



# CHS NEWS

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AUGUST 2014

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## MONTHLY MEETING

**Mon, 1 September 2014 at 20:00** at The Athenaeum, Newlands  
(R8 for members and R20 for visitors)

James Fisk, a qualified horticulturist, has been in the Industry for 25 years. He is particularly known for his interest in bulbous plants and specialises in a range of these, including Agapanthus, Cannas, Daylilies and Irises. His Pink Geranium Nursery was established 23 years ago and is based outside Stellenbosch. This includes a retail Nursery with a wholesale division, as well as Landscape Design. One of his projects was to landscape the Hotel Verde, which has an eco pool, living wall and green roof. The subject of James' talk will be

*Landscaping the greenest hotel in Africa*

## NEXT OUTING

**Sat, 30 August at 15:00:** Visit the gardens of two CHS members in Lakeside – the Manns (details on this garden in the July CHS News) and Langley.

Both are more than 50% indigenous and both are on the side of the mountain. There is also an adopted patch of adjacent Council-owned land that is 90% indigenous.

Limited to 20 members. There is still space so please let Glenda have your name by no later than 28 August.

## REPORT BACK

### *Visit to Vera School for Autistic Learners*

We had an interesting talk by the Principal while we enjoyed coffee with muffins and sandwiches, which they had made in their demonstration kitchen – even making the bread.

Cecil (the Principal) and Anita (the Fundraiser) Reed, plus others, will spend their next holidays stirring a bath of Christmas Pudding ingredients. This is their main source of funds and R35 000,00 was made last year – their third share of the total raised. Perhaps you can support this too?

Anita then took us on a walkabout around their extensive grounds. They have worked very hard, with limited resources, and their lack of knowledge was made up for by their enthusiasm to improve the grounds. Cecil and Anita have total dedication to the school and its work and we all left feeling not a little humbled by what they are achieving there and that we could and should do more to help them.

Our member, Isabella, presented them with an *Ekebergia capensis* (Cape Ash) that she had grown.



*Left: The newly laid path and beginnings of a garden in early 2013.*

*Right: The same area today.*



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## August Plant Table:

Left to right – top:  
*Agathosma glabrata*,  
*Coleonema pulchellum* – a new cultivar with much larger flowers;  
*Veltheimia* “Lemon Flame” – this form is much stronger and sturdier than the pink. Look at the bulb to see what colour flower you will get, as the pigmentation goes right through the plant.



Bottom: *Clivia gardenii* x *miniata* – 7 years old. This is the 3rd time it's flowered.

Other specimens brought in: *Chasmanthe floribunda* (orange) and the variety *Ducketii* (yellow); *Sparaxis grandiflora acutiloba*; *Lachenalia splendida* and *L aloides*

The *Kalanchoe delagoensis* reported on in the July CHS News has been regarded by some as invasive and that it was on the “hit list”. The Invasive Aliens unit says that NO *Kalanchoe* species are listed as invasive plants.



## FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

### 6/7 September 2014 – Alphen Centre, Constantia:

The CHS Spring Flower Show is an extremely important event on our calendar – it gives us a chance to exhibit and show the public what can be achieved in our gardens. To do this, we need as many entries as possible. If you haven't entered anything before – now's the time to start. It isn't difficult and there are always people to help you stage your entries. There are also lovely prizes to be won. If you have exhibited before, thank you for supporting the CHS Show and we look forward to lots more, please!

We could do with a few more posters up for the week before the show; so, if your area could handle some, please let me know.

Also, we still require people for gate duty, on both days – please let me know if you're able to help.

Attached is a flyer (two to a page): it would help enormously if you could print this out and distribute the flyers as widely as possible.

Information on the talks and stalls can be found on page 6.

Show Manager, Rod Stewart (082 556 6071 / 021 788 2840)

## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

This collection has won prizes at our flower shows. Read all about Lyn McCallum's **Abutilons – a 40 year love-affair...**

“These shrubs, also known as Chinese Lanterns, can grow into small trees, are long lived, and make wonderful garden subjects. I have had an *Abutilon pictum* in my garden for over 40 years! It has survived a devastating cut back by an over enthusiastic gardener, stood up to severe winter gales and constant buffeting by summer south-easters and nutritional competition from a mulberry tree and several hydrangeas.

