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NEXT MEETING

Mon, 6 June 2016 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

VOLCANIC GARDEN MAGIC

CHS member, Melanie Stewart, will give an illustrated talk on her 2014 visit to the annual Premier Spring Festival in New Plymouth, New Zealand. New Plymouth, on the North Island, is situated around the base of the active volcano, Mount Taranaki (also known as Mt Egmont), where plants thrive in volcanic soil, winters are mild and watering systems are unnecessary – the average rainfall is 1,432 mm annually!

Sale of Plants

As you know, at our monthly meetings we have a plant table – the CHS Nursery table. We have a select group of members who propagate or bring plants to be sold, and we are very grateful to them for their efforts in helping to boost the CHS kitty. The funds are used to defray running costs of the Society. Please continue to support this by buying these very reasonably priced plants.

At our June meeting there will be a second plant table where we are giving FOTAG (Friends of the Arderne Gardens) a chance to sell some of their excess plants for funds. A variety of Anne Bean's Begonias – *B. fuchsioides*, *B. maculate*, *B. radicans*, *B. rex* – have been propagated and will be available, as well as *Koelreuteria paniculata* and others. You are advised to bring enough cash to support both these plant tables and make the most of the bargains on offer!

IDing of Plants

We always have a wonderful array of flowers freshly picked from members' gardens – some known and some unknown. When you bring your plants please remember to place a note next to them giving *your* name, the *plant's* name or your question about the plant. This will help Jenny, or whoever stands in for her, to impart as much knowledge as they possibly can about each specimen. We try hard to record some of these in the monthly newsletter, so having the name of the grower would help when more information is required.

OUTINGS

Sat, 4 June at 08:30: We will visit the Woodstock Peace Garden, which is a partnership between Co-Creators Landscaping (the managers), the Alpha School (for learners with autism) and the Woodstock community. This will be followed by a walk around Co-Creators' Bruce Beyer's own garden. Limited to 25 members. RSVP to Glenda by 2 June 2016.

WELCOME TO ...

... new members who have joined us since the beginning of this year: Debbie, Bonny and David-Phillip Feldman, Louise Kinrade, Hanne Moll Christensen, Dirk Muller, Bonita Francklin, Moira and Jan Truter, Sue Kingma and the Valerga family – Jeremy, Josca, Joshua, Caleb and Benjamin; as well as Doreen Daubermann, Genevieve White and Lindsay Hooper who have returned to the fold after a time away.

We trust your time with the CHS will be mutually beneficial and that you find much pleasure in joining in with what we have to offer.

REPORT BACK

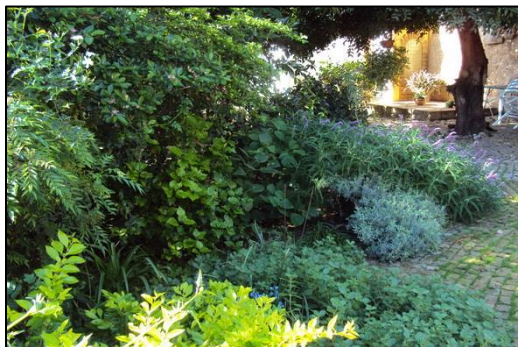
Our Stroll Through 3 Algarvian Gardens – Part 1

Burford Hurry, President of Mediterranean Gardening Association of Portugal, took us on an outing – much like our monthly visits – to see three of their members' gardens and how they have adapted to their very dry climate. We'll start off with Burford's small garden which has a number of levels and a river running through it, out to the sea. This is what Burford has to say about each of the pictures on page 2:

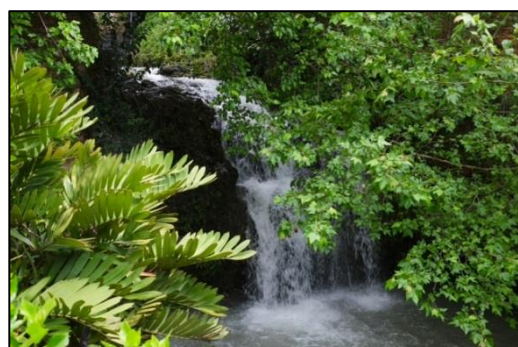
"Salvia and deck (left, pg 2): the *Salvia leucantha* is quite prominent – a cutting I brought back from Hermanus years ago. That is a small curry tree, *Murraya koenigii*, on the left of the photo. Part of the shrubbery on the left is made up of the pink *Grewia occidentalis*, which does well here on little water.

