

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, 7 August 2017 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum, Newlands.

R10 for members; R20 for visitors.

BABYLONSTOREN

Ernst van Jaarsveld will be back to tell us about the progress being made at Babylonstoren, especially with all the innovative ideas and new projects taking place.

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. Limited to 20 members. Give your name to Glenda by no later than 26 July.

Sat, 19 August at 10:00 to visit the Constantia gardens of Matt and Vikki Bresler and Sheila Boardman. Limited to 25 members. Give your name to Glenda by no later than 16 August.

REPORT BACK

July Plant Table:

Our Winter selection came from the following suburbs:

Grown in **Sea Point** from rain collected in tank

- *Tecomaria capensis* (Cape Honeysuckle) (IND) – rambling shrub; low maintenance; full sun; hardy; needs light pruning; attracts birds and bees. (Right)

Grown in **Kirstenhof** with wellpoint water

- Aloe (IND) – has provided enough babies to line an 8 – 10m boundary wall

Grown in **University Estate** and only watered by the rain

- *Buddleia/Buddleja* – fragrant. Grower's comment: "boring until it flowers"! (Below, right)

Grown in **Pinelands** with no water

- *Clivia gardenii* from E Cape and KZN: needs shade. This sp named after Major Clive Garden who was in Natal 1848 – 1853. Autumn/Winter flowering. (Below, far right)
- *Lachenalia bulbifera* (IND) – on verge and totally ignored! Does not get watered. Still flowering a month after the last meeting!

Grown in **Kenilworth** from the runoff before a shower

- *Camellia japonica*

Grown in **Lakeside** and only watered by the rain

- *Nylandtia spinosa* "Tortoise Berry" (berries are irresistible to tortoises) (IND): very tough; fully exposed to sun, wind, harsh conditions on pavement; difficult to propagate. (Below, second from right)

Grown in **Diep River** with grey water

- *Grewia occidentalis* (IND): found around the lagoon in Sedgefield; grown well in dry corner; flowers close at night; watered occasionally.
- Rose, "My Granny", growing in a pot. (Below, second from left)

Grown in **Marina da Gama** in the rain

- *Jatropha* from Madagascar?? – has large leaves; drought-tolerant (swollen stem); flowers are inconspicuous and it's the flower stems that are so colourful. (Below, far left)



Clivias are named after Lady Charlotte Clive (mother of Clive of India) who first grew and flowered a type specimen – they grow mostly under the forest canopy in light shade; humus rich soil.

JENNY'S CHOICE FOR JULY

Exotic

Cherry's Camellia
"Kramer's Supreme??"

Grown in Lakeside and initially watered with tap water, but now with tank water. Semi-double; watered weekly from tank; in sheltered position. (Ed: Apologies for the poor picture quality.)



Indigenous

Arpad's Clivia Nakamura
Interspecific (Miniata x Nobilis?) – Japanese hybrid

"An incredible amount of hybridising is being done with Clivias and this is just one example of hybrid vigour – really beautiful growth, a very nicely positioned flower head and flowers which are incredibly like none of the other species. Most flower in Spring but this is flowering now."



Annual Book Prize Winners – Part 1:

The student who attained the highest marks at the end of her 2nd Year in 2016 (with an 80% average and 3 distinctions) was 22-year old Jenny Liedtke. Her prize was presented to her by our President, David Davidson (below, right).

She says: "I am currently in my final year of horticulture at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

In 2015 I started studying horticulture because working outside and with plants was a dream of mine. My grandmother and grandfather both had a green thumb and I felt that I inherited it and wanted to do something with it.

What I like about horticulture is that it includes working outdoors and with nature. It is fun to learn about new plants and all the things one can do with them. Last year I worked in a production nursery in Germany and it was really nice to see how the seedlings that were potted grew fast into beautiful plants. This year I am working at Babylonstoren and I am excited to learn about a different side of the industry.

Next year I want to do the BTech before I go out into the field, just to gain more knowledge. Once I have completed this I want to travel and work at different nurseries to get more ideas about the ways things can be done and to gain experience. Afterwards I want to come back to South Africa and hopefully will be able to use the experience and knowledge I gained to do something good for the horticultural industry."



SEED SWOPPING

Our Seed Swop Basket/Box is operational and the only rule is: You have to make a deposit in order to withdraw!

Speak to Jane Robertson if you have any questions.

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – JULY/AUGUST 2017

The drought and dam levels at 26.4% in the middle of July have made me consider what our garden should look like in the future. There are various possibilities. I could pave over the whole area with paving stones or bricks and leave it at that (left). I could scatter a few pot plants around the paved area to give nature a bit of a chance. Instead of using paving I could use pebbles to cover the space which would give the rain water a chance to replenish the underground water supply. I could copy a neighbour who has put down an artificial lawn and planted some water-wise plants in well-mulched narrow beds around it.



