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NEXT MEETING

Mon, 1 February 2016 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

Notice is given of a Special General Meeting of the CHS to be held on Monday, 1 February 2016 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Campground Road, Newlands

Agenda

1. 2016/17 Subscription fee
2. Monthly newsletters
 - The Committee has determined that as there has been no escalation in annual subscription fees since 2012, an increase is justified and, according to the Rules of the Society, this has to be confirmed by members at an AGM or SGM.

The need for an increase arose after the Treasurer's forecast that the Society would run at about a R4000 loss for the 2015/16 year, the main culprit being the R6000 loss suffered on the Flower and Garden Show last year. The Committee proposes that the increase will be from R120 to **R130** for single members and from R160 to **R180** for family members.

- The Committee also proposes that members who wish to receive their monthly newsletters as hard copies (printed) via the postal services instead of via email, pay a surcharge of **R40** per annum for the privilege.

The cost of posted hard copies is approximately R73 per member per annum at present versus the zero cost for emailed copies, resulting this year in an expense of R1900, which can largely be avoided.

This will be followed by ...

A (SOUTH AFRICAN'S) GARDEN IN DEVON

– a talk by Rosalind Spears



Born in London and a childhood spent between Africa and Wimbledon, Rosalind Spears ended up marrying a South African, the son of well-known Cape Town artist, Frank Spears.

They have lived at *Libertas*, their South Devon home (a converted tythe barn), for nearly 20 years during which time they have created the garden. This garden will be opened to the public through the National Gardens Scheme for the first time in 2016.

The 10 acres include two large walled gardens, a wooded area, a meadow and the Ladies Promenade and Vine House.

In this illustrated talk Rosalind will lead you around the estate, which is close to Heligan, showing you the development and design of the garden, including the flowers and sculptures.

The book *Frank Spears the Painter* by Melissa Sutherland (introduction by Hayden Proud of SA National Gallery) will be on sale on the night at the special price of R400 for members and guests. Cheques, cash or EFTs will be accepted.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Please note that subscriptions are not due yet. The renewal forms will be issued with the next newsletter and payment can be made after that or at our March meeting.

REPORT BACK**End of Year Party:**

As always, a good time was had by all who attended. There were plenty of raffle prizes to be won, thanks to Jenny Zeederberg who grew the beautiful Echeveria, Michael Tuffin for his delicious homemade preserves and the lovely Christmas table decorations made by Jane Robertson. The winners were Colin Engel (left), Bill Bremer (centre), Peggy Reynolds, Jenny Elder (right), Ruth Allen and Jackie Diesveld.

**JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – 'TO DO' LIST FOR 2016**

While I was thinking about what to write this month, one of my ideas was to compile a list of resolutions. No, a stupid idea. When did I last manage to keep one? The *Cape Times* published an article 'How to stick to that 2016 resolution'. It stated that in a survey most people had 'abandoned these undertakings by the end of January'. Also the best time to decide on a resolution was the previous August so as to get used to the idea by January.

I also came across two local comic strips. In *Madam and Eve*, Thandi's list was a blank page because, "If it ain't **broke** don't fix it!"; and the old man in *Treknet* had decided "...to kick some criminal butt this year" with a 'TO DO' list: Hence the title of this Journal.

So here is my To Do list:

- *Work for some time in the garden every day.*

When I compiled the original list I had written 'for an hour', but have discovered that in order to keep to my task it pays to be as vague as possible about the length of time.

A sub-section of this resolution is to work regularly really early in the day. One morning recently, when fetching the newspaper at 5 am, Table Mountain was suffused in a pink glow from the rising sun – marvellous. Apart from the lovely light; the air was fresh and cool; the song birds were active and the wind hadn't started to blow. 'Regularly' is another suitably vague word – one mustn't overdo the birdsong.

- *Use the roll of netting a friend gave me when she emigrated to New Zealand 2 years ago.*

It has been lying in a gutter clogged up with leaves but they have been removed and the roll now stands up against the wall all clean and expectant.

The sub-section of this resolution is to hang the netting against a neighbour's ugly vibracrete wall and train a *Thunbergia* up it. The black-eyed Susan already in our garden is a lovely deep orange colour and I have now managed to get a cutting of the creamy-yellow variety. It was hanging over our wall and I took several cuttings from it, potted them and now have three good healthy plants.

- *Reduce the lawn area both inside and outside on the pavement.*

I have seen lawns referred to as 'high-maintenance money pits'. Because of the water restrictions most of the people in our neighbourhood have stopped watering their lawns. Our pavement lawn for a limited time in spring

and winter is covered in *Arctotheca calendula* (Cape weed) and hundreds of minute *Romulea* which look fine. Now it resembles a very old teddy bear with large bare patches and scraggy faded brown fur.

