

President: David Davidson, **Chairman:** Errol Scarr, **Hon Treasurer:** Henry Diesveld, **Secretary:** Glenda Thorpe
Honorary Members: Laurie Powis, Colin Cook, Marianne Alexander, Barbara Hey, Mary Smith, Anne Bean, Adam Harrower, Michael Tuffin

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 5 March 2018 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

SUPERCHARGED SOIL

After many years of trial and error, Sarchen Bassingthwaighe, of Natural Gardening Principles, embarked on a journey of natural soil building and managed to transform soils in a very short space of time. Today NGP has fine-tuned the process so that it is easy for gardeners to revitalise their poor soils: retain moisture, cool soil temperatures and soil nutrition which enhances plants and boosts their immune systems.



<p>Supercharge your Soil: Get started with 4 easy layers</p> <p>CLICK TO PURCHASE ➔</p>	<p>4 Carbon Build (shredded thatch and palm fibre)</p>	<p>4. Releases carbon chains to store nutrients.</p>
	<p>3 Compost Extract + Trace Elementals (micro-organisms + electrolytes)</p>	<p>3. Fixes nutrients and electrolytes into the soil.</p>
	<p>2 Soil Build (composting worms and cocoons)</p>	<p>2. Converts greens to rich soil.</p>
	<p>1 Green Nutrient (alfalfa and herbs)</p>	<p>1. Natures latent superfood store.</p>

REPORT BACK

Annual Subscriptions and Levies

Our Treasurer reported on the Committee's decision not to increase the annual membership for the coming year: "The growth in our investments is more or less covering our losses. The Committee feels it is premature to push up the subscriptions because if we manage to have a Plant Sale, the loss will be less than expected. We will review the need to increase subscriptions in October this year. We believe that we can see this year through without having to adjust subs, so at this stage we will leave subscriptions as they are.

However, the banks are really hitting us hard with charges. For cash deposits they charge a minimum of R40 and R42 for cheque deposits. So those people who insist upon depositing subs directly into our account, it is costing us over R40. We are, therefore, expecting those members to add a R40 levy to their subscription to cover that cost. It would be far better to pay the subscription by EFT – it won't cost the CHS anything and it will cost you a minimal amount. Subscriptions paid to us in cash and by cheque at meetings means the whole batch of cheques can be banked for R42 for about 10 cheques.

To summarise:

- If you pay by cash or cheque at meetings, there will be no levy;
- If you do an EFT there will be a small charge to you;
- If you deposit cash or a cheque directly into the CHS account, which is an expensive option, you must include the levy;
- If you cannot be reformed and do EFTs, you will have to come to meetings to make payment." 😊

Printing and postal costs:

Two years ago we instituted a levy for receiving newsletters by snail mail. At present the cost to us to print the newsletter is just under R50 for the year per "snail mail" member. The annual outlay for the CHS to mail the newsletter is R50 per "snail mail" member. There will, of course, be a postage increase in April. Therefore, we are asking for a R50 levy this year.

There is absolutely no cost involved in receiving the newsletters electronically.

Your 2018/19 Subscription Renewal Form is enclosed/attached. Please complete it and return the form with your payment, or with your EFT proof of payment, in order for our membership database to be kept up to date.

Annual Plant Sale

If you can pot something up and if you think you can keep it going, please don't stop. Just keep going because nature is incredible and if we could perhaps have a very hardy plant sale.

February Plant Table

Grown near Wolseley with no water:

Fennel (EX) – almost a weed and could easily get onto the invasive alien list because it is popping up wherever it's sandy and gets a foothold where the seed lands. It's good for flower arranging. There is also a bronze-leaved Fennel which is more exotic cousin and not as invasive as the green form. Tough, gives height and airy texture. Use bulb and leaves in cooking. Use as wind break in veggie garden.

Salvia canariensis (EX) – Madeira, Canary Islands. Leaves are very downy and hairy and able to withstand the heat and drought, typically arid growing plant. Beautiful flowers. Grows to 2m high and spreads to 1,5m. Self-seeds and flowers all summer.

