

President: David Davidson, **Chairman:** Errol Scarr, **Hon Treasurer:** Henry Diesveld, **Secretary:** Glenda Thorpe
Honorary Members: Laurie Powis, Colin Cook, Marianne Alexander, Barbara Hey, Mary Smith, Anne Bean, Adam Harrower, Michael Tuffin

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 3 July 2017 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

CHELSEA 2017

David Davidson will be back to give us his take on this year's Chelsea Flower Show. We know that we are in for a very entertaining evening.

One of our members, Di Thomson, was fortunate enough to visit Chelsea and she had this to say about her experience there:

"It was with great excitement that I booked a special ticket from Heather Martin of Mediterranean Plants and Gardens in the UK, which permitted me early entrance to Chelsea on Tuesday, 23 May – Awards Day – as well as a champagne breakfast. [Ed: see final paragraph on page 8.]

So at 06:30 on a cool but clear day I found myself entering the Chelsea Flower Show with hardly a soul around. It was marvellous to have this early preview without the crowds which flocked in at 8.30. I covered as much ground as possible in 2 hours marvelling at the show gardens that had been created in a week from nothing. Each had a theme with a short write-up alongside describing the inspiration for the design. The trend I picked up this year was meadow gardening and attracting wild life into your garden. To create something made up of weeds, wild flowers and grasses that looks as if it's been there forever was a feat indeed. But there were also the Artisan and Fresh gardens – each one inspiring and a feast for the eye.

But before anything else I had to visit the Great Marquee and find our own SANBI stand. There it was – a veritable riot of colour depicting the wonderful diversity of plants to be found in South Africa all set off by an ingenious circular backdrop of Castle Rock and Kirstenbosch and the Walter Sisulu Botanic Garden. The design by David Davidson and Ray Hudson beautifully showcased the amazing variety of plants found in our country. However I was amazed by our Proteas which were truly magnificent – both in quality and variety – a sight to behold.

I was also bowled over to discover that our stand had won its 35th Gold Medal at Chelsea AND the President's Award! What an achievement! Heartiest congratulations to David and Ray and the whole team who helped build the stand. [Ed: Ditto from the rest of us in the CHS. Well done!]



David and Di

While I was admiring the stand, Ray appeared and later that morning I returned to the stand to find David and other members of the team all in high spirits. I was particularly thrilled to find my fellow Constantia Valley Garden Club member, Helene Spreckley, there chatting to members of the public. She had helped build the stand so had been there from the beginning.

After two hours of hot footing it around Chelsea I was famished and, anyway, the crowds had started to clog up the pathways. So I headed for the champagne breakfast. It was a delight to meet Heather Martin with whom I had been in correspondence re Chelsea as well as several other members of Mediterranean Plants and Gardens – some from as far afield as Monaco and Portugal. Mind you, they were quite taken aback that I had come from South Africa! We enjoyed a delicious breakfast and needless to say we all held forth about our own experiences of gardening in a Mediterranean climate. It was such fun! I had to drag myself away as I still had a lot to see at Chelsea. I spent the rest of the day enjoying it all at a more leisurely pace – and loved every minute."

FORTHCOMING OUTINGS

Sat, 29 July at 10:00 to visit the beautiful Sculpture Garden displaying Dylan Lewis's art in Stellenbosch.

There will be an entrance fee of R100 per person, which goes directly toward sustaining the garden.

This is a place of expansive vistas, scents and the sounds of nature, with tranquil groves, hidden paths and lush indigenous vegetation, particularly fynbos. Over 60 sculptures have been carefully placed in harmony with the landscape. Limited to 20 members. Give your name to Glenda by no later than 26 July.

IN MEMORIAM

Harold Mills, a member for at least 30 years, passed away on June the 14th, not recovering from a stroke he suffered at the end of May.

His passion was growing vegetables, which he did with great aplomb. Everything he grew seemed to turn into giants. Harold was always willing to hold pruning workshops for members and, together with Esmé, was happy to have us traipsing around the garden to admire their many wonderful plants. Being an engineer, Harold always asked the sensible and, sometimes, difficult questions of speakers. His presence at meetings will be greatly missed.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Esmé and family.

NURSERY TABLE

Don't forget our Seed Swop Box/Basket where members can swop their own packet of seeds for a packet of seeds in the basket.

