

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

## NEXT MEETING

**Monday, 1 October 2018 at 20:00** at The Athenaeum, Newlands

Prof Charles Laubscher, Head of Horticultural Sciences at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, has a very impressive resumé and amongst the many things in which he is involved, he also supervises Post Graduate students, a number of whom are CHS members or our Annual Book Prize winners.

An ongoing project, initiated in 2015, is the collaboration with Prof Dr Alexander Demidov of the Main Botanical Garden in Moscow, to advance scientific research in a horticultural and landscape design capacity.

<http://www.moscow.info/parks/botanical-gardens.aspx> says: "*Russians take their Botanical Gardens very seriously - there are five in Moscow alone. The largest and most famous is The Russian Academy of Sciences' Main Botanical Gardens, located in the northwest part of the city, and adjoining the All-Russia Exhibition Centre (VVTs, or VDNKh as it is still better known).*



*This 360-hectare (890-acre) park, which spans the valleys of three small rivers, was officially founded in 1945. Nearby is the sight of the 17th century Apothecaries' Gardens, where medicinal plants were grown to stock the Army's pharmacies and the Grand Prince's palace with drugs.*

*After World War II, an enormous collection effort brought plants and seeds from all across the Soviet Union and further afield, and the garden is now a botanist's treasure trove, with a rose garden containing 2,500 varieties including an ancient green Bengali rose. There is also an arboretum whose highlight is a glorious*

*oak grove (home to squirrels who are tame to the point of impudence), a delightful Japanese rock garden, and a vast glass-covered orangery with a wide collection from the tropics and sub-tropics including numerous rare orchids and carnivorous plants.*

*But the Botanical Gardens are not just for experts. Once inside, it's hard to believe that you're close to the centre of Europe's biggest city, and it's a wonderful place to come to get away from the noise and stress of urban living. The gardens change their character and their attractions according to the season, and the enormous greenhouses mean that even in the depths of winter there's plenty to see - although the cost of heating them doesn't bear thinking about."*

Come and hear what Prof Laubscher has to tell us about his partnership with the

## **BOTANICAL GARDENS OF MOSCOW**

## NEXT OUTING

**Sat, 20 October at 10:00:** Visit Avondale, the garden of Rochelle Shuttleworth in Durbanville. This is their Open Day and entry is R20. A tea garden is also available.

8 Acres of garden with large rose garden, orchid glass house, formal vegetable garden and much more. The structure of the garden has recently been adapted to changing weather patterns. Local artists may have their work on display, weather permitting.

If you are interested in attending as a CHS group, please let Glenda have your name by 17 October.

## REPORT BACK

### September Plant Table (suburb – source of water)

#### University Estate – only rain:

*Wigandia urens*: looks like it should be related to Borage. The flowers and leaves have the same sort of feel. Can be seen on the M3 near Chart Farm and passing Wynberg Park. (Below, left)

Difficult to grow. It tends to come up by suckering up from the roots.

#### Sea Point – only rain:

*Isoplexis canariensis* "Canary Island Foxglove": originally bought at Freshwoods, Elgin; only gets occasional tank water in summer to keep it alive. (Below, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left)

#### Pinelands – only rain

*Dutch Iris*: growing in a small pot in full sun; Irises are generally from Turkey and Armenia. They are such a joy. They are prepared and arrive with the bud already in the corm, then it's very simple to plant them out and get them to grow.

*Allium neapolitanum* – from Mediterranean region: very pretty; approx. 25cm tall.

*Allium triquetrum* – from southern Europe: could become invasive; 15 – 20cm tall; has triangular shape to the stem; grows everywhere on the verges.

We don't get the big flowerheads of Allium, but if you let your leeks go to flower, that's the closest we get to a beautiful Allium-like flowerhead, although not purple.

*Pelargonium* (IND) (name needed, please): very tough; drought-resistant; long flowering season. (Below, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right)

*Dombeya rotundifolia* (IND) "Wild Pear" – Dombeyas are large shrubs or small trees in E Cape, Natal, and north of the Vaal River and are common in Zimbabwe, northern Botswana and Namibia: ideal small garden tree; flowers white, but turn copper as they die and remain for a time on the tree.

