



# CHS NEWS

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NOVEMBER 2014

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## END-OF-YEAR GET-TOGETHER

**Mon, 1 December 2014 at 19:00** at The Athenaeum, Newlands

Don't forget the CHS's splendid Christmas party. Please do not delay and confirm your attendance with Jane Robertson (021 794 0804 / [janerobertson.mail@gmail.com](mailto:janerobertson.mail@gmail.com)). The party is renowned for its delicious fare, and should not be missed! Liquid refreshment will be provided by the Society. There will be prizes to be won.

This year a nominal charge of R10 per member will go towards purchasing the necessary compost and fertilizers needed for the gardens at the Vera School for Autistic Learners.

## NEXT OUTING

**A week day in February 2015:** Take a walk through the Stellenbosch Botanical Garden with Curator, Martin Smit. Limited to 25 members. More details to follow in January.

## WELCOME TO ...

... Jenny Samuel who has returned to the CHS fold and also managed to win two trophies at our recent Show. We trust she will spend many happy years with the CHS.

## REPORT BACK

### November Plant Table:

Jenny reported on the following plants brought in by members and visitors:

*Ochna* – two plants were brought in but identification as to which was which was not possible. The two species are:

- *O natalitia* up to 10m tall and most common species along Natal/Transkei coastal belt. Also very floriferous and flowers up to 30mm.
- *O serrulata* is smaller 1-6 m; flowers only up to 20 mm. This sp can occur in the S. Cape.

Both species have serrated leaves as do the two samples we brought home so that is no help! My money is on *O natalitia* as it is more floriferous!

*Odontonema* (below left) – pink/lavender; long lasting

*Eranthemum* (below centre) – grows to 1m in shade or sun

*Dombeya rotundifolia* (below right) – white flowers turn coppery



*Phlomis* (below left) – Jerusalem sage; striking yellow flowers; growing well in Constantia and Kenilworth

*Streptocarpus* (below centre) "Harlequin Blue" – John Winter got permission to bring this back from England where Dibleys raised it. It was the plant of the decade.

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## *Euphorbias*

*E xanti* (above right) – from California. Also common names Cherry Blossom of the Desert, Baja Spurge. Colour varies from white to pink and is long lasting. Try it as a container plant as it will then be less straggly.

There is also a purple form (right) – anyone know the name?

All have a milky sap – do not get it near your eyes.



## *Vegetables:*

A basketful (above) of purple mangelwurz, bite-size cucumbers, frilly lettuce, spitskop cabbage, leeks, radish, spinach, beetroot and strawberries.

To grow tomatoes from cuttings: tomatoes make those side growths which we normally pull out and throw away; rather make a clean cut and tuck them either in very sandy soil or vermiculite, they will grow and they will fruit at about 15cm high and far earlier than a relatively same height seedling tomato. If you have a particularly fine tomato you want to perpetuate, cuttings are by far the best way to go.

Other plants brought in:

*Lavatera* (exotic) / *Anisodontia julii* (indigenous) – cut back, almost to the ground, when the seed pods are drying out and the bush is looking tatty / *Isoloma* – shade loving patio plant; rhizomatous / *Mandevilla* – Chilean Jasmine; climber; lovely scent; does not like the wind / *Kalanchoe* (above right) – anyone know the name? / Queen Anne's Lace / *Arthropodium* / Dahlias / *Salvinia* – a weed and should not be grown in your garden / *Fuchsia triphylla* (orange tubular flower) – grows into a bush.

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"Trees are the best monuments that a man can erect to his own memory. They speak his praises without flattery, and they are blessings to children yet unborn." – Lord Orrery, 1749

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## October outing to the garden of Jane and Gerald Robertson:

Members enjoyed the morning in Jane's new garden. Jane (right – 2<sup>nd</sup> from right) with a small group of lady members under the trees and, far right, the old man in the oak!

*"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn."  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson*



## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Among the many collections in the Scarr garden and shade house is one that we don't hear of too often, the *Cistus*. In our final article of this series Jenny has this to tell us about these plants:

"*Cistus* – a genus of Mediterranean small to medium shrubs with evergreen, sometimes sticky leaves. Flowers in shades of pink and white. About 20 species are listed.

They are not long lived (as in 10 years) but ours have been here five plus and are still fine. They definitely want sandy/stony well drained soil as they come from countries around the Mediterranean Sea, as do lavender and rosemary. We have been collecting them and find they have done well here on our terrible sandy soil here in Pinelands.

We only prune to keep a shape and remove dead wood. They are better not given rich soil, and only fertilize when we plant them. I wonder if they object to well-water like Fuchsias and Salvias – any thoughts out there?

My favourite is *C ladaniferus* – 1-1 ½m, white flowers with purple/crimson blotches at base of petals (we have same plant labelled *C ladanifera alba*!!) Often I have bought this labelled as *C ladaniferus*, but found it to be PINK with or without blotches! This species comes from North Africa and SW Europe and has been in cultivation since 1629!