The sub-section here is that when the weather is cooler the task will be to dig up the lawn outside and replace it with water-wise local plants. Which brings us to:

- *Introduce two great new plants; one fynbos and the other local.*

When talking to a friend she suggested that I plant some *Gnidia* because the flowers are fragrant at night – they are pollinated by moths. The common name is ‘saffron bush’ because the yellow flowers of *Gnidia deserticola* (right) were used as a source of dye for leather.

The *Epidendrum* near our front door has been attacked by a fungal disease and so it will have to be dug up and the *Gnidia* will eventually be the perfect replacement.

The local plant is *Plectranthus verticillatus* (far right) – ideal for hanging baskets which I enjoy having in the garden.



- *Continue to improve water conservation.*

I wrote about this in the previous journal. The new water regulations: watering for an hour only 3 times a week between 4pm and 9am, however, has forced me to even greater savings. I can water each section of the garden only once a week but the plants seem to be surviving.

- I could have added: start a herb garden, sort out the slugs and snails, do something organic about the pests, install a water feature – but no, let's end with:
- **Spend more time in the garden without actually gardening** which should be easy enough. I'm off now to buy the arm chair.

PEOPLE BEHIND THE PLANTS

An article in the RHS' The Garden of August 2014 written by Roy Lancaster VMH, broadcaster and member of the RHS Woody Plant Committee.



Physician, botanist and professor Sebald Justinus Brugmans (above) is today remembered in the name *Brugmansia*.

“There can be few more spectacular plants than *Brugmansia* (angel's trumpet), its branches strung with extravagant, pendent, long-tubed flowers each with a flared five-lobed mouth. Five species and many hybrids, single and double, offer a rich palette of colours from white to yellow, orange, pink and red with subtle variations in between. Members of the potato family (Solanaceae), these large shrubs or small trees with fragile, minutely downy, often suckering stems and large flabby leaves have long been cultivated in Andean regions of South America though, according to *Mabberley's Plant-Book* by David Mabberley (2008), truly wild species are no longer known there.

Familiar to Western gardeners, including Britain where they are usually grown in large containers and given greenhouse or conservatory protection in winter, *Brugmansia* can bring a real sense of the tropics. Where conditions are favourable, their flowering can stretch from late winter into autumn, year round in some areas. A large specimen in full flower has the power to stop traffic as I observed in August last year, when a double-decker bus slowed and passenger heads swivelled to admire an impressive plant of apricot-flowered *B.* 'Grand Marnier' growing in a wooden tub in a town garden.

Fanfare for a polymath

The first *Brugmansia* I ever saw (in the early 1950s) was white-flowered *B. suaveolens* in a glasshouse in my local park in Bolton. The name means 'sweet scented' and I can still remember well its sultry fragrance. Some years later I saw this same species in the foothills of the Himalaya of eastern Nepal where, as in Bhutan and neighbouring parts of India, it has long been introduced and planted as an ornamental hedge, in places escaping and naturalising. According to some authorities, *B. suaveolens* and its hybrids is the most commonly cultivated angel's trumpet, in Britain and certainly in Europe.

It was first discovered by German explorer and scientist Alexander von Humboldt with French botanist Aime Bonpland on their groundbreaking expedition to Central and South America (1799-1804). It was described by von Humboldt's countryman, botanist Carl Ludwig von Willdenow, in 1809 under the name *Datura suaveolens*.

It was the great Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus who first published the name *Datura* in his pioneering *Species Plantarum* of 1753, describing several annual herbaceous species including *D stramonium* (thorn apple). When the first South American tree-like perennial species was found, this too Linnaeus assigned to *Datura* as *D arborea*. From then on the classification - and with it the nomenclature of these plants - has yo-yoed from one genus to the other, reflecting conflicting opinions. Today; thankfully, the genera enjoy a deserved independence: *Datura* includes herbaceous or annual species with erect flowers and spine-clad capsular fruit, while *Brugmansia* covers larger, shrubby or tree-like South American species with pendent flowers and rounded, berry-like, fleshy fruit.

So, who was Brugmans? Sebald Justinus Brugmans (1763-1819) was a Dutch physician, botanist and professor in several scientific disciplines. Aged 15, Brugmans became a student at the University of Groningen, rapidly climbing the academic ladder to become, aged 22, a Professor in Astronomics, Metaphysics, Physics and Mathematics in 1785.

A year later he became Professor of Botany and Director of the Botanic Garden at Leiden University, where he was to remain until his death. From 1806-1810, the Netherlands (then occupied by France) was ruled by King Louis Bonaparte, younger brother of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, and Brugmans, among his many duties, was appointed Court Physician and member of the Privy Council. Such were the number of Brugmans' academic and other appointments that Napoleon Bonaparte called him the 'professor of everything'.

