



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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is given of the 113th AGM of the CHS to be held on Monday, 7 May 2018 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Campground Road, Newlands

Agenda

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM held on Monday, 1 May 2017
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 2017 AGM, the audited Financial Statement and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 28 February 2018 are enclosed/attached. We would appreciate you bringing your copy of these documents to the meeting.

The AGM will be followed by an illustrated talk by Jenny Scarr on the ...

FOUR DAYS EXPLORING PRINCE ALBERT

– an excursion taken by CHS members in September 2017.

NEXT OUTING

Wednesday, 9 May at 14:00: Following up on Ernst van Jaarsveld's talk last month, the next outing is to Babylonstoren. Limited to 15. Entrance fee: R10 which goes towards the farm school. Please RSVP to Glenda by 7 May.

REPORT BACK

Annual Subscriptions and Levies

Subscriptions are now due. If you have not renewed by mid-May, this will be your last newsletter.

Clean Your Indoor Air – Naturally

Last month this article listed air purifying plants. Unfortunately, the common names left some of us wondering what the actual plants were. Janice Anderssen of Home-Dzine has given us the correct names of the plants to which she referred:

Golden Creeper – *Ernodea littoralis* [Ed: could this be an indoor plant?]

Spider Plant – *Chlorophytum comosum* (also known as Hen and Chickens)

Ficus benjamina

Ivy – *Hedera helix* or any indoor species

Dracaena deremensis

Philodendron oxycardium

April Plant Table (suburb and source of water)

Jenny has asked that, where possible, leaves accompany flowers, especially when identification of the plant is required.

EXOTICS:

Rondebosch; only rain:

Antigonon leptopus "Coral Creeper" from Mexico – very waterwise once established. This plant has had almost no water except rainwater this past summer. A climber that has become invasive in the hotter and humid climates – kwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces.

Claremont; surviving on borehole water on Tuesdays and Saturdays, as allowed:

Liriope – liliaceous plant.

INDIGENOUS:

Kirstenhof; wellpoint water:

Barleria – scrambles through shrubs; occupies about 2m x 2m; good for a groundcover.

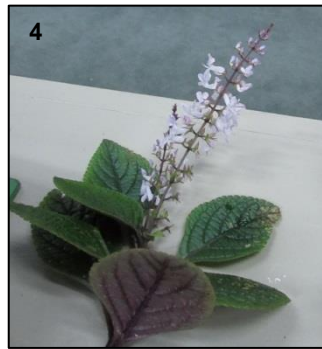
Tecomaria (1) – possibly because of the good watering, this is not flowering as well as the other in Rondebosch. This has gone into vegetative growth. Loved by sunbirds.

Leonotis

A selection of *Plectranthus* – *P elaphie*, *P fruticosus* "James" (2), *P ciliatus* "Drege"(4), an unusual *P Ecklonii*, *P petiolaris*, *P fruticosus* (3), *P ambiguous* – all need moisture as they are summer rainfall plants.

Rondebosch; only rain:

Tecomaria (5) – flowering profusely.



Kirstenhof; only rain:

Leonotis leonorus (6) – growing on a Council green belt garden.

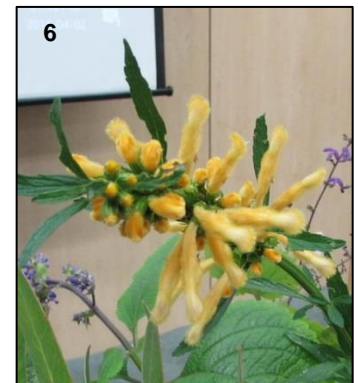
Pinelands; only rain:

Protea "Pink Ice" (*P compacta* x *P susannae*) – hardiest of the Proteas; wind tolerant; full sun; free draining neutral/alkaline soil.

Hybrids will cope with difficult conditions. This hybrid vigour enables the plants to survive where species are notoriously difficult unless you have exactly the right conditions for them.

