



# CHS NEWS

FEBRUARY 2014

Post: 22 Rustenburg, Pinelands, 7405 | Tel: 021-531-5713 | Fax: 086-514-0998  
Email: [info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za](mailto:info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za) | [www.capehorticulturalsociety.co.za](http://www.capehorticulturalsociety.co.za)

## MONTHLY MEETING

**Mon, 3 March 2014 at 20:00** at The Athenaeum, Newlands  
(R8 for members and R20 for visitors)

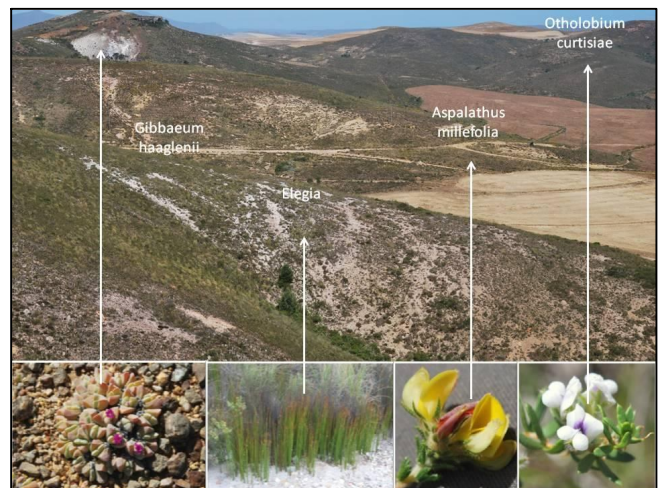
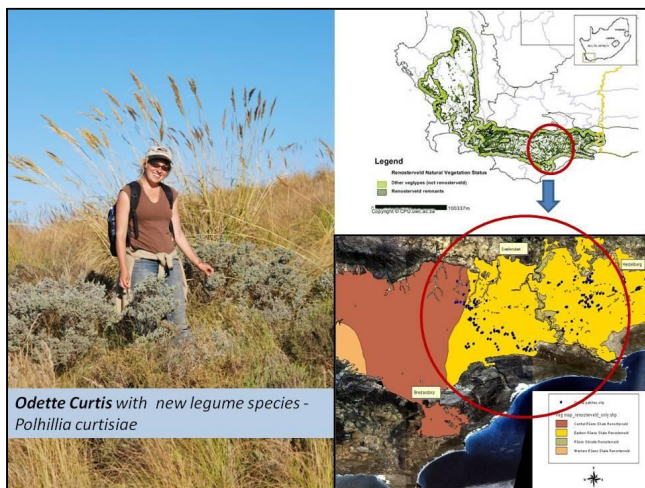
### THE OVERBERG RENOSTERVELD – GOING, GOING ..... NOT QUITE GONE YET

by Prof. Charles Stirton

“Renosterveld is a unique ecosystem found within the Fynbos Biome of South Africa, which contains the highest diversity of bulbous plants in earth, as well as hundreds of plants that are found nowhere else on the globe. However, with most renosterveld having been converted to farmland, it is a Critically Endangered habitat, on the brink of extinction. The Overberg Renosterveld has almost disappeared and exists in fragments scattered across a vast expanse of wheat lands. Lowland habitats in the Overberg are severely threatened, poorly known, global botanical hotspots, in dire need of conservation attention.

In this talk I will show some of the spectacular plant diversity that still exists, some of the new species described published in 2013 and also the unique Overberg Quartzveld which we have described recently, and discuss the challenges that lie ahead. I will talk about the work of the newly created Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust and the work it is doing to purchase for prosperity and help manage the last remaining fragments of Overberg renosterveld as well as the work it is doing with local communities, new generation and established farmers, and non-farming landowners to help them manage what is left more effectively. The talk will be fully illustrated with many localities, species, and habitats you will never have seen before. Renosterveld as you have never seen it before and rather more exciting than the grey blandness many think it is.”