The idea is to *bring* seeds in order to *take* seeds, or just bring surplus seeds to make them available to others. Seed packets are available from Jane if you'd like to take some home to fill them for next month. If you would really like some of the seeds on offer and don't have any of your own, you may purchase seeds from a nursery and deposit them into the basket to make the swop.

Your seed packets should have the following information:

- the name of the seeds
- the number of seeds in the packet (if they are relatively large)
- the year of collection
- and any other details you think relevant (waterwise, indigenous, sowing time etc.).

The rule is: You have to make a deposit in order to withdraw!

The seeds presently available in the basket are:

- Chasmanthe floribunda
- Sweet peas
- Nasturtiums (trailing, cream flowers)
- Poppies (Pink, often called "opium poppies" but not identical to "somniferum")
- Lunaria annua "Honesty"
- Aloe polyphylla
- Nigella "Love-in-the-mist" (white)
- Strelitzia reginae
- Queen Anne Lace

REPORT BACK

Kirstenbosch Sponsorship

At our 2016 AGM, Janet Macfarlane suggested that less fortunate children be given the opportunity to enjoy the wonders of Kirstenbosch. The Committee agreed to sponsor such a venture and as Susan Armstrong's sister, Sally Hey, happens to be the Principal Environmental Education Officer at the Gold Fields Environmental Education Centre at Kirstenbosch, plans were set in motion to organise bus trips for a worthy school. Where to find a school? Glenda's domestic worker lives in Weltevreden Valley North (more popularly known as "Samora Machel") and has a grandson, Aviwe, at Nal'uxolo Primary School. The majority of the children in this area never get to experience anything outside of their community and the learners at this school had certainly never visited Kirstenbosch before.

The necessary paperwork was organised and finally three busloads, each with 62 Grade 4 learners (at R20 per child) and three teachers, arrived at Kirstenbosch on each of the mornings of 31 May, 1 and 2 June.

Susan, Shelley and Wilma were in attendance over the three days and this is their combined report:



"After disembarking at the Gold Fields Education Centre, and a group photo taken in front of the bus, these boys and girls, aged between 9 and 11, entered the Centre with a mixture of excitement and apprehension.

Once the learners were seated they were welcomed and given an introduction to Kirstenbosch and its purpose. They were then divided into three groups, each with one of their teachers (who could assist with translation where necessary) and one of the Kirstenbosch Education Officers as leader. Each group spent a while discussing what living things need in order to thrive, which introduced them to the concept of habitat, and then the group leaders used illustrated cards to talk about the dos and don'ts of the garden.

The groups were then taken into the grounds of the Centre and seated on logs around the leader. Pictured right is Sally with a group from the first day. Aviwe is seated third from the right.



The school had chosen the Forest Ecology option as the morning's theme, so this session involved learning about the parts and growth of trees, and their importance in taking in carbon dioxide and giving out oxygen. Each pair of learners had been given a clipboard with a map and worksheets (left): using the first of the worksheets and a container with different leaves in it, they had a practical lesson on identifying leaf types by shape and margin. They were also given guidelines for completing the tasks that lay ahead.

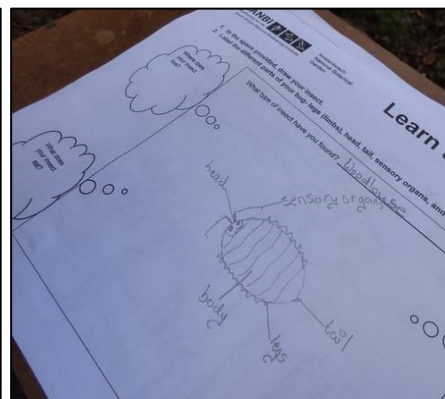


Then it was time to head into the forest! As they walked they were made aware of the importance of observation, and had to list, on a worksheet, things they saw that were living (spider, bird ...) and not living (web, soil ...).

At the first stop teams of four or five had to tackle a worksheet that involved giving details of a tree selected by the leader. They had to measure a leaf (in theory without picking it!), estimate the height of the tree, measure its circumference (a new word, that!) and note what grew around it, before sharing this information, somewhat diffidently, with the rest of the group.

Then came a food break. The school had been asked to try to ensure that the food brought by the children did not include orange-coloured chips, fizzy drinks or sweets but, perhaps not surprisingly, these were in evidence. Sadly, some children had brought nothing, but sharing ensured they did not go hungry.

