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CHS PARTY!

Monday, 5 December 2016 at 19:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

"It's time for fantastic food, excellent company AND some of our Chairman's splendid Christmas cake again ... at our annual CHS Christmas party. Please diarise this date and note the change in time.

Members bring a dish they enjoy making, so we always have the most marvellous meal, with starters such as a choice of pate and biscuits or bread, and salads, vegetables, chicken or beef dishes – and ending, of course, with an incredible spread of divine and decadent desserts!

Do let me know what you'd like to bring and how many will be coming – the party is always the perfect opportunity to get together with other members and have time for a proper chat, while enjoying an absolutely delicious spread...

Look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes: *Melanie* (082 550 2618 / 021 788 2840 / rsp@telkomsa.net)"

There will be a nominal charge of **R20 per person**, which will include a draw in the raffle. The proceeds will go towards purchasing compost etc for the upgrading of the Athenaeum garden. (More about this in January.)

2017 MEETINGS

To whet your appetite, the following talks have been lined up for the early part of next year. They are all subject to change, of course, but your monthly CHS News will give you details, as always.

- Beauties and Beasts
- Sustainable gardening
- 25 years of Weekend Argus gardening
- A garden in South Devon which has Gilbert and Sullivan connections
- Something interesting from Ernst van Jaarveld
- Chelsea

REPORT BACK

November plant table:

Jenny reminded everyone to fill in the piece of paper (available on the table) stating your name, suburb and the name of the plant (if known) and putting it next to your specimen. Having this information helps with her identification of each flower and also for reporting in the newsletter.

The following plants were on display:

Ochna arborea – "Mickey Mouse Bush" – grows naturally from George eastwards. Other smaller growing species are *O serrulata* and *O natalitia*. Slow grower.

Salvia canariensis (pink) and *S discolor* (black flowers) – not partial to well water.

Arthropodium cirratum (Asparagus family) – "Rock lily", "New Zealand Rock Lily" or "Rengarenga"; endemic to NZ. Rhizomes are edible when cooked and used way back by Maori folk as food. (Photo 1)

Hemerocallis – "Day lilies" – hybrids are difficult to identify unless you check the website of the nursery you brought it from. Shorter forms are now available; reasonably drought tolerant, but possibly would not survive without water.

Polygala virgata – prolific self-seeder.

Silene glauca(?) – will thrive where it's dry and sandy; comes in deep pink, pale pink and almost white.

Verbascum – prolific self-seeder.

Bauhinia bowkeri (indigenous) – summer rainfall plant so watch the watering

Mackaya bella – shade loving indigenous climber/rambler



Iris foetidissima from Britain. Mainly grown for the bright red seeds when the pod opens up in winter. Probably brought by birds eating fleshy seed and depositing seed in the garden! (Photo 2)

Liriodendron tulipifera – “Tulip Tree” – no relation to our *Thespesia acutiloba*. Native to America and is a member of the Magnolia family. (Photo 3)

Psychotria capensis – A rounded evergreen shrub or small tree, 3-8 m, with a slender stem, horizontal branches, pale brown bark and large, glossy, dark green leaves. It occurs in forests & coastal dune bush. Golden yellow flowers are borne in flattish, terminal branched heads up to 80 mm in diameter from spring to midsummer (August to January). The flowers are followed in late summer to winter (January to July) by large, flat clusters of pea-sized, shiny yellow fruits ripening to red or black. A very decorative plant in the garden, with flowers or fruit throughout most of the year, it makes an excellent focal plant. Attracts birds. Easily cultivated. A good container plant. Does not handle frost well, but is waterwise. A fast grower. Grows equally well in sunny or shady areas, in all soils. [<http://witbos.co.za/plant.aspx?plant=psychotria-capensis>] Can cope with lots of competition. (Photo 4)

Cuphea micropetala – “Mexican Giant Cigar Plant” – a genus of about 260 spp native to warm areas of America viz. Mexico; grows up to 1m; likes a good well drained soil and is a rhizomatous perennial. Takes sun but not midday heat. Flowers summer /autumn; good for butterflies (and hummingbirds – possibly Sunbirds here!). (Photo 5)