It has been reported that the WWF have recently purchased 2,000 acres in the Quartzite fynbos area for Conservation!



NB: We will also be presenting our Annual Book Prizes to four students from the Horticulture Department at CPUT (Cape Peninsula University of Technology).

## NEXT OUTING

**Thursday, 13 March at 10:00:** The Garden Manager will take you on a tour of the 6ha gardens of the Delaire Graff Estate in Stellenbosch. The planting is both formal and informal and is 90% indigenous. Limited to 30 members. RSVP to Glenda by 10 March.

The winery and restaurant will be open. Check the times if you are interested.

**President:** Anne Bean, **Chairman:** Michael Tuffin, **Hon Treasurer:** Henry Diesveld, **Hon Secretary:** Glenda Thorpe

# CHS NEWS

FEBRUARY 2014

2

## SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

The question of raising subscriptions was discussed at the last committee meeting as a loss was predicted for the 2013/14 financial year. This was caused by the approximately R6300 loss at the annual Spring Show (poor attendance due to the foul weather). The committee decided that the loss would be covered by the Society's accumulated funds and that subscriptions would not be raised for 2014/15.

As costs are increasing all the time, an increase is a distinct possibility for 2015/16.

There are, however, a number of ways that members can help reduce these increased costs. A major unnecessary cost is the printing and posting of the monthly newsletters to members who have e-mail facilities. Each printed and posted newsletter costs R5.80 per member, or R64 a year. There are about 48 members who have the newsletter delivered by snail-mail, costing nearly R3000 a year. Of those 48 members, a substantial number do have e-mail facilities and the committee appeals to them to use this resource.

Members can also help the Society reduce its banking charges by paying their subscriptions directly by EFT or by cash/cheque handed in at the monthly meeting and to avoid banking cash or cheques directly into the Society's account. The latter two options cost the Society R4 and R14 in additional bank charges.

For your interest, the cost to CHS for collecting R120 subs is as follows, from lowest to highest.

1. Direct banking by EFT = R0.00
2. Cheques handed in at a monthly meeting or received by post and bulk banked by Treasurer = R1.20
3. Cash handed in at monthly meetings and bulk banked by Treasurer = R1.76
4. Cash banked directly by an individual member into CHS account = R5.76
5. Cheque banked directly by an individual member into CHS account = R15.00

In order to reduce unnecessary bank charges, members are requested to keep the above in mind and to avoid options 4 and 5. If that is unavoidable, it would be appreciated if you would please add R4.00 to your amount banked for option 4 and R14.00 to your amount banked for option 5.

Henry Diesveld – Treasurer

That said, your Subscription Renewal Form for the 2014/15 year is being sent separately. Please remember that this form needs to be completed, whether your personal details have changed or not, and returned with your cash/cheque payment. If you do an EFT, please see that the form is either faxed or e-mailed to the Membership Secretary (details top of page 1). EFT payments without a reference cannot be correctly allocated.

## REPORT BACK

### February Plant Table:

Members brought in quite an array from their gardens, which included veggies (more about these on page 3), *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, *Stapelia gigantea* (not quite ready to open), *Gardenia thunbergia*, (pictured below), as well



as *Bauhinia tomentosa*, *Crinum moorei*, *Iris sibirica* and *Echevaria*.

---

“There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling.” - *Mirabel Osler*

---

# CHS NEWS

FEBRUARY 2014

3

## WELCOME TO ...

... Pierre Rossouw, Talitha Cherry and Gillian Knight who have already signed up this year. We wish them many years of gardening pleasure.

## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Not quite a "collector", as this collection gets consumed, but Andrea Benn produces the most superb vegetables and won the Edna Minnitt Trophy last year for the "Best Exhibit in Classes 200 – 207", which is for veg and fruit. This is what she has to say:

"My veg interest started many years ago. The Farmer's Weekly had a series of articles on mini plot veg growing where one had 2 long beds – 1½ m wide & 6m long and they gave seasons for planting and crop rotation. An American booklet "Organic Gardening" got me going (dated in the 1970s, I still have several copies). I have a feeling they were a "throw out" by a Horties member ages ago.