*Freesia laxa* (IND) – from E Cape to Mozambique in shady forests: a very attractive early flowering bulb; approx. 25cm tall; dies down in summer so no water needed. (Below, far right)



#### Pinelands – grey water

*Irisene*: grown for their foliage; if you don't want the flowers, pinch them out to keep them in their vegetative state.

*Heliotrope*: gets morning sun; this should be on a list of 'very rewarding Cape Town plants' because all through the summer Heliotropes appeared in full bloom. The white/off-white variety has a real fragrance.

*Lachenalia callista* (IND) – only found on upper slopes of Piketberg in 1949/50 and listed as Rare: grown from IBSA seed in 2014; name means 'most beautiful'. (Right)

#### Pinelands – alternate wellpoint and grey water

*Ochna serrulata* (IND): has taken about 9 years to get to a height of 1.5m; never gets the black berries because the pigeons get to them first.

*Aloe tenuoir* (IND): grows tall so needs to be behind plants that will hold it up, or thread through a trellis.

#### Kirstenhof – wellpoint water

*Tetradenia* (IND) – formerly Iboza: lovely misty plumes of flowers from early (July) for approx. 6 weeks; although leaves are big and soft, it is very waterwise once established. (Far right)

*Polygala myrtifolia* (IND) "September Bush": a small tree at 2.5m; lovely purple flowers loved by Carpenter bees.

*Polygala fruticosus* (IND): a short shrub; sun or little bit of shade; flowers most of the year.



*Polygala virgata* (IND) "Purple Broom": tall and narrow and nice to have between other shrubs; very graceful and a dark, dark purple.

The Polygalas can be identified by their leaf shape.

*Ochna natalitia* (IND): very drought-hardy and slow growing; gets to a height of 5m; yellow flowers in early spring; green, red, black berries/fruits.

*Psycotria capensis* (IND): semi-shade; very hardy; flowers in early spring when other bushes are full of berries that go from green to yellow to red to black. Loved by birds. Grows to 3m x 2.5m. (Right)

*Euryops pectinatus* (IND): drought-hardy; attracts insects which is good for attracting birds; flowers all year but in this garden mostly winter and is still flowering; prolific self-seeder so you're never without it. (Below, left – small yellow flower)

*Euryops virgineus* (IND): grow very tall; 2 – 3m high; drought-hardy; only flowers now, for a short time; best grown at the back as it gets very woody; does not seem to self-seed much, if at all. (Below, left – larger flower)

#### Diep River – only rain

*Ixia ciliaris* (IND)

#### Diep River – stored rain water

*Merwillia* (was *Scilla*) *peruviana*: this hasn't flowered for a few years; needed the rain.

#### Diep River – grey water and stored rain water

*Salvia* "Black and Blue": died back, but came back beautifully with the rain. (Below, centre)

Other plants brought in: *Tulbaghia fragrans*, Forget me not, *Irisene*, *Mackaya bella* (needs shade and a bit of water), *Duranta*, variety of *Impatiens* and *Balsam*, *Fuchsia*, *Osteospermum*, and an unnamed plant – possibly a *Combretum*? (Below, right) [Ed: if you recognize this, please let us have the name.]



### ISABELLA'S AND JENNY'S CHOICES FOR AUGUST

#### INDIGENOUS

#### Diep River – only rain

Susan's *Gladiolus carmineus*: this bulb was a mystery until this year's rain helped it to flower.



## EXOTIC

### University Estate – only rain:

Mel's *Euphorbia* (name unknown)

*Euphorbias* are either very indigenous and very poisonous or they are very small and very weedy. This one is tough and wind- and drought-resistant, and it is a big plant. It's a lovely green which is a good backdrop for something like the dark *Salvia* 'black and blue' (see above). To work with colour and try and group your plants, gives each one more impact. Look for *Euphorbias* and try and get some of the more unusual ones because they really are an interesting group. They seem to come from everywhere.

Mel says: "The plant is about 1m x 1m and has grown in rather inhospitable conditions so maybe they could grow bigger? It is a few years old and is offspring of a previous plant that was bought in George."

[Ed: If you know the name, please let us know.]



## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE

This month is the turn of our other new committee member, Georgina Charlesworth.