The lounge in autumn (below, centre): the small tree is a *Citharexylum spinosum* – flowers throughout the summer – insignificant flowers but nice perfume – and attractive leaves; the mauve flowers in front are *Hypoestes aristata* (brought back from Johannesburg) and provide a nice splash of colour in the autumn.

View from deck (below, right): looking down on the old Portuguese concrete tiles a *Plumbago capensis*, 'Cape Royal' the dark blue form, cascades down the right of the photo. It looks glorious in summer and there is a *Chamaedorea seifrizii* palm with its roots in continually damp soil on the left. The large tree in the background is a carob, *Ceratonia siliqua*, and the smaller one in front of it is an unnamed *Pittosporum*.



Water fall (below, left): a *Zamia furfuracea* is on the left and a white mulberry tree and a plane tree frame the water fall (we have had some glorious late rains – buckets of it – and 'my' river really did try to emulate the Victoria Falls. This photo was taken on 13th May).



Lycoris aurea (left, centre) flowering in autumn under one of my lemon trees.

(Left) The star of the show is a hybrid aloe from Natal – I call her a *Mina lobata* aloe because her flowers remind me of that little climber."

Burford presented the Society with the beautifully

illustrated and informative new English translation of Olivier Filippi's book, *Planting Design for Dry Gardens*.

111th AGM: This was attended by 53 members and 10 visitors. Apologies were received from 14 members.



Our Chair's Report:

We had as interesting a mix of talks and outings as we had in 2014. The year started with Loubie Rusch enthraling us with her passion for cooking with indigenous plants, explaining that there are many plants that are available at nurseries, but are not much known for their edible aspects, as well as some wild plants that are not in cultivation yet, such as *Carissa macrocarpa*, *Dovyalis caffra*, *Eriocephalus africanus*, *Portulacaria afra*, and *Tulbaghia violacea* that many of us already know or might have in our gardens. All the plants she gathers are made into a meal, a marmalade, a cordial, or a relish. You name it she can make it.

In March, Elmarie de Bruyn, who is the marketing director of HERBS-APLENTY (PTY) LTD, based in the Overberg, focussed on organic herbs – fresh herbs, dried botanicals, volatile oils and natural cosmetics.

Elmarie said she is fortunate to work with organic botanicals as she has a love for natural plant ingredients - her first love being lavenders.

In April Dr Roger Stewart spoke to us about William Burchell (1781 – 1863) who is remembered in South African botany in the indigenous plants that bear his name and for his botanical manuscripts, books and massive collections of herbarium specimens.

Last year's AGM was graced by Marijke Honig, whose latest book, *Plant Palettes*, provides a practical approach to indigenous plant selection, as the choosing and arranging of plants is by no means straight forward, demanding careful thought when planning your garden.

In June Marion Whitehead gave us some useful tips on how best to find and see our spring flowers - such as turn your back on the sun, walking with the sun behind you so the flowers face you.

In July we suffered the horrors of bureaucracy along with David Davidson as he detailed his woes when trying to get our flowers released for display at 2015 Chelsea Show.

August saw The French Connection working as Marianne Alexander gave a 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 inspiration of 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.

In September we walked with Jenny Scarr through Spring in England and Wales. She included visits to The Lost Gardens of Heligan, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the Sky Garden in the City of London, Tatton Park in Cheshire, Bodnant Gardens in North Wales and the Chester Zoo which houses three National Collections – orchids (Pleurothallidinae), Nepenthes, and cacti.

October saw us being introduced to the structures of Soils and Composts by Morné Faulhamer of Super Plants.

