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NEXT MEETING

Mon, 5 September 2016 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

Dr Mariana Smith is the Certification Officer and General Manager for Ecocert. They are a certification body for sustainable development in southern Africa. Their services include organic inspection and certification, training in organic agriculture, inspection in organic cosmetics, green spaces, UTZ, fair trade & corporate social responsibility. Ecocert Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd also offers third party inspections in southern Africa to organisations which require outside auditors to conduct inspections.

Dr Smith's talk is entitled

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION AND BIODIVERSITY

As we know, one of the buzz words nowadays is Biodiversity. Other buzz words are organic farming and organic certification. One often wonders if a producer can really sustain biodiversity if they plough out natural vegetation to produce food or feed crops? Why is organic agriculture seen as sustainable? Is it only possible to certify agriculture and processed products as organic?

If these questions have ever crossed your mind, this is the presentation you will want to hear. Dr Smith will also explain why Rooibos is one of the more eco-friendly crops and tell us a bit about plant oil extracts.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHS Flower and Garden Show – Sat, 3 Sept from 11am to 5pm and Sun, 4 Sept from 10am to 4pm

- The show flyer, which gives you all the details, is attached for you to distribute to family, friends and neighbours.
- On the outside grassed area you will find a group of friendly and knowledgeable stallholders ready to engage in conversation about their product or plants. You will have the choice of:
 - A good variety of well grown succulent plants – some quite rare – at very reasonable prices
 - A good mix of exotic and indigenous and fynbos plants
 - Indigenous bulbs and rare *Vireya* shrubs from Cape Seed and Bulb
 - Lush herb and vegetable plants and seedlings
 - *Fuchsias*, *bromeliads*, *tillandsia*, carnivorous plants, saplings, yellow *Clivia* plants
 - Stylish furniture made from recycled plastic or recycled pallets
 - Hen coups, rabbit hutches and a wide variety of wooden planters
 - Interesting growbags and planters for vertical gardening – visit www.plantup-za.co.za
 - Advice on permaculture, hydroponics, compost and fertilisers
 - Driftwood ornaments, metal and stone birds, garden ornaments, basket work, bird feeders and carved wooden puzzles
 - Olives, delicious olive products and homemade drinks.

CHS Plant Sale – Sat, 15 October from 10am to 2pm

WELCOME TO ...

... Sr Joanne Petersen, who signed up as a member at our last meeting. We hope her association with us will last for many years.

REPORT BACK

IPPS exchange student

CHS member, Megan Blatchford, first came to the attention of the CHS in her 1st year at CPUT in 2012 when she was awarded a prize for attaining the highest marks for that semester. She continued to achieve the highest marks for her 2nd and 3rd years at CPUT, receiving the CHS Annual Book Prize each year. She went on to complete her BTech through UNISA during 2015, while working, and we were pleased to hear that she had graduated. Well done! Megan's talk on her visit to see how the Australians did things was also well presented.

August plant table

Members proved that gardens do not have to be dull and boring during winter. This is what was brought in. The suburb in which they are grown is shown in {curly brackets}.

1. *Lachenalia* {Pinelands} – [Hyacinthaceae] Common name: Cape Cowslip. Essentially plants of Southern Namaqualand and Western Cape. Can occur in dense stands of hundreds or thousands. Favour open sunny habitats often on rock sheets.

Species are very variable in both foliage and flower. Leaves often banded or mottled.

Almost all species are pollinated by bees, except those with tubular flowers (*bulbifera*, *reflexa*, *aloides*, *rubida* and *viridiflora*) which are pollinated by sunbirds!

Very easy to grow and an ideal pot or container plant.

They start to flower in May, one of the earliest bulb groups to flower, filling a drab season in the garden. Just keep dry in summer!

Hybrid *Lachenalias* are prone to viruses, which the species are not prone to.

2. *Chasmanthe* {Pinelands} – [Iridaceae] Common name: Cobra Lily. Western to Eastern Cape (Transkei) in forest margins.

Orange seeds thought to be bird dispersed. Flowers are pollinated by sunbirds.

C. floribunda Duckittii: the tallest at over 1m and a pretty pale yellow flower.

C. floribunda: the largest species, stems can exceed 1m. Orange flower. Flowers July to September.

C. bicolor: from the Robertson district, but now extinct in nature. Flowers in August. Just under 1m in height.

C. aethiopica: This is the shortest at 50-60 cms tall. Darling to Eastern Cape. The earliest flowering from May to July. Seeds have fleshy outer covering eaten by birds.