Betty's Bay; only rain:

Protea repens (7) – cream and pink (sugar bush) and *P compacta* (7 centre) – grown from seed.



JENNY'S CHOICE FOR APRIL

EXOTIC	INDIGENOUS
<p>Constantia; a weekly splash of borehole water as hose is pulled round to the roses: David's <i>Pereskia aculeata</i> "Barbados Gooseberry", a cactus from Brazil and Mexico; battles for space with a <i>Barleria</i>.</p> 	<p>Kirstenhof; wellpoint water: Nicola's <i>Justicia petiolaris</i> – watered once a week; hardy.</p> 

More about the *Pereskia*, courtesy of <https://worldofsucculents.com/how-to-grow-and-care-for-pereskia/>

“These tropical cacti, often referred to as leaf cacti, are quite unusual and in fact bear many characteristics unlike any other plants in their family. Instead, *Pereskia* plants often look more like plants from other genera; for instance, they often have large, bright green leaves and long stems, two characteristics uncommon among cacti. There’s also lots of diversity among leaf cacti, in growth habit and preferred treatment.

Nonetheless, *Pereskias* qualify as cacti because of their spines which develop from aureoles, a distinctive characteristic of the cactus family. They can be divided into *Leuenbergerias* and *Pereskias*, and *Pereskias* are usually found in tropical areas while *Leuenbergerias* are found farther north. Many of these plants have lovely foliage; for instance, *Pereskia grandifolia*, which is used by native Brazilians for its medicinal properties, has large pinkish flowers that develop from the end of dense inflorescences.

They’re often used as flowering hedges, and those varieties that carry edible fruits, like *Pereskia aculeata*, are also grown to be eaten. Many plants in the *Pereskia* genus are rare, and there’s so much diversity within the genus that it’s difficult to generalize these plant’s characteristics, but *Pereskia* is without a doubt one of the most interesting and unusual genera of cacti.

Growing Conditions

Light: Lots of direct sunlight every day; like all cacti, *Pereskias* will benefit from tons of light exposure.

Water: Err on the side of underwatering rather than overwatering. They can be watered fairly infrequently and survive.

Temperature: There’s some variance depending on the species’ place of origin, but these are generally tropical plants that require warm temperatures.

Soil: Use a typical cactus potting soil that contains some organic material, and make sure their drainage is good to avoid damaging the roots.

Fertilizer: Feed regularly with a balanced, water-soluble cactus fertilizer to increase their propensity to bloom.”

CHS Library

Our library has been in operation for a year. Peter Henshall, who has catalogued each and every book, deserves our thanks. We now have two mobile book shelves which are sagging under the weight of the books. In order to protect them on the open shelves, Susan made a lovely bright green cover (yes, it’s part of our “corporate” colour), while the other shelves are in a locked cupboard in CHS green.

The library is open before and after monthly meetings for you to return or borrow books until the next monthly meeting. Come and browse through the wide selection of titles we have acquired.



Far left: Peter and the books

Left: Peter, Susan and Errol with the two library trolleys, ready for packing away.

WELCOME ...

... to another new member, Helen Salamon. We hope her stay with the CHS will be a long one.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

Susan Armstrong has been a member of the CHS for more than 15 years and in 2016 was the most recent addition to the CHS Committee.

"Growing up on the mountain above Simonstown – in the grounds of the Naval Signal School where Just Nuisance's grave is situated – I developed a love of all things to do with nature.

My mother was a keen gardener, and I remember the battle she had at our first little cottage. There she started a narrow strip of garden above a rocky drop. As this began to flourish there would be cries of woe in the morning as it had all but disappeared overnight, eaten by the Dassies (*Hyrax*) who had discovered it.

