indigenous seeds and bulbs (labelled) you may have for our table at the Kirstenbosch Plant Fair which has been postponed to **13 and 14 May** "due to the continuing drought and the possibility of water shedding, and further water restrictions."*

## **FORTHCOMING OUTINGS**

**Sat, 22 April at 09:30:** Tour of the Philippi Horticulture Area with Nazeer Sunday.

You've been hearing a lot about this area and how it is in danger of being taken over for development. Let's go and see what it is the farmers are trying to save. The visit will start with a brief talk at the PHA Campaign Centre, followed by a drive through the farms, stopping a few times for explanations to be made. To keep the number of vehicles down, we will fill cars of those prepared to do the driving.

There will also be boxes of veggies available at R120 per box, but these have to be ordered beforehand.

Monetary donations towards their fight against developers would be gratefully accepted – as small or as large as you would like.

Let Glenda have your name by no later than 19 April. Please advise if you are prepared to drive or need a lift.

**Sat, 13 May at 12:00:** Visit two gardens designed by Clare Burgess, one in Fernwood and one in Silwood. This will enable you to attend the Kirstenbosch Plant Fair either before or after this visit.

More details next month. Let Glenda have your name by no later than 11 May.

## **WELCOME ...**

... to our first new members of 2017. They are Margaret Reason, Linda Pollard, May Almano, Neville Wylie and Eric West. We hope they will enjoy what we have to offer and stay with us for many years to come.

## SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Thank you to the 71 members who have already paid their subscriptions for the coming year.

You *have* received your renewal form – either by post or electronically – so PLEASE include your completed form as proof of payment when paying via EFT or in cash at our next meeting. It is the only way to ensure you remain on the membership database/e-mail mailing list. It is also needed to keep track of any changes in your contact details, to have a record of whether you would be willing to be called upon when help is needed or whether you would like to purchase a name badge.

Once payment, together with your form, has been received, you will be issued with a receipt and membership 'card'.

We look forward to welcoming back the rest of our members for another year!

## EARLY NOTICE

**Notice is given of the 112<sup>th</sup> AGM of the CHS to be held on Monday, 1 May 2017 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Campground Road, Newlands**

### Agenda

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM held on Monday, 2 May 2016
2. Chairman's Annual Report
3. Treasurer's Financial Statements and Auditor's Report
4. Election of President
5. Election of Committee
6. Appointment of Auditor for the ensuing year
7. General

The Minutes of the 2016 AGM, the audited Financial Statement and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 28 February 2017 are enclosed/attached. We would appreciate you bringing your copy of these documents to the meeting.

## NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Also enclosed/attached is a Nomination Form. The Committee is looking for new members so we're hoping you will feel compelled to offer your services and allow yourself to be nominated. If you are interested and want to know more, just ask.

The top half of the form needs to be completed by you, a Proposer and Secunder must complete the bottom half, and the signed form returned to the Secretary by 13 April.

## REPORT BACK

### To show or not to show ...

After a number of calls for help, 17 members gathered together on 24 February to discuss the way forward. One of the decisions taken was that we will not hold a Flower and Garden Show this year. We will probably support the Fish Hoek Garden Club by exhibiting at *their* show on 7 October. If members volunteer to take on a portfolio, with the help of others (ask about this if you are interested), Jane Robertson would be prepared to be the overall co-ordinator in 2018.

Several new ideas came out of this meeting and they will be revealed to you over the coming months. In the meantime, we will begin by enriching your monthly Plant Table experience.

To begin, we would like you to complete a slip (right) for each specimen you bring to the Plant Table. When you arrive Gillian will be on hand with these slips and ask you to fill in the relevant information. There are good reasons for asking you to do this.

1. Firstly, it will help Jenny with her explanations about each plant. She doesn't know each and every plant.
2. Secondly, this information is used for reporting in the newsletter. Sometimes information from a website isn't quite the same as how a particular plant grows under Cape Peninsula conditions.