In the end I have decided to clear away the bits of lawn we have and turn these areas into gravel gardens. The only snag is that my wife thinks that this is a bad idea as I am too lazy to maintain such an area; the weeds will soon be taking over. So only one piece of lawn has been removed while the cleared bit is lying fallow and giving me a chance to study how many different types of weed can grow in a small patch of soil. In the meantime I need to decide what to plant. Starke Ayres Garden Centre has issued a list of water-wise plants. The list includes shrubs, trees, succulents, restios, climbers, palms, ground covers and bulbs. The named plants are mainly indigenous. As a start I decided to concentrate on the succulents and have done some research as to their suitability for our garden.

South Africa I have discovered is blessed with an unbelievable variety of succulents. The roots are adapted to seek out every last scrap of water. They either have long deep tap roots or fine fibrous ones extending outwards as they search for moisture. The leaves, the smaller the better, can store water, have a waxy surface, or are often grey in colour to help preserve all the moisture they can. Bulbs sensibly go dormant in summer.

There are 18 genera listed and this month I shall concentrate on the top half. Several of the plants mentioned are already in our garden or that of our daughter. *Carpobrotus edulis* (Sour fig) has covered large sections of our pavement garden living up to its reputation of being 'an easily grown ground-hugging, tough evergreen plant'. There have been a few yellow flowers and no fruit at all. The plant needs to be cut back regularly or it will take over the garden. These cuttings root easily and are growing in pots ready for the CHS Plant Sale.



Cotyledon orbiculata (Pig's ear) is 'a satisfying small shrub with pendulous flowers with a red rim to the leaves' (right). It needs good drainage. The picture shows a lovely example in our daughter's garden: ours hasn't produced nearly so many flowers – lack of care. 'All succulents will grow better if compost is added'. It is also easily propagated.

Crassula multicava (Fairy Crassula) must be one of the most cultivated plants in local gardens (left). One of our plants grows happily in the shade, suffering neglect for years. It has dainty pink and white star-shaped flowers. It is also easy to propagate. This plant drops many plantlets which can easily be picked up and planted. *Crassula ovata* (Plakkies) grows into a fairly large shrub (right). The one in our garden loved the drought and the rains have encouraged all these 'attractive pale pink starry flowers'. They attract the bees. It is easily propagated from stem cutting. Let them dry out for a few days before planting.



Echeveria comes from Mexico. (below) There are innumerable hybrids and cultivars. A local nursery has a least 10 different varieties. They are useful pot plants and like well-drained soil. In the pictures they are helping to cover an ugly wall. They are easily propagated from offsets and cuttings.



The Euphorbia genus has a large variety of plants: there are more than 200 in South Africa alone. (The Poinsettia is a member of this family.) *E. mauritanica* is an easily grown shrub. The sap of many Euphorbias is poisonous. This is another plant that is easily grown from cuttings that need to be dried out before planting. *E. tirucalli* (Pencil plant) is a new recruit

to our garden: it is very drought tolerant (right). These 2 are thriving in our daughter's garden.



Many of us have at some time or another had a *Kalanchoe* given to us as a get-well plant: the garden centres are full of the many hybrids that are available. I have transplanted these gifts into pots and they are thriving. The one pictured is *Kalanchoe Tessa* (below, left). They are also easily propagated by cuttings but need to dry off for a few days before planting. *K. fedtschenkoi* (Lavender scallops) (below, right) comes from Madagascar. It is another plant in our garden that loves the drought and suffers neglect. It is easily propagated.



Some of the plants on the Starke Ayres list that I don't have in the garden are *Delosperma* which is described as 'a strong grower' (left). *D. litrole* (Seaside Delosperma) comes from the Western Cape. This plant is another that can be grown from slips. *Dorotheanus bellidiformis* (Bokbaaiwygie) is an annual, unlike the other plants described. It is a groundcover whose flowers attract butterflies in the spring. Another groundcover is *Drosanthemum speciosum* (Red ice plant). It has a bushy habit and thrives in poor soil. The plant needs to be pruned after flowering. It can be propagated from cuttings. An interesting sounding Euphorbia is *E. caput-medusae* (Medusa's head). It prefers acid soil and is a good pot plant.



An interesting sounding Euphorbia is *E. caput-medusae* (Medusa's head). It prefers acid soil and is a good pot plant.

Buying these succulents at the Garden Centres, however, is expensive; the *Kalanchoe Tessa* is R52.90 and the *Euphorbia tirucalli* is R79.90. The others on the list fall within the R40.00 to R49.00 range. The only seedlings tray available was for the Bokbaaiygies. But luckily, as I have mentioned, they are all easily propagated.