With farm dam water once a week:

Canna colibri (EX)

Carissa bispinosa (IND) – tough shrub; good barrier plant.

Grown in Claremont with no water:

Aristolochia gigantea "Dutchman's Pipe" (EX) – possibly pollinated by carrion flies; very vigorous climber; flowers are enormous.

Grown in Pinelands with grey water:

Hamelia (EX) – South America, West Indies. Thrives in the heat and dryness. Bees and birds love it.

Balsam (EX) – grown from seed; summer annual and takes full sun; collect seeds when pods turn yellow.

Impatiens (EX) – need shade and regular pruning otherwise they get leggy.

Ornamental Chilli "Black Pearl" (EX) – needs occasional pruning. If you have a dark corner, black flowers or berries add depth and add lovely contrast to the bright colours we usually see in gardens.

Fuchsia insulinde (EX) – does well in semi shade; pinching from June to Sept helps the plant to bush out, giving more flowers.

Hibiscus mutabilis "Confederate Rose" (EX) – NOT a rose and not even from USA, but China! Mutabilis means changing – the flower opens white and changes to deep red by evening. [Right]

Grown in Constantia with borehole water:

Thunbergia erecta (EX) – according to www.rareflora.com/ this is of tropical American origin – slow growing initially but becomes rampant in the heat. [https:// thunbergiaere.htm](https://thunbergiaere.htm)

Vreasea splendens (Bromeliad)(EX) – South America, seen in the forks of trees around Rio; water collects in the crowns and the mosquitos love it; continue to grow and flower; the crown dies and from the bottom 3 or 4 suckers will grow.

Vinca (EX) – Madagascan Periwinkle.

Duranta (EX)

Pelargonium (IND)

Plectranthus "Mona Lavender" (IND) – does well with lots of water

Grown in University Estate with rain water:

Plumbago "Royal Cape" (IND) – very tough and almost indestructible.

Polygala (IND) – tough, wind resistant; has been flowering all summer.

Grown in Rugby:

Cattleya hybrid (EX) – dark purple colour



All the plants listed above (if they had a slip with the member's name and the plant name) will receive one point each.

For Jenny's choice of one indigenous and one exotic plant, they will each receive an extra point.

Should there be one particular plant that can be regarded as being "the most difficult to grow", an extra 5 points will be awarded. This will not necessarily happen every month.

A gentle reminder: Don't forget to place your plant in a vase on the table (there are both exotic and indigenous 'sides') and attach your paper slip giving your name, the plant name and anything else of interest. No slip, no point. The slips are available at meetings but you could get them done at home to save time.

JENNY'S CHOICE FOR FEBRUARY

EXOTIC	THE PLANT MOST DIFFICULT TO GROW
<p>Bernice's <i>Hoya</i> (EX) – grows in shade houses and conservatories. Thick waxy leaves. There are a number of species. Grown in Constantia.</p> 	<p>Michael's collection of: <i>Pachypodium geayi</i> – grown from seed – teaspoon of kitchen water – 3 years old [in black pot in front] <i>Pachypodium lamerei</i> or <i>geayi</i> – age approx. 5 years [behind 3 yr old] <i>Pachypodium lamerei</i> or <i>geayi</i> from Madagascar – inherited a number of years ago – full sun; 1 cup water per week with wellpoint water; age approx. 40 years [at the back] <i>Pachypodium namaquanum</i> (IND) –sprayed with wellpoint water to mimic the West Coast fog; leaves are channelled to catch the water which runs down the plant to the roots; <i>Pachypodium bispinosum</i> (IND) – Easter Cape endemic – ½ cup once a week with wellpoint water. NB: Michael will only know whether these are <i>P lamerei</i> or <i>geayi</i> once they have flowered. Grown in Marina da Gama.</p> 
<p>INDIGENOUS</p> <p>Jean's <i>Amaryllis belladonna</i> "March Lily" (IND) – Western Cape – only a few out of a large population flower each year; some are much darker pink. Grown in Kirstenhof.</p> 	

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

And this month it is the turn of Cherise Viljoen who, after judging at shows and giving talks at shows and meetings since 2006, re-joined the CHS in 2008. By May 2010 she was elected onto the Committee.

