



CHS NEWS

AUGUST 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, 7 September 2015 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.
R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

FOLLOWING SPRING THROUGH ENGLAND AND WALES

Jenny Scarr's presentation covers gardens and natural areas, and their plants, in England and Wales visited during May 2015. It includes visits to The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the Sky Garden in the City of London, Tatton Park, Cheshire, Bodnant Gardens, North Wales and the Chester Zoo which houses three National Collections – orchids (Pleurothallidinae), Nepenthes, and cacti. The cool and damp weather enabled plants like Azaleas and Rhododendrons to be seen at their best while bluebells were in flower the entire month!

NEXT OUTING

29 August 2015 at 10:30: Visit the garden of member, Bernice Mallet, in Constantia. Bernice and Ron moved to this house in 1973 when Constantia Village Shopping Centre was covered in roses and vines and Strawberry Lane was a dirt road. The garden was flat and dry but is now shady, filled with nooks and walks with more beds than lawn.

Refreshments will be served. Limited to 30 members. Let Glenda have your name by no later than 26 August.

OUTINGS TO DIARISE

Thurs, 22 Oct at 14:00 – Visit the garden of Marilyn Noakes in Constantia.

Fri, 13 Nov at 10:00 – Visit The Gravel Garden in Somerset West, suppliers of Heirloom seed.

WELCOME TO ...

... Fiora Wachter who became a member recently. We hope she will have a long and beneficial association with the CHS.

REPORT BACK

August Plant Table:

Jenny reported on the flowers brought in by members:

Indigenous:

The last of the *Chasmanthes* (yellow). We had the short ones last month and this is the taller one. It's *Chasmanthe floribunda duckittii*. It will grow up to 1m so in these winds it does need a bit of support. There used to be a lovely big bed as you entered Kirstenbosch but that has now been changed to *Agapanthus*. This is lovely. We've grown these from Kirstenbosch seed and we're forever giving them away. They're very rewarding and a lovely, lovely colour.

Pelargonium fulgidum is just starting to flower now. It grows along the West Coast in the sand and has also been seen on the rocks at Cape Columbine. It isn't as spectacular as *P cucullatum*, *P betulinum* and some of the other species. The flowers are bright red and it flowers right through to the end of the year. This makes a sprawling shrub and is very nice as a ground cover; it loves the sun and sandy soil. It grows to about a metre square.

To make cuttings of *P fulgidum*: Remove the bottom leaves; remove any buds; cut through the node with sharp secateurs; this is where the new roots will appear, from the cambium; let it dry off overnight to seal because if it stays wet and you put it in sand or seedling mix or anything and it's wet, it will then rot. It needs to air dry, then tuck it in the sand. You can put 3 around the rim of a pot and let them root for a few months. If you use pure sand, you'll get lots of straight roots. If you mix sand with coco peat or another peat, you'll get a finer root system, which makes it easier to establish later in soil. So rather use a mix than pure sand. That root system holds for any cutting. Pure sand will always give you straight roots.

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Marianne Alexander brought in some lovely *Leucodendron* and *Leucospermum* hybrids from her Betty's Bay garden.

Leucospermum bolusii (Gordons Bay Pincushion) in bud (right) and open (far right) and is, surprisingly, white flowered which is most unusual for a *Leucospermum*. Although small, the masses of them make a real show. It is fragrant in the evening so attractive to night flying insects, but is very popular with bees during the day, so this is ideal if you want to attract them. There are some large specimens in Kirstenbosch at the top of the Protea/Restio garden. This is a very local endemic from the Gordons Bay area which flowers in the early spring.



Leucospermum hybrid: *L. conocarpodendron* x ? (could be 'Veldfire') (below) grows to about 2m high, masses of blooms and watered with bath and shower water in Betty's Bay – when the Alexanders are down there!

The Arnelia website (www.arnelia.co.za) has this to say about *Leucospermum glabrum* x *conocarpodendron*

'Veldfire': This dense shrub will provide masses of flowers to attract the birds to your garden. Ideal for low maintenance, low water use gardens or containers.

Flowering time: Aug / Oct

Flower colour: Apricot Yellow with red ribbons

Mature plant size (H x W): 1.0m x 1.5m

Moderate frost tolerance and moderately tolerant to heavy soils.



Another *Leucodendron* hybrid (right) – quite a small dainty one. Not sure what it is and Marianne thinks its leaves are too pale yellow to be 'yellow devil' – has smaller more dainty heads.