We soon moved to a bigger house with plenty of space to make a wonderful garden. Surrounding a patch of lawn, overlooking the bay, she developed beds full of indigenous plants, realising that this was the way to go. This was in the late '50s, early '60s. With seeds obtained from Kirstenbosch, the spring beds were always delightful, with Namaqualand daisies, Blue flax etc. and numerous bulbs. During this time I enjoyed helping when I could. Besides the garden, we were surrounded by the wonderful mountainside where we could take walks, identifying the variety of plants seen. I particularly remember the displays of 1000s of pink *Watsonias* which sprang up after a fire, and of course the *Ericas*, *Proteas*, and many other species which were seen from year to year, and always a joy to find and name. Towards the end of this time I studied to become a Pre-school teacher, and our garden as well as the mountain provided a plentiful supply of interesting items for my Nature Tables.



In my own homes I have always maintained or established little gardens, including one in Oranjemund, an oasis in the desert, where we had way more water than in Cape Town at the moment. It is only in my present home of 27 years that I have developed my own garden, using mostly indigenous plants, and now discovering which of these are truly waterwise. A collector by nature, I now have 3 metal racks overflowing with succulents. Some of these will soon move into a bed I have constructed in the middle of my non-lawn!

I was invited to join the CHS a number of years ago by Barbara Hey, and assisted her with the teas for quite a while. The varied talks, assisting at shows, and sharing with other members has been a source of inspiration over the years.

I cannot imagine life without a garden to potter in. Even if it is a mess at times, there is always some little wonder to discover."

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER –APRIL / MAY 2018

The last few months, I have been feeling grumpy about our garden. I just knocked off. It is already the middle of April and we still had the Berg wind blowing with the temperature reaching 31 degrees. I found this quote which exactly expressed my feelings 'I've had enough of gardening – I'm about ready to throw in the trowel.' **Anon.**

I seem to be up, down, back, forth with the watering can. I know that one of the advantages of gardening is the exercise that it provides, but this is enough. To make matters worse, getting down on my hands and knees has grown more difficult with the knees creaking and the back aching. As **Charles Dudley Warner** describes it in *My Summer in the Garden (1871)* 'What a man needs is a cast-iron back, with a hinge in it.'

Gardening is supposed to be communing with nature, satisfying one's emotional needs by growing things. I'm afraid this summer a large number of favourite plants have died in the drought. One particular favourite was the *Gnidia* with its lovely scented flowers. The pests have also overwhelmed many weak plants. **Richard Arkell** writes:

Of every single garden pest,
I think I hate the Green Fly best.
My hate for him is stern and strong:
I've hated him both loud and long.
Since first I met him in the spring
I've hated him like anything.

Working with the earth in one's garden is supposed to enrich one's soul. All I get is dirt under my nails that has become an embarrassment as it won't go away. I have tried putting soap under my nails but to no avail. The dirt continues to clog up my nails like glue.

Then today the rains came! The gutters were flowing. The plants are happily dripping with water. The great outdoors beckoned once more. No plants = no life. I'll prepare the beds and plant the local bulbs I bought last month. They are: *Ornithogalum thrysoides*, *Babiana*, *Lachenalia*, *Albuca* and *Gladiolus alatus*. Bulbs can be forgiving plants. I thought the Pink Nerine (*Nerine humilis* – right) which is indigenous to the Western Cape had died but it surprised us by flowering late this year – and before the rain.



I also bought seed packets with enticing titles like 'Namaqualand Flower Scatterings' and 'Indigenous Garden Mix'. These flowers will, one hopes, cover the bare patches caused by the drought for as **Caroline Wells** writes in *One Firm Faith*:

I don't believe the half I hear,
Nor the quarter of what I see!
But I have one faith, sublime and true,
That nothing can shake or slay;
Each spring I firmly believe anew
All the seed packages say!

I end this month with a wonderfully encouraging remark I overheard the other week when I was at a local nursery. A mother and her young son passed the succulent stand and she said: "Look Jonathan, our *Echeverias* (below)." – a gardener of the future?