My collection at our meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was as follows:

(Left) Pumpkin: Hokkaidu. Seed from Soil for Life (behind Waldorf School)  
Beans: Selma Zebra Climbing. Heritage collection. Thompson & Morgan (UK seed merchants)  
Cucumber: Marketmore. Outdoor variety (peel). Suttons.  
Gem Squash: Hybrid. Star 8001. Starke Ayres  
Hybrid Squash: Patty Pan Mix. Starke Ayres

(Right) Zucchini: Seed from Peru.  
Onion: seedling. Harts Nursery  
Tomatoes (baby plum): Rainbow blend. F1 Hybrid. Thompson & Morgan  
Beefsteak Tomato: Local seed.

Most of these summer veggies I sow the seed in seed trays at the end of winter – July/August but, being cold outside, they are moved about indoors at sunny windows. It does make a good talking point.

I transplant into larger 6-packs when needed – more lounge space needed! When warmer outside, October-ish, they are planted out.

I use a mix of worm compost, sea weed, soil mix in pots and small garden beds. I don't have space for a compost heap but all shredded green stuff is bagged, kept damp, turned & used as a thick mulch. The heat is a challenge.

Neighbours and family enjoy the spoils and I haven't shopped for veg since Dec.

I will shortly be sowing winter "soup" veggies like leeks, Cauli, broccoli, turnip, peas and maybe carrots (but they don't like clay), spinach or swiss chard. Tomatoes from now will be frozen.

Having said all that, it does become a challenge as to what comes up. As we live in a cluster, watering from a borehole is limited to 2 days a week. Our borehole water is pure ... I drink it!"

## COMPANION PLANTING

[Extract from Starke Ayres Garden Centre Newsletter – [www.starkeayresgc.co.za](http://www.starkeayresgc.co.za)]

Before synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, gardeners and farmers had to rely on natural growing methods to produce healthy plants. In natural conditions, plants grow in close communities with a number of different species existing side by side.

Planting different crops/plants near each other provides specific benefits, assuming the plants assist each other in nutrient uptake, pest control, pollination and overall enhanced productivity.

When used together with their organic gardening methods, companion planting can eradicate pests and diseases as well as making a marked difference in the soil.

Many plants have natural substances in their roots, flowers or leaves that repel or attract insects. They are also able to enhance or inhibit the growth of plants situated nearby.

By using the companion planting philosophy, one can chase away harmful insects while encouraging the beneficial ones to stay. There are no firm rules to companion planting and gardeners are encouraged to experiment with combinations to discover what works for their gardens.

Companion planting may mean your garden does not look as tidy as it "ought" to, but the advantages far outweigh what may be seen as the "chaos" of a cottage-style garden.