Here is her story:

"A Capetonian girl born in Fish Hoek, schooled at Kirstenhof Primary and Muizenberg High – where my mom was a biology teacher. I always lived in the southern suburbs and many childhood weekends were spent walking in the local mountains. My love of our indigenous fauna and flora is definitely a gift from my mother who exposed me to both from a young age.

In the early 1990s I studied Horticulture at Cape Technikon. After finishing the theory part of the course I took a year off for a working holiday in the UK and to travel in Europe. I then completed my National Horticultural Diploma after doing two years in-service practical at Kirstenbosch on the student training program which was challenging and extremely enjoyable. Although I never did take that forbidden dip in the Lady Anne's bird bath (or dam), I did manage to learn to drive the tractor, even after jack-knifing the trailer a few times much to my trainer's horror. I still hop on the tractor and drive it around the nursery when I get the chance – although everyone stands at a ridiculously far distance whenever I reverse.

From a young age I've loved Kirstenbosch. I remember visiting the gardens as a primary schoolgirl with the Goldfield's Educators, and having many family Sunday breakfasts in the old prefab tearoom, followed by walks in the garden.

Once I was qualified I got a lecturing position with College of Cape Town where I lectured N1 to N3 Horticulture for four years. I enjoyed that very much and had great fun with my student groups turning the dilapidated old tennis courts into a small nursery in order to introduce a much needed practical component to a purely theoretical course.

But I wanted to get back into 'true' horticulture so I leapt at the first opportunity to return to Kirstenbosch. Since 2001 I have been employed as Nursery Supervisor of the Plant Production Wholesale Nursery. I am responsible for growing most of the plants that are planted into the garden, and those that were sold at the Botanical Society's annual Garden Fair (now sold every month at a Volunteer plant table at the Kirstenbosch Food and Craft Market) and also for wholesaling and promoting indigenous plants to the green industry. For 15 years I also managed all the student training programs offered at Kirstenbosch. The lecturing awoke the teacher in me – passing on horticultural knowledge and experience is something I am still passionate about. I oversee the *Streptocarpus* (such beauties!), Aquatic & Riverine, and Shrub collections at Kirstenbosch, over and above being nursery supervisor. I have always had a passion for indigenous plants and have been lucky enough to cultivate this love of our indigenous flora by working at Kirstenbosch.

In 2010 I obtained a Degree in Horticulture (Cum Laude) from Cape Provincial University of Technology (CPUT), a real achievement for me working full time, as well as being a wife and a mom of two young children (Jessica, now 13 and Amy, now 9 years old). I am currently studying a Master's degree in Horticulture.

I spend a lot of my time at home in my garden with my children and we have a full veggie and herb corner that we all take great delight in using in our daily cooking, and a worm farm that fascinates the kids and helps me recycle kitchen waste and feed my plants. The whole family loves horses. In fact, I met my husband through horse riding while we were still at school, and both girls ride weekly. So I get bagfuls of horse manure from the stables that I use in the garden as a mulch.

At work I spend a lot of my time managing my 9 nursery staff and volunteers. I often feel that I grow 'people' instead of 'plants', and although at times that is a lot more difficult, it is also always very rewarding. I do a lot of resource management, making sure everyone has enough of what they need to do their jobs properly, as well as planning the systems that will implement those resources: propagation lists, feeding schedules, potting plans etc. We do a lot of information sharing at Kirstenbosch so a part of my day is always taken up with advising or assisting a colleague, customer, grower, landscaper, or member of the public on a plant or production query. I am also constantly looking for/at species I do not yet know, and deciding whether it is worth growing them or promoting them in some way and constantly bearing in mind that the focus of Botanical gardens is becoming very much more concentrated in conservation and restoration than ever before. Even as we keep on educating about growing and displaying indigenous plants, we now also need to highlight the plant's threatened status and what gardeners can do to help save our habitats and plant species.

