



CHS NEWS

JULY 2015

Post: 22 Rustenburg, Pinelands, 7405 | Tel: 021-531-5713 | Fax: 086-514-0998
Email: info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za | www.capehorticulturalsociety.co.za

NEXT MEETING

Mon, 3 August 2015 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands. R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Marianne Alexander will give an illustrated talk on how the renovated mediaeval garden of the Prieuré Notre Dame d'Orsan in France has influenced the creation of the gardens of Babylonstoren near Paarl, and the influence the structured gardens of Nicole de Versain and Le Château de Marqueyssac, with their clipped plants, have had on Jacqueline Crewe-Brown's Franschoek garden. The use of our colourful indigenous plants in gardens and public places in France will also be part of this presentation.

NEXT OUTING

Wed, 22 July 2015 from 12:00 to 13:00: Pay a visit to the Compton Herbarium at Kirstenbosch to hear about the Herbarium's history and see the process of mounting specimens, how they are filed etc.

You could start the morning off by attending the Kirstenbosch Wednesday talk in the Sanlam Hall at 10:30 (garden entrance fee will apply) where Adam Harrower will tell you about the new Kirstenbosch Tree Route. Or you can just meet at the Herbarium at 12:00.

Limited to 20 members. Let Glenda have your name by no later than 20 July.

REPORT BACK

July Plant Table:

Jenny says: "It's amazing what you can collect in your garden in the middle of Winter, if you plant the right things. Not everything is indigenous, but there are a lot of things that are."

All the bulbs are beginning to push now. Some of the *Lachenalias* are even finished like the ones we went to see up at Langebaan the other week."

This is her verbatim report on these plants (* Indigenous) brought in by members:

**Veltheimia* 'lemon flame' – grown on a patio so is flowering earlier than those in the garden. Been around for about 10 years. Almost verging on lime green and as they open they become more of a pure yellow. They do come true from seed. If you check the bulb and the lower part of the stem, if there is no pigmentation – no shading of pink – you can be assured that the flower will be yellow. The colour that is in the flower is actually right through the bulb, the leaves, everywhere. Every cell has that colouring pigment in it.

**Lachenalia bulbifera* (right)– grown in Pinelands. Makes bulbs all the way down the stem underground and hence its name 'bulbifera'. They are very tough. No need to water in summer. They get natural rainfall now.



**Chasmanthe aethiopica* (small) and *C floribunda* (bigger plant) – structure is designed to be pollinated by sunbirds. *C floribunda duckettii* is the yellow variety



Leucojum aestivum "Summer snowflake" - can become a weed, but is pretty. Native to Majorca.

**Adenandra*

Thryptomene sp (left) – looks like our fynbos. Myrtaceae family from Australia.

**Heliotrope* – white one is fragrant

CHS NEWS

July 2015

2



Erysimum – perennial wallflower – little shrub that seeds itself, usually in shades of yellow. Ordinary wallflower – *Cheiranthus* – is a completely different genus and is a biennial and has to be sown from seed.

**Tetradenia* (formerly *Iboza*) (left)– needs watering in summer

Anchusa capensis – “Forget me not” (above, centre) – same family as Borage. Scatter the seeds.

Camellia

Peas (above, right) from Allée Bleue in Franschoek.

Have you seen this before?

Last month you were asked to identify a pod. Only two members ventured a guess – neither was correct.

From the website of the RHS we are given this information:

“Genus: *Ceropegia* can be evergreen or semi-evergreen, erect, climbing to trailing, usually succulent, perennials with opposite leaves and curiously shaped flowers in summer, sometimes followed by cylindrical fruits containing silky tufted seeds

Family: Apocynaceae

Details: *C. linearis* subsp. *woodii* is an evergreen tuberous perennial with long trailing stems to 1m or more, bearing small, heart-shaped, grey-patterned leaves purple beneath, and lantern-shaped pink and purple tubular flowers 2cm long

Plant range: Zimbabwe to S Africa”

www.llifle.com/ tells us about

“Cultivation and Propagation: *Ceropegia linearis* subs. *woodii* forms the most striking trailing stems if grown in a suspended basket. In a warm Mediterranean climate, it can be grown as a ground cover as well. During the growing period it requires heat, light and adequate watering. However the flowers are most interesting and worth the trouble, only bearing in mind that this species benefits from slightly warmer winter than others.”