Helichrysum 'Icicles' thianschianum – “Liquorice Plant” – from dry parts of central Asia; low evergreen shrubby perennial 30 – 40 cms. Drought tolerant anything with narrow, reduced leaves is going to be very good at coping with hot, dry climates. Flowers early to mid-summer. Attracts bees and butterflies. Full sun, good drainage. (Photo 6)

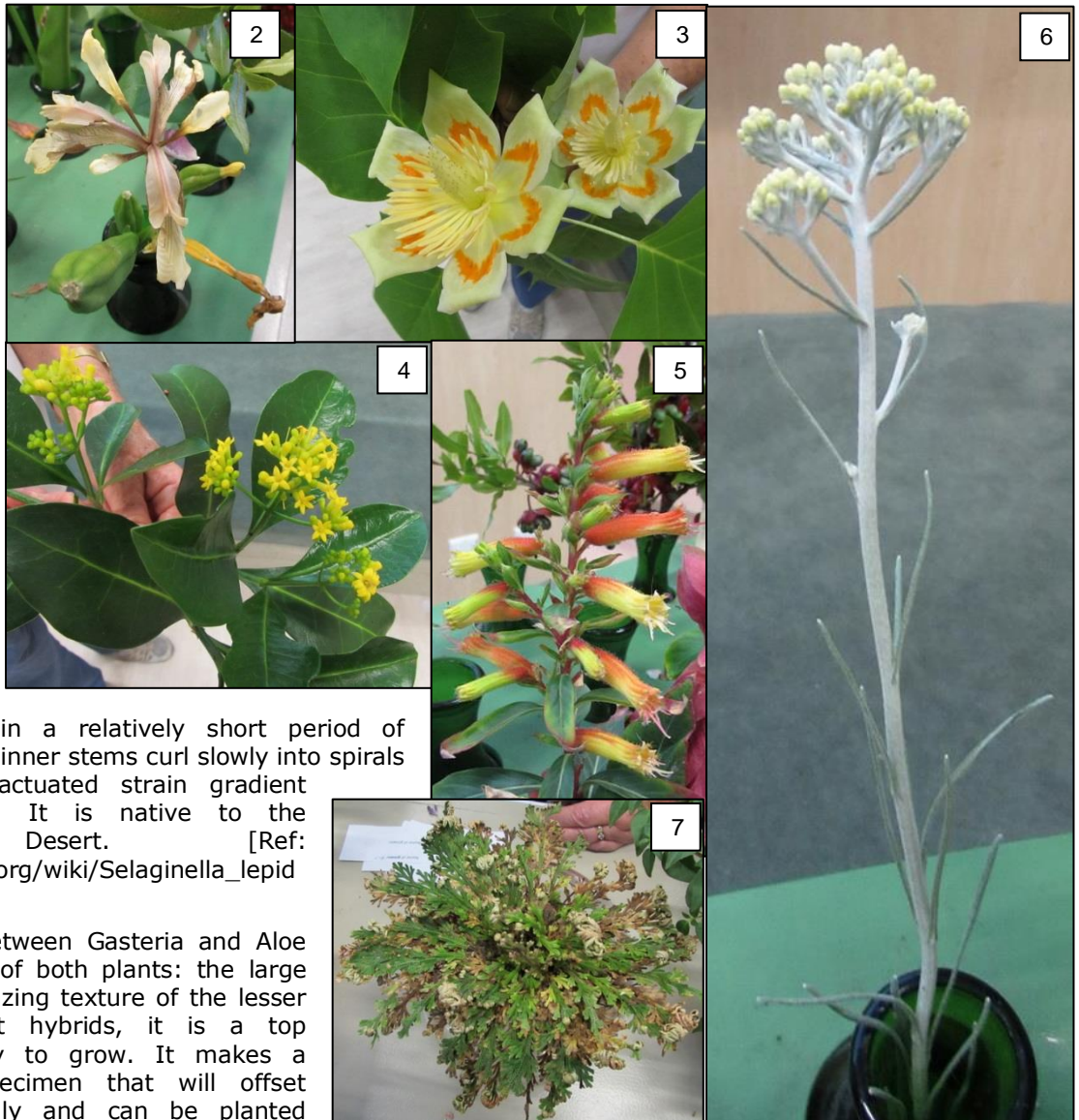
Selaginella lepidophylla (syn. *Lycopodium lepidophyllum*) is a species of desert plant in the spikemoss family (Selaginellaceae).