The challenge in working for SANBI is the very onerous systems we have to adhere to for purchasing and procurement, as well as a lot of HR-related paperwork, such as writing job descriptions, doing performance evaluations, attending meetings, keeping staff records. Because we are a para-statal we follow a lot of the government policies and procedures to the letter. But at the same time, the support in a large organisation such as ours is immense, as is the skills and expert knowledge base. There is always someone knowledgeable or experienced who can assist you or provide you with whatever you need to know. People at SANBI are "in it for the passion, not the pay" we always say!

My future goals are Kirstenbosch-related: just to continue to learn and share that learning, I hope to retire here – a very unusual thing for any professional to say these days. Most people stay 4 to 5 years and then move on – but not me! I believe that I am exactly where I am meant to be. I would like to write a gardener's handbook on South African *Streptocarpus* species and work on establishing a wetland riverine display garden at Kirstenbosch.

I first came across the CHS in 1992 when a fellow horticulture student friend invited me to come along to a Monday night meeting. I enjoyed it so much I decided to join as a student member and I attended many meetings throughout my studies. As a young student the attraction for me was chatting to and spending time amongst all the friendly people, rich in years of gardening experience and knowledge, and I inevitably used to buy some plant treasure after 'bargaining' with Sara at the plant table. Then there were the interesting talks and the specimen table filled with plants I quite often had never seen or heard of before. All of this was, and still is, so wonderful to me.

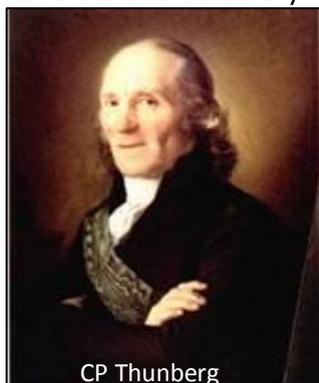


I decided to join CHS again as my children were old enough for me to leave them in my husband's care in the evening, and after Glenda and Lyn enticed me back with requests to do talks and my absolute favourite – to judge at the Flower Shows.

Gardeners are such a wonderful bunch of people – down to earth, literally, bonded by a love of nature and the ability to nurture. I am so proud to be a member of the CHS and am honoured by the opportunity to serve on the committee."

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – FEBRUARY / MARCH 2018

At the UCT Summer School this year there was a series of lectures 'Witness to South African history' to celebrate the centenary of the Van Riebeeck Society of South Africa. One of the lectures, given by Dr John Rourke, was about two significant botanists who visited the Cape in the 18th century. Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828) and Anders Sparrman (1748-1820) arrived within four days of each other in 1772.



CP Thunberg



A Sparrman

Both men were Swedish and studied at the University Uppsala and were students of Carl Linnaeus and so were well qualified to explore and describe the floral kingdom of South Africa.

Linnaeus and a Captain Carl G Ekeberg arranged for Sparrman to travel to the Cape of Good Hope as a naturalist. Soon after his arrival on the 12th April, the 24 year-old Sparrman spent a few days collecting plants and insects in the Cape Town area with Thunberg. Sparrman needed to earn a living and so became the tutor to the children of J F Kirsten of Simon's Town. The Kirsten family later moved to the Alphen near Constantia. His job meant that he could only collect plants in his spare time. He sent examples of plants and insects to Linnaeus. He was not here for long before he was offered a job as assistant naturalist on Captain Cook's second voyage of discovery. He accepted with alacrity.

In 1775 he returned to Cape Town. At first he worked as a doctor to earn money to finance his journey to the interior of the Cape. He travelled extensively, reaching as far as the Great Fish River near Cookhouse. This time he was far more interested in the fauna than the flora. He described everything he saw from the striped field mice, the Aardvark, the Cape buffalo to the hippopotamus. One of the examples he took back to Sweden was a foal of the now extinct Quagga.