Abutilons flower in our warm Peninsula climate almost all the year round, giving colour to the garden throughout the year. They need compost enriched soil and require a fair amount of water, but their generous flowering makes all this worthwhile. The shrubs should be pruned regularly, if you can bear to do this to a plant still bearing flowers! This helps to keep its growth neat and compact. They grow and flower best in dappled shade or morning sun and also make good container subjects.



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I feed my Abutilons twice a year – in Spring, with Neutrog Rapid Raiser or Talborne Organic 3:1:5 and in Autumn, with Neutrog Bounce Back and ensure that there is a layer of mulch around the root area at all times.

Abutilons have a lax, willowy growth habit and drooping lantern-like flowers which come in white, as well as shades of red, orange, pink and yellow. The leaves are palmate with mainly three lobes and some are attractively variegated. There are many hybrids available – I usually buy from Jenny Ferreira at Klein Optenhorst in Wellington. She also has one of the species Abutilons *Abutilon megapotanicum*, (previous page) as well as a very attractive cultivar Abutilon “Kentish Belle” – both small, scrambling shrubs that love to twine themselves amongst other plants.



Recently, to my delight, I discovered an indigenous Abutilon – *Abutilon sonneratianum* (right) at the Kirstenbosch nursery. Occurring naturally in most provinces of South Africa, including the Western Cape, this perennial sub-shrub has butter yellow flowers most of the year, opening in the afternoons. It also has unusual and ornamental seed pods. It prefers to grow in semi shade and in my garden it has sown itself fairly freely, unlike the exotic Abutilons.

Abutilons are fairly successful plants from which to take slips. Spring is the best time. I try to choose slim, semi-hardwood twigs or thin branches – preferably without flowers or buds – and cut the stem just below a node, to about 10cm. Trim off excess leaves and put into sandy soil and water well. Keep in the shade and don't let the slips dry out completely. It is quite a long slow process, with slips that do take, being ready for potting on after about 6 months.

Unfortunately, Abutilons do not enjoy being cut and put into a vase – they droop after about 12 hours, some even earlier than that, but the plants make up for this disadvantage by the way they flower constantly in the garden.”

*Gorgeous pink hybrid*



*Beautiful yellow hybrid*



## **IN MEMORIAM**

Many who went on CHS outings will remember the grandfather always attending to his grandson, Dean. Sadly, Jac van Schoor passed away last month. Our condolences to Talitha and Dean on their loss.

Well known succulent grower and prizewinner, Anne McKenzie, also passed away last month – 5 days before her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday. Apart from her prowess in running and cycling, she was an excellent plantswoman and grew wonderful plants, especially succulents. She joined the CHS in 1982 and according to our records she won her first trophy in 1991 for the Best Exhibit in the Indigenous Section. She may not have always been awarded a trophy, although there were quite a number over the years, but she certainly won many First Prize certificates.

Our condolences go to her two sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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## ***A GARDENER'S DILEMMA: Caterpillars – to kill or not to kill?***

PART 2:

The **Cape Lawn Moth**, a small, inconspicuous brown/gray moth, lays her eggs in bunches on lawns. They hatch out into small green/brown caterpillars which feed on the lawn "thatch" at ground level. Water a patch of your lawn with a solution of Sunlight Liquid – if the caterpillars are there, they will come to the surface. Flocks of European Starlings and Hadedas poking their beaks busily into your lawn and obviously enjoying what they catch, is also a sure sign that the lawn is being devoured by lawn caterpillars! To rid yourself of these little pests, sprinkle the lawn lightly with Omo, water in well, wait a few minutes for the caterpillars to struggle to the surface and then gather them up by hand. (Omo, being a powder, is easier to use than lugging watering cans with a Sunlight Liquid solution around!)

Other caterpillars that moths give us are the Semi-looper and the Boll Worm.