S. lepidophylla is noted for its ability to survive almost complete desiccation; during dry weather in its native habitat, its stems curl into a tight ball and uncurl only when exposed to moisture. The outer stems of *Selaginella lepidophylla* bend

into circular rings in a relatively short period of desiccation, whereas inner stems curl slowly into spirals due to the hydro-actuated strain gradient along their length. It is native to the Chihuahuan Desert. [Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selaginella_lepidophylla] (Photo 7)

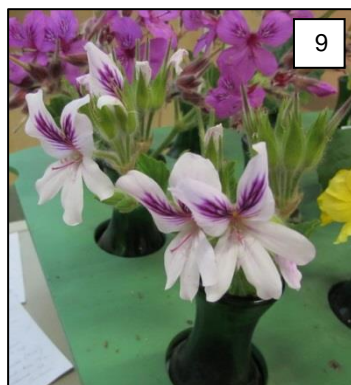
Gasteraloe: cross between Gasteria and Aloe brings out the best of both plants: the large size of aloe and amazing texture of the lesser gasteria. Like most hybrids, it is a top performer and easy to grow. It makes a fantastic potted specimen that will offset profusely and rapidly and can be planted outdoors in zone 9 and up. Its delightfully dark green and white speckled leaves and perfect symmetry draw immediate attention. Grown in full sun it develops

its best tones and will get quite large: about 20cm once mature. [Ref: <http://www.ebay.com/itm/GASTERALOE->



ROYAL-HIGHNESS-BEAUTIFUL-HYBRID-CACTUS-SUCCULENT-/231598212705] (Photo 8 is not necessarily this variety)

Jenny's "plant of the month": *Pelargonium cucullatum* – comes in pink, white, dark pink and double. Grows on sand in hot dry areas. (Photo 9)



Other plants brought in by members:

Impatiens niamniamensis; *Deutzia* – pinks, whites; *Aristea*; *Beloperone guttata*; Nasturtiums; Fuchsias and *Deutzia* – Another common UK shrub only growing to just over a metre; a lovely spring flowering shrub; prune after flowering as it flowers on the growths it makes after flowering; also a variety of beautiful Roses.

With Level 3 water restrictions in place, you may want to find out which roses are drought-tolerant. Visit the MGF website for a list of roses. *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea' is the first on the list as

being drought tolerant. There are many more.

[<http://www.mediterraneangardeningfrance.org/plRoses.htm>]

The following need correct names. Can anyone provide them?

Artemisia ??– 1m high; after flowering it is cut back; lovely foliage. (Photo 10)

Kalanchoe ?? (Photo 11)

This flower was not brought in, but had been seen in Wendy Ackerman's garden. A painting from the 1700s described it as "Arum". It must surely have a more correct name by now. (Photo 12)



What is that?

Everyone on the outing to Susie Leblond's garden was questioning the ID of this strange plant growing in Constantia ... 'Is it a Lachenalia?' some wondered. NO, it wasn't. It was certainly not a bulb, but was *Orobancha ramosa* or Branched broomrape.

Orobancha ramosa (right) is an introduced plant found in many gardens, green belts and open areas of natural vegetation and cultivated lands where, in some countries it is considered a 'pest'. As an obligate parasite it needs to establish a connection to a host root within a few days of germination and is totally dependent on its host for all its nutrition, and also draws most of its water from the host root.

It produces leafless blue-purple flowering stems, 15-30 cm high and contains no chlorophyll. It self-pollinates producing many seeds which remain viable in soil for many years. Pulling plants out as soon as you see them will help restrict their spread. Although they don't spread too rapidly or aggressively in our gardens they can be problematic in agricultural crops.