In 1785 he published the book for which he is remembered, *A voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, towards the Antarctic polar circle, and round the world: but chiefly into the country of the Hottentots and Caffres, from the year 1772 to 1776* (London 1785, 2 vols). (An edited version of this book has been published by the Van Riebeeck Society). It is the first known personal account of extensive travels through the settled areas of the Cape. It is an accurate account of the territory and its natural history. (Thunberg as we will see got there first but published his book later than Sparrman). Sparrman also showed a keen interest in the indigenous people he met and he greatly increased our knowledge of 18th century society. The journal

reveals that he was concerned for the wellbeing of the local people. In 1779 he also published a rather 'crude and inaccurate' map of the Colony: but it is a first and so remembered.

Here is an extract from the book describing a meeting with the KoiKoi: 'They presented us with milk, and danced at our request; at the same time giving us to understand, that our fame, as being of singular people with plaited hair, as well as flower-collectors and viper-catchers, had reached them long before our arrival... Their country dances [showed] very little either agility or art. While their feet were employed in a kind of stamping and moderately slow movement, every one of them between whiles made several small gentle motions with a little stick,...[This] simplicity ...was equally conspicuous in their singing, the following being all the words used to the tune of one of their country dances ,... *Maijema, Maijema, huh, huh, huh.*'

Carl Peter Thunberg was also sponsored on his voyage to the Cape. He was the surgeon on a D.E.I.C ship on the 16th April 1772. He stayed here for 3 years before sailing for the East. (He had to learn Dutch before being allowed to go there). While he was here, he climbed Table Mountain 15 times and he was the first private visitor to visit the interior. He made 3 journeys: two to the Eastern Cape as far as the Sundays River and one to the Roggeveld, and continued his investigations around Cape Town.

He was a thorough and painstaking collector of plant species He collected over 3100 species of which more than 1000 were new to science. Hence his title as 'The father of South African Botany'. He collected 14 fungi species and 39 lichens; the first significant collections of these groups. Unfortunately his descriptions were not very extensive and he ignored 'substantial taxonomic literature by other botanists describing plants in other parts of the world which related to southern Africa. His book *Flora Capensis*, published in 1813, contains a huge genus list; 30% of species now known. All major plant groups are there. They include *Oxalis*, *Ixia*, *Gladiolus*, *Aloe*, *Erica*, *Morea*, *Restio*, *Hermannia*, *Buchus*, *Drosera*, *Aspalathus* and *Phylica*. He also wrote up on such animals as the Brown Hyena, Blue Duiker, Steenbok and Grysbok.

A quote from Thunberg's journal: 'In many places I observed the land to have been set on fire for the purpose of clearing it... [P]lains here, produce a very high sort of grass which being too coarse a nature, and unfit for cattle, is not consumed, and thus prevents fresh verdure from shooting up; not to mention that it harbours a great number of serpents and beasts of prey...[Many] places were overgrown with bushes [and] were burned quite black, and left standing in this sooty condition for a great length of time afterwards to my great vexation, as well as that of other travelers, who were obliged to pass through them'. Thunberg's journal was published some time after Sparrman's and so it was not realized that he had been the first to describe the interior of the Cape. This journal has also been published by the Van Riebeeck Society. Thunberg was still going strong at 80 – good on him.

Compared to Thunberg, Sparrman described very few plants. One is the *Ekerbergia capensis* (Cape ash) which he named after his sponsor. They are also commemorated in *Thunbergia alata* (Black-eyed Susan), a biographical novel *The Journey of Anders Sparrman* by Per Wästberg, a Sparrman Road and a Thunberg Street in Monte Vista and an Anders Sparrman Pinot Noir wine produced by Strandveld Wineries – as yet untested by me.

I compiled this journal with the help of notes taken by my wife at Dr Rourke's lecture and the following:

S2A3 Biographical Database of southern Africa

www.vanriebeeksociety.co.za/docs/sparrman.htm

www.vanriebeeksociety.co.za/docs/thunberg.htm

NOTICES

Lost: A dessertspoon at our year-end party didn't make it home. This is part of a canteen, so please check your cutlery drawer and let us know if you have a spoon that doesn't belong.

Found: A teaspoon left behind at our year-end party. Is it yours? [Right]