Leucodendron Safari Sunset (right): with such attractive colouring it seems unnecessary to have flowers although some were there in the centre. At this time of year it starts losing its red colour and becomes a beautiful orangey apricot colour.

As these were hybrid plants from Arnelia which are used to being watered daily and have been in small pots with tightly packed roots, they won't survive when grown in a garden which gets watered once every two weeks. So after buying them they were re-potted into a bigger pot (using some soil from the garden and some potting soil) and kept at home for a couple of months – until the rainy season, July. This allowed them to extend their roots into the new soil so they would be able to put on new growth quickly once planted out. Marianne used some of Betty's Bay soil and compost and they seem to be doing okay. She has found that smaller plants grown under tough conditions from cuttings do better – sadly these are not easy to find.



She also brought in *Stoebe plumosa* (*Seriphium plumosum*) (left) which has very white foliage and a neat growth habit. Cut them back hard and they come back again. Sandy soil and sun. There are five species listed for the Peninsula, so they should be worth trying in your garden.

Romulea flava (right), common on the Cape Peninsula – or used to be before we urbanised it all! Found on the verge in Lynfræ as a 'weed' but is now safely in the garden. Found on Rondebosch Common. Usually the pink *Romulea*



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is found on your lawn, but the white one is really precious. In Nieuwoudtville in late August there are about 4 different species of red ones.

Exotics:

Corydalis (below, left) – related to the weed, *Fumitory*, but isn't as invasive. Dies after flowering. Leaf is reminiscent of angelica. Can be used in flower arrangements and lasts longer than *Alstroemeria*.

Irisine: Grown more for its foliage than its flower. As red leaved plants go we're very scarce compared to overseas. Dark foliage does add depth to a border. Can be clipped back and the tips make very nice little cuttings.

Fuchsia (below, centre): A *Dombeya* was cut back in May in Lakeside and this *Fuchsia*, which was growing underneath it, got more light and produced these beautiful flowers.

Silene armeria (below, right) or *glauca* (catch fly) grows right through Eastern Europe and as far as Japan. It has naturalised in Britain. It self-seeds all over the Scarr's Pinelands garden and is now a weed in the vegetable patch. Very pickable. Grows 300 – 500mm. Comes in pink, white and in-between.



Jenny also advised that the Neutrog range of fertilizers has had a name change to ATLANTIC FERTILISERS and the new products are:

Bio Ganic All Purpose (was Bounce Back)

Bio Ganic for Lawns (was Blade Runner)

Bio Ocean (was Seamungus)

Facebook:

We have received only 23 'Likes' since the inception of our Facebook page in June. Please have a look (instructions in the June and July issues of CHS News) and comment or like what you see. The link is at the bottom of this page.

The plants brought to the Plant Table each month will be placed, with names, in an album on our Facebook page.

If you have any good ideas as to what could be added to our Facebook page, please send your suggestions – or photos (between 500Kb and 1MB in size) and items of interest – to Glenda for consideration.

2015 CHS SPRING FLOWER SHOW, SEPTEMBER 19 AND 20

Trophies please! It's showtime again, and time to polish up the trophies! These need to be returned by the next meeting, on Monday, September 7, at the very latest, in a clean state (= bright and shiny) ready to be awarded at the show. If you wish to return them before that time, do phone Errol Scarr, 021 531 0711, to make arrangements to get it to him.

Posters for the show, to go up from the afternoon of Sunday, September 13, will be delivered at the meeting.

The Show Schedule is enclosed for those who have requested it.

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To make the show a success, we need as many entries as possible. If you've not exhibited before, do go through the schedule carefully, as there are bound to be many categories for you to enter – the most simple of plants may be a winner in its category. If you're not sure about entering, do visit the hall at Alphen in the later afternoon of Friday, September 17. Some entries will have been staged by that time, and you'll then have an idea of what is required.

Not difficult at all, and lovely cups, prizes and vouchers to be won!

Schedules of duties at the show are being drawn up at present – if you're able to help with hall preparation, gate duty, Info assistance, stewarding during judging, or any of the many tasks requiring wo/manpower, please let us know. There is no other event like this in the country – it makes us unique! Your help is essential to the ongoing success of this event...