Orobanche ramosa occurs naturally in Mediterranean countries in southern Europe, Africa and the Middle East, extending eastwards to India, Pakistan and China, central Asia and southern Russia but has also been introduced to the USA, Cuba, Central America, Australia, West Africa, East Africa, South Africa and Chile.

It has a wide range of host plants which include families like Amaranthaceae, Chenopodiaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Capparidaceae, Labiatae [Lamiaceae], Linaceae, Malvaceae, Oxalidaceae, Plantaginaceae, Polygonaceae and Rubiaceae, as well as crops in Alliaceae [Liliaceae], Compositae [Asteraceae], Cannabinaceae, Cruciferae [Brassicaceae], Cucurbitaceae, Leguminosae [Fabaceae], Solanaceae, Rosaceae and Umbelliferae.

[Ref: www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/37747]

Marianne Alexander

Open Gardens

The season for Open Gardens has come to an end and many fabulous and different gardens have been seen around the Western Cape. There were the usual favourites, with some new and exciting gardens included to keep the public's interest.

One of the new kids on the block is the Mamre Garden Club. Toni Dymond started this club for the residents of Mamre about a year ago. She says, "we give them a talk once a month on different topics related to gardening. It has been such a huge success. We started with 5 members and we now have more than 30 members who attend monthly". They held a garden competition in October and the 6 best gardens were on show to the public.

Wilma and I decided to support them and to see how they cope with gardening under the most dreadful conditions – sand, wind, heat and very little water and money.

One of the gardens had been the domain of a man who pottered around but there was nothing to speak of. He passed away a year or so ago and after a period of mourning his widow decided to take over the garden. This was how she expressed her feelings, in Afrikaans (translated below), with a note displayed in her garden.

Glenda Thorpe

What my garden means to me

by Jackie Liedeman

My garden is a sanctuary for me.

At the beginning of my garden project I did not have the vaguest idea how much I would get out of my garden.

When I feel alone or depressed, I take my tools and begin working and after a few minutes I am so engrossed in what I am doing that I don't even think about how I felt before I began. I feel like a different person to the one 2 or 3 hours before – excited and happy and too tired to think.

The way my garden looks today is light years away from the sand dune that it was. Under the guidance of Karien Naude, my advisor, the sand dune has been turned into a paradise, a pleasure garden.

I don't think there is anyone who was more thrilled over a potato than I was, when "my first potato" was harvested.

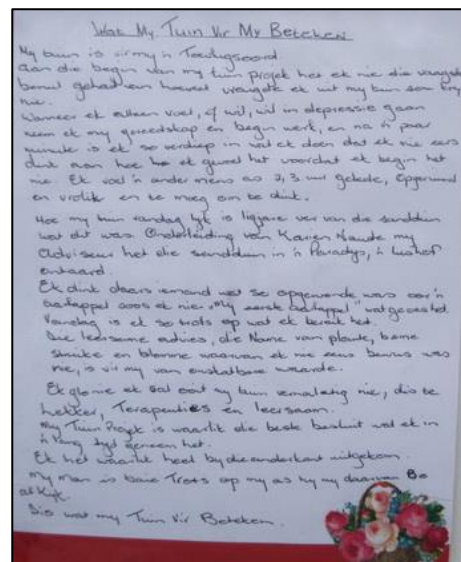
Today I am so proud of what I have achieved. The instructive advice, the names of plants, trees, shrubs and flowers of which I'd never been aware, is for me of inestimable value.

I don't think I will ever neglect my garden again; it is too 'lekker' [untranslatable], therapeutic and informative.

My garden project is definitely the best decision I have made in a long time. I have truly come out the other side whole.

My husband is very proud of me as he looks down on me from above.