(Left) The pod which stretches left and right from a central stalk is 22cm long. It shows no sign of spewing “silky tufted seed” – yet!

(Right) This plant hangs 1,78m from the top of the pot to the ground and trails 3,34m horizontally above, along a nylon thread.

CHS NEWS

July 2015

3

A Mediterranean Link:

As reported last month, the CHS is now officially a member of Mediterranean Gardening International. The member societies are:

Mediterranean Gardening France (MGF)

MGF provides opportunities for keen gardeners to meet each other in a convivial atmosphere to share information about waterwise and wildlife-friendly gardening using plants compatible with a Mediterranean climate. It seeks to promote the philosophy of waterwise gardening through its programme of activities, its website and its links with the wider community.

Mediterranean Gardening Association Portugal (MGAP)

MGAP promotes Mediterranean plants and gardens through education, cultivation, conservation and recognition of their communal, environmental and economic importance in our everyday lives.

Mediterranean Plants and Gardens (MPG)

Based in the UK, MPG is an association for people with a particular interest in the flora and gardens of Mediterranean climates. It embraces concepts of sustainable gardening such as matching plant species intelligently to their environment and giving particular attention to economical use of water.

Mediterranean Gardening Margaret River - Western Australia

Our group has evolved to encourage gardeners of this region the chance to share knowledge, friendship and learn how to best cope with the local climatic conditions for our Mediterranean climate. While in our infancy we are constantly promoting our gardening style and arranging visits between our members and friends to further the enjoyment of gardening. We have gathered quite a number of newcomers to the region who are enjoying the friendship aspect as much as the gardening and every meeting see our numbers grow.

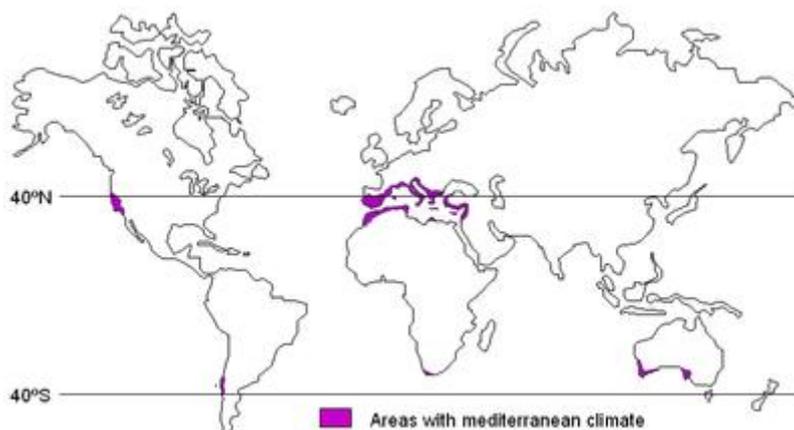
and, of course, *Cape Horticultural Society (SA)*

The CHS promotes the growing of a variety of different plants and believes that a garden with birds, butterflies, chameleons, lizards and frogs, and alive with insects, represents a healthy garden in which plants flourish and the balance of nature exists. We advocate the growing of waterwise plants, both indigenous and exotic (if non-invasive), and encourage the use of natural, organic fertilisers. We are based in Cape Town, where a Mediterranean climate prevails, and members meet monthly to listen to talks on a wide variety of subjects, as well as visit gardens or places of horticultural interest.

You can see more about MG*i* and these societies by visiting www.mediterraneangardeninginternational.org. Look at the "Our Principles" page and see if you recognize anyone in the two pictures, bottom left and right.