He made important points about soil's air filled porosity (air in compact soil), its wettability (how quickly is water absorbed) and its water holding capacity.

He also gave us a jar test to determine our soil type using this recipe:

3 cups water (distilled)
1 cup soil
Shake

In November Jenny Scarr's Spring ride around England and Wales was followed up by the showing of the video about the rescue of the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

Our thanks to Jenny Scarr who runs the Speaker Portfolio.

The year was rounded off with a very enjoyable pre-Festival party.

Committee member Cherise Viljoen contributes vigorously with excellent ideas for outings which were spread around visits to private gardens, business gardens, and public gardens:

The Gravel Garden in Somerset West

The Constantia gardens of Desmond and Linda Pollard and Marilyn Noakes; and member, Bernice Mallet.

Other visits have included the Namib Succulent Nursery on the R27; the upgraded Company's Garden in town; the herb garden at Allée Bleue Franschoek and Ina Paarman's garden; the Stellenbosch Botanical Garden with curator Martin Smit and the Compton Herbarium at Kirstenbosch.

Other events include becoming involved with the Vera School for Autistic Learners with a donation of fertilizer, compost, chicken manure and 2 Hibiscus plants – bought from the proceeds of our year-end party – as well as a number of plants that the Scarrs had grown on for them

The CHS is now officially a member of Mediterranean Gardening International which provides opportunities for members to meet and share information about waterwise and wildlife-friendly gardening using plants compatible with a Mediterranean climate.

The CHS Book Prizes awarded to students of horticulture at CPUT for attaining the highest marks in 2014 were:

Sihle Ngxabi (1st year), Barbara Louw (2nd year), Megan Blatchford (3rd year) and Joshua Butcher (BTech).

We acquired a laptop which has worked well with the Athenaeum equipment.

During the year we have been the recipient of book donations which were either sold for funds or passed on to a library of a more worthy cause.

In July we entered the world of Facebook.

Our Flower and Garden Show suffered under the weather and, unfortunately, we made a loss notwithstanding the Herculean efforts of Wilma Tindall and Rod and Melanie Stewart, and all the stalwarts who helped. The Annual

Plant Sale fortunately made a healthy profit which covered this loss and more. More thanks are due to the Stewarts, Kirstenbosch and the many members who provided plants.

Sadly our long standing Honorary Member Sara Pascal passed away on 12 Feb 2016 and we will miss her.

I have already handed out some bouquets and thanks on your behalf but there are some more that are necessary.

Thanks to Anne Bean for her continued Presidency of the Society; to Henry Diesveld who ably looks after our budget and the books; and to Bill Elder and Rod Stewart, for looking after our technical needs which fortunately are now few and far between; to Jane Robertson who loves to go to find the monthly Raffle plant and who curates the CHS Nursery (assisted by Cherry Mann) with plants that so many members bring to the sale table every Monday; to Jenny Scarr who also puts her vast professional knowledge at members' feet at the Plant Table. Thanks also to Melanie Stewart who, together with Rod, organises the Annual Flower Show, Plant Sale and the Christmas Party. Also to Vicki Hitzeroth, Bill Elder, and Errol Scarr who weigh in with sage advice at our noisy and often merry monthly meetings.

Grateful thanks also to Glenda Thorpe, our organizational wizard who prepares agendas, writes letters, and keeps the Minute Book and tries to keep the Committee members, myself included, in touch with reality.

I offer sincere thanks to all members who give their time, hard work, inspiration and perspiration in propagating plants for The Nursery, who are willing growers for, and helpers at, the Plant Sale and ungrudgingly assist at our Flower and Garden Show.

Our team of 12 ladies (Myra, Wilma, Judi, Angela, Janet, Jackie, Elwyn, Jenny, Anne, Vicki, Heidi and Joy) take turns to organise the tea at meetings – so to them, many many thanks.

And last, but not least, as always, our grateful thanks must go to Guy Carter for placing his vast accounting experience at our disposal as auditor.