### Here are a few examples to get you started:

- ❖ **Nasturtiums** attract caterpillars. Plant them close to cabbages and lettuces and they will act as a trap-crop and protect the cabbage and lettuce.
- ❖ **Marigolds** deter aphids and their roots cleanse the soil by deterring nematodes.
- ❖ **Comfrey** benefits all plants and when the leaves are added to compost heaps the breaking down process is speeded up.
- ❖ **Marjoram** scent confuses pests.
- ❖ **Mint** controls aphids around **tomatoes**.
- ❖ **Parsley** attracts bees to **tomatoes**.
- ❖ **Lettuce** planted between **corn** plants gets shade in the hot afternoons.
- ❖ **Marigolds** and **Petunias** help to repel beetles on **bean** plants. **Summer savoury** helps **beans** grow sturdy and strong.
- ❖ **Rosemary** and **sage** repel cabbage butterfly. **Celery** helps to control grubs on **cabbage**.
- ❖ The chemical secreted by **dill** improves the health of **carrots**. **Sage** and **onions** help to repel carrot fly.
- ❖ **Bush beans** and **celery** help each other to grow better.
- ❖ **Leeks** grow better when planted near **celery** and **onions**.
- ❖ **Radishes** and **beans** help each other to grow better.
- ❖ **Lettuce** makes **radishes** more tasty.
- ❖ **Basil** improves growth and flavour of **tomatoes**. It repels thrips, flies and mosquitoes.
- ❖ **Beans** enrich the soil with nitrogen drawn from the air. They are great with **carrots**, **cabbage**, **beetroot** and **cucumber**. They are not good with **onions** and **garlic**.
- ❖ **Beetroot** adds minerals to the soil, especially magnesium. They grow well with **lettuce**, **onions** and **cabbage**.
- ❖ **Chives** improve the growth of **carrots** and **tomatoes** and help keep aphids away from **tomatoes** and **sunflowers**.
- ❖ **Mexican marigolds** deter nematodes found in the soil, as well as chasing away whitefly from **tomatoes**. However, **beans** and **cabbage** don't do well around marigolds.
- ❖ **Peppermint** repels white cabbage moth and aphids. Bees love the flowers.
- ❖ Besides being pretty when in flower and attracting good bugs, **sage** is good around **broccoli**, **cauliflower**, **rosemary** and **carrots**, chasing away white cabbage moth. It does well with **cucumbers** or **onions**.
- ❖ **Yarrow** leaves added to compost heaps speed up decomposition.

However, certain plants inhibit growth of its companion and even itself. Below is a more extensive list of good and bad combinations:

- Beans:** Good with Corn, Carrots, Strawberries  
Bad with Tomatoes, Onions, Broccoli
- Broccoli:** Good with Geraniums, Borage, Rosemary  
Bad with Tomatoes, Mustard
- Tomatoes:** Good with Roses, Peppers, Asparagus  
Bad with Potatoes, Cabbage, Rosemary, Peas
- Basil:** Good with Tomato, Peppers, Oregano, Petunias  
Bad with Rue, Sage

# CHS NEWS

FEBRUARY 2014

5

<b>Lettuce:</b>	Good with Beans, Carrots Bad with Celery, Parsley, Cabbage The mint family (Sage, Hyssop, etc.) repels slugs that are attracted to lettuce
<b>Potato:</b>	Good with Horseradish Bad with Sunflowers, Tomatoes Horseradish increases disease resistance of Potatoes
<b>Borage:</b>	Good with almost everything - it is the magic bullet of companion plants
<b>Coriander:</b>	Good with Spinach It repels Aphids
<b>Rosemary:</b>	Good with Sage, Carrots, Beans It deters Cabbage flies and repels many bean parasites
<b>Spearmint:</b>	Controls Ants, Aphids
<b>Marigolds:</b>	Repels nematodes.

**If this all seems a bit intense, just refer to the following general combinations:**

General **GOOD** combinations:

*Leek and celery; Lettuce and carrots; Sage and cabbage; Parsley and tomato; Beans and potatoes*

General **BAD** combinations:

*Beans and garlic; Mint and parsley; Wormwood with anything; Fennel with beans or tomatoes; Sunflower with any vegetable, except squash.*

## CLOUDS OF BUTTERFLIES

[Extract from *Go South Online, TimesLIVE – Sapa; 12 January 2014*]



*Belenois aurota* (Brown-veined white) male, Great Saltpan. (Photo Steve Woodhall © – Biodiversity Explorer)

**"Swarms of white butterflies have descended on Johannesburg during their annual migration from South Africa's west coast to Madagascar, lepidopterist Earle Whiteley said on Saturday.**

Whiteley, a director of Conservation of Butterflies in SA, said that the spectacle was an annual event, but that the clouds of *Belenois aurota*, commonly known as brown-veined white butterflies, did not always follow exactly the same route.

"They start hatching along the entire coast from Cape Town towards Namibia, then migrate inland in a north-easterly direction."

Whiteley said that the initial batch of butterflies were joined by more and more along their migratory route, over the Eastern Cape, which had now reached Gauteng.