Rod and Melanie Stewart (021 788 2840)
(Rod: 082 556 6071) (Melanie: 082 550 2618)

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

The plant sale is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, from 10h00 to 14h00 – just less than two months away now! Sorting and marking days will be the mornings of Thursday and Friday October 15 and 16. While you're cutting back and pruning, do please pop your cuttings into pots and trays for the sale. If you have anything unusual or rare, and are able to propagate it, we'd love to offer it as an additional attraction to the gardeners out there.

We need as many plants as possible, and every plant has a value – our leftovers are much sought after by various groups (such as Abalimi) – if you also have a suggestion of a deserving group, please let us know.

Please diarise the dates – we really need help sorting, marking and pricing the plants, and we'd value assistance on the day of the sale. Members also have the opportunity to find the most incredible bargains at the sale.

If you're in need of pots or potting soil, or anything else, do let me know. Happy propagating!

Melanie (021 788 2840 / 082 550 2618)

CLEAN AND SHARPEN YOUR GARDEN TOOLS

By Janice Anderssen, Home-Dzine

With spring around the corner it's time to get out those dull and rusty garden tools and restore them to good condition ready for use in the garden.

Garden tools are usually the most neglected tools and get packed away in the garden shed or garage without proper care. When you think about how much it costs to replace these tools, it makes a lot of sense to give your garden tools annual or regular maintenance to keep them in good condition.

If you own a Dremel Multitool this is where you find this handy tool very useful. With a variety of accessories that either come with the tool or can be bought, a multitool can easily sharpen and clean dull and rusty garden tools.

To show how easy it is to sharpen and clean garden shears we used a Dremel 8200 Multitool and aluminium oxide grinding stones. These grinding stones are ideal for sharpening, deburring and general purpose grinding of most materials, including metal garden tools.

The trick is to hold the stone at an angle against the blade, following the existing slope of the edge. Use clamps to hold the shears firmly in place as you work and DO wear safety goggles. Have the tool on medium speed and slowly work from left to right along the length of the blade, repeating this until the blade is sharp.

Clean and polish the garden shears with an abrasive buffing accessory to remove rust and restore shine. I prefer to use WD-40 when sharpening or cleaning. It cleans and lubricates at the same time and also extends the life to the grinding stones.

You can use this exact same process on pruning shears to clean and sharpen the cutting blade. To clean out gears or hard to reach areas use a bristle brush accessory and WD-40.

Sharpen dull edges to perfection using a Dremel Multitool and aluminium oxide grinding stone.

And let's not forget about the trusty garden spade. A sharp edge will make garden work easier. You can also use an aluminium oxide grinding stone to sharpen the edge of the spade.

Rust will destroy your garden tools before you know it. Keep your tools rust-free by drying them before putting them away. If you need to remove rust use Plascon Rust Remover and Concrete Etch. Follow the instructions and handle with care.

If you own a chainsaw you will be pleased to note that Dremel also offer a selection of grinding stones for sharpening chainsaws.

When sharpening a blade, focus on maintaining the bevel – don't try to change the angle or the shape of the blade, or it won't cut properly.

Excerpt from the July 29, 2015 issue of Go South Online

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – JULY/AUGUST

"Hanging baskets are useful for giving extra space in my garden. The containers I use are mostly made of wire mesh with chains for hanging. A cheaper option is plastic containers which are light and hold water longer. The disadvantage is that plastic becomes brittle with time. A few years ago at the Horticultural Society's Flower Show there was a lecture on how to construct a hanging basket – and I was hooked. The plant nearest the camera (right) is *Ceropegia linearis* subs. *woodii* which was described in last month's newsletter.



I first put the basket in a pot to hold it steady and then line it with coconut fibre (you can buy ready-made coir liners but I think that they are overly expensive: and don't provide the birds with nest building material). Next I line the basket with plastic. I use the plastic sheets that Stodels Nurseries provide to line the boot of your car. Stab holes in the plastic and then trim the edges with scissors. I fill the basket with a mixture of the sandy soil from the garden and good quality potting soil. The baskets are relatively easy to maintain: cover the plants with a thick mulch and check regularly if they need watering. You also need to check for diseases and insects (the biting insects love feasting on the *Crassula* varieties).