CHS members are welcome to attend any of the events these groups are organizing should you find yourselves overseas. If you are interested in receiving information from any of the above societies – and not already one of their members – please let Glenda know and your name can be added to their mailing list to receive newsletters and notifications.

Should we have forgotten what we were taught at school, "The term Mediterranean climate is one typical of the Mediterranean Basin and is a particular variety of subtropical climate. The lands around the Mediterranean Sea form the largest area where this climate type is found, but it also is found in the United States, where it prevails in most of California and in southwestern Oregon, in parts of Western and South Australia, in southwestern South Africa, sections of Central Asia, and in central Chile.", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_climate



Questionnaire analysis:

36 of our 156 (23,08%) CHS members were kind enough to let the Committee have their thoughts on what they liked or disliked about monthly talks, the newsletter and outings. These 36 respondents agree almost unanimously that they are happy with what the Committee organizes for the Society. We can only assume the other 120 feel the same way. Hopefully their silence does not mean they're so unhappy they can't tell us. 😊

A number of good suggestions for meetings and outings have been put forward and will be considered in the year ahead. At the top of the list, it appears that practical gardening tips and solutions to problems are what members are wanting, either in the newsletter or at meetings. If you have any specific subjects you'd like to hear or read about, please advise Glenda, as this would help us to know in which direction to go.

CHS NEWS

July 2015

4

Facebook:

All members who are on the Internet have been told of our brave new venture into the realms of social media. Love it or hate it, we are asking all members to take a look and "like" our Facebook (FB) page, "like" a photo or comment on a post (click on the appropriate link). Also tell your family and friends to visit and do the same thing. We are easily found if, once logged in, you search for Cape Horticultural Society. Our logo is very plain for all to see.

This Facebook page can also be reached by going onto our website and clicking on the link on the Home page. In fact, you don't even have to log in or sign up for FB. You can see all the information and photos by scrolling up and down.

The idea is to reach a wider – and possibly younger – audience with regard to our meetings. Our monthly meetings will be posted for more people (your friends and their friends, and their friends ...) to see. The plants that are brought to monthly meetings will be put into an album each month. We also hope to use this as a forum for members – or the public – to ask questions about plants (hopefully we can give answers), post photos of what's growing in their garden, or snippets of horticultural interest.

We will not be asking to "add friends" as it becomes too cumbersome and we don't want to wade through 1000s of messages from all and sundry. Any constructive advice or ideas would be more than welcome.

GARDENING IN JULY

"July is traditionally the time to prune and to plant new roses and deciduous fruit trees. It is also a good month to transplant roses that are growing in the wrong position."

Pruning and transplanting are best done in late winter because the plants sap flow is low and therefore the risk of infection is at its lowest. Pruning of existing fruit trees, grapevines, roses and hydrangeas can be done from the middle of July in temperate regions, and from mid August in very cold regions. In the winter rainfall regions pruning starts from the end of July to August; and in warm subtropical regions you can prune from the middle of June.



Correct pruning will rejuvenate old plants; produce fruit laden trees, and well-shaped shrubs and roses that flower well. Do not prune shrubs, trees or roses that flower in late winter, spring and early summer. These can be pruned when they have finished blooming. Do not prune frost bitten evergreen shrubs now, rather wait until the weather warms and there is no danger of late frosts. When you do prune, remove all green branches from variegated shrubs right at their base, or the stronger growing green shoots will quickly overtake the variegated ones.

Ensure that all your pruners are sharp and always make clean cuts as ragged cuts are subject to infection. You will need secateurs to prune small branches and loppers for bigger branches; a garden saw will also come in handy for large branches. Large branches should be sealed with a tree seal. When pruning wipe your secateurs clean often with a cloth dipped into a disinfectant; this will help to prevent the spread of fungal diseases from plant to plant. It is especially good to do this after pruning each rose bush before moving on to the next. A good pair of gloves will save your hands; and if you are doing a winter spray, ensure that your sprayer has good pressure.