It is not clear if Brugmans had a personal interest in the genus which commemorates him. *Brugmansia* was established by Dutch botanist CH Persoon, an admirer, in 1805. Plants from early introductions may have been grown in the botanic garden glasshouses at Leiden as they are today – in large wooden containers protected in winter, then placed outdoors where their floral displays through summer are enjoyed by an admiring public.”



1 The richly coloured trumpets of *Brugmansia sanguinea*

2 A pink-flowered selection of *Brugmansia suaveolens*

3 *Brugmansia* 'Grand Marnier' bears orange-tinted flowers.

Summary of facts:

Can grow to 5m; needs fertile and moisture retentive soil; likes sunny, sheltered areas; hard prune large plants and water regularly in hot weather; toxic.

[The Editor would like to borrow issues of *The Garden* with other "People behind the Plants" articles (possibly published in 2014). Please advise Glenda if you would be willing to share.]

GENIUS OF PLANTS – NOT-SO-ANGELIC EFFECT

An article from *The Garden* written by James Wong, botanist and garden designer.

“Sitting unassumingly in local authority bedding schemes and suburban conservatories, the delicate shades and subtle perfume of ‘angel’s trumpet’ (*Brugmansia* species) belie a dark secret.

Packed with a cocktail of toxic alkaloids with powerful psychoactive effects, the leaves, flowers and fruit of this popular garden plant have been used for centuries across South America, in everything from sleeping potions to rituals of human sacrifice.

Long before the arrival of Europeans, the Muisca people of the highlands of present-day Colombia mixed the plant with tobacco and maize beer to induce a compliant, narcotic state in the wives and slaves of dead kings, in order to bury them alive with their masters. These sedative properties have been employed by indigenous Latin Americans, from the basic anaesthesia of early surgical procedures to calming unruly children.

Taken by some peoples for its hallucinogenic effects, the plant is believed by its users to be valuable to enhance divination and clairvoyance. Indeed, this belief in its revelatory powers means it has been used in preparations as diverse as the food of hunting dogs to help them track prey, and the amulets worn by ‘tomb raiders’ to uncover buried treasure.

Paradoxically, despite inducing a calm, easily suggestible outward appearance, the experience of the plant is typically more terrifying than pleasurable. Experiencing vivid, often violent hallucinations that can last for days, the user is usually unaware that what they are undergoing are hallucinations. The levels of the alkaloids differ markedly between plants, varying with the seasons and time of day, so use of the plant remains highly dangerous – there being almost no way to determine a ‘safe’ level of exposure.”

CONSERVING OUR WATER RESOURCES

Since 1 January this year, restrictions on water usage have been elevated to Level 2. Level 1 has been with us for many years although you wouldn’t know it by the amount of water that is wasted by both the public and the City.

The City’s website says:

“Restrictions applicable to all customers

- Watering (with drinking water from municipal supply) of gardens, flower beds, sports fields, parks, lawns and other open spaces are allowed only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for a maximum of one hour per premises either before 09:00 or after 16:00. This includes watering with buckets or automated sprinkler systems.
- No watering will be permitted within 24 hours of rainfall that provides adequate saturation. Facilities/customers making use of boreholes or other sources are not exempt from this.
- When watering gardens, parks, open spaces, etc. with alternative water resources (e.g. boreholes, wellpoints, grey water re-use, treated effluent water, spring water and rain water harvesting) you are encouraged to do so only before 09:00 or after 16:00 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- If alternative water sources (e.g. boreholes, wellpoints, grey water re-use, treated effluent water, spring water and rain water harvesting) are utilised, all customers must ensure that they display appropriate signage clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. See guidelines for signage below.
- Special users (e.g. golf courses and schools) can apply to the Director: Water & Sanitation for exemption from any of the above restrictions by emailing a completed Special Exemption Application form to Water.Restrictions@capetown.gov.za.
- No automatic top-up systems are allowed for swimming pools. It is recommended that all swimming pools be covered by a pool cover to avoid evaporation when not in use.
- Ornamental water fountains and water features are to be operated only by recycling the water.

Restrictions applicable to residential customers

- Washing of vehicles (including recreational vehicles and watercraft) is only allowed with hosepipes fitted with automatic self-closing devices, or with waterless products.
- No washing or hosing down of hard-surfaced or paved areas with drinking water from a tap is allowed.

- Residents are encouraged to replace all taps, showerheads and other plumbing components with water efficient parts or technologies."

These restrictions also apply to those of us who have boreholes and wellpoints. It appears that the use of grey water must also be restricted to the hours between 16:00 and 09:00. Could someone explain how or why this should be controlled?

In the Saturday Weekend Argus of 16 January Vivien Horler reviews a new book, *Building the Mother City – Cape Town 1880 – 1930* by Beatrice Law, which makes mention of "a sufficient supply of water to the City was a continuing problem, especially in dry years."