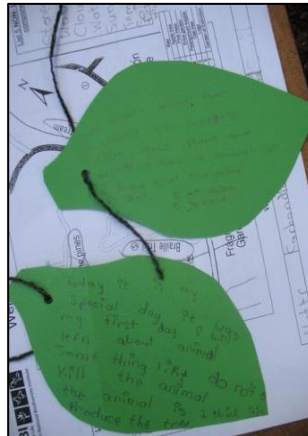
While they ate, the leader marked out areas about one metre square with thick string. The groups had to investigate the leaf litter in these areas to discover what tiny creatures might be found there (below). The learners picked these up to put into a container. They were provided with a magnifying glass to help them identify the creatures from an illustrated worksheet. They had to draw one of them (but for some of the children just to copy one of the drawings from the worksheet was quicker and easier!). Mention of camouflage came into this exercise – another new word that required some explanation.



For some of the groups the last interactive activity was the formation of a food chain (page 4, top left): with pictures as aids, the children had to organise themselves in the correct order eg. caterpillar – bird – mongoose – caracal. This was again a new concept, but the activity certainly added to their understanding.

On the way back there was a pause for reflection. Learners were given a piece of leaf-shaped card on which to write their impressions of the morning, in English or isiXhosa (page 4, top centre). Then, with a brief stop to smell the leaves of a *Pelargonium*, it was back to the Centre to put the cards on a branch "tree" (page 4, top right) and visit the cloakrooms before heading back to the school.

The learners were accompanied by enthusiastic teachers and each group seemed interested in what they were asked to do.



Of the many impressions over the three mornings, one that sticks fast is the sight of some learners sporting brand new pencils, almost certainly supplied for the special occasion, while others worked diligently, if with difficulty, with ones no more than four or five centimetres long – which many of us would have discarded as no longer useful.

Another observation by a member was the children's obsession with rubbing out every little error in their writing, whether a spelling mistake or just a small mark out of place!"

Aviwe's reaction to his morning "on the mountain" was that he wanted to go again the next day, and the next! Hopefully a seed has been planted in his and the minds of the other children and that they will get the opportunity to visit Kirstenbosch again in the future.

Goedgedacht

Mikal Lambert spoke to us about Empowering Communities from the Garden to the Kitchen. He has sent this message to all members:

"Thank you for your keen interest and attention in hearing about the work we are doing at the Goedgedacht Trust, working with local communities to raise awareness about the potential plants, vegetables, herbs and fruit trees have for reshaping lives.

At the end of the talk, I was asked what resources gardeners could donate to our work.

As we work with many new gardeners, we are always looking for basic garden tools, planting trays and pots. If you have potted plants and trees (especially fast growing, indigenous and fruit trees) to share, we could definitely redistribute them among our network of gardens.

Our work is made possible through the efforts of a team of local men and woman who are permanently employed, so if you are able to make a financial contribution towards extending our work we would be most grateful.

Thank you for the kind feedback received. I look forward to seeing you on the farm soon.

If you need to contact me my email address is Mikal@envirosolutionscentre.com

Remember: Global warming is the result of an increase in carbon in the atmosphere, plants and trees are the perfect answer to this global problem so every time a plant is grown it contributes to healing the planet. Us gardeners are at the forefront of saving the planet.

Have a wonderful wet winter."

Donations can be made to Goedgedacht Trust, Standard Bank, Mowbray; branch code 05 10 01 – account no. 282 577 629, or post a cheque to Peter Templeton at PO Box 458, Malmesbury 7299. Find out more about their work by visiting www.goedgedacht.org or www.facebook.com/goedgedachtcarefortheplanet

June Plant Table:

Thank you to everyone for being so diligent about filling in the paper slips that go with each plant.

Grown in **Kirstenhof** with well point water:

- *Justicia lutea* from Brazil: grown from one of Anne Beans' cuttings at the April 2013 meeting.
- *Hypoestes forskalii* (below, left) – Acanthaceae (IND): scrambler; low maintenance
- *Hypoestes aristata* (IND)
- *Abutilon* – "Indian Mallow" – Malvaceae: grows very big; large genus throughout the tropics and sub-tropics
- *Aloe ferox* (IND) – southern Cape to KwaZulu Natal; attracts lots of birds; has medicinal values; hardy

- *Leucadendron* – hybrid “Yellow Devil”(IND): are more tolerant of adverse climate and water problems.
- *Holmskodia sanguinea* – “Chinese Hat” from the Himalayas (below, 2nd from left): with its calyx and flower which comes forward, it is probably attacked by Sunbirds and insects with a long proboscis to get the nectar out. The calyx is still very attractive even with the flower gone. The indigenous *H tettensis* is a lavender/lilac colour.