When you refuse to open your garden for members' visits, just remember Ruth Draper's words:

'As a matter of fact, you know I am rather sorry you should see the garden now, because alas! It's not looking at its best. Oh it doesn't *compare* to what it was last year'."

Our Treasurer's Report:

"The Audited Financial Statements for the year ending 29 February 2016 have already been circulated, so I won't go into any detail.

INCOME STATEMENT

The deficit of R4876 is lower than the R6100 forecast this time last year.

BALANCE SHEET

The financial position of the Society remains healthy with Accumulated Funds of R97 202. The Society's Arderne Gardens Centenary Project account has finally been closed with the completion of the labelling of trees in the garden.

The Society's investments consist of a unit trusts portfolio. (48% in the Allan Gray's Balanced fund and 45% in the Coronation's Strategic Income Fund with the balance in the AG money market fund). The market value of this investment was R131 767

BUDGET 2016 – 2017

A budget has been drawn up based on the expected income and expenditure, and shows an expected loss of R5000 for the next financial year. This figure can change substantially being very dependent on the success or otherwise of the show and annual plant sale.

In closing I would like to thank Guy Carter for auditing the Society's accounts and for his assistance and guidance in preparing the financial statements.

As a token of the Society's appreciation for the hours he devoted to finding my R146 error in the audit this year, we ask Guy to accept this small gift."

Your Committee:

The present incumbents were re-elected for the ensuing year and Susan Armstrong was elected as a new member to the Committee.

Honorary Life Membership

The meeting ended with our Chairman bestowing Honorary Life Membership on Adam Harrower. As space is limited this month, there will be a report back on this in the next issue.

Annual Book Prize Presentation

Each year we award a book prize and a year's membership to the top horticultural students in their year. The winners for the 2015 year are Sihle Ngxabi (2nd Year), Shaheed Roos (3rd Year) and Shain Butt (BTech). Our congratulations to all of them.

Sihle, who was also the recipient of a prize last year, was unable to be present at the AGM.

Shaheed (right, with Michael and Cherise) was there to receive *his* prize. Having attained 76% at the end of last year, he tells us that this is how he came to be studying horticulture:

"Sometimes you are not born with a dream or a calling, but sometimes the people around you inspire you and they instil in you that something you can only describe as a passion."

I was playing in the garden when I must have been about seven or eight years old when my grandfather called me over and told me to make a small furrow in the soil. He then put some French marigold seeds in my hand and told me to sow them then close it gently with the soil. I then went on my way forgetting about what I have just done. It was not until about a week later when he took me to the same spot in the garden and showed me the little seedlings standing there all in a straight line like soldiers in the army. And that was it! That is how it all started, that one magical moment, a memory printed in my mind forever. Ever since that moment I followed my grandfather to the garden every time he went outside and he showed me different types of bulbs and seeds and how to grow vegetables and herbs. He has since passed away and never got to see me try to fulfil my dream of becoming a horticulturist.

You see, after I matriculated I went into the admin field for many years and it was not until three years ago when by chance a pamphlet from the University blew against my leg on a windy day. I read it, saw the details about the Horticulture course and decided right there and then that this is a sign and now is the time – and the rest is history.

After completing my B-tech year I would like to do my masters and hopefully fulfil the requirement to achieve my doctorate, God willing. I would like to do research on the propagation of Rare Southern African plants by using tissue culture. Until then I have a lot of hard work ahead of me but my head is in the right space so I think I will get there slowly but surely."

We wish him well with the goals he has set for himself.

Shain Butt was also not able to be present at the AGM as he is, at present, working in Kenya – but more about him – and Sihle – next month.



JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER –MAY/JUNE 2016

When, in April, I eventually got round to paying our family subscription to the C H S, I could not remember how much to pay so I paid R160.00 as I had done last year. I was soon informed by Glenda that I still needed to pay R20.00 as the subs had gone up. With the price of everything rising at the moment, a thought passed through my mind: does the Society pay its way?