PLANT NAME:

WATERING (tick): 

Borehole	Wellpoint	Grey water	Other
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GROWTH HABITS AND/OR OTHER INTERESTING FACTS:

GROWER'S NAME:

SUBURB:

3. The plant name and details regarding its growth or position in the garden would be very useful to those who live in your suburb.
4. Therefore, your name and suburb also needs to be filled in.
5. The idea behind ticking the water that is used on your plants is to compile a database of which plants have eg. done well with wellpoint water (good or bad) or just grey water and survived the restrictions imposed on us. If this is to be the way of the future, then it would be good to know what plants will do well in our various suburbs. Below you will see a few notes on how and when plants are being watered.
6. Your plants will be divided into Indigenous and Exotic on the Plant Table. Jenny will help you with this if you're not sure.
7. Prestik will be provided, so please ensure your slip is stuck onto the green bottle with your specimen, or onto your plant pot.
8. And the best reason for filling in these slips and attaching them to your specimen is that, for every plant brought on the evening, the grower will be awarded ONE point. No name, no point. These points will be tallied over the year and prizes awarded at our year-end party.
9. And, finally, there will be an *extra* point awarded to both an indigenous and an exotic specimen. These will be known as "Jenny's Choice". Her criteria for the night will vary from month to month. She could decide to choose "the most unusual", "the most difficult to grow", "most beautiful" or even her favourite flower.

### March Plant Table:

Jenny reported: "This is not a competition but to make you look at plants and see what you would like to add to your garden. And I'm sure there's something here, that when you hear about them, you'll say, "oh yes, that would be a good thing to have" and, hopefully, we'll get enough information off these new slips which ask for the plant name, the water regime (lots of water, not enough water, once a week, twice a week etc), growth habits and/or interesting facts, as well as your name and suburb. Please fill them in.

If we know what they're doing in *your* suburb and people can see them here and read about them in the newsletter, we can all learn from one another."

The list has been divided into suburbs (those that we know) and labelled IND = indigenous and EX = exotic.

*Odonotonema strictum* (EX) – from Central America. Loved by sunbirds because of the tubular flowers. <http://spain-info.co.uk/gardening/firespike/> tells us "In late summer and autumn it produces plumes of blood red, glossy spikes of flowers which almost look as if they are made of some sort of plastic. It appreciates moist but well-drained soil, however, once it is established, it can tolerate all but the longest droughts."

*Gasteraloe* (IND x 'EX') – has the flower of a Lachenalia but is a hybrid of a Gasteria and an Aloe. Dwarf Aloes from Somalia are being crossed with Gasterias and producing very drought-tolerant plants, in miniature.

*Grown in Rosebank and Rondebosch:*

*Podranea* (IND) – Port St John's or Zimbabwe Creeper (see Feb issue) taken from a neighbour's hedge.

*Leonotis ocymifolia* (Dagga plant) (IND) – needs sun. Watered once or twice a week from a rainwater tank. When the flowers are finished there are lovely seed heads. (Below, pics 1 and 2.)



*Grown in Constantia:*

*Vinca* (EX) – Survives on very little water. They come up all over the garden, almost like weeds. Bigger flowered and better coloured hybrids are being produced. The leathery leaves prevent moisture loss. <http://www.parkswholesaleplants.com/spring-plants/annuals-jz/vinca-periwinkle-cora-cascade-lilac/> says, "Vinca is always a favorite for hot locations because of its heat and drought tolerance." (On the Invasive List yet???) (Above, pic 3.)

*Liriope* (EX) – very leathery and growing in semi-sun with minimal water. (Above, pic 4.)

*Plectranthus* (IND) – need water and shade.

*Eucomis* (IND) – a Drakensberg speciality, so needs summer rainfall. When buying at a nursery find out if it is a summer or winter rainfall plant. Lovely in flower arrangements; grow very well from seed.

A *Stapelia*, *Orbea variegata* (IND) – a succulent from the coastal belt of Western Cape, it occurs on granite outcrops from Lamberts Bay to Humansdorp. This flowers against hot walls and is watered when dry. This is now invasive in Australia!! (Right) The website <http://kumbulanursery.co.za/plants/orbea-variegata> has a lot more information about its habits.



Marigolds

*Grown in Pinelands:*

*Vitex trifolia purpurea* (EX) – large shrub and has dainty elegant blue flowers. In full sun and surviving on 30 minutes per week of very salty wellpoint water and even more infrequent grey water. <http://www.landsdaleplants.com.au/plant/vitex/> says it tolerates moderate drought once established. Keep moist in drier weather. (Right)



*Hamelia patens* (EX) – from Central America. Full of flowers and very robust and “does its thing”. Watered twice weekly with rain water.

*Heliotrope boraginaceae* – from South America (Peru). Some are purple, some are white and a lot are scented. Seems to be surviving quite well in this climate. Belongs to the family which includes Borage.