Hybrids with *C ladaniferus* as one parent include *C x purpureus* – purple flowered with darker blotch at base of petal.

The commonest *Cistus*, which we don't have, is 'Silver Pink', an old hybrid (1916 given as earliest date) of unknown origin much loved by landscapers for ground cover, as it is very spreading and has attractive silvery foliage along with smaller pale pink flowers.

Our large white plant which I thought was *C creticus*, is now called *villosa*, but ours grows up to 2m in height so I am still not convinced! *Cistus villosus* now includes *creticus*, *corsicus* and *undulatus* as varieties, not species in their own right any longer.



If you find the photos appealing I can really recommend them as trouble free plants but they do like a sunny aspect.

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As I was Googling 'Cistus' the other day, I found a lot of interesting information on tea made from leaves which are highly anti-inflammatory, antiviral, good detoxifying agent regarding heavy metals (tooth fillings) and environmental pollution. Also helps fight candida, dermatitis and is a good cardiovascular support. The tea is apparently made with *Cistus incanus* (*syn villosus*). This is all off an American website so, although interesting, is probably best left alone until one finds someone in South Africa who makes or uses it. Don't try this at home; it is for information only at this point.

There is also a National Collection of *Cistus* in England near Bristol so that is now on my 'to do' list next year."

[Ed: Thank you to all the members who contributed to this series during the year.]

## **WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR**

**Excerpt from Stodels' November newsletter ([www.stodels.com](http://www.stodels.com))**

### **"Plant and sow :**

- ⊗ Plant heat-loving bedding plants like salvias, gazanias, vinca, petunias and dianthus.
- ⊗ Plant heat-loving herbs like basil, rosemary, origanum, sage, thyme, chives, rocket and fennel.
- ⊗ Sow these fruits and vegetables now: beetroot, carrots, celery, eggplants, gem squash, radishes, cabbage, tomatoes, runner beans, strawberries and rhubarb.
- ⊗ This is the last month that you can plant summer bulbs like amaryllis, gladioli, galtonia, cannas, lilies and dahlias. Keep them well watered and feed once a month with a liquid fertiliser like Multifeed P or Nitrosol.

### **Feed :**

- ⊗ Feed your lawn with a handful of LAN per square metre once every 6 weeks. Water well after feeding.
- ⊗ Feed agapanthus with 3:1:5 to encourage them to flower prolifically.
- ⊗ Feed indoor and outdoor container plants with a liquid fertiliser like MultiFeed P or Seagro.
- ⊗ Keep roses well mulched and watered.
- ⊗ Water hydrangeas deeply and feed with aluminium sulphate for blue flowers and agricultural lime for pink flowers.

### **Prune and trim :**

- ⊗ Prune and tidy up fynbos like leucospermums, proteas and ericas. Renew the mulch around these plants.
- ⊗ Lift and divide irises after flowering. Replant the outer sections in well composted, mulched soil.
- ⊗ Prune confetti bushes, spiraea, deutzia, geraniums, bougainvilleas and other flowering climbers after their initial spring flush.
- ⊗ Raise the blades on your lawn mower and mow more frequently (once a week) to ensure a lush, finely textured lawn.

### **Re-potting plants:**

- ⊗ First, choose a container that is only about 5cm larger in diameter than the current pot. If the pot is too large the potting soil will retain too much water which can cause root rot.
- ⊗ Carefully free the plant from its current container. It may be helpful to dampen the soil so that the roots can slide freely from the side of the pot.
- ⊗ Now tickle the roots! Using your fingers, gently loosen and pull apart the roots along the sides and bottom of the root ball.
- ⊗ Dead or decaying roots can be cut away using a pair of secateurs. This step will encourage new root growth."

**Excerpt from the Starke Ayres November newsletter ([www.starkayresgc.co.za](http://www.starkayresgc.co.za))**

"Here are a few tips on what one can do in the garden in November.

- ❖ Deadhead annuals to extend the flowering season
- ❖ Dig up spent spring annuals
- ❖ When the leaves of spring bulbs have died down, dig up the bulbs and store them
- ❖ Deadhead roses after the first flush of flowers and prune Banksia roses - feed roses with 5:1:5 or 3:1:5
- ❖ As the weather dries up watch out for red spider mite on the underside of leaves
- ❖ Watch out for snails and apply an organic snail bait
- ❖ Mow your lawn as often as it needs, but not too short in order to protect the roots from heat
- ❖ Keep on weeding

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- ❖ Be sure to water responsibly and adhere to the guidelines and recommended watering times
- ❖ Trim topiary to tidy up spring growth
- ❖ Start a Food Garden if you don't already have one – home produce is in, healthy and deliciously fresh
- ❖ If you have a veggie patch, continue planting small batches of vegetables to ensure a continued and manageable supply
- ❖ Tie tomatoes to stakes to prevent the leaves dragging on damp soil
- ❖ Plan and plant up your Christmas Garden"

## FOTAG'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY



Left to right: Guests under the "Wedding Tree", *Ficus macrophylla* or Moreton Bay Fig; Anne Bean, CHS President and Founder of Friends' groups, cuts the birthday cake; Michael Tuffin, CHS Chairman, with present and ex-committee members of the Friends of the Arderne Gardens

On 8 November, the FOTAG Committee, members and invited guests gathered in the Arderne Gardens for a walkabout and update on the happenings of the past 10 years – especially the work that has been done over the past two years or more to clear and rejuvenate the gardens, ponds and lawns – and ended off with delicious refreshments.

