



# CHS NEWS

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OCTOBER 2015

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## **NEXT MEETING**

**Mon, 2 November 2015 at 20:00** at The Athenaeum, Newlands.  
R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

And now for something completely different! Following on from the talk in September on Spring through England and Wales, we will hold an audio-visual presentation on

## **THE LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN**

## **NEXT OUTING**

**Fri, 13 Nov at 10:00** – Visit The Gravel Garden in Somerset West (<http://www.thegravelgarden.com>), suppliers of Heirloom seed to the Home grower, Small farmer and Gardening enthusiast.

They 'farm' a garden in the suburbs of Somerset West with the main goal of saving and supplying vegetable seed as well as eating tasty, nutritious and ultimately the freshest homegrown produce.

A lot of the old varieties are where the flavours lie. Many modern hybrids are bred to withstand long storage and transportation times and it is often the thin skinned tastier produce (especially tomatoes) that have been bypassed commercially.

These amazing and almost forgotten open-pollinated varieties are fast disappearing off seed lists and being replaced by modern alternatives.

On a Friday morning there is an informal get together of like-minded people who trade produce of all sorts with the emphasis being on fresh and home grown. These are being grown behind suburban walls – Avos, Figs, Lemons, Oranges, Tamarillos, Asparagus, and of course, all the good old standard vegetables.

You can learn how to plant and save your own Heirloom seed. All seed is R20.00. Tea and cake on sale.

Limited to 20 members. Please let Glenda have your name by no later than 11 November.

## **LAST GET TOGETHER OF THE YEAR**

Our Christmas Party for members will be held on Monday, December 7 at 7pm.

Lists for the party will be doing the rounds at the November meeting – please remember to fill in your details: number attending and dish you'd like to bring. If you need any information, please phone Melanie at 021-788-2840 or 082-550-2618.

## **WELCOME TO ...**

... Annette Ketterer. We wish her many years of gardening pleasure with the CHS.

## **REPORT BACK**

### **October Plant Table:**

Jenny reported on the flowers brought in by members:

*Prostanthera*: Bought at Hart Nursery in August. A genus of about 40 evergreen shrubs or small trees. Native to Australia and Tasmania.

[http://www.yallaroo.com.au/Prostanthera\\_ovalifolia.htm](http://www.yallaroo.com.au/Prostanthera_ovalifolia.htm) says:

"*Prostanthera ovalifolia* is a member of the Lamiaceae family and is known as the Oval-leaved Mint Bush.

The Oval-leaved Mint Bush is a variable shrub that may reach a height of five metres. Judicious pruning will keep plants to a dense and tidy two metres.

The leaves range in size from 0.5–5 centimetres in length, moderately crowded, mid green to dark green and strongly aromatic.

# CHS NEWS

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October 2015

2

Flowers are about one centimetre long, usually mauve, purple or bluish-purple. A white-flowered form is sometimes available. Flowering occurs in spring and blooms are both profuse and very conspicuous. After flowering plants appreciate pruning. Each stem should be cut off behind the spent flowers.

*Prostanthera ovalifolia* (below left) is a native of New South Wales and Queensland.

This hardy and free-flowering species will develop into a colourful screening plant.

There is a form with variegated foliage.

Propagate from cuttings."

*Dodonaea viscosa* 'Purpurea' (Red Sand Olive) (below centre) is a native of Australia (Wikipedia has more information on this). The plain green form, *Dodonaea viscosa* var *angustifolia*, (see page 6) occurs along the coastal belt from Namaqualand, through Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal to Mozambique. Find out more from [plantzafrica.com](http://plantzafrica.com).

*Pelargonium botulinum* (below right): white form; this is the short form (Betty's Bay). There is a taller West Coast form (Yzerfontein) and both can occur with pink flowers.

*P. citronellum* (lemon scented) – grown for foliage; likes a moist position as it grows naturally along sides of streams.

Clivia:

- Ben's bronze x Ian Vermaak bronze 'Green Boy' x Gerit van Wyk green throat. (2<sup>nd</sup> row left)
- Cywes x Tatle D x Rosette Conway, selfed. (2<sup>nd</sup> row centre)

*Tillandsia* (a Bromeliad, which is really an epiphyte) (2<sup>nd</sup> row right): from South America; bright light, keep damp (likes humidity); do not pot in soil, just hook it over a branch and spray with the hose when you can. There is a form which does not flower, as well as a flowering form.

Other plants brought in: *Heliotrope*: white variety is scented; *Salvia* "hot lips"



Next month: report on the Soils and Compost talk.



## JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER –SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

“Dit is die maand Oktober! Die mooiste mooiste maand!

Dan is die dag so helder, so groen is elke aand,  
so blou en sonder wolke die hemel heerlijk bo,  
so blomtuin vol van kleure die aasvaal ou Karoo.  
so blomtuin vol van kleure die asvaal ou Karoo.