*Achimenes* hybrid – Gesneriaceae family – from tropical America (Brazil to Mexico). Has scaly tubers underground and dies down in the Autumn. Water in Spring. Low maintenance house plant.



*Grown in University Estate:*

*Selenicereus anthonyanus* (EX) - the Fishbone cactus from Mexico discovered only in 1946 and first flowered in 1950. This plant survives on 1 cup of water every two weeks in a hanging basket in the shade. (Right)

Chairman’s choice of the night: *Leonotis* (IND) and *Odontonema* (EX)

**Beasts and Beauties talk:**

You had to be at the meeting to appreciate the full impact of Cherise’s enthusiasm for her ‘Beauties’ and hear her disdain for the ‘Beasts’. We were introduced to a whole new range of plants that would be very suitable for most of our gardens.

Cherise started off by explaining how this list came about.

“Monique [her colleague] and I walk the garden every Friday looking for labelling problems and accessioning problems and I will ooh and aah over almost every plant I come across and Monique says, “Yes, yes, yes, it’s pretty now, but what is it going to look like in a month’s time?” and “Yes, I see it still flowering in a month’s time, but you need to prune it all the time, don’t you?” She interrogates my poor plants until they move from my ‘beauties’ list to my ‘beasts’ list – and this is how it started to come about – my Beauties and Beasts.

While you are looking at all my beasts, while they have something of an unattractive element about them, just remember that there is beauty in everyone.

How did I come across Beauties and Beasts? Either they’re just absolutely enormous, complete hooligans in the garden or they’re very, very hardy – you can’t do a thing to kill them or they have thorns or they’re challenging to grow. Beauties are just gorgeous and there’s something pretty about them.”



The *beast*: *Asparagus falcatus*

The *beauty*: *Asparagus ramosissimus*



Here is the first half of Cherise's list, showing the names of the 'beasts' with a 'beautiful' alternative. Part 2 next month.

Beast or Beauty	Latin, Family and Common Names	Cherise's observations:	Official description	Summer/Winter Rainfall	Threatened Status
Beast	<b>Agathosma crenulata</b> RUTACEAE Oval-leaf Buchu, Langblaar boegoe	Full sun, well-drained soil. Perfect for herb & fragrant gardens. Attracts bees and butterflies.	Rounded shrub 1.5-2m, aromatic leaves. Starry white flowers, Jun-Nov, are carried on short flower stalks.	Winter	Declining
Beauty	<b>Agathosma serpyllacea</b> RUTACEAE	Full sun, well-drained soil. Attracts pollinators.	Shrublet 30-80cm, aromatic leaves. Clusters of pink, purple or white flowers May-Dec.	Winter	LC
Beast	<b>Asparagus falcatus</b> ASPARAGACEAE Large Forest Asparagus, Sickleshorn, Doringtouw.	Full sun, well-drained soil. Tough, low maintenance. Organic barbed wire. Attracts pollinators.	Robust thorny creeper 7m. Sickle-shaped shiny dark green leaves. Small, white, fragrant flowers –Dec. Red berries. Older stems have sharp, hard thorns that are curved backwards.	Summer	LC
Beauty	<b>Asparagus ramosissimus</b> 'Spidersweb' ASPARAGACEAE Cascade Asparagus, Krulkransie	Shade and semi-shade, in any soil. Hardy, low maintenance. Ideal for a trellis in a small garden or as a groundcover under trees.	Perennial, 60cm with tuberous roots and fine-textured foliage. Tiny white flowers Sep-Jan. Small, orange-red berries from October	Winter to Summer	LC
Beast	<b>Cannomois grandis</b> RESTIONACEAE Tall Cape Reed, Giant Riverreed.	Full sun, well-drained soil, water regularly. Keep tidy by removing straggly and dead culms as they appear. Stimulate new growth by cutting culms down to the ground in autumn. Emulating what a fire would do in nature.	Very large, fast-growing, reed-like tufted growth, up to 5 m. Attractive new shoots form branching willowy culms that create texture and movement in the garden	Winter	LC
Beauty	<b>Elegia stipularis</b> RESTIONACEAE Cushion Restio.	Full sun, well-drained and composted sandy soil. Best planted in groups where the bright seasonal colour makes a show. Good accent or filler plant.	Compact, fast growing with tufted growth 0.35-1m. Flowering Jun-July, papery brown seeds are released before the next flush of flowers fruits.	Winter	LC
Beast	<b>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</b> ASTERACEAE (Daisy family) Tick Berry, Bosluisbessie, Weskusbietou	Full sun, well drained sandy soil. Low maintenance. Hardy. Waterwise. Can be pruned into a hedge. Attracts pollinators. Pioneer plant.	Very large, fast-growing shrub 2m. Semi succulent foliage. Very striking during winter, when bright dense yellow daisy flowers appear. Fleshy, edible, sweet blackish or purple berries	Winter to Summer	LC
Beauty	<b>Chrysanthemoides incana</b> ASTERACEAE (Daisy family) Vaalbietou	Full sun, well drained sandy soil. Low maintenance, grows easily and quickly in harsh conditions. Waterwise. Pioneer plant.	Groundcovering shrub with grey leaves and similar flowers and fruits to above.	Winter	LC
Beast	<b>Encephalartos horridus</b> ZAMIACEAE Eastern Cape Blue Cycad	Full sun, well-drained soil, very hardy, adaptable.	Small, low-growing cycad 80cmx30cm Trunks branch freely, forming dense clusters of overlapping entangled blue-green foliage, with 4- 8 stems clustered together. Both sexes bear a single cone per crown, Dec-Jan. Mature cones are bluish green in colour. No other blue-leaved cycad rivals the intense blue of this cycad's foliage. The male is bluer than the female.	Summer	EN
Beauty	<b>Encephalartos frederici-guilielmi</b> ZAMIACEAE White-Haired Cycad	Full sun, well-drained soil, very hardy, adaptable and easy to cultivate, but will not do well in the shade. Ideal in a rockery surrounded by low-growing succulents.	Vigorous growing cycad, with a stout stem 40-60cm in diameter, height of 4 m. The leaves are 1.0-1.5 m long, fairly straight, and tend to spread out horizontally when the cones appear. They are blue-green and darken as they age. One of the most attractive cycad species	Summer	EN

