



# CHS NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2015

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## NEXT MEETING

**Mon, 5 October 2015 at 20:00** at The Athenaeum, Newlands.  
R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

## SOILS, COMPOST AND HOLISTIC PLANT NUTRITION

Morné Faulhamer of Super Plants, Tokai, will tell us what we need to know about whether the products we use are government regulated or not; what potting soils and composts to us; and why brands of lawn dressing are different when you open the bags. If you've ever wanted to know more about the medium into which you're entrusting your precious plants, this is for you!

## NEXT OUTING

**Thurs, 22 Oct at 14:00** – Visit the garden of Marilyn Noakes in Constantia. This outing is now full but you may join the waiting list in the hope of someone cancelling.

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

## WELCOME TO ...

... Ruth Smart, Lesley Richardson, Alison James, Laurence Sonnenberg, Kelly Fisher and Kate Steyn. We wish them all many years of gardening pleasure.

## REPORT BACK

### September Plant Table:

Jenny reported on the flowers brought in by members:

### Indigenous:



*Gladiolus tristis*: this can grow up to 1.5m tall; likes a moist situation.

(Far left) *Wachendorfia*: usually needs wetter, swampier ground; both tall and short species. (Photo [www.biodiversityexplorer.org/](http://www.biodiversityexplorer.org/))

Honey *Euryops*: loved by bees.

(Left) *Dombeya rotundifolia* (wild pear): from Natal through the northern provinces into Botswana, Caprivi and central and northern Namibia; flowers like white cherry blossoms which go a coppery colour with age; evergreen with very leathery leaves. An ideal small tree for the average garden.

(Below left) *Moraea loubseri* (Photo [plantzafrica.com](http://plantzafrica.com))



(Left) *Clivia miniata* "Cameron Peach": grown in palm peat (used for both orchids and clivias) from a seed of a seed (offset) from Belgium.

Others included *Pelargoniums*, *Aloes* and *Euphorbias*, which is a huge genus with many, many species. Most of the latex is poisonous, so try to avoid it.

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

## Exotics:



(Left) *Roldana petasites* (formerly *Senecio* or *Cineraria*): from Mexico and various South American countries: native to cloud forest and likes it foggy and cool!

(Top centre) *Allium triquetrum*: from Britain; does well here but can become a 'weed'.



(Top right) *Hellebore* (Christmas rose): growing in Constantia; becoming popular here, especially in Elgin/Grabouw area.

*Bartlettina* (formerly *Eupatorium*) from Mexico: mostly herbaceous perennials; 36 – 60 species; very similar to *Ageratum*, the little border plant but this is a back-of-the-border plant.

(Right) *Retama monosperma*: a genus of flowering plants in the legume family Fabaceae, native to open habitats such as moorland and pasture in Europe and western Asia; little white pea flowers.



*Hyacinthoides hispanica* (syn. *Endymion hispanicus* or *Scilla hispanica*), the Spanish bluebell, is a spring-flowering bulbous perennial native to the Iberian Peninsula. It is distinguished from the common bluebell by its paler, larger blue flowers, more erect flower stem (raceme), broader leaves, blue anthers (where the common bluebell has creamy-white ones) and little or no scent compared to the strong fragrant scent of the northern species (extract from Wikipedia) *Bletilla*: an orchid, very similar in look to a *Cattleya*; will do well outside.

*Raphiolepis*: improved forms with better colour and bigger flowers; slow growing and won't get out of hand.

Others included *Isoloma*, *Spirea*, *Kalanchoe*, *Lavender* and *Impatiens*.

Photos of plants mentioned but not shown here can be seen on our Facebook page (see details at bottom of this page).

NB: A member brought in the plant on the right and we think it was overlooked. If it is still flowering, could the grower please bring another piece to the next meeting?

## Connecting with Mediterranean Plants and Gardens members:

A group from MPG UK arrived at the end of August for a 12 day tour of Cape Town, the northern Cape and Stellenbosch. Their tour leader, Charles Smith, and his wife, Jennie, arrived a few days earlier and your Committee decided to show them something of Cape Town that they would otherwise not have seen.

On Monday, 24 August, we were all joined by two more MPG members, Richard Barrett and Barbara Jones, and we set off for the Arderne Gardens to be led by Hank Lith. This was followed by a walkabout in Jane and Gerald Robertson's garden and then lunch. The day ended off with a visit to Stellenberg where Sandy Ovenstone and





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Head Gardener, Athol McLaggan, together with the gardeners had been hard at work cutting back, tidying up and clearing a newly acquired area where the stream flows so that new trees can be planted.

The tour was enjoyed by all in the MPG group, with the best time being in Nieuwoudtville where there were "over 10,000 bulbs to the square meter with vast fields of colour, varying by the minute".