Wilma with Jackie in her back garden which has mainly vegetables and herbs

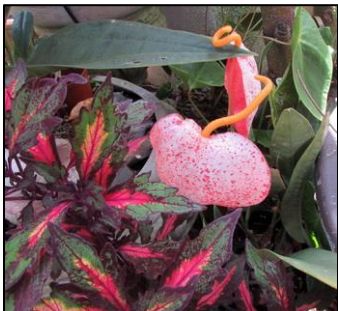


Plattekloof Paradise

This "Bromeliad garden" was something we'd never seen before. We were astounded by the variety of plants, the colours and textures, as well as the beautiful layout of the garden. Japie certainly is very creative in the way he displays his many plants. We could not be blamed for thinking we'd been transported into the tropics.



L to R: Pathway with Acers and Palms; Coleus (?) and Anthurium; front verge; Bromeliads growing in a Palm



A Garden in Malaucène, in the Vaucluse

Christine Savage, President of Mediterranean Gardening France, was in town visiting the many open and private gardens we have in the Western Cape. We managed to persuade her to tell us something of her dream to achieve the typical Provençal garden. It turned out quite differently.



She tells us: "Summer temperatures are normally 27/30°C with some days at 35°C. My (ground) water runs out at the beginning of summer and usually almost nothing for three months till the autumn rain arrives."



L to R: Christine answering questions after her talk; her garden almost 20 years ago when she moved in; the garden today

WATER RESTRICTIONS

We are almost at the end of our first month of more stringent water restrictions. Have your hoses been packed away and replaced by buckets and watering cans? At least we have not been restricted to only 3 specific days of the week. You may water on any day but the City urges residents to limit watering to mornings and evenings. But we already know that, don't we? Remember, the more you use (or waste), the more you will pay from December.

Non-potable water may be used for irrigating if you display the appropriate signage. Again, the use of groundwater must also be used conservatively.

As you, our members, are a very law-abiding bunch, perhaps there are ways that you have devised to help save water so that we can keep our gardens going? Alternatives to carrying heavy buckets and watering cans would be a start.

We hear lots of ideas but do we put them into practice? Please let us hear your innovative ways of saving every drop to put onto our plants. Send an e-mail or fax or give a call. All the details are at the top of page 1. Your ideas can be published in the next newsletter and possibly help those who are struggling.

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER

Our Haphazard Gardener is taking a break in the UK and will be back with more horticultural gems and tips in January.

FOLIAR SPRAYS (*published without water restrictions in mind*)

Foliar fertilisers can be used successfully on flowers, shrubs, vegetables, as well as on lawn.

If your garden has depleted soil conditions, and you are thinking of changing from conventional to organic soil management, it is a good idea to use foliar fertilisation during the conversion period to help your plants adjust. Plants that are accustomed to synthetic fertilisation programmes sometimes show signs of deficiencies when changing to a natural or organic soil management programme. To help the plants to overcome this period of stress, foliar fertiliser is an excellent choice.

What to use

Foliar feeding instantly supplies plants with nutrients via their leaves' pores. It is used to achieve maximum performance, for example when preparing roses for competitions, or after transplanting seedlings to help them overcome the temporary stress situation. Foliar fertilising can also be used as a first measure on plants exhibiting deficiencies, just until the dry organic fertiliser applied to the soil becomes available to the roots. Foliar fertiliser can be used on all plants, including flowers, shrubs, vegetables and lawn. To start with, spray every week, changing to every two weeks after about three months – it all depends on how the plants respond to your treatment. When spraying the plants, also spray the soil around the plants to stimulate biological activity.

You have a choice: you can make your own foliar fertiliser by brewing up compost, manures, weeds in water, or fermented sprays, or you can buy commercially available ones. Preparing home-made liquid growth fertiliser is not difficult. The difficulty, however, may lie in obtaining fresh manure.

To make your own foliar fertiliser, follow these guidelines:

Manure fertiliser

Fill 2/3 of a 10-litre container with any kind of fresh manure (chicken, cow, horse, pig, goat). Top up with water (preferably rainwater) and allow to stand for 2-3 days, or until the water is dark brown. Then strain the mixture through a stocking or cotton cloth, and throw the residue on the compost heap. Keep the strained liquid in a closed container in a shady place, and just take the amount required. As a foliar spray, dilute 1:20 (one part liquid to twenty parts water). [Ed: you will have to be innovative here if you don't want to pay too much for water.]