3. *Clivia x cyrtanthiflora* {Rosebank}

4. *Tulbaghia fragrans*: good for front of a flower bed or border. {Lakeside}

5. *Leucospermum reflexum* {Lakeside}

6. *Lavatera arboria*: Makes a nice big shrub. Does self-seed. {Kirstenhof}

7. Mid-winter *Salvia* selection {Kirstenhof}



Clockwise from left: *Clivia cyrtanthiflora*; *Lachenalia splendida*; *Lachenalia quadricolour*; *Chasmanthe floribunda Duckittii*; *Chasmanthe aethiopica*



Clockwise from above:

Tulbaghia fragrans – lavender and pink;
Leucospermum reflexum;
Lavatera arboria;
 mixed *Salvias*



Camellia Crazy

Wow! What a treat awaited the group that visited the garden of the late Mary Muller two weekends ago. Her son, Dirk, tells us the story of the garden.

"My Mom started the garden in 1938. The property was initially silver tree woodland. They thrive on granite south facing slopes. When my parents moved in to Greystones the silvertrees had been displaced by wattle and pine. Every year she did a new piece of construction in the garden. It took 18 months to clear the bush, level the ground, and plant the long lawn which ends with two Camellias and a Hawthorne tree. The tennis court was constructed in 1949 after she had stopped playing international tennis. Each year she extended the garden. She believed in creating "rooms" each of which contained different plantings.

When I moved into Greystones it was a jungle. You could not see the view. It took me about 2 years to clean up. This involved removing many of the large trees thus allowing sunlight to penetrate. I don't have a borehole so the shrubs and trees have to survive the hot dry and windy summer months without water. Fortunately I have only lost one Camelia. Herbaceous borders and green lawns are not possible and in summer my lawn goes brown.

Last year we dug up the gravel court and have converted it into a garden. This has been a great success and with each passing year it will improve. There are many more projects which I will initiate over the years.

Many people hire a landscaper and plant "instant" gardens. Mine has been a gradual process spanning nearly 80 years of plant collecting from nurseries and plant enthusiasts."

The granite boulders make a wonderful backdrop for the Arums, Leucadendrons, Aloes and Ericas et al (photos 1 and 2); the old tennis court (photo 3). We are very glad Dirk is continuing his mother's legacy.





Dirk kindly allowed us to pick the Camellia blooms because there was an abundance of them and it was also a way of "pruning the trees". We, naturally, did not need a second invitation. Above are some of the arrangements made of the Camellia haul. Contributors are Hannie, Isabella, Glenda, Debbie, Bonny and Angela.

Members also took cuttings, so we would like to hear from them, at some stage, how their Camellias are doing.

Visit to the Deep South

We visited two gardens: Kathy Fish's garden, Pooh Corner, straddling the Goeiehoop River in Noordhoek is lush and green while CHS member, Alison James' Simon's Town garden bakes in the sun and is buffeted by the elements. Photos left to right: *Andrea and Melanie getting friendly with Pooh Corner's scarecrow; Alison leading the way up her mountainside and tyre 'pots' with the only veg she can grow – celery.*



JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER –AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2016

The *Cape Times* recently reviewed a book *Journal of an Irish Garden from amateur to open garden* by Rachel Darlington. The review recommended *Unglamorous gardener* on YouTube where she gives gardening advice and shows videos of a very glamorous garden. I have watched some of these and her delightful Irish accent is immediately appealing. Rachel Darlington wandered around her garden showing many colourful local flowers and plants from the Mediterranean. One plant she introduced was from South Africa: a *Diascia* specially bred for colder climates. Another was an ...umm – the name had disappeared into outer space. This I fully appreciated as my garden is overflowing with umms. (More about these later). The book is made up of a collection of monthly articles that she has written for the *Irish Gardener* over the last 14 years. One article in the book is about trees planted to mark the birth of children – I wish we had done this. On our trip to Turkey we saw many of these 'birthday' trees dotting the countryside. To quote from the review: 'This book tells funny and down-to-earth tales of the disasters, plans and happy triumphs we all experience when growing plants on whatever scale.' Rachel Darlington can also be found at *Gardening at Douentza*. (*Cape Times* August 12 2016).