If you did not prune your **hydrangeas** in April you can do so from mid to late July. They need to be pruned down to a good, fat bud and all the old, dead wood needs to be cut right down to the ground.

July is the best month to **transplant deciduous shrubs or trees** that are growing in the wrong place. It is also a good time to transplant Cycads and Cycas; remove any cones from your plant before transplanting and ensure that the new site has good, well-drained soil, adding some river sand to the new planting hole if the drainage is not good; do not over water until the rainy season starts; in the winter rainfall regions it may be better to wait before transplanting unless your soil drains very well, or the plants are in raised beds.

If you did not transplant **conifers** growing in the wrong place last month you can still do so now. Spray them with Wilt-Pruf before moving, this helps to prevent shock during transplanting. Dig the new holes first and make sure that you plant them at the same depth that they were growing before transplanting. Add generous amounts of compost and a good dressing of bone meal into the planting holes to encourage new root growth; water thoroughly afterwards. Continue to treat your conifers for aphids by regularly applying insecticide granules or a similar product around their roots. Prune your plants lightly; this should be done every year to keep them looking neat and to retain their shape. Shake out most of the dead material from the centre of the plant and mulch the soil around the root zone with a good layer of organic material."

FROM THE JULY 10, 2015 EDITION OF GO SOUTH ONLINE

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – JUNE/JULY

FMR has a gardening programme, *Garden Chat*, which I listen to regularly on a Saturday morning at 8.45. It is presented by Sandy Munro and it has been running for 15 years. He has a few hobby horses that I have taken to heart. One is to use plenty of mulch as it keeps your garden cool in summer and warm in winter. So the mulch of wood chips, grass cuttings and leaves has grown steadily deeper over the years. The mulch also discourages weed growth and encourages the grubs that the Olive Thrushes love to harvest. He also believes that you should not over water one's plants: they learn not to expect too much which is excellent advice in these times of rising prices and a waterless summer looming ahead. Another mantra is not to "skoffe" (hoe, weed) the garden too much, as by doing this you encourage the growth of weeds. I did an experiment with a new planting of *Erica cerinthoides* and you can see the result with stinging nettle *Urtica dioica* being prominent (photo 1 below). Sandy Munro also gives suggestions about water wise plants to grow. One of his suggestions recently has been the bushy shrub, *Polygala myrtifolia* which is looking attractive, with its showy mauve flowers, in our garden at the moment (photo 2). It self-seeds easily and is therefore a useful addition to the plants that you can pot for the plant sale in October.

Another gardening programme that I listen to occasionally is broadcast by Cape Talk on a Friday at 2pm. The afternoon I listened CHS's own Cherise Viljoen was answering the questions. One of them was how to prune a lavender plant. This set me off on a lavender hunt. We have been walking our daughter's dog while she was on holiday and I noticed that every second house in our neighbourhood has a lavender plant in the garden. So for me the book of the month is *The Lavender Book* by Margaret Roberts. There are over 50 listed varieties. The dried flowers can retain their scent for up to 20 years. It is a shame that the choices made by the gardeners in our neighbourhood are so limited: either *Lavandula dentata* 'French lavender' like ours (photo 3) and *L. angustifolia* 'English lavender'. Also many of the plants are neglected: spindly, unkempt and with many dead bushes. I went to the local nursery to see what other types were on offer and one called *L.stoechas* var. *St Bell Rouge* was a handsome deep red colour – well worth growing. Another was *L. Intermedia* 'Margaret Roberts' which according to Margaret Roberts has 'no plant breeder's rights or royalties' and is now sold world-wide with no profit to her. The cross-pollination came about in her Herbal Centre gardens between *L. latifolia* and *L. angustifolia*. She also writes that lavender is easy to grow from cuttings. I have done this with the help of cuttings from my neighbours and potted them for the plant sale. By chance during the latest *Garden Chat* talk Sandy Munro spoke about Lavender – its cultivation and propagation. The talks are available on the FMR website at www.fmr.co.za

The CHS July talk by David Davidson about the Kirstenbosch entry to this year's Chelsea Flower Show was a first class horror story about the bureaucracy. It is strange how a system that is supposed to protect – in this case rare and endangered plants – can also evolve into a labyrinth of laws and regulations administered by overbearing government officials. But the section of his talk about changing fashions in gardening plants and design caught my interest. In our neighbourhood gravel pavements and pathways have in many cases taken over from lawns. Topiary is also very popular (photo 4). Hedges have almost disappeared and have been replaced by ugly security walls relieved occasionally by attractive clipped high box-like hedges.