Compost tea

This is prepared from matured compost to stimulate growth. Put one part compost to five parts rainwater into a container. If you like, you can add seaweed solution (5g/litre) to strengthen your spray. Place the container in a sunny location for five days, stirring once daily. Strain through a cotton cloth or nylon stocking – there is no need to dilute.

Weed fertiliser

This is a foliar fertiliser made from weeds as a growth stimulant. Half fill a container with weeds, such as chickweed or dandelion. Top up with rainwater. Allow to stand in the sun for 5-7 days. Strain and spray undiluted. If you prefer, there are products on the market which you just dilute according to the instructions given on the product. When preparing foliar sprays, follow the instructions carefully, as they can burn leaves if used in full strength. Set your sprayer to emit as fine a spray as possible. Never use a sprayer that has been used to apply herbicides or other chemicals. It is almost impossible to remove any residue from the tank, hose and nozzle.

Products containing ingredients from the sea, such as kelp or seaweed and fish emulsion are the best. Fish emulsion is a concentrated by-product from the fish industry, which supplies major and micro-nutrients and is used as a general growth promoter. The fish emulsion does have an odour for about 24 hours. Kelp products provide plants with minerals and are an excellent source of plant hormones, which stimulate plant and root growth. It also strengthens the plant tissue, which means increased resistance to pests and diseases, as well as to frost and drought.

The best times to spray are early mornings and early evenings, as it will allow the pores to absorb the nutrients before the sun dries them up. Cloudy days are good, but choose a day when no rain is forecast. If you observe lunar cycles, the best time to spray is during and after the full moon. Spray until the liquid is dripping off the leaves, remembering to spray the underside of the leaves as well. You can set your sprinkler system to foliar spray your plants. In this instance, kelp extract is a better product to use, as fish emulsion can clog the sprinklers.

Good idea!

Soak your seeds in seaweed extract diluted at 1 part concentration to 25 parts of water to increase seed germination.

(Excerpt from the <http://www.lifeisagarden.co.za/> link on the Go South website)

SAVE OUR FLOWER SHOW!

Members need to know that the Stewarts and their small team have resigned from organising the Society's Flower and Garden Show and the Society thanks them for the enormous efforts they have made to mount the Show. At last month's meeting I made a plea for help in saving it, suggesting a way forward.

It is important to note that this and the wholly successful Plant Sale are the only events we produce that show our public face and is a way to attract new members. However, the Show is a large event that needs a great deal of planning requiring input from a lot of people.

The public face we displayed at our last was a splendid exhibition of what can be grown in our gardens - an amazing total of 453 exhibits put on by only 27 people.

Twenty-seven out of a membership of over 200!!!! Congratulations all round, but I would love to see more members taking part.

To this effect there is one class in the schedule - THE BEST FLOWER IN MY GARDEN - in which everybody could take part, as everyone must have one exquisite flower in their garden or on their balcony.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful to astonish the public (and members) with the variety of flowers that can be grown in Cape Town gardens seen from 200 single exhibits?

Please don't let the Show die.

ORGANISING THE SHOW

Now, to the more important point of this plea. We need small teams of people who can spend a little time together to look after the various elements that go to make up the presentation of the Show.

Could I appeal for a small group of people to come together around a table to try and find a way forward so that the Show will not die?

Does the Show need a new format? Can the whole organisation be made simpler?

We cannot let the Show die. If you feel the same way as I do, please get in touch with me by the end of January 2017. I would love to receive ideas and suggestions AND VOLUNTEERS, and the sooner we get together

Contact me at tuffin@mweb.co.za or 082 5575 994 and 021 788 9030.

Michael T (Chairman)

CHS LIBRARY

Having received the gift of "Planting Design for Dry Gardens" by Olivier Filippi earlier this year, the CHS committee has suggested that a library of horticultural books would be a useful asset to the Society. There was also a plea for a member with library experience to take this on. I have offered my services.

Now we need to know from you, the members of the Society, if this is a facility that you would like to use.

