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END-OF YEAR CHRISTMAS DINNER

Monday, 3 December 2018 at 19:00 at The Cape Town Athenaeum, Newlands

A message from the evening's hostess: "This is an excellent time to get to talk to all the other lovely people who belong to our Society AND enjoy the most delicious spread, supplied by all of you! If we haven't already spoken, please give me a ring if you are coming, and we can discuss what you're able to bring. Wine and soft drinks for the evening are supplied by the CHS.

Please mark or label the serving spoons you bring with your dishes. Serving plates/boards are also needed if you're bringing patés and breads etc.

The usual R10 for the evening applies. You may even be in line to win a magnificent yellow Clivia, which has been waiting for this occasion since our Plant Sale."

Melanie

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The Committee invites all members to attend this annual function.

We will also be announcing the winner of the monthly Plant Table Exhibits. As was done last year, every specimen brought in was awarded a point, with an extra point given to Jenny's monthly choice of an exotic and an indigenous plant. Added to this, we included a few "special" awards this year. Come along and see if you're a winner.

The library will not be open so please hang onto the books you have borrowed and return them to the February meeting.

FIRST MEETING OF 2019

Monday, 4 February 2019: Rosalind Spears will tell us about *Antony* – a National Trust Garden in Cornwall.

REPORT BACK

At the September meeting a plant was brought in and could not be positively identified. It was a *Combretum bracteosum*. Visit <http://pza.sanbi.org/combretum-bracteosum> for more information.

November Plant Table (suburb – source of water)

EXOTICS

Marina da Gama – wellpoint and grey water:

Lathyrus a la Chelsea "Sweet Pea" – grown from the seeds brought back by Wendy Ackerman from the Chelsea show a few years ago.

Pinelands – rain water until mid-October; wellpoint and grey water since then:

Lavatera – bought at 2017 Plant Sale; full of buds; leaves could be smaller because of less water; if grown from seed this could be a variation of *L arborea*

Pinelands – rain water:

Arpophyllum spicatum (photo 1) – orchid from Mexico/Costa Rica; growing in a shade house. The typical orchid structure can be seen in the tiny flowers.

Calandrinia (or *Cistanthe*) *spectabilis* (photo 7) – Portulacaceae family from Chile; very drought tolerant but short-lived; lift and replant small pieces every 2 – 3 years; large showy cerise flowers

Newlands – stored rain water:

Streptosolen jamesonii "Marmalade Bush" (photo 2) – from South America; does not like frost

Kirstenhof – wellpoint water:

Begonia ?? – bought from Arderne Garden stock

Hippeastrum (not an *Amaryllis*, although related) – hybridised; species *Hippeastrum* is smaller petalled and quite remarkable; usually sold as a bare bulb, then up comes the flower spike and the flower blooms and up come the leaves. That is when you start feeding it. The more you feed those leaves, when they die down all that goodness goes into the bulb to produce the bud for the next year; growing in a pot in the shade

Tropaeolum majus "Nasturtium" – the more modern breeding has produced a variety of colours; the variegated leaf forms are not as vigorous; leaves, flowers, buds and seeds can all be eaten.

Constantia – borehole water:

Odontonema callistachyum (photo 3) – 2m high shrub growing in shade; needs quite a bit of water

Rosa ?? (photo 4) – very bushy; growing in semi-shade

Rosebank – rain water:

Alstroemeria "Inca Lily" (photo 5) – from South America; they don't have a bulb, they have a tuberous root; to pick the flowers, you pull them rather than cutting, so they snap off; a bit invasive as they pop up everywhere; need quite a lot of water and a good mulch of compost as they start growing in spring; very rewarding as the mixed colours you get a really super.

The Goemans family in England are hybridising and producing the miniature form which make a nice container plant.

Philadelphus "Mock Orange"

Claremont – wellpoint water:

Alstroemeria – a variety of colours; the grower asks if anyone knows how many colours are available.