Adam Harrower has updated his list of trees in the garden and reports that the completed list boasts 418!

We congratulate FOTAG on reaching their first decade and trust their efforts will continue to go from strength to strength.

## CHAMELEON FRIENDLY GARDENING AND PLANTS

Chameleons need a large area to roam. Involve your neighbours and create a series of linked gardens to give them a large enough habitat. They need good vegetation cover and a mix of plants of different sizes, including small plants with fine thin stems to provide perches for juveniles, and larger shrubs to provide more sturdy perches for older chameleons. Chameleons don't like large lawns; reduce or replace it with shrubs or groundcovers.

Chameleons eat insects, so to encourage them you have to become insect-friendly. Stop using insecticides – they kill chameleons directly, by poisoning, and indirectly, by eliminating insects, their food source. Lay biodegradable mulch, leave logs to decay and keep a compost heap, all of which provide food and breeding places for insects that chameleons prey on. Grow plants that attract their prey, e.g. flowers or fruits that butterflies or other insects feed on and/or plants that insects breed on.

Exclude domestic cats from the garden – they kill chameleons. Fiscal Shrikes (= Jackie Hangman or Butcher Bird) is also a predator of chameleons. AVOID barbed wire and plants with large thorns, such as *Acacia karroo*, because Fiscal Shrikes use the thorns to impale their chameleon prey.

**PERENNIALS & SHRUBS** with thin stems (to provide perches for juveniles):

*Berzelia* and *Brunia* spp.

Buchus: *Agathosma* spp, *Acmadenia* spp. *Coleonema* spp., *Diosmas* spp.

*Dicrothamnus rhinocerotis* (*Renosterbos*)

*Erica* spp. – any species

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Euryops annae

Euryops virgineus

Gnidia squarrosa & Gnidia oppositifolia

Leucadendrons with small narrow leaves such as L. linifolium, L. levisanus, L. salignum

Ocimum labiatum

Pelargonium spp. with small leaves

Phylica ericoides

Protea scolymocephala

Restios: Thamnochortus bachmannii, T. insignis, T. pluristachyus, T. spicigerus, Elegia cuspidate,, E. fistulosa,, E. equisetacea, E. persistens, E. tectorum (=Chondropetalum tectorum), E. nuda, and more

Scabiosa spp.

Searsia spp. (= Rhus spp.) S. crenata, S. lucida, S. nebulosa, S. refracta

Serruria aemula, S. fucifolia, S. villosa

Struthiola spp.

**LARGE SHRUBS AND TREES** with thicker stems (perches for adults) and/or that provide dense cover:

Afrocarpus falcatus (=Podocarpus falcatus)

Buddleja auriculata, B. saligna, B. salviifolia

Chrysanthemoides monilifera

Crotalaria capensis (chameleons feed on the butterflies that breed on it)

Diospyros glabra, D. lycioides, D. whyteana

Dodonaea viscosa, D. angustifolia

Grewia spp.

Heteropyxis natalensis

Leucadendron spp. eg. L. xanthoconus

Olea europaea ssp africana

Phylica buxifolia

Podocarpus latifolius, P. elongatus

Protea spp. with small leaves e.g. Protea repens

Restios with thicker stems such as Elegia capensis, Restio subverticillata (=Ischyrolepis subverticillata)

Searsia spp (= Rhus spp.) including S. lancea, S. viminalis

Sideroxylon inerme

Syzygium pondoense

*Extract from a handout distributed at the Kirstenbosch Plant Fair earlier this year*

## **PLANS FOR 2015 TALKS AND OUTINGS**

Heritage Seeds

Distillation of Lavenders

Foraging from your garden

Burchell

Cape Seed and Bulb's new nursery

... and lots more

## **ITEMS OF INTEREST**

The Entomological Society of Southern Africa is proud to announce the publication of a new book, entitled *Insects of Cultivated Plants and Natural Pastures in Southern Africa*. Details are available electronically from Glenda (2MB file). The special offer ends 31 December. For more information e-mail either Prof Frances Duncan, President of this Society at Frances.Duncan@wits.ac.za or jannette.mitchell@bufo.co.za.

(Photographs: Andrew and Glenda Thorpe, Henry Diesveld, Errol and Jenny Scarr)