Beast	<b>Grewia lasiocarpa</b> MALVACEAE Forest raisin, Bosrosyntjie	Full sun, some light shade, in any soil. Hardy and Waterwise. Prune only to shape lightly if necessary. Mixed background planting, a dense screen or informal hedging.	Fast-growing large shrub, small tree 3-5m. Bark is smooth and grey. Rough-haired large circular leaves. Large, pale pink flowers Jan-Mar. Reddish 4-lobed furry fruit May-Jul remain r eventually turning black.	Summer	LC
Beauty	<b>Grewia occidentalis</b> MALVACEAE Cross-berry or Four-corner, Kruisbessie	Full sun or shade, well drained sandy soil. Hardy and Waterwise. Can be pruned into a hedge as responds well to clipping. Attracts pollinators.	Scrambling shrub 3m. Purple star-shaped flowers Oct-Jan. Distinctive four-lobed fruits (hence the common name cross-berry and four-corner). Shiny reddish-brown Fruits ripen to light purple Jan-May and remain on the bush.	Winter to Summer	LC
Beast	<b>Gymnanthemum myrianthum (Vernonia)</b> ASTERACEAE Wild Heliotrope, Eared Vernonia	Full sun, any soil. Easy to grow. Waterwise. Prune right down hard after flowering to control untidiness. Attracts pollinators.	Very large multi-stemmed shrub 4-6m long upright softwood branches and large leaves. Large white to deep purple flowerheads turn the whole shrub into a ball of colour Aug – Sep. Fluffy seeds.	Summer	LC
Beauty	<b>Linzia glabra (Vernonia)</b> ASTERACEAE	Full sun, any well drained composted soil. Prune back hard in winter when untidy. Plants get stronger year after year as the clumps get established. Use in mixed herbaceous borders.	Strong-growing, herbaceous perennial 1.2m. Stiff upright robust stems, tips bear dense clusters of bristly mauve flowerheads Sep-May. Buds are light green to pale cream, opening to light and dark purple flowers. Fluffy white seedheads.	Summer	LC
Beast	<b>Helichrysum petiolare</b> ASTERACEAE (Daisy family) Everlasting, Khooigoed	Full sun, any soil. Easy to grow Waterwise. Spreads rapidly and should be cut back. Can be pruned into a low soft hedge as responds well to clipping.	Soft, vigorous shrub 0.5-1m x 1m. Aromatic attractive foliage and flowers. Roundish leaves covered with silver-grey hairs. Tiny creamy-white flowers make up abundant flowerheads on long stalks Dec-Jan	Winter to Summer	LC
Beauty	<b>Plecostachys serpyllacea</b> ASTERACEAE (Daisy family) Cobwebbush, Vaaltee	Full sun, any soil. Easy plant in the garden. Hardy. Waterwise. Use in mixed borders. Foliage ornamental. Pioneer plant.	Mounding grey-leaved perennial 1m. Long slender tangled stems greyish and woolly. Leaves oval with wavy margins and tips curved down. Many small flowerheads in rounded clusters at the tips of the branchlets, flowers yellow with milky-white floral bracts Mar- May.	Winter to Summer	LC

**JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – MARCH / APRIL 2017**

A recent visit to Kirstenbosch and a holiday in Knysna are the focus of this month’s journal. At Kirstenbosch I went to have a look at the Water-wise gardening area. They have replaced the old information boards with some attractive new ones. The first board suggested that you could achieve a water-wise garden in 7 easy steps. Four that interested me were: to ‘create shade areas and wind breaks; water correctly and only when necessary; reduce lawn area; and to group plants according to their needs.



Most of our garden is partly protected from the wind by the neighbouring house but the garden on the pavement gets the full blast of the south-easter as it roars down our road. The suggestion was to plant wind breaks and so I have decided to plant a *Metasia muricata* (blombos). The shrub thrives in our climate and is looking very attractive in the veld at the moment with its clusters of white flowers. The visit to Knysna made me aware of the habitat of *Hibiscus pedunculatus* which is a local hibiscus growing on our pavement. It grows on the fringes of the Knysna forest. I now realize that I shall have to remove it from this section of the garden to a more suitable place.



The Kirstenbosch notice board suggested that we overwater. To confirm this, the little bit of rain we had recently has bucked up our garden surprisingly well. One near neighbour was unimpressed by the amount that fell: “Didn’t even fill the dog’s water bowl”. But the garden has got used to the weekly small dose of grey water.

Our lawn area is looking very sorry for itself. Someone recently suggested that we, in the Western Cape are far too fussy about our lawns. In the rest of South Africa gardeners let their lawns go brown in the dry season. Kirstenbosch suggests that one reduces the lawn area by constructing various types of mulched pathways using 'pebbles, loose tiles, sleepers and chipped stone'. These substances allow the water through. If the lawn is not being used for social purposes they also suggested that suitable groundcovers could be planted instead.

Some of the plants in the water-wise section at Kirstenbosch that are also thriving in our garden are *Artemisia afra*\* (Wormwood); *Eriocephalus africanus*\* (Wild rosemary), *Crassula perfoliata*\* which is easy to grow from cuttings and produces a bright red flower, *Lampranthus deloides*\* with attractive leaves and a pink flower in Spring. *Crassula rubicaulis*\* has beautiful red-rimmed leaves and pale pink flowers. There are also various very happy *Hawthornia*\* which are busy flowering at the moment.



(Photos in order of the text, marked \* – left to right, top and bottom)

Two plants in the water-wise section that I must get for my garden are *Aloe tenoir*\* which looks magnificent with its many yellow flowers. It grows in the dry thickets in the Eastern Cape. It is easy to propagate from stem cuttings which are allowed to dry and are then planted directly into the garden. The other plant is *Agothosma ovate* 'Kleitjieskraal' (False buchu).

A plant we saw growing vigorously in the Knysna forest was *Agapanthus praerox* subsp. *praerox* which is a lighter blue colour than our local plant. They were still flowering profusely in mid-March.

I'll finish this month with a picture of an *Epidendrum x obrienianum*\* (Poor man's orchid) which has been flowering all summer and are no trouble to grow. I also have *Epidendrum* plants with red and purple flowers.

I used the following resources when writing this journal:

- Pienaar, Kristo *The A to Z of Flowers in South Africa*
- *Plantzafrica.com*

## GARDENING TIPS

Excerpt from <https://gosouth.co.za/march-in-the-garden/> Life is a garden

### Planning for autumn planting

Fill your boot with compost, compost & more compost! Apply to each and every planting bed as nutritious mulch. Prepare soil by digging it over to the depth of a large spade, while working in copious amounts of compost and include bonemeal to promote strong root growth.