She comments on two instances, "in 1918, when water was cut for a total of 2218 hours, including up to 20 hours a day in some parts of the city at the end of summer. In April 1923 the water supply was cut from 6pm to 6am daily, watering of gardens was prohibited, and sea water was used to clean the streets." And we think we have it bad!

The best method of keeping our plants alive is to mulch, mulch and mulch again. Jenny Scarr suggests you use a coarse compost – "up to about 4" (10cm?) thick – to cover and insulate your soil. To stop the compost from blowing away, put Pine or Casuarina (the Scarrs happen to have one of these on the verge) needles on top of the compost. Bark mulch is not recommended as it draws nitrogen from the soil to decompose.

For ideas on what to use as a mulch, the following website has quite a variety of ideas: <http://www.weekendgardener.net/garden-plants/mulch-060806.htm>

We hope that you, as members of the CHS, are doing your bit to conserve this much "endangered" commodity.

A BIT OF FUN

ACROSS

- Botanically known as *Leucandendron Argenteum* and is indigenous to Table Mountain (6-4)
- Vegetables which are members of the *Liliaceae* family (6)
- Larva of the fruit fly (6)
- What you sit in at a meeting (5)
- This is commonly known as Prickly Pear (7)
- Botanically known as *Beloperone Guttata*. Has decorative rusty-red bracts (6-5)
- Deciduous climber commonly known as Chinese Trumpet. Has orange/scarlet trumpet flowers (7)
- Universal groundcover (5)
- French Breakfast is a variety of it (6)
- Australian *Acacia* grown for its bark. Used in tanning (6)
- Fragrant climbers grown annually from seed, botanically known as *Lathyrus Odoratus*. The variety Marilyn, describes them aptly (3-5-4)

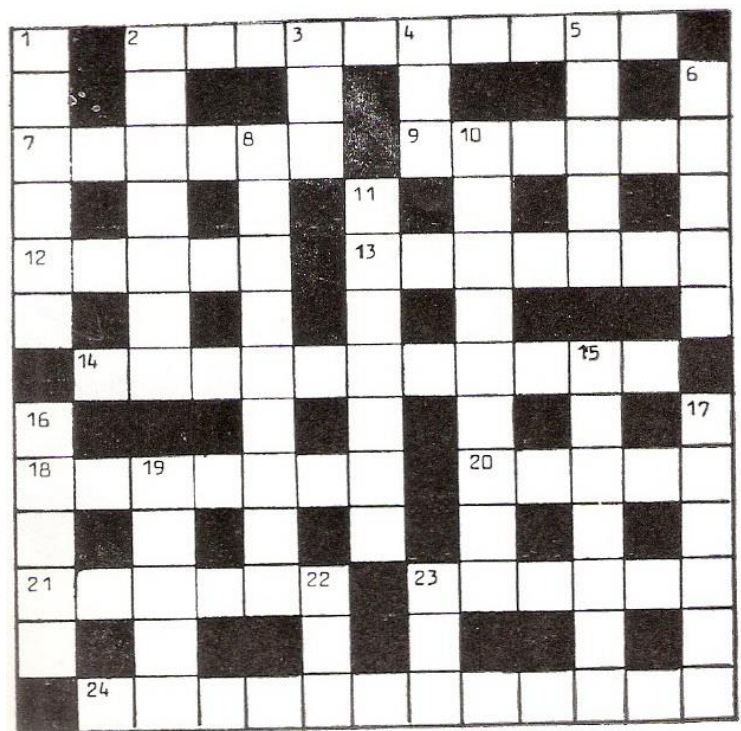
DOWN

- This Marigold is a popular winter annual (6)
- Leafy vegetable (7)
-caria are showy garden annuals producing large single flowers in red, white and blue shades (3)
- Top edge of the flower pot (3)
- Rye fungus (5)
- Mulching material, or one kind of berry (5)
- Bulbous spring bloomer, commonly known as daffodil (9)
- Perennial semi-shade loving plants which produce spurred flowers on slender stems and commonly known as Granny's bonnet (9)
- Valuable organic material every good gardener should dig into the soil regularly (7)
- Bella, is a popular slender parlour palm, botanically known as *Chamaedorea Elegans* (7)
- Fruit of the *Quercus* (5)
- Colourful summer annuals often attacked by crown borers. Perennial ones are Michaelmas Daisies (6)
- Small flying insect troublesome to us (5)
- Cut away or chop down (3)
- Willy is a dwarf variety of Sweet Williams (3)

This crossword was found in between the Classes of the Programme Schedule of the 1978 Rose and Spring Flower Show. It was drawn up by LE Edwards.

Some of the clues (plant names) may be a bit out of date, but give it a try anyway.

Answers will be given in next month's issue. If you can't wait until then, send your answers to Glenda for checking.



(Photos: J Spears, A Thorpe, Google Images, *The Garden*)