I'll finish this month from the Gardens in the Sand book mentioned below: 'take time to enjoy your garden'. This book has been a wonderful find because it gives excellent advice on gardening in difficult conditions.

The books I used were:

- Gildemeister, Heide *Mediterranean gardening: a water-wise approach*
- Joffe, Pitta *Indigenous shrubs*
- Pienaar, Kristo *The A-Z of Garden Flowers in South Africa*
- Pienaar, Kristo *Grow South African plants*
- Van Jaarsveld, Ernst *Water-wise gardening in South Africa & Namibia*
- Wilkinson, Jenny *Gardens in the sand: the Marina da Gama Garden Club book*

CHS LIBRARY

Thank you to all those who have contributed books and DVDs to our new library and, very especially, to Michael Tuffin. With the very generous donation of almost his entire collection of gardening books – from wonderful coffee table books to interesting reference books to horticulturally-based novels – we have helped him reduce his load when he moves to his new home. Our library now consists of many outstanding books. Do come and browse or borrow a few for the month. These are books you'll never find in any City Library.

There are a number of BotSoc Flower Guides, and others, which the Committee feels should not be in the library, particularly as people want to use them when doing trips. They will, therefore, be on sale at the August meeting for between R75 and R100 each. Bring some extra cash if you would like to purchase any of the following:

- Cape Peninsula Wild Flower Guide 3 (older one)
- Karoo Wild Flower Guide 6
- West Coast Wild Flower Guide 7
- Southern Overberg Wild Flower Guide 8
- Nieuwoudtville Wild Flower Guide 9
- Cederberg Wild Flower Guide 10
- Eastern Cape Wild Flower Guide 11
- Rondebosch Common Flowers
- Wild Flowers of Table Mountain National Park.
- Mountains in the Sea – an interpretive guide to the Table Mountain National Park
- Trees – a small booklet by Elsa Pooley

WEEKEND AWAY: 22 – 25 September 2017

Arrangements are well under way for this weekend. We have a few single members who have shown interest and would be willing to share accommodation in order to reduce costs.

There are still a few more places to fill so let Glenda know if you are interested.

ANNUAL CHS PLANT SALE – 9 SEPTEMBER 2017:

Not to clash with anything else, this is being held a month earlier than we've held it before. What we've done to make it easier, various members are taking home some well-grown seedlings I bought at an amazing nursery called Little Orchard in Diep River. They will grow these on for us. It's a fair outlay but if we can sell one of those plants grown from the seedlings six-pack, we amortize the cost of the punnet, so it makes good business sense. If you would like to do that as well, please call me.

And we hope you're also growing lots of other things for the sale. We need as much as possible, please. Don't forget to label all the plants you grow.

Also speak to me if you need pots or potting soil. If you have any questions, please call me



Melanie

021-788-2840 / 082-550-2618.

LOVELY LUSCIOUS LAVENDER

Lavender, a magnet for bees and other insects, is the queen of herbs – loved for its beauty, fragrance and the sense of well-being that it imparts.

If you plant just one herb, it should be lavender, for no other herb combines so many qualities in one plant. Its beauty and fragrance are self-evident, it is a significant healing and tonic herb, it has a myriad of culinary, beauty and household uses, and can play a role as a pest-repelling plant in the garden. According to ancient records, you can even smoke it! For all that, lavender is the one herb that is least likely to be found in the herb garden. Instead, it is usually grown with roses, clipped into hedges, used to line pathways or fill containers, and can also act as a silvery grey foliage plant in the garden. As a landscape plant, it is one of the best, and when in flower, it is breathtaking. Gardeners travel halfway around the world to view the lavender fields of France and Britain. Even in a domestic garden, a lavender bush in full flower stands out as a feature.

Five tips for growing lavender

This Mediterranean herb likes cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers, making it ideal for Western Cape gardens. That doesn't mean it can't grow successfully elsewhere, even in hot, wet, summer-rainfall areas.

- Plant lavender in a sunny position where it receives at least full morning or afternoon sun.
- Make sure the soil drains well, adding plenty of compost and other organics. If you have clay soil, rather grow lavender in pots.
- Space plants well enough apart so that there is adequate air movement, which prevents fungal disease. For informal planting, space bushes 45cm to 90cm apart. For hedging, plant up to 60cm apart.
- Water well to establish and then reduce watering, especially during a rainy period.
- If possible, water at root level rather than with overhead sprinklers. This prevents the hot, wet humid conditions that lavender dislikes.



Keeping lavender in shape

Prevent lavender from getting woody by pruning after flowering. This can add to a bush's longevity, although most lavenders need replacing after three years, especially in summer rainfall areas. Rule to remember: After flowering, cut back by two thirds. Only cut into semi-hardwood (green stems) but not into old, brown wood. Always make sure that there are small shoots below the cut. Lavenders do not regenerate from old wood.