I used the following books:

Briers, Richard *A little light weeding*

Metcalf, Fred (Compiler) *The Penguin dictionary of modern humorous quotations*

HOUSE RULES

For the benefit of both new and long-standing members alike, here are some unwritten rules:

NAME BADGES: The majority of our members have CHS name badges and we ask that they be worn to meetings, outings, and when working at the Plant Sale. Not all members know "who's who in the zoo" but others would like to get to put a name with a face. Wearing a badge is also a way of identifying who "belongs", especially if we don't see you too often!

OUTINGS: Cherise Viljoen, our Outings Convenor, spends hours organising the hosts and hostesses who graciously open their gardens to us. Often we are offered refreshment – at no cost – or parking is limited, or the garden is just small and therefore, a limit is stipulated. It is discourteous to exceed the requested limit. For this reason we ask that you book your place for outings. Please do not "book" a place for your CHS friend without consulting them. Be sure they are free to attend. We have to be fair to all members – no favouritism – so, it's a case of first come, first served.

You will always be given directions to the garden, and a time to meet, prior to the visit. If you've booked and have not received any notification, please enquire.

Please try and get there on time (unless we know beforehand that you'll arrive later) so the host(ess) is not inconvenienced by having to constantly open the gate once the "tour" has started.

Always on our best behaviour, please wait for an invitation to help yourself to snippets of interesting plants or to view the interior of the house, some of which are quite magnificent.

Your understanding, co-operation and friendliness is always appreciated.

POND FOR SALE

Despite the water restrictions, it is still wonderful to have a water feature in the garden. A glass fibre pool – 90 cm in diameter and 28 cm deep – is available for the best cash offer. Call Hilda Cameron on 021-532-2470 if you are interested in making an offer.

IN MEMORIAM

ROD AND RACHEL SAUNDERS

Two tributes from CHS members who were closely involved with them:

"It has been over two months since there was any communication from Rachel and Rod, yet the hope was always there that they would be coming home.

We can, however, reminisce on happier times. They travelled regularly, collecting seeds for their business, Silverhill Seeds, and there was always excitement on their return when they showed us photos of what they had found. Rachel was generous in keeping horticultural students happy, with speedy make up and delivery of their orders – and putting in extra seeds for which they didn't have to pay. She also made up orders of seeds for weddings or a child's project for school.

Rod had an extensive knowledge and ability to identify specimens that were brought in. He was the sorter and cleaner of seeds, but above all, he was the Master Chef for the staff's Christmas lunch.

Rod and Rachel are sorely missed by friends and their clients around the world."

Andrea Benn and Cherrie Klesser

"Through our membership of IBSA (Indigenous Bulb Association of South Africa) we have known Rod and Rachel Saunders for over ten years. Rod is a past Chairman of IBSA and has been Vice- Chairman for many years while Rachel has been the Treasurer for all that time and also the Editor of the annual IBSA Bulletin.

But they have been far more than that! On outings to the Roggeveld around Middelpoos and the Hantamberg they were always to the fore helping to identify our 'finds' with such wisdom and warmth. We have all learnt so much from them.

Their willingness to speak at the IBSA Symposia and at local meetings, including CHS, have enriched us with their enthusiasm and knowledge especially as they tracked down every SA species of *Gladiolus* in preparation for their next book.

We are sure the Tissue Culture Nursery will continue producing the rare plants and hope that Silverhill Seeds will also find someone to run what has been an invaluable source of seeds to enthusiasts worldwide. They have been very highly respected internationally and have been invited to address many international bodies. Rod worked for many years at Kirstenbosch and those who were at our last meeting will remember how warmly Ernst van Jaarsveld spoke about his time working under Rod and how much he had learnt from him.

The Pacific Bulb Society has a Tributes Page if you are interested in learning more about them.

We have been shocked and saddened at the news of their disappearance and want to pay due tribute to their invaluable work with Southern African plants. The botanical world will be all the poorer without them."

Errol and Jenny Scarr