## **Trees for Charity:**

It was suggested by a member, Roy Oldfield, that we should support Stodels' Arbor Day recycling project by giving them newspapers in exchange for a free indigenous tree. These trees would then be brought to our meeting and made available to those who required them for a deserving cause. This drive turned out to be very successful with members and visitors alike arriving with trees (not all from Stodels) and happy customers able to take some home for their worthy charity. Bea Heymann (right) looks perturbed by the height of the tree that Roy is convincing her to take for her gardens in Mamre.

Perhaps members could let us know to whom they donated the trees they took last month.

## **MEET OUR BOOK PRIZE WINNERS:**

Megan Blatchford (Best 3<sup>rd</sup> Year student in 2014):



"I got my full distinctions and was nominated as a potential candidate to receive the Dean Medal Award. On April 13<sup>th</sup> I graduated with my National Diploma and was honoured to receive the Dean Medal.

Professor Charles Laubscher, Head of Horticulture Department at CPUT and IPPS (International Plant Propagators Society) member, nominated me to be part of the IPPS Student Exchange Program in October 2014.

Three candidates were chosen/shortlisted to present to the IPPS members in March 2015 in KZN at the annual conference, and I was successful in being chosen as the best speaker/most suitable candidate.

I left for Sydney, Australia, in April and stayed for two weeks until mid-May. I attended the Australian Region annual IPPS conference which was held in Newcastle City Hall. Some lovely nursery families hosted me and I got to see many nurseries,

botanical gardens, reserves, and went on a pre-conference tour with a group of IPPS members.

In March 2016 I will be giving a feedback presentation at the next local IPPS conference which will be held in Lamberts Bay.



Australia was absolutely lovely! However, it can never compare to the abundance of natural beauty and diversity that we have here. It was such a fantastic opportunity for which I will be forever grateful. It definitely broadened my horizons, as it was my first trip overseas.

Currently I am based at Kirstenbosch as the Scholar until the end of the year. My major project is the redevelopment of the garden bed behind the Botanical Society office.

I am also completing my BTech Horticulture through Unisa full-time and hope to graduate, as it is incredibly difficult managing one's time studying full-time and working full-time. As part of my research project for my studies I am trialling various rooting hormone treatments on *Agathosma ovata* 'Witteklip' as the Buchus are quite difficult to grow/propagate."

## **JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER –AUGUST/SEPTEMBER**

"The haphazard gardener has temporarily been transplanted to England. The English summer has been a big disappointment. The word summer raises expectations of long days filled with warm sunshine and blue cloudless skies. The reality is long days of the sky covered in murky grey clouds and copious amounts of rain. I now understand why the landscape paintings of Gainsborough and Turner have battalions of cumuli scurrying across their pictures. On one day since we have been here, the temperature rose to 30 degrees. The more usual temperature of 20 degrees does, however, seem surprisingly hot.

Despite the climate I have seen many South African flowers flourishing in local gardens. *Pelargoniums* in great varieties are seen everywhere in hanging baskets and window boxes. *Agapanthus* drip happily in the rain; *Kniphofias* (red hot poker) stand over a metre tall and vygies and *Lobelias* grow happily together in pots.



The amount of open spaces in this overcrowded city is tremendous. Our bedroom window overlooks our daughter's typically small south London garden but at the same time there is a wonderful expanse of greenery in the neighbours' gardens. There are three large open spaces nearby:

Tooting Common is within walking distance; we rode on our scooters to Wandsworth Common and it is a short bus ride to Clapham Common. There are many trees, large ponds, play grounds for children, cricket pitches and tennis courts. Cyclists, runners, walkers and pram pushers use the large network of pathways.

Allotments have featured in the news. They were founded in 1918 all over Britain by soldiers and officers returning from the war, so that they could supply food for their families. Now there aren't enough to go round and so the suggestion put forward was that they should be halved in size. No way said the traditionalists – the size (about 30 yards by 9 – the size of a London bus) is sufficient to sustain a vegetable garden that produces enough for a family; cutting them in half would therefore defeat the object of having an allotment.





Bird life is a bit sparse – no dawn choruses. Parakeets, however, flutter around chirping noisily in the trees. They are escaped cage birds from Nepal and as a result they flourish in the temperate British climate. The bird feeder in the garden attracts blue tits, coal tits and robins. The blackbird with its lovely bright yellow beak and feral pigeons are also frequent visitors. There is other wild life: a squirrel attacked the feeder the other day and ate all the seed: and at night foxes can be seen foraging for food.