Grown in **Pinelands** with very little well point water:

Jenny says the *Lachenalias* are pushing up all over and need very little water to push them into growth:

- *L bulbifera* on her Pinelands verge is flowering –gets no water and loves growing in sand.

Others flowering are the green *L viridiflora* (in Pinelands); and on the sand going on to the beach at Langebaan, *L rubida*, with big spotty leaves, is now flowering, flat on the ground.

Also grown in **Pinelands** with water collected in a tank:

- *Laelia anceps* from Mexico (below, centre) – grows outside; full sun; very hardy; little water; used to make innumerable hybrids which are very attractive. Good as an introductory orchid.

Lithophytes grow on rocks. Epiphytes grow along tree branches but do not take food from them as in parasites. This *Laelia* can be either, depending on where they are grown.

Growing on a **Claremont/Harfield Village** pavement, watered only by rain:

- *Syzigium guineense* (IND to Africa): the edible purple sweet juicy berries which hang in tight bunches (like grapes) are delicious; 15 – 20m high with evergreen rounded dense crown; ovate leaves curl down at tip.
- *Syzigium australe* – “Australian Brush Cherry: the edible “squarish” pink berries have a tart taste and are quite floury; tall evergreen with dense crown; opposite, rounded leaves.
- *Syzigium paniculatum* – “Eugenia”: the sparse bunches of edible rounded purple/pink berries have a tart taste; 20m evergreen with spreading crown; ovate leaves do not curl at tip.

There are many species – between 1200 and 1800 – of *Syzigium* which come from all sides of the earth, so probably date back to Gondwanaland. Many are edible. Many are invasive. Difference in leaf shape is an indicator of species. Fruits vary hugely in colour, taste and texture. Those in India make large fruits and they are also used for jellies and jams etc.

Also growing in **Harfield** with water collected in a tank:

- *Lachenalia bulbifera* (IND) (below, 2nd from right): from Mossel Bay to the West Coast; winter growing and flowering; needs sun; robust; 80 – 300mm in garden or pot.

Grown in **Sea Point** with rain water

- The *Epidendron radicans* – “Poor Man’s Orchid”/“Crucifix orchid”: full sun; hardy; comes in many colours; is incredibly rewarding.

Grown in **University Estate** with rain water

- *Pyrostegia venusta* – “Golden Shower” from South America

A new very hardy species: *Beadii wireicious* (below, far right) – endemic to one corner of Rondebosch Common; needs NO water; flowers all year; only problem is it needs 1000s to make a show!!



JENNY'S CHOICE FOR JUNE

Exotic

Wilma's Syzigium guineense

"So impressive. Not seen berries like that. They're amazing."



Indigenous

Fee's Aloe Ferox

"Don't often see these Aloes here. When you plant Aloes, don't think because they grow on a rocky hillside, they don't need any compost.

An Aloe nursery in Natal has said that the more compost you put under an Aloe, the better it will do."

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER –JUNE/JULY 2017

Aloes are the theme for this month's journal. There are various reasons for this. Many varieties seem to be drought resistant. In our area of lower Claremont all the neglected and parched pavement aloes have sprung into life as can be seen below. The *A. ferox* (Cape bitter aloe, below left), the *A. arborescens* (Krantz aloe) which is shaded by a tree and another wild and woolly *A. arborescens* which covers the whole of the area in the front of the house (below, centre and right).

The aloes seen along the N1, coming into town just before the Muizenburg turnoff, is the second reason. Characteristically they were an eye-catching focal point as the *A. arborescens* adds a good touch of orange to the dreary landscape. The third reason was the gorgeous *A. ferox* greeny-orange inflorescence that won the prize for the best local plant at the June CHS meeting (page 5). The inflorescence on our one won't win any prizes but they do add much wanted colour to the winter garden.