Next I'd like to follow-up on what I wrote about *Lachenalia* last month. We found *Lachenalia reflexa* (yellow soldiers) growing profusely in the grass verge of a neighbour. It is fascinating how many different types of *Lachenalia* there are. *L. reflexa* is very small – only 5-10cm with a yellowish-green inflorescence. The grass had been mown and so they were struggling to flower. They grow profusely in the damper areas on Rondebosch Common. (Terry Trinder-Smith *Wild Flowers of the Table Mountain National Park*) When I went to the Common to photograph them, they had all gone and there was only this specimen left from the verge of our neighbour (right, above). *L. reflexa* is one of those South African plants that were introduced into South Western Australia that has turned



into a noxious weed. The yellow soldier is running rampant through the Bushveld of Australia. I found a site for *L. reflexa* where people record their sightings of the plant! There were also some Australian sites which told of the devastation this tiny plant is causing. It is in the top 10 of the most unwanted plant list.

Now we come to an ...umm. I bought this *Lachenalia* (right, below) when we visited the Clanwilliam Flower Show some years ago. One important lesson I have learnt since starting to write this journal is to make sure that I record the name of the plant; for my own interest as well as for you, the reader. If anyone knows its name I'll be pleased to hear from you.



Spring is slowly showing its face in our garden. The *Oxalis* has just begun to flower. A few years ago I bought a packet of small 10mm bulbs at the Kirstenbosch Plant Sale and they have spread to the far corners of the garden (left). Again we have another ...umm. They have leaves divided into 3 heart-shaped leaflets. The plant is spread by runners and, as can be seen, forms a dense carpet. Does anyone have any ideas as to its name? *Oxalis pes-caprae* (Geelsuring) with its canary yellow flowers is growing in wonderful profusion on our neighbour's neglected verge. It is considered to be a weed but I enjoy its profusion and bright colour. (John Manning *Field Guide to Fynbos*) Last year in London I saw a very similar plant growing in neglected gardens in Tooting. In one there was a guy happily sunbathing amongst the yellow flowers.

When we visited Rondebosch Common last week spring was much in evidence and so I shall leave you this month with some pictures. Umm – *Protea scolymocephala*? which once used to grow on the Common was re-introduced, and this is the only one to survive (below, left). We also saw a field of daisies (below, centre) and a wonderful crop of Arum lilies *Zantedeschia aethiopica* (below, right).



ARBOUR DAY

This takes place on 2 September. Last year we asked members to collect trees for charity. These were obtained free from Stodels for a bag of newspapers. Stodels usually has a choice of trees on the day. Our idea is to donate these trees to a charity of your choice. There must be many areas that could do with a bit of greening.

If you do not know of an organization that could benefit from having a few trees, please bring your tree to our 5 September meeting and members can help themselves to trees for their charity.

NOTICEBOARD FOR ITEMS OF INTEREST

Visitors Guide: Flower Route: You may remember the talk Marion Whitehead gave us last year about how to follow the Spring flowers. This talk has turned into a book and is now available to order online at <http://www.mapstudio.co.za/product/visitors-guide-flower-route/> for R195.

Visitors Guide: Flower Route (MapStudio) by Marion Whitehead is packed with useful information, from the best scenic back roads for flower spotting to fascinating facts about our fabulous floral heritage, plus photo tips. Places of interest for each region (West Coast, Namaqualand, Cape Peninsula and Overberg) are highlighted, as well as recommended eat, stay and play options. Clear colour maps make navigation simple and a selection of flower photos assist in identification. A4 x 68 pages. Order direct from 0860 10 5050 or www.mapstudio.co.za

Arderne Gardens Walk: On the 1st Saturday of every month at 10:00, you can take a guided walk through the gardens for a fee of R40. For more information, contact FOTAG Secretary Rose Meny-Gibert on 021-761-9697 or Harold Mills on 021-794-6242.

Hermanus Flower Festival: This takes place from Thurs, 22 to Sun, 25 September at the Fernkloof Nature Reserve from 09:00 – 17:00. Following the Fires in Fernkloof Nature Reserve in December, their theme for this year will be "Fynbos & Fire". Entrance fee: R20 R10 for pensioners on Pensioner's day, Thursday 22nd September

MPG and MGi events in 2017: Visiting France in May next year? Mediterranean Plants and Gardens are organizing a tour, based in Avignon, from 5 to 10 May. For anyone wanting to stay on, Mediterranean Gardening International have put together a short tour, *Art and Gardens*, from 10 to 13 May in Aix-en-Provence.

If you are interested in finding out more, ask Glenda for the details.

Cape Town Flower Show – 27 to 30 October: This event will take place at the Castle of Good Hope. To find out more visit www.capetownflowershow.co.za



(Photos: Isabella Hayden, Debbie Feldman, Hannie van Wieringen, Angela O'Connor-Smith, Peter and Heather Henshall, Andrew and Glenda Thorpe)