The books available would cover such topics as:

- General South African gardening books e.g. *The South African garden month by month*
- Particular SA gardening books e.g. *Growing South African bulbous plants*
- Books that list plants for identification purposes e.g. *The South African what flower is that?*
- Field guides e.g. *Field guide to fynbos*
- More general books of horticultural interest: *Gardening with Mediterranean plants* and *The house plant expert*.

The books will be available for loan at the monthly meetings. The loan period is one month, with the possibility of an extension if nobody else wants it. The books could also be available to browse through at meetings.

The internet is a wonderful resource and I use it regularly but I still find a book very useful with all the information required in one compact place.

Please send your comments and suggestions – before end January – to Glenda for a decision to be made.

Peter Henshall

CELEBRATING CHIVES

"Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) are members of the Allium family, along with garlic, leeks, onions, scallions and shallots, but with a mild onion flavour. They are all effective in countering infections, including those of the nose, throat and chest, although garlic is by far the most effective. Chives have similar medicinal properties, just not as potent. Nevertheless they are rich in vitamins A and C, as well as calcium and iron. Like parsley, adding one or two tablespoons a day to the diet takes very little effort.

Garlic Chives (*Allium tuberosum*) are grown for their mild garlic flavour. While not as powerful as garlic, they do act as a tonic and blood cleanser.

Growing

Chives are perennial, growing 25cm high and 20cm wide. In frost areas, they do go dormant and die down in winter, and come back again in spring. It is one of those cut-and-come-again herbs. Chives grow easily from seed and do best in full sun, but will grow in partial shade, in well-drained, composted soil.

Like spring onions, chives also form clumps but only the leaves are harvested (by cutting them off at the base). New shoots emerge quickly. If fed with liquid fertiliser at half the recommended strength once a month new leaves will be produced for two to three years.

Dividing

Divide the plants or sow new seed when they lose their vigour. Thick clumps of chives and garlic chives can be divided and replanted in Autumn into freshly composted soil. If you have enough to go around, pot up a few pots too. Keep them on a sunny kitchen windowsill in winter. The soil must be kept moist and your chive pots should be fed regularly with a liquid, indoor plant fertiliser.



What you do

- Lift or dig up a mature clump. Remove excess soil from the roots. Wash off the roots so that the bulbs can be easily seen and split apart.
- Carefully break the clump apart with 5-7 bulbs per division. Top and tail the splits by trimming the roots and foliage by half.
- Plant the splits into pots in herb-growing medium or into well-composted soil in the ground. Don't forget to add bonemeal to encourage strong root growth. Water the chives immediately after planting.

Did you know

Chives improve the flavour of carrots and keep aphids away from roses, grapes, tomatoes and fruit trees.

Quick tips

Only pick as much as you need, and use it immediately. Soft leaves don't store well and quickly lose their goodness.

Lightly rinse herbs before using, to get rid of grit or dust.

Use sharp kitchen scissors to snip the leaves.

Using chives

Cut off the green shoots at ground level and they quickly resprout.

Snip the green leaves into egg and cheese dishes, add to sandwiches, chopped into salads, in sips, soups, breads and muffins, or use as a garnish.

Chive dinner rolls

1 cup sour cream	2 x 10g packets active dry yeast
1 teaspoon salt	½ cup warm water
½ cup white sugar	2 eggs, beaten
½ cup melted butter	4 cups cake flour
	¼ cup fresh chopped chives

Heat the sour cream in a saucepan, add salt, sugar and melted butter. Cool slightly. Add the yeast, warm water, eggs, flour and chives and mix well. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Divide the dough into four and take each part and roll it into a circle. Cut each circle into 12 pizza-shaped pieces and starting with the wide side roll each piece towards the point. Place the rolls on baking sheets lined with baking paper with the point facing down. Repeat until all the dough is shaped and let them rise until doubled – about 30 minutes. Bake in a medium oven – 180°C for 12-15 minutes. Serve warm with lashings of butter."



By Life is a Garden on <http://gosouth.co.za/celebrating-chives/>

(Photos: Marianne Alexander, Toni Dymond, Christine Savage, Life is a Garden, Andrew and Glenda Thorpe)