The blue-green **semi-looper** adult is a smallish brown and yellow moth. The caterpillars eat a variety of garden plants, beans, radish, lettuce etc.

The **African Boll Worm** moth is a small reddish brown moth and the caterpillar is slender and greenish-brown with cream and black stripes. They feed on the pods, stems and fruits of a wide range of plants including tomatoes, peas and beans

Keep a sharp lookout for tell-tale signs of infestation of these caterpillars – droppings and chewed leaves - and deal with the culprits by hand picking and squashing.

Butterflies are always welcomed in the garden, but not without some cost!

The **African Monarch** has orange and brown wings, bordered with white-spotted black patches. She lays her eggs on Asclepiads and some succulents, for example - *Orbea varigata*. Watch out for the smooth black and yellow striped caterpillar with 3 pairs of movable black filaments.

The caterpillars of the beautiful **Citrus Swallowtail** or Christmas Butterfly, one of the largest butterflies occurring on the Peninsula, are called "Orange Dogs", not because they are orange in colour, but because they mostly eat the leaves of citrus trees, as well as chestnut trees and fennel. They are, in fact, a light green in colour with a brown or black diagonal stripe on each side. Although the butterflies are one of the most often seen butterflies in our gardens, the caterpillar seems to be relatively uncommon.

The **Garden Acraea** is a reddish orange butterfly with black spots.

The black, spiky caterpillars feed almost exclusively on the leaves of the Wild Peach (*Kiggelaria africana*), nearly stripping the tree of all its leaves at certain times of the year. (The tree, however, always seems to recover!)

None of the caterpillars from any of these lovely butterflies, with the possible exception of the Garden Acraea, cause too much damage to our garden plants. They are, therefore, perhaps best left to pupate, so we can go on enjoying the sight of these butterflies flitting around in our gardens enjoying the nectar from a variety of flowers, including salvias, mints, Pentas, *Lantana montevidensis* and heliotrope.

The same cannot be said about the **Cabbage White** butterfly, whose black and yellow caterpillars decimate Alyssum, Nasturtiums, Watercress, radish, cabbage, cauliflower and all the other brassicas.

Introduced to South Africa from Europe in about 1994, this creamy white butterfly with brown wingtips and spots is very common in the gardens of the Peninsula, and has become a real pest. Eggs are laid in clusters of up to 100 on the undersides of the leaf of the food plant.

The caterpillars are gregarious and voracious feeders. They can strip a plant almost overnight! Check the undersides of the leaves of nasturtiums, cabbages and cauliflowers. Pick off the whole leaf with the eggs or newly hatched caterpillars and destroy! As you will be bound to have missed some of the caterpillars, hand pick as they become larger and destroy them too!

So, to satisfy the need for an acceptable garden, with not too much caterpillar damage, and to ensure the survival of our wonderful butterflies and moths, I believe discretion is needed, and moderation, in the control of caterpillars in our gardens.

Lyn McCallum

[Pictures of these caterpillars, moths and butterflies can be found either in Mike Picker's *Field Guide to Insects of South Africa* or on Google Images.]

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## WHAT NEEDS DOING FOR THE PLANT SALE – Part 2

Some tips from Anne Bean on how to make your plants in pots look better if they're not looking as good as they should:

- When the cuttings you planted up look scraggy, they *can* be rejuvenated.
- There are almost certain to be points on the plant, at ground level, that will grow if you do things to it first.
- Plants organise themselves very well. They have a growing point at the top of every branch and that growing (controlling) point produces hormones which stop the little bud behind from telling the branches nearby, that it doesn't want to have too many. If you have too many then they shade each other out, and so it's really to keep the whole plant contained and trim.
- If you want to get your plant to be bushy, you have to take off the controlling points and then they will branch out quite well. Trim off the tops of each branch (right: Anne trimmed the tips off this plant). It is amazing the number of new shoots and the number of flowers you'll get afterwards, especially after a bit of feeding. They will respond.
- After trimming, put the plant into new compost and give a bit of a feed once the leaves start to come out.
- Foliar feed: Dilute with water and water them onto the plant with a watering can. Just be careful you don't overdo it. Do not make the solution too strong. Never overdo what the manufacturer's say. Even half the strength is fine because you can always do it again next week or in a fortnight.
- Pot plants can develop, at some stage or another, awful caverns in its soil where there are air spaces too big for the water to go through, so that the water bypasses and goes straight out the bottom. Then you wonder why on earth your plant is behaving as though it's dead. It probably is nearly dead, as the water is not coming anywhere near to where its roots are.
- Cuttings that have not grown as big as you'd like, can be repotted into smaller pots to make them look as if they're doing extremely well in a more proportionately sized pot!
- If the roots are coming through the bottom of the pot, remove the pot and put the plant into a slightly larger pot.
- Pelargoniums: If these get long and lanky, cut out the tatty bits and cut back. to propagate more, use these cuttings and take off any dead leaves and leave for 3 days or more until they are quite dry at the base. They will not wilt. When dry, pot it up in soil.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

- ⊗ Our most senior Honorary Member, Barbara Hey, celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at the beginning of August. Congratulations, Barbara, on achieving this milestone. We wish you all the best for the years ahead.
- ⊗ FOTAG has given us a wish list of items and plants they need/would like. This will be published in full next month. If you are interested in seeing it now, request it electronically from Glenda.

## DATES TO DIARISE

- ❖ 20 September: Annual CHS Plant Sale at 11 Sonnet Quay, Marina da Gama. For more information contact Melanie on 021-788-2480 / 082-550-2618.
- ❖ 25 – 28 Sept: Hermanus Botanical Society Annual Flower Festival.
- ❖ 6 October meeting: Dr Jackie King will speak on the Himalayas and Pakistan.
- ❖ October outing: Visit the indigenous garden of members, Jane and Gerald Robertson.
- ❖ 3 November meeting: David Davidson – *Islands on the Edge* – a botanical ramble on the islands of the United Kingdom.
- ❖ 1 December is party time again!

(Photographs: Henry Diesveld, Lyn and Deryck McCallum, Errol and Jenny Scarr, Glenda Thorpe)

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## **FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW – 6/7 SEPTEMBER AT THE ALPHEN CENTRE**

### **Talks**

#### **Saturday, September 6**

**14h00:** Snakes Alive! Vardaman Hahndiek, known throughout the Cape for his ability to rescue and relocate snakes, will give a fascinating talk on the snakes of the Cape – their habits, ecology, how to identify them and what to do should you come across one, particularly with reference to our gardens, and whilst out walking. He will be bringing beautiful live specimens.

**15h00:** Plantswoman Pam Hart will show how she has slipped plants all her life – using honey. Using one of the most natural products available, Pam will demonstrate the trimming and preparation of slips and cuttings for successful propagation.

#### **Sunday, September 7**

**14h00:** Starke Ayres will reveal the details of how to prune and graft successfully.

**15h00:** The Cape Bonsai Club will discuss the history and care of these incredible trees.

### **Stallholders**

Name	Product
Christine Stevens Organics	Gardens tools and planters
Atlas	Garden gloves
Stonehill	Olives
Master Organics	Compost, bark etc.
P and N Industries	Plastic furniture
The Hortishop CT	Hydroponics and liquid fertilisers etc
Nuno Compact Gardening	Moss balls and aeriums
Garden Stuff	Planters
H3Herbs	Herbs
Rob's Bromeliads	Bromeliads etc.
Dan Sherwood	Sprouts and other edibles
Cape Seed and Bulb	Various plants
Milkwoods Nursery	Exotics, indigenous, herbs
4 plants	Aloes, succulents, vermiculite
West Coast Flora	Fynbos, ferns and clivia
Silverleaf Nursery	Mixed exotics
Granny's Green Nursery	Mixed plants/indigenous
Will's Fuchsia Garden	Mixed exotics + fuchsia
Desert Plants	Succulents
Jane Yeats	Mixed exotics + indigenous
Waterwise Plants	Succulent plants
Exotic Plant Company	Orchids
Village Gardens	Herbs and edibles in planters

*NB: All the above information is subject to change without prior notification.*