I prefer to put one plant per basket because the plant isn't crowded out by its neighbours. I have used some of the following South African plants with success: *Cotyledon pendens* 'Cliff cotyledon'; *Crassula capitella* 'Campfire' with shiny orange leaves; *C. multicaeva* which has a rich red reverse leaf; *C. sarcocaulis* which has many small green leaves with yellow serrated edges. Pelargoniums to use are *P. capitatum* with rose scented leaves and *P. ionidiflorum* which has lovely pink flowers.

Many *Plectranthus* also grow prolifically. They include *P. elegantulus* with tiny white flowers; *P. madagascariensis* var. *madagascariensis* with variegated leaves; and the best by far *P. oertendahlii* which has attractive silvery markings on the leaves. Three *Senecio* that give a showy display of flowers are *S. oxyriifolius*, *S. radicans* and *S. repens* (right). I bought most of these plants at the Kirstenbosch Plant Fair. The non-South African specimen is *Sedum morganianum* 'Lamb's tail' which comes from Mexico and is very easy to propagate (far right).



The book I used to check on how to assemble hanging baskets was: **The way we garden – month by month** by Reg Botha which I borrowed from the library. I also used Ernst van Jaarsveld's pamphlet **The Plectranthus Handbook** as a reference. I have a book on my shelves by Nancy Gardner **Creative Containers** which has incredible pictures of 'inspirational container gardening'. I will never be able to reach the standard of perfection of the container ideas developed in this book.



Spring is just around the corner: the dawn chorus in our garden is suddenly much louder and earlier in the morning. The thrush was singing away in our garden today and the white eyes have been digging deep into the reddish-purple flowers of *Polygala myrtifolia*. Red and yellow cultivars of the *Lachenalia* family have burst into bloom to welcome the warmer days (left).



August has heralded the arrival of many noxious weeds in the garden including winter grass *Poa annua*, clover running wild across the lawn and great bunches of *Oxalis pres-caprae* 'suring' (right). Each plant produces a copious number of small bulbs and according to Wikipedia are

'used in waterblommetjie bredie'. I used to chew the stems in my youth but when I asked my grandchildren if they did this I got a pitying look: so much for tradition. Another weed that has popped up in profusion in open spaces from July onwards is *Cotula turbinata* 'Bachelor buttons'; they have yellow centres and a circle of white florets. They were first described by Linnaeus in 1753. There is a garden variety *C. sericea*, with bright yellow flowers, which is adding a bright yellow colour to my garden at the moment. I checked the information about *Cotula* at the plantzafrika.com site.

Until next month – I must be off to do some 'late pruning'."

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.

Can you help?

Yvonne is looking for Jerusalem artichoke tubers; lime yellow or pink (not red) *Poinsettias* – plenty around about 10 years ago (flowering now in winter); and the old fashioned large bush *Lavatera* with lilac flowers which flowers in spring. She would be happy to grow the *Lavatera* from cuttings. If you are able to offer advice or supply slips/plants, please email her at yvonne.reynolds@gmail.com or call 021-799-8810 at work.

Kirstenbosch Photo Competition: Have you taken some amazing photos while visiting Kirstenbosch? Then enter their competition every month for the next year and win a R35000 camera. Details can be found at botsokirstenbosch.org.za/competition.

Bee Plague: The Tatler of 23 July reported on the devastating bacterial disease, American Foul Brood (AFB), which has spread into the Western Cape. "AFB is caused by bacterial spores that infect bee larvae as they feed, causing their death as pupae". This disease is not harmful to humans or adult bees but affects larvae before they are 36 hours old. Greg Aberdeen of Bee Kind says that if this disease spreads further into South Africa, it will affect the R20m agriculture sector that supplies our food. "Simply put, no bees, no pollination, no food."

Mediterranean Plants and Gardens' (UK) events:

If you're travelling overseas next year and wish to be part of any of the following events, make contact with Heather Martin (Chairman) on hma@clara.net or www.medgap.org to find out more. Only paid up CHS members are eligible.

Saturday 23 January 2016

Winter meeting at the Chelsea Physic Garden

March 2016

Gardens of southern Morocco (dates to be confirmed)

6 – 13 April 2016 (dates to be confirmed)

Visit to Crete to see wild flowers, led by John Fielding, co-author *Flowers of Crete*

22 – 25 April 2016

Western Algarve – International conference with guided wildflower walks, private gardens, speakers including Olivier Filippi

10 – 13 July 2016

Garden tour – Norfolk, UK

(Photos: Andrew Thorpe, Marianne Alexander, Peter Henshall)