On a walk slightly further afield from our house I also saw the following thriving plants. Aloe 'Bushwacker', a hybrid, with orange and cream flowers (below left); two wonderful examples of a tall aloe that I do not know the name of – one behind a high wall and the other in the grounds of Golden Grove Primary School (below, 2nd and 3rd from left). Also nameless is this smart looking plant growing amongst the Yucca (below, right).



I decided to do some research to find out what other aloes were available in the local nurseries and was surprised to find what a great variety there are. I saw many hybrids with fascinating names like 'Orange express', 'Red rooster' and 'Twice as nice'. Pictured is 'Little joker' (right). Aloes come in all shapes, colours and locations: *A. dyeri* which is shade loving, *A. tenuior* which is a climber that has yellow flowers, *A. brevifolia* (Duine-alwyn) which is endemic to the winter rainfall areas and is found from Agulhas to Riversdale. Other fynbos aloes are *A. succotrina* (Table Mountain aloe) and *A. commixta* (Fynbos aloe). A completely different aloe is the decorative *A. plicatilis* (Fan aloe). It has orange-red flowers in spring. I once tried to grow this plant in a pot but it died. I now realize that I over watered it (right, below).



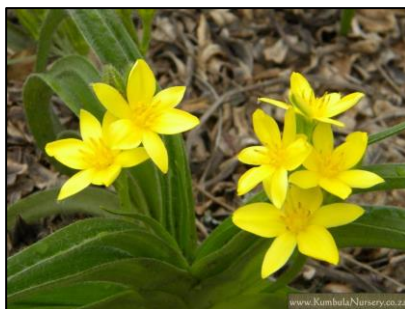
Aloes can be grown in poor soil as they can take a fair amount of neglect but grow best in a good well-composted mixture. The drainage needs to be good. They don't mind the wind. The Cape White-eyes and the sunbirds in our garden are attracted by the abundant nectar the plants produce. The sap of *A. ferox* is supposed to have healing powers.

Aloes can be propagated from offsets growing from the stem base that form small plants which can be cut and planted. Others grow from the leaves which, after they have been removed from the plant, can be planted upright with a third of their length into the soil from your garden.



Starke Ayres has the most varied selection of aloes; one of them is *A. chabaudii* (below, left). The big drawback to growing them in the garden is the cost: you can spend over R100 for some of the hybrids. I suppose the best thing to do is to get cuttings from friends and neighbours. Starke Ayres has produced a comprehensive Waterwise Plant List, of which more next month.

I'd like to finish this month with two plants that have added sunny yellow to the garden: *Hypoxis hemerocallidea* (Star flower) (below, centre) and *Faucaria felina* Tiger jar mesemb (below, right).



I used the following resources:

- Gardiner, Nancy *Affordable gardening*
- Joffe, Pitta *Indigenous shrubs*
- Pienaar, Kristo *Grow South African Plants*
- Van Jaarsveld, Ernst *Waterwise gardening in South Africa and Namibia*

CHS LIBRARY

Our library is now open and Peter Henshall is ready to help you at our monthly meetings.

The Rules:

1. Open to any paid-up member (2017/18 year) of the CHS.
2. Three books may be borrowed for a period of a month (from meeting to meeting).
3. Books may be renewed for a second month. This can be done in person at a meeting or by email to info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za
4. The library will be open for half an hour both before and after the monthly CHS meetings.
5. Lost books must be paid for at the repurchase price. Replacement books are not acceptable.

If you don't want to borrow a book, come and browse while you wait for the meeting to begin.

WEEKEND AWAY: 22 – 25 September 2017

Come and join us in Prince Albert for a horticultural Heritage weekend. Plans are afoot to organise an interesting and fun-filled weekend. Amongst other things there will be Garden Club members' gardens to see, a visit to a nature reserve and olive farm, perhaps a labyrinth to walk through. The local hiking club will welcome you should you feel so inclined. And, of course, nurseries for those who need to go home with a few new plants. There are plenty of other activities to keep you busy in between garden visits – ghost walk, star gazing etc.

Almost 20 members have already shown interest, so please let Glenda know if you want to be included in the list for notifications. We would need final numbers by mid-August in order to organize group activities. In the meantime, book your accommodation so that you don't lose out. More information in the weeks to come.

DOS AND DON'TS OF CARING FOR ORCHIDS

It may be hard to believe, but growing orchids indoors is not as difficult as it may seem. In fact, with the proper watering, lighting and care, orchids can not only dress up a room, but they can also bring much joy.