The fascinating talk on the trees of the Arderne Gardens by Adam Harrower at the May meeting soon convinced me that we were getting more than our money's worth. For one thing it made me look around at the many trees planted across Cape Town: both by the City and by the local inhabitants. Just one instance of this is an open piece of ground along the Liesbeeck Parkway opposite Starke Ayres Garden Centre. The next time you are nearby take a look. Milner Road South near where we live is lined with these evergreen trees with handsome trunks and high canopies of dark green leaves (right, above). So this month I thought that we would wander a little way from our garden and look at some interesting trees in the neighbourhood.

We walk our daughter's dog in Keurboom Park and the adjacent grounds of Rondebosch Boys' High School. These poor trees sit above the Primary School sports field and are a perfect example of the vagaries of growing trees on the Cape Peninsula (right, below). In contrast right next door to these wind blasted



specimens, is this pretty tree (right).

In the Park itself I found this visually appealing plant – *Nuxia floribunda* (Forest Elder) which lives up to its name. The flowers are wonderful: small and white in dense showy masses covered in early morning dew. I'm sure the insects must love them (second from top).

At the road entrance to Rondebosch school near the swimming pool there is the *Sideroxylon inerme* (White milkwood, third from top). This handsome evergreen guards the entrance with its lovely spreading canopy of dark green glossy leaves. The bark is almost black with a pleasant rectangular pattern. In the *Veld and Flora* magazine of someone wrote in a letter - how a row of milkwoods stopped a fire dead in its tracks behind her beach cottage. (Both these trees were available for sale in the Kirstenbosch Plant Fair catalogue of 2014). Both these trees can also be grown from seed. (Johnson & Johnson)

The reason I know the names of these trees is that Adam Harrower has been very busy naming them in both Keurboom Park and Rondebosch Boys' High.

The tree in my garden that I would like to recommend is *Acokanthera oppositifolia* (Bushman's poison). It is very suitable for a small garden: it grows to about 3m (fourth from top). It has hard glossy, dark green leaves. The tree is covered in sweetly scented cream-white flowers with a pink tinge in spring. They attract butterflies to the garden. The tree bears fleshy red fruit which turns black with age. The tree has a reputation for being poisonous and was used by the Koisans for their arrows, so the sticky milky sap is to be avoided. The fruits are supposed to be edible but I have never tried them. The birds also ignore them. (I used David and Sally Johnson's *Gardening with indigenous trees and shrubs* to check up on my facts).

There are of course many other reasons for staying with the CHS. I also enjoyed the talk about Mediterranean gardens in the Algarve region of Portugal. In my next life I am going to return as the owner of a small manageable garden with a stream running through it. The recent visit to Vergelegen was also a CHS highlight. I can add a story not mentioned in the report back in last month's newsletter. When the Barlow family owned the estate the slave bell was not the original one placed there by Willem Adrian van der Stel. It was on the next door farm and the owner would not sell it. Years later a friend of the Barlow's found the original bell on an auction, bought it and returned it to its original home. We were also shown a yellowwood tree surrounded by all the offspring.

Last month I wrote about the wonders of autumn and to end with, this glorious picture of a creeper covering the ugly railway fence near Rondebosch station (right).



ITEMS OF INTEREST

Hermanus Flower Festival – Fynbos and Fire: Early notice is given for this event which will take place from 22-25 September at the Fernkloof Nature Reserve from 09:00 – 17:00. Entrance fee: R20

The Hive at Kew Gardens: This new attraction, from June 2016, will have visitors exploring the vital role of bees and other pollinators in feeding the planet. Find out more from. <http://www.kew.org/about/press-media/press-releases/hive-comes-kew-gardens>

NOTICEBOARD

Lost property: Did you leave an item of clothing at our April meeting? If you did, please contact Glenda to get it back.

Flower and Garden Show – 3 & 4 Sept: Do you have a product to sell? Reduced rates for members. For more information, contact Wilma on 083-645-2468 or at katetindall@telkomsa.net

(Photos: Burford Hurry and Ze Pascoal, Glenda Thorpe and Peter Henshall)