"The eldest of 5 children, I was born in London, England.

My gardening passion started at a very young age with fond memories of making "mud pies" in the garden of our house in Wimbledon; running through rhododendron bushes with my friends in Ascot and gathering bluebells and other colourful wild flowers from the Sussex downs for my dear late mother.

After leaving school I enrolled at the Southampton School of Nursing and embarked upon a student nursing career. This was short-lived as, after 18 months of training, I gave it up to get married.

In 1975 I emigrated to the then Rhodesia where I spent 5 happy years in the sunshine and learning how to grow vegetables with the help of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable gardener.

In 1980 I moved to South Africa and have been in Cape Town ever since.



In the mid-80s I embarked upon a full-time office job with a leading short term Insurer. Work tensions and other "family" issues needed an outlet and I found that gardening was very therapeutic. Nothing like digging up a patch of ground to relieve stress – and it is a lot cheaper than a gym membership, plus you grow things!

I researched as much as I could about gardening; bought books on composting, mulching and anything else relating to horticulture that caught my eye. In the 90s I read a book written by Rachel Carson titled "Silent Spring" which described the damage to the environment caused by the use of pesticides. This really scared me and probably is the main reason I subscribe now to organic gardening, recycling and as many other environmentally-friendly issues as I can manage.

A visit to a long past CHS Garden Show introduced me to even more gardening delights and possibilities and so I joined the Society and have been a member for about 14 years.

I did a certificated course on Gardening & Horticulture in 2004 through Intec College and a home study course on Basic Botany for Herbologists in 2010 through the South African Herb Academy but, apart from that, I have no formal horticultural qualifications. I just love being outside in the garden, whatever the weather, watching and learning from my successes – and failures (of which there are quite a few!).

I am very happy to have been able to join the CHS Committee."

And we are very happy to have her.

## JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

A correction to last month's journal: The flowers named Chinchinchee, were not. They were possibly *Allium triquetrum*.

'This month I have been listening to our garden. The reason for this is an article I read in *The Spectator* magazine, 'The joy of bird-listening' by Simon Barnes. He describes how he led a group of people on a listening excursion on a farm in England in order to convince them that the more bird song they heard, the better the quality of the land.

In our garden the male Cape Sparrow (right) has been singing at the top of his voice, letting everyone know that he is around. The sharp, clear 'chissseep, chirreep' sound lets all other sparrows know that this is my piece of territory, my mate - keep off. They hop busily on the ground foraging for seeds and grain. There is obviously a good supply of protein in our garden. We are lucky to have the sparrows because friends closer to the mountain apparently don't see them.



The aggressive Olive Thrush (left) is after the worms and snails for his daily dose. You always know that he has been around because the mulch has been scattered far and wide over the pathways in his search for worms and snails. His high-pitched song 'wheet-tooo-wheet wheewoo' is the first call of the morning. At night he is busy long after other birds have sensibly gone to bed.

Yesterday a male Southern Double-collared Sunbird was busy sucking nectar from the *Veltheimia bracteata*. His head was stuffed well down into the tube drinking the honey. His song is a high, short and fast 'chee-chee'. We don't see this bird so often, so it is lovely to see the sparkly green head and red band around its neck.

Another welcome visitor is the ubiquitous Cape White-eye (below left) with its wide-awake appearance. They busy themselves searching up and down the tree branches looking for pests. The continual 'tweee-tuuu-twee-twee' brings another happy note to the garden.



The Cape Turtle Dove and its smaller cousin the Laughing Dove (centre and right above) are permanent members of the garden community. They are easy to see because they perch openly in the trees. Our daughter scoffed at the idea that she would miss the 'kuk-cooo-kuk-cooo' of the Turtle dove when she and her family emigrated to England. Later she confessed that this call of Africa was greatly missed. (My wife, who is British, still misses the sound 'My toe bleeds Jenny' made by a local Dove). The Doves who find homes in our trees are hopeless nest builders and we frequently find lost eggs under their scruffy nests.

Last week there was great excitement when a Little Sparrowhawk flew over our garden with a dove in its mouth. It settled in a tree opposite and started devouring his prey with feathers flying everywhere. We also have a *Gymnogene* [Ed: this has had a name change] that nests in a nearby tree.