Despite the awful weather, there are massive and colourful flower displays in the parks. We visited Battersea Park where the Festival of Britain took place in 1951. The picture shows massed replica plantings of many shades of *Begonias* (below left). I also liked the idea of how four trees have been planted in a square but the foliage looks like one tree (below centre). In the herb garden there were two fascinating *Salvia* hybrids 'Good Hope' and 'Hot lips' (below right). I leave you with a quote from a nursery in the Park: 'Gardening is cheaper than therapy and you get to keep the tomatoes'."



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

- **Sat, 17 Oct – CHS Annual Plant Sale:** From 10:00 to 14:00 at 11 Sonnet Quay, Marina da Gama. Call Melanie (021-788-2840 / 082-550-2618) if you want to arrange to deliver plants or help with sorting and pricing.
- **Sat/Sun, 10 & 11 Oct – SARDA Open Garden:** Water Oak Farm, Klein Constantia Road, Constantia, will be opening their garden from 09h30 to 17h00 to raise funds. R30 entrance and tea/ coffee on sale. Enquiries 082 406 3434 or SARDA Office 021 794 4393
- The Farm, home of **Flower Valley Conservation Trust**, offers protection not only to many vulnerable and threatened fynbos species, but also to the many animals and birds that live and hide in this vegetation. But we need your support. For just R4 a day, you can adopt – and protect – each hectare on Flower Valley Farm. Take a look at [www.flowervalley.org.za](http://www.flowervalley.org.za) to find out more.
- A green beetle (and there are quite a lot of them) is eating ALL the petals on a member's expensive Geraldton Wax. This is a Common Metallic Longhorn (*Promecus longipes*) which occurs all round our coastline, until you reach the arid northern Cape, and is found on a wide range of flowers (not just Geraldton Wax). Are any other members having trouble with this beetle? Let us hear about it.
- **Seed Exchange:** As the CHS is a member of Mediterranean Gardening International, this entitles our members to order and/or exchange seed. The link, Seed Exchange, can be found on the home page of the MGİ website [www.mediterraneangardeninginternational.org](http://www.mediterraneangardeninginternational.org) and states "Chantal Guiraud, of Mediterranean Gardening France, maintains a collection of over 400 varieties of seeds at her home in Montpellier. Members of associations which have joined the Mediterranean Gardening International community are welcome to contribute and to order seeds from the list, which is updated twice each year.

The full list, together with information about how to collect and send seeds to Chantal, and how to order them, is on the Mediterranean Gardening France website. When contributing or ordering seed please ensure

you include the name of the gardening association to which you belong. To make the seed list easy to use, it is illustrated with plant photographs taken by members. You'll notice that not all entries have an illustration and the website editor, Christine Savage, would be grateful to receive photographs to fill the gaps. Please send these to Christine."

If you are a good photographer and have photos of any of the plants on the list that still need a picture, please contact Christine through the links on the MGJ website. They would love to have a more complete seed catalogue.

- **Rare plant find:** A group of conservation volunteers has discovered a living plant so rare it was thought to be extinct. The plant, last documented in the 1940s, was recently uncovered on Lion's Head. The Granite Cape Flax (*Polycarena silenoides*) was recently found by the Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (Crew) team.

With 39 species of Cape wildflowers classified as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and 22 of these extinct, finds like these are very special. This population of Granite Cape Flax will now need to be more fully assessed and monitored, so that its endangered status can be revised, and more can be learnt about its life form and responses to fire and other threats, says Crew's Gigi Laidler, who found the plant.

"I felt great excitement, mixed with trepidation at first that I might be mistaken. But I was elated when the expert confirmed that one more of our more elusive targets has been found and that we can now learn more about this species," she says. (Extract from Go South Online – September 8, 2015)

- **The life cycle of *Ceropegia linearis* subs. *Woodii*:** This began in March with the flowers, followed by the seed pods in May and these pods have been bursting open since August.



- **Montreal's Mosaiculture:** Once every three years, there is an international competition in horticultural sculpture, called "Mosaiculture," in a major city in the world...the last one in Montreal. This is not topiary, but rather creating sculptures out of living plants. The greatest horticulturists in the world, from 20 different countries, submit plans a year in advance. Steel frames were built to support the works; they are then wrapped in steel mesh and filled with dirt and moss and watering hoses. Then 3 million plants of different shades of green and brown and tan were grown in greenhouses all over Quebec. The horticulturists came to Montreal and planted all of these plants in the forms at the Montreal Botanic Gardens. There were 50 major sculptures along a path two miles long. To view, follow this link: <http://myvirtualgarden2.blogspot.co.za/2013/09/mosaiculture-exhibition.html>

(Photos: Peter Henshall, John van der Linde, Google, Wikipedia, plantzafrica.com, Glenda Thorpe)