### Start sowing sweet peas

It is sweet pea sowing time – prepare deep trenches for them by digging in compost from your local GCA garden centre and generous dustings of bonemeal or superphosphate (do not use bonemeal if you have dogs). Soak the seeds overnight in tepid water before sowing directly.

**Bedding plant of the month: Lobelia**

There are very few flowers that can match the true blue of Lobelia, that comes in light to dark blue, as well as white and dark pink. These grow anywhere in full sun or semi shade and like loose, gritty soil. When nothing else seems to grow, punnets of seedlings can still be planted out, provided the area does not receive heavy frost. There are also trailing Lobelias, which have a more cascading habit and suitable for hanging baskets, window boxes and for softening edges of raised beds.

**Rose care for March**

Roses are simply spectacular in autumn! To ensure quality blooms into the winter, continue with regular preventative treatments/spraying for black spot, beetles and bollworm. As the days get shorter, the roses start to go dormant and withdraw food from their leaves. To compensate for this and to provide enough food for new growth and flowers, fertilise with rose food – your local GCA will advise you on the best option. Regular watering is very important if there is insufficient rainfall.

**Heirloom veggies**

Spice up your food garden with these deliciously different veggie varieties. Heirloom varieties are kept true to type, handed down from generation to generation and produce very healthy plants. Some of the exciting varieties on the market these days include strange-looking and fiery chillies, different coloured cauliflower, carrots and broccoli, striped beetroot, and different varieties of tomatoes and brinjals.

**In the herb garden**

Start harvesting and preserving herbs for winter, harvesting small quantities at a time. Chop mint, parsley, basil and lemon balm, place in an ice tray, fill with water and freeze. Aromatic herbs, like oregano, marjoram, thyme, sage, bay and rosemary, are better air dried. Continue to feed herbs monthly with a half strength liquid fertiliser and water regularly.

Your local nursery will have some beauties to plant now. Look out for these:

- Gardenia augusta hybrids (Cape jasmine) are possibly the best known scented shrubs in local gardens. These neat evergreen shrubs are seldom without buds or blooms from spring through to autumn. Grow in rich, well-drained soil in sun or semi-shade.
- Plumeria rubra (frangipani) grows well in the tropical and sub-tropical areas of the country. They withstand drought and bloom profusely from late spring through summer and into autumn. There are a wide range of different coloured flowers that are beautifully fragrant. They are easy to grow and require little attention, flourish in almost all soil types, from sand to clay, and they cope with a wide range of pH levels – both acid and alkaline. They grow best in full sun.
- Capsicum annuum 'Black Pearl' (ornamental chilli) is a compact, bushy ornamental chilli that will reach a mature height of 40 to 50cm. The young leaves are greenish in colour but turn glossy black as they mature. The small white flowers are followed by very hot fruit that are shiny black at first and then turn bright red. These plants will grow indoors and outdoors in a sunny spot in well-drained, moist soil.

**Garden tasks**

- Take stock of any evergreen trees that may have grown strongly and will now be shading your garden and trim or thin out.
- Cut back all summer flowering perennials that are looking tired. Pay attention to salvias, daisies, lavender and fuchsias.
- It is a good month to do a thorough feeding. Plants and lawns will respond well to fertilising now with some 2.3.2. Not only will they give you another flush of growth, it will help to strengthen them for the winter to come. Fertilise all your container plants, hanging baskets and seedlings with a liquid plant food.
- Move shrubs or trees in the wrong place on a cool day. First prepare the new planting hole with compost, general fertiliser like superphosphate or 2:3:2 and bonemeal. Do not attempt the replanting of large trees yourself, it should rather be done by professionals
- Go to autumn plant sales, there are great bargains to buy and most plants will be lush and big after a whole summer season's growth.
- Get your spring bulbs while the selection is good. Do not plant them yet, the soil needs to cool down. Keep the bulbs in a cool, dry and dark place till April and if it's very hot, May before planting.
- Sow more flowering plants directly into well prepared soil for masses of colour in the winter garden.

**ITEMS OF INTEREST**

- Margaret Roberts, the great herb lady, passed away on 4 March at the age of 79.
- The Kirstenbosch Plant Fair has been postponed to 13 and 14 May 2017.
- The Rare Plant Fair has been postponed to 14 October 2017.

(Photos: Andrew and Glenda Thorpe, Plantzafrica, Peter Henshall)