We always know when the Hadedda Ibis has visited because he leaves his droppings in the middle of a pathway – the other day just as we came out of the front door. But at least he has eaten some nasty grubs in the 'lawn'.

Other visitors like the Red-winged Starling croaking 'spreeeeoo', the Cape Bulbul with his sharp whistle 'peet-peet-patata' and even the harsh 'kah' of the black crow and many more tell us that our garden is doing its job as a source of protein.

It would be interesting to know what birds are attracted to gardens in other parts of the Peninsula.

I used the following when writing this Journal:

- Barnes, Simon 'The joy of bird-listening' *The Spectator* pg. 26 23 June 2018
- Liversidge, Richard *The birds around us*
- Sinclair, Ian *Field guide to the birds of Southern Africa*

[Ed: Our Pinelands garden can also boast, apart from those mentioned above, a Cape Robin, Pied Barbet, Mousebirds Cape Weaver and, our "favourite", the European Starling.]

## TREES UNDER THREAT

Reported in the Weekend Argus of 25 August 2018 by Kay Montgomery:

"A beetle, just 2mm long, and its symbiont fungal partner are threatening trees across South Africa. Botanists and arborists are concerned about a number of dead and dying trees around the country.

The polyphagous shot hole borer or PSHB (*Euwallacea fornicatus*) is an ambrosia beetle native to south-east Asia. It was first discovered in South Africa last year on London plane trees in the KZN National Botanical Gardens in Pietermaritzburg.

The beetle has already become a damaging invader in nearly 60 different tree species from Israel to California. In South Africa, it is invading exotic and indigenous trees in urban, agricultural and natural landscapes.

The female PSHB beetle carries three species of fungus, including the pathogen, *Fusarium euwallaceae*."

Dr Trudy Paap, a post-doctoral researcher at the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute at the University of Pretoria, says, 'The adult females burrow into trees to establish brood galleries where they lay their eggs. They introduce the fungus which colonises gallery walls, becoming a food source for developing larvae and adult beetles. The fungus kills the water-conducting tissues of the tree and can lead to branch die-back and tree death. The most likely pathway for the movement of the beetle is through the movement of infested wood, originating from dead or dying PSHB-infested trees, including wood intended to be used for cooking or heating.'

She also says that while no infestations have been reported in Cape Town, gardeners are to be on the lookout for symptoms. She cautions against bringing any green (uncomposted) mulch into the garden.

Local trees infested include plane trees, Japanese maples, Chinese maples, pin oaks and English oaks. Indigenous reproductive hosts include the cost coral tree, forest bushwillow and the Cape willow.

Look for tiny holes and a fine sawdust that comes out of the hole. Holes in Maples will have a black ring around them. Resin or gelatinous drops from the entrance holes may ooze from some trees. Brown, watery sap can also stain the bark and a shot hole-type lesion (bark thickening) can be found around older entrance holes.

Treatment, if only some branches are infested, is to remove the infected part and an insecticide given that will target the PSHB from the inside outwards. Heavily infested or dead trees should be felled by a reputable company that disposes of the wood in a controlled manner. Burning and chipping the wood for compost (the heat build-up will kill the beetle) are the best methods of disposal. If a tree has been felled, the area should be cleared and, possibly, sanitised.

Report any suspected infestations to [diagnostic.clinic@fab.up.ac.za](mailto:diagnostic.clinic@fab.up.ac.za). For more info, see [www.favinet.up.ac.za](http://www.favinet.up.ac.za).

## THINGS TO DO

- **Sat, 29 Sept:** Celebrating Fish Hoek's Centenary, False Bay Gardening Expo, organised by Fish Hoek Garden Club is on from 09:00 to 15:00. Entrance is R10. Call Sally Britten on 021 785 2386 and 076 662 3500 for more information.
- **Sat/Sun, 27/28 Oct and 3/4 Nov:** Elgin Open Gardens from 10:00 to 17:00. To find out more, visit [www.elginpengardens.co.za](http://www.elginpengardens.co.za) or call Barbara on 021-844-0154/078-021-2101 or Jessie on 083-458-3790.

Photos: Google Images, Susan Armstrong, Beni Hotz, Andrew and Glenda Thorpe