My own contribution to fashion is the vertical garden. My interest was aroused by a series of talks at the 2012 UCT Summer School by Ernst van Jaarsveld. At the same time there was a CHS visit to the Tokai garden of Dr Eric Harley who had created a vertical garden wall. In this south facing stone wall, he had placed many small aloes and succulent genera in the gaps between the stones. Down one side of our house is a very ugly vibracrete wall. No places between the stones: so a different approach was needed. I was lucky that at the time Stodels Nursery was having a sale which included wooden frames, metal trough holders and clay pots (photo 5). The habitat is difficult as the driveway is hot and sunny in summer and the plants only get reflected sunlight in the winter. The plants coping under these conditions include succulents *Crassula capitella* 'campfire' *C. multica* 'rosy lining' and *C.sarcocaulis* which has tiny white flowers in winter. Other succulents that like this spot include *Haworthia reinwardtii*, *Plectranthus neochilus* 'Peppermint Cream', *Portulacaria afra* 'Prostrata', *Sedum nussbaumerianum* and creeping *Senecio repens* with a mass of yellow flowers in autumn. The wonderful frame for the vertical garden in our back garden was given to me by a friend who was emigrating to New Zealand. It was made by her son-in-law (photo 6). This wall garden is in a shadier position on the other side of the house, so Hen-and-chicken *Chlorophytum comosum* 'vittatum' thrives in this

CHS NEWS

July 2015

6

cool place. *Echeveria runyonii* 'topsy turvy', *Haworthia rebusa*, and *Senecio radicans* all like it here. Our daughter who has just visited Amsterdam saw vertical gardens in the city (photo 7).

In response to last month's journal, Marion Whitehead wrote that I must not be afraid to eat the fruit of the Num-num bush and that a delicious sauce can be made from the berries to accompany grilled meat. As soon as some red berries appear I'll report back. Last month I left out the most notorious useful plant in my garden, the African potato *Hypoxis hemerocallidea* (photo 8) which Thabo Mbeki advocated as a cure for AIDS.



Photos 1 – 3 (top row), 4 – 7 (2nd row), 8 & 9 (right)

Until next time, I leave you with:

My plant of the month: Aloe arborescens and *A. ferox* brightening up the garden in these cold winter days (photo 9).

ITEMS OF INTEREST

24 – 27 Sept – Fynbos Creatures: This is the theme of the 2015 Hermanus Botanical Society's Flower Festival in the Fernkloof Nature Reserve. Entrance is from 9am-5pm every day and costs R20 (R10 for pensioners). Refreshments will also be on offer. For further information contact botsochermanus@telkomsa.net or call 028-313-0819.

10 & 11 Oct – SARDA Open Garden: Water Oak Farm will be opening their garden from 09h30 to 17h00 to raise funds. R30 entrance and tea/ coffee on sale.

19 & 20 Sep – CHS Flower and Garden Show: Alphen Centre, Constantia. For more information or to offer help, call Rod or Melanie on 021-788-2840.

What creature started life in this cocoon? This cocoon, found lying on garden paving, is 2cm long, dark brown and beautifully woven with the finest thread. The "lid" was neatly sliced off to allow its occupant to take flight. Any idea as to what emerged from it? Let Glenda know by e-mail of telephone.



(Photos: Andrew Thorpe, Google Images, Wikipedia, Glenda Thorpe, Peter Henshall)