C. Louis Leipoldt

Arriving back home from our trip to England was more disconcerting than usual. We left autumnal England with the temperature hovering around 20 degrees and arrived back in South Africa with spring in full bloom and the temperature hovering around 20 degrees. Leipoldt's poem always comes into my head at this time of the year: badly misremembered I find when I checked my memory!

When we stepped out of the car in front of our garden the sage bushes were beautifully welcoming. Pictured you can see *Salvia Africana-lutea* 'Bruinsalie' (right top), *Salvia dolomitica* with pink flowers (right centre) *Salvia lanceolata* (bottom right) with rusty red flowers and *Salvia sangria* with purple flowers (bottom left). When checking up on the salvia in the plantzafrica.com site I discovered that the 'Bruinsalie' has a distinctive way of pollinating itself. Hidden in the hood of the flower, the stamens have a clever lever mechanism. 'When the insect crawls in at the mouth of the flower, looking for nectar in the flower base, its head brushes against a sterile part of the stamen, which pushes the anther downwards and rubs some of the pollen off onto the insect's back. When the stigma is mature it bends down and blocks the way of the insect visiting the flower'. Maybe some of you know this, but I didn't. These plants are very easy to grow; are drought resistant and keep bees, butterflies and white-eyes happy.



There were also plenty of weeds in the lawn and between the bricks in the garage driveway. The weeds in the lawn were easy to pull out because the rain had made the ground soft. A gardening article I read in the *Sunday Times* of 4<sup>th</sup> October suggested that you throw boiling water onto the weeds. I tried this, waited 24 hours and most of them came up fairly easily. There were not nearly so many weeds in the undisturbed and composted parts of the garden.

Which brings me to our recent visit to Babylonstoren. The gardens were looking magnificent. Capitalism at its best; they employ top-notch horticulturists, plant many different varieties of apple (13), pear (6) and plum (10) trees, experiment with different types of vegetables and serve tasty food in the restaurant. In the vegetable



gardens they do not dig over the soil: the compost is placed on top of the soil and the goodness works its way down into the ground and the weeds are kept at bay. We joined a group of Americans for a tour around the garden. The Clivias along the stream looked very happy to be there. After the tour – capitalism at its worst: morning tea, lemonade, ginger beer, lemon tart and ice cream and scones and cream in the Green House restaurant cost the same as in a similar tea room in the most expensive capital city in the world.

Here are some follow-ups on previous journal entries. Except for the *Tritonia crocata*, the bulbs that I bought at the Kirstenbosch plant sale had unfortunately flowered before we got back.

I was also encouraged to be brave and eat the fruit of the Num-num tree and they were delicious.

I was questioned about the size of allotments (that of a London bus) so I checked up on my facts. (I had relied on the information gleaned from letters written to the *Times*). The size of a full plot is 250 sq. metres and it is based on Anglo-Saxon measurements of rod, pole and perch; 10 poles = 250 sq. metres (approx). This is the size of a doubles tennis court. The National Allotment Society's website, [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk), explained that areas have been set aside



for vegetable and fruit growing from medieval times but in 1908 the Small Holdings and Allotments Act was passed making it obligatory that local councils provide sufficient plots for local residents. The allotments I saw had a pleasantly scruffy look with a garden shed, greenhouse, picnic tables and brambles (left). They are used mainly to grow vegetables and fruit but some people also plant flowers, keep bees and grow hops for beer making. I saw a television programme where someone was making sparkling wine from their grapes. 350,000 people have allotments and there is a waiting list of 800,000 according to the *Guardian* newspaper. They interviewed a woman who didn't want to give her name nor location because she was

working her daughter's plot and was afraid of her losing the space. ([www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/allotments](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/allotments))



2015 is The Year of the Sunflower. They can be seen in the allotment picture above. While in London I went on the lookout for roof gardens. A book *The London Garden Book A – Z* by Abigail Willis led me to the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the Southbank of the Thames which has a roof garden in the café. They were also celebrating sunflowers (left). The terrible brutalistic architecture of the Centre is somewhat softened by this garden. A 'Sun Deck' on the roof of the hall was part of the original plan. But



nothing happened until 2011 when as part of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for the Festival of Britain the 'arid concrete rooftop' was transformed into a garden (left). It was established by the Eden project. The raised beds were overflowing with plants. There is



also a woodland garden which leads to the Hayward Gallery (above right). The café was closed on the day I visited because it is weather dependent and it had been raining earlier. It was a pleasant haphazard oasis. I liked the idea of an apple tree brimming with fruit (left).



The only other people in the garden were a couple kissing passionately and gardeners from a local charity, Grounded Ecotherapy (above right), who promote garden therapy: speaking of which – until next month."



## CHS FLOWER SHOW AND PLANT SALE

The September show certainly was a success – we had an amazing range of beautiful plants on display and the public had that display as well as the latest plants, gardening materials and equipment from the stalls outside the hall. The show has cost money, though (the figures will be finalised at a later stage), but the Show Committee expected that – costs have increased overall.