However, before you head out and spend a bundle on one, two or even three orchids, keep these dos and don'ts in mind.

Types – Orchids come in three main types: epiphytes, lithophytes and terrestrials. Orchid experts believe that the best type for growing indoors and at home is called the Phalaenopsis, also known as the *Moth orchid*. This type of orchid has lovely blooms, does well in bright lights, near windows and in a temperature range between 65 and 75 degrees F.

Watering – Most beginners make the mistake of overwatering their orchids. Be aware that the orchid obtains its moisture through its leaves and not its roots. Over watering can rot the roots. Depending on where in the country you reside, most orchids do not need to be watered more than once a week or every 10 days. The best time to water orchids is in the morning hours to allow the leaves to dry by evening. Make sure you water enough so that the water drains from the holes in the pot in which the orchid is planted. In nature most orchids grow in tree bark rather than soil.

Lighting – The Moth Orchid variety likes bright light from a window or else indirect lighting; either is said to be perfect for growing this type of orchid plant. However, do not put them directly in mid-day sun. A sheer or lightweight curtain can help protect the leaves from getting scorched. Watch the color of the leaves. If they turn yellow, the plant is receiving too much light.

Humidity – Moth Orchids enjoy humid conditions, but most homes do not offer enough humidity, especially in the winter months. In this case, a humidifier or placing plants on gravel in a tray with water can also add humidity. Do not place the pot so that it sits in the water, but be raised above the water level by the gravel. These orchids like anywhere between 40 and 70 percent humidity.

Fertilizing – Unlike many houseplants, orchids do not need a regular dose of fertilizer. Experts suggest using a water-soluble fertilizer once a month if you see the orchid looking dull. Be careful not to over fertilize, black leaves are a sign that you have added too much fertilizer or given it too often.

Temperature – Moth orchids enjoy temperatures hovering around the 70 degree mark during the daytime hours and at night be sure it is not in a room that dips below 55 degrees. Do not place orchid plants near cold windows at night, or in drafty areas. Also, do not place orchids near radiators, floor heaters or vents. During the summer months, orchids can be misted to keep them cool, as well as placing them in a shady area when temperatures get too high.

With these dos and don'ts, growing a single orchid plant or even a roomful should be easy. If properly cared for, these brightly colored houseplants will provide enjoyment for many years to come.



from DoItYourself.com on <https://gosouth.co.za/dos-donts-caring-orchids/>

THE ATHENAEUM

The CHS has been a Member of The Athenaeum Trust since 1974 when we began holding meetings in the Newbery Hall. It is important for all the Member Societies to be represented on the Board, but we have not had a representative for at least 10 years. At the Athenaeum's recent AGM, the new name, 'The Cape Town Athenaeum NPC', was adopted. We are also happy to announce that Gerald Robertson was elected to their Board as the CHS's representative. We wish him well in his endeavours to do what is best to promote and maintain The Athenaeum.

DATES TO DIARISE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

- **Tokai Super Plants'** fortnightly Wednesday talks:

28 June: Water features and how to install them	12 July: Plant nutrition
26 July: Citrus tree care – all you need to know!	23 August: Vegetable gardening
6 September: Spring gardening tips	20 September: New plants available for the season
- **Annual CHS Plant Sale:** This will take place on 9 September 2017. Keep potting up those seedlings. If you have any questions, call Melanie on 021-788-2840 / 082-550-2618.
- **Fish Hoek Flower Show:** If you're interested in exhibiting, this takes place on 7 October 2017. Let Glenda know if you would like to receive their Show Schedule.
- **Rare Plant Fair:** This takes place on 14 October 2017 at Tokara.
- **Cape Town Flower Show:** This has been postponed to October 2018.
- **Mediterranean Gardening International:** A reminder that there is a wonderful Forum which all CHS members can access. The instructions on how to do this can be found on page 7 of the April CHS News. We also have a separate mailing group for CHS members who want to be kept informed of what the other 4 groups (UK, France, Portugal and Western Australia) are up to and the activities they offer, such as the Early Bird Chelsea visit. If you are not yet on this mailing list, let Glenda know that you want to be included.

Visit <http://mediterraneangardeninginternational.org> to find out more.

Photos: Susan Armstrong, Wilma Tindall, Shelley Brown, Nicola Anthony, Andrew Thorpe, Peter Henshall, Google Images