When to prune

Lavandula stoecha flowers mainly in spring. Prune in November after flowering.

Lavandula dentate (grey and green) should be pruned in summer when flowering slows down due to the heat.

Lavandula x intermedia (eg. 'Margaret Roberts') flowers continually and some grow very large. Trim 2-3 times a year, but don't cut back by more than a third.

Lavandula x allardii 'African Pride' and ***Lavandula allardii*** are hedging lavenders that can be pruned at any time because they do not flower.

Lavandula pinnata, ***Lavandula canariensis*** and ***Lavandula multifida*** (fern-leaf lavender) can be cut right down after flowering in spring, or deadheaded and trimmed.

Lavender in pots

Good varieties for containers are the ***Lavandula dentate*** varieties and even the ***Lavandula intermedia*** and ***Lavandula allardii*** varieties, although they need bigger containers of at least 60cm in diameter. Place pots in a position that receives morning or afternoon sun. Water pots every day in very hot, dry and windy conditions. Fertilise 2-3 times during the growing season with a liquid fertiliser or a light granular fertiliser.

Are they lavenders?

Fern-leaf lavenders are quite unlike the conventional lavender. Their fern-like foliage produces slender spikes tipped with delicate sprays of flowers, and their wild, airy feel suits cottage-style gardens. They tolerate more shade and more water than other lavenders, although they still like well-drained soil.

Call the lavender doctor

Lavender has been used medicinally for centuries. Its anti-spasmodic, anti-septic and anti-bacterial properties make it an excellent first-aid herb for treating cuts, burns, stings, bruises, eczema, muscle cramps and pains, and even arthritis.

German nun Hildegard of Bingen (1098 -1179) used lavender water to treat migraines. A decoction of vodka, gin or brandy mixed with lavender, it should still work today.

Soothing lavender

Lavender is best known as an anti-stress herb. Its calming action acts as an anti-depressant and relieves nervous tension, insomnia, and even phobias. By stimulating blood flow, it helps to reduce headaches and migraines, which are often related to stress. Lavender's soothing effect also works on the digestive system, relieving colic, wind and bloating.

How to use it

For internal use, drink lavender tea or make a tincture and sip small amounts 2-3 times a day. For external use, apply lavender as a poultice or make a topical cream, using a strong infusion in aqueous cream. The best remedy of all is to just inhale the strong fragrance of the flowers and leaves.

Tantalise the taste buds

Inventive cooks use lavender in both sweet and savoury dishes.

Lavender flowers stripped off the stalks and finely chopped lavender leaves can be added to meaty casseroles, soups, baked fish, oven-roasted vegetables, and rice. The secret is to use the lavender sparingly so that there is just a hint of perfume.

The fragrance of lavender particularly complements sweet dishes. Add the flowers to cold desserts like cheesecakes, fruit salads, sorbet and ice cream. Infuse sugar with lavender and use that when baking scones, shortbread, biscuits and tarts.

Handy household hints

- Mix lavender water with vinegar and use as a surface cleaner.
- Dried sprigs of lavender in cupboards help to repel fish moths.
- To perfume a room, put a bowl of fresh lavender sprigs on a windowsill in the sun.

Lavender shortbread

This shortbread recipe uses lavender sugar; it's also really nice to have a jar of lavender sugar in the pantry, reserved for special occasions. Make sure the lavender is well dried before you add it to the sugar if you intend to keep it stored for any length of time.

For the lavender sugar

110g castor sugar

1 tablespoon finely chopped lavender flowers and leaves

Mix the castor sugar with the finely chopped lavender flowers and leaves.

For the shortbread

350g plain white flour

110g lavender sugar

75g rice flour

Pinch of baking powder

275g butter

Pre-heat the oven to 140°C

1. Sieve together the flour, lavender sugar, rice flour, a good pinch of salt and a good pinch of baking powder.
2. Cut the butter into cubes and rub it in to the dry ingredients until the whole mixture comes together.
3. Spread mixture evenly onto a baking tray and bake for about 1 to 1½ hours in the oven.
4. The shortbread should be a pale golden colour and fully cooked through.
5. Cut into squares or fingers while still hot and sprinkle with some castor sugar. Leave to cool in the tin; hide away in an airtight container.

Source: <https://gosouth.co.za/lovely-luscious-lavender/>

**DATES TO DIARISE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST**

- **Tokai Super Plants'** fortnightly Wednesday talks:
 - 23 August: Vegetable gardening
 - 6 September: Spring gardening tips
 - 20 September: New plants available for the season
- **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 which is now available.