The butterflies would then head toward Mozambique before crossing the sea to Madagascar.

"As they are going further north, some die and more join. Eventually, there are massive clouds of butterflies, reaching up to a kilometre into the air."

Along the route, the female butterflies laid eggs, which would begin the life cycle of the next generation.

The timing of the migration was dependant on weather conditions, but usually ran from late November to mid-February. The brown-veined white butterflies were often joined by other butterflies of the same Pieridae family, which had shades of yellow or orange in their colouration.

The butterflies travelled from sunrise to dusk and needed to replenish themselves with nectar every 20 minutes or risk dying from dehydration. They favoured long grass and were particularly attracted to grass nectar, Whiteley said.

The butterflies roost overnight, and it was possible to tell whether a butterfly was awake or asleep by looking at their feelers. "If the feelers are touching, then they are sleeping."

Whiteley was working towards establishing the Gauteng Butterfly Sanctuary, which is expected to open in December."

# CHS NEWS

---

FEBRUARY 2014

6

## **CARBON GARDENING**

[Extract from Starke Ayres' January 2014 newsletter – [www.starkeyayresgc.co.za](http://www.starkeyayresgc.co.za)]

Carbon gardening is about gardening in a way that understands the carbon footprint that is associated with various gardening products. In this way, gardening can become carbon neutral or even carbon negative.

The aim of carbon gardening is therefore not only to plant species that are effective at capturing and storing carbon, but to recover organic materials that would otherwise become waste and end up in landfills. Organic materials that end up in landfills decompose in a way that generates gas, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

Carbon gardening encourages the practice of gardening in such a way that it reduces the carbon footprint. This is done by capturing and storing carbon within the garden which offsets the carbon that is being released into our atmosphere on a constant basis.

Carbon gardening products that can offset carbon in your garden are composts, mulches and soil conditioners. These products provide your garden with vital nutrients, storing carbon in an environmentally friendly way. They avoid the need for non-organic fertilizers and pesticides, as well as diverting these harmful components from landfill sites.

Here are some other green tips:

- Use plants that are indigenous to your area
- Plant trees – they absorb and store carbon dioxide
- Grow your own produce – this reduces carbon emissions and chemicals produced by large businesses and farms
- Use natural pesticides
- Remove weeds as soon as they occur
- Use environmentally safe cleaning products so you can recycle waste water on the garden
- Use slow growing, drought tolerant lawn varieties
- Use recycled or artificial stone
- Source all wooden products from plantations
- Install a rainwater tank.

## **ITEMS OF INTEREST**

- ⊗ **Lost Property:** A Stork cake lifter was left behind at the December party. If it belongs to you, please call Melanie (021-788-2840).
- ⊗ **Indigenous Cactus:** Last month it was reported that there are no indigenous cacti in this country. Correction: there is, in actual fact, **one species** found in Pondoland – *Rhipsalis baccifera*, an epiphytic one.
- ⊗ **Urban Eco Life Electronic Magazine:** Subscription to this bi-monthly e-magazine is absolutely free from <http://www.wildworldbooks.com/> Sign up on their Home page by clicking the Subscription link below the Urban Eco Life cover – the rest is self-explanatory.

## **DATES TO DIARISE**

- ❖ **April Outing:** Arderne Gardens. Date to be confirmed.
- ❖ **Rare Plant Fair:** Sat, 15 Mar at Rustenberg Wines, Stellenbosch, from 09:30 to 14:30. Entrance fee: R10. Enquiries: 078-021-2101 / 021-844-0154.
- ❖ **BotSoc Kirstenbosch Garden Fair:** Sat, 12 Apr from 09:00 to 15:00 and Sun, 13 Apr from 09:00 to 13:00 at the Stone Cottages.

**NB:** We will have a table there to promote the CHS and another 4 members are needed to fill the time slots. Please let Glenda know if you are able to do a 2-hour duty some time over this weekend.

(Photographs: Charles Stirton, Andrew Thorpe, Google Images)