The main objective of the show is to educate people about the variety of plants in our beautiful part of the Cape, and to encourage gardeners to grow the plants they've seen on display – it isn't a fund-raiser. Our splendid members came up with the most marvellous and diverse range of indigenous and exotic plants imaginable – these showed what can be grown in our gardens. The suggestion has been made that, from next year, exhibitors will also supply the suburb/area in which each plant was grown – to encourage the gardeners in those areas to try similar plants.

A big thank-you goes to everyone who helped make the show the success it has been – from the preparations, staging, exhibiting and managing of various duties, to the final clearing up and taking down of posters ... thank you!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MAIN TROPHY WINNERS:

- The Chapmann Trophy for the Most Spectacular Exhibit on Show went to Jenny Scarr.
- The Sybella Schelpe Trophy for the Plant Most Difficult to Grow was awarded to Georgina Charlesworth.
- The Constantia Woods Trophy for the Most Unusual Exhibit on Show was won by Jim Holmes.
- The Jocelyne McDowell Memorial Trophy for the Most Points on Show went to Alison James, a new member and first-time exhibitor at a CHS Show.
- The Stuber Cup for the Best Decorative Entry on Show was awarded to Heather Patton.



*Left: Helpers setting up the sale area*

*Right: Ann giving advice to a buyer*

The Plant Sale has also been a great success this year – at the last count, we made almost R9 500, more than we made last year. The quality, variety and number of plants supplied for the sale has been excellent – there's another enormous thank-you to all our growers, you've each done a sterling job! The plants that remain are being divided between the Abalimi Trust and



garden groups in the Capricorn, Vrygrond and the Lavender Hill areas – where they will be greatly appreciated, with a good home for each plant!

As a result of a computer glitch, the raffle list could not be printed in time for the sale, and the raffle prize, a beautiful Clivia in bloom, accompanied by an enormous Ali Baba-shaped strawberry pot, could not be raffled. If you're interested in either, do please make an offer for them at the next meeting – they'll be on show there as well as some sale plants.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the show and the sale such a success!

*Melanie Stewart*

## TRAVELS IN THE KAROO

Andrew and I had an opportunity recently to get away for a long weekend and decided to travel further afield than the usual late Friday afternoon trip we can normally only manage. We chose to visit Prince Albert (approx. 450Kms from Cape Town), having heard reports about it over the years and also knowing that former members of the CHS had made it their home.

Not knowing too much about the area other than that the N1 was a long boring stretch of road and Prince Albert Road was a signpost somewhere past Laingsburg, we set off. We had not driven along this stretch of road in many years and were totally blown away by the changes that had taken place. Added to that, the flowers were in full bloom – an amazing sight, and just as good as the West Coast.

# CHS NEWS

October 2015

6

We turned right at the Prince Albert Road (a siding) sign and 45Kms further on we arrived at the town of Prince Albert. What a lovely little town in the middle of nowhere.

We looked up Sue Goosen who moved there eight years ago and is now Chairlady of their local Garden Club. With the help of a job lot of succulents (right: Sue and the job lot!) purchased at our 2007 Plant Sale, she has produced the most amazing garden, full of variety – from scratch. She also told us that she does not have to contend with snails or moles!! Makes you want to sell up and move there, doesn't it?



Although very dry, the 'lei water' system works well. There are many lovely gardens and the flowers were at their best – both exotic and indigenous. This part of the world is definitely worth a visit in Spring – and after they've had a bit of rain, which was the case with our visit.

We returned home via the Swartberg Pass and there the Proteas abounded, amongst other things like the Nivenia. Glenda Thorpe



Clockwise from above:  
An aloe seen on the road into Prince Albert. Anyone know its name?  
Seen in local gardens –  
*Dodonaea viscosa* var *angustifolia* and yellow *Banksia* rose.  
Seen on the Swartberg Pass:  
*Nivenia binata* and, we think, *Protea eximia*.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

**Elgin Open Gardens:** Sat, 31 Oct/Sun, 1 Nov and Sat/Sun, 7 and 8 Nov (Sat & Sun)

21 gardens are opening in the Elgin, Bot River & Vyeboom areas. For more information take a look at [www.elginopengardens.co.za](http://www.elginopengardens.co.za) or contact Barbara Knox-Shaw on 021-844-0154 / 078-021-2101/ 083-458-3790 or [info@elginopengardens.co.za](mailto:info@elginopengardens.co.za)

**Accommodation in Floral Paradise:** Member, Fiora Pegge, has a holiday house in Betty's Bay which is very comfortable and sleeps 6. Weekend rates are R200 pp/pn and during the week R180 pp/pn. If you are interested in spending time in that area to see the flowers and want to find out more you can call her on 084-748-1501 / 021-701-2922.

**Old Nectar** in Jonkershoek is, once again, open to the public, after a major rejuvenation.

(Photos: Jenny Scarr, Peter Henshall, Rod Stewart, Andrew and Glenda Thorpe)