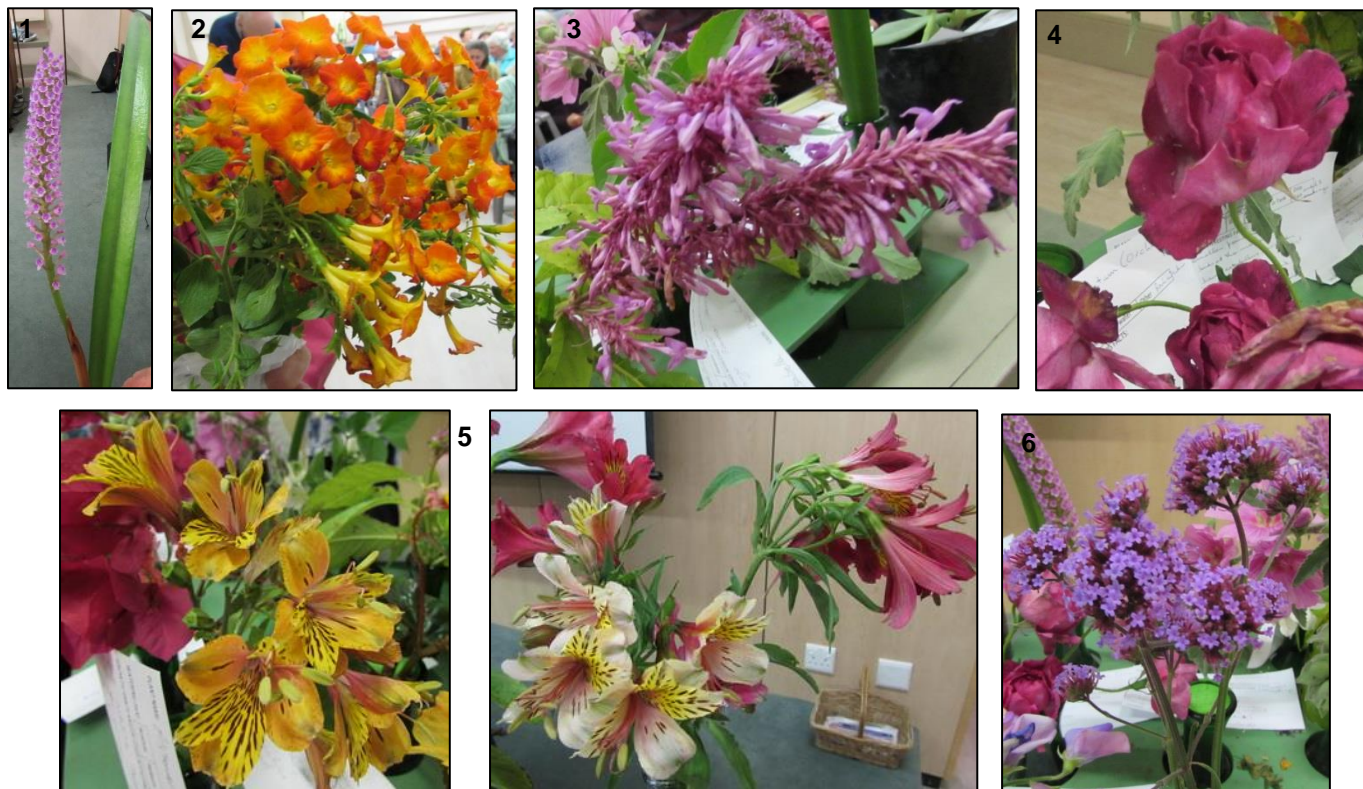
Holland is producing the hybrids, both dwarf forms and the taller ones. The cut flower farms at Oak Valley grow under licence from Holland – the really special varieties you get in the bunches from Woolworths. [See page 7.]

Rondebosh – rain water:

Verbena bonariensis (photo 6) – has grown to more than 2m high; flowering prolifically; self-seeds

Hout Bay – rain water:

Bougainvillea – growing well against a wall in a sunny position; if grown in a container they'll reach flowering size sooner than if growing in the ground and putting out mile-long growths.



Above: a variety of *Alstroemerias*

Far right: *Calandrinia* seen at Avondale, Durbanville

Plants not shown here can be seen on our Facebook page.



INDIGENOUS**Diep River – rain:**

Scilla violaceae or *Ledebouria violaceae* – grown for its leaves rather than its flowers which have a pale purple colour underneath

Marina da Gama – wellpoint and grey water:

Pelargonium – try to take slips of these because they can get woody; keep young growth

Polygala myrtifolia – small pink flowers in great profusion which is loved by bees and butterflies

Hout Bay – only rain:

Polygala – grows well on Hout Bay sand

Newlands – only rain:

Pelargonium (not *fulgidum*) – growing in a hanging basket; just flowers and can be ignored

Langebaan:

Pelargonium (not *capitatum*) – growing profusely in Langebaan

Pinelands – stored rain water:

Plectranthus oertendahlia – from Eastern Cape/Natal; grows in light shade in a pot; flowers are insignificant so grown for its foliage

Kenilworth – grey water:

Gasteria/Aloe? or *Gasteraloe?* – growing in a pot

Sea Point – rain water:

Barleria repens 'Rosea' – easy to grow; no maintenance; very tough; climbs up through plants

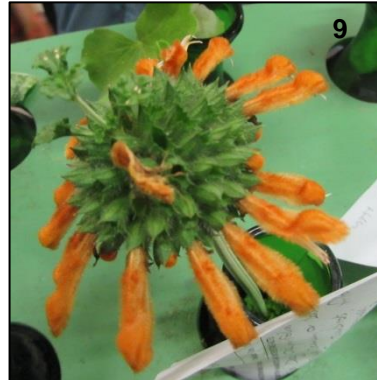
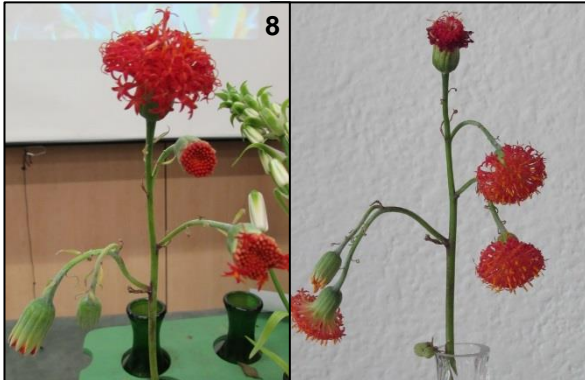
Constantia – borehole water:

Kleinia fulgens "Coral senecio" (photo 8) – PlantzAfrica says: "This is a stunning, grey-leaved plant with a profusion of scarlet flowers. It is ideal for hot, dry spots in the garden." [The second photo was taken a week later.]

Rosebank – rain water:

Leonotus ocymifolia "Klip Dagga" (photo 9) – 'ocymifolia' means "leaves like Ocimum or basil". Flowers more than, and does not get as large as *L. leonurus*; wonderful for sunbirds

Pelargonium peltatum (sp) (photo 10) – from Eastern Cape; ivy-leaved Pelargonium; sprawls or climbs; flowers for a long time from spring to autumn.



The unnamed Pelargoniums mentioned above:



In answer to a question, Jenny replied: "Geranium is a common named used for Pelargoniums, but Geranium is a different genus completely. We have one or two Geranium species in South Africa – *G. incanum* which grows all around Port Elizabeth as a groundcover on the roadside. What we have on the table are Pelargonium species or hybrids. The nursery will label plants as 'Pelargonium cultivar'.

As a group, Pelargoniums are fantastic for Cape gardens in this dry weather. If we are going to have another dry summer next year, which we may well do, then Pelargoniums will reward you in the spring with a mass of flowers of many different colours. The hybrids are more fussy, but the true species (growing around Hermanus, or Eastern Cape), are very widespread and very tough. They grow in very sandy soil and will survive with minimum rain water." [Ed. See more from our Haphazard Gardener.]

JENNY'S AND ERROL'S CHOICES FOR NOVEMBER

INDIGENOUS

Rugby:

Arpad's *Ansellia africana* 'Mombasa Spring' x *Ansellia africana* Mike. He says "it's past its prime". Usually plain lemon colour.



From <http://pza.sanbi.org/ansellia-africana>

This is the largest of our epiphytic orchids and grows in spectacular clumps in trees in the subtropical areas of southern Africa.

Distribution and habitat

It is found in tropical Africa and into N Namibia, N Botswana, Swaziland, and in South Africa in the Northern Province, the Lowveld and Kwa-Zulu/Natal, mainly in the hot, dry river valleys.

AND

Constantia – borehole water:

Marianne's *Albuca nelsonii* – bulb; water-wise



EXOTIC

Kirstenhof – wellpoint water:

Nicola's *Rosa centifolia* "Cabbage or Provence rose" – 150 year old Heritage Rose with an amazing fragrance, grown from the first offshoot received from her friend, Athalie Burrows.

Extract from an article in the Argus, 3 March 2018:

Anja Taschner (daughter of Ludwig) says these roses "are said to have first appeared in the late 16th century as a cross between the Autumn Damask and the Alba rose. They tend to have large globular blooms of white or pink and be rather lax in habit. They are all fragrant and extremely hardy." This was in response to a picture sent in by Constantia gardener, Athalie Burrows, whose grandmother had first planted this rose on the family farm in the Eastern Cape in 1873. The family tradition was for every child to be given a plant when they started their own garden.



WELCOME TO ...

... new members Margaret Hanekom, Linda Hibbin and Stacey Robinson. We hope they will enjoy their time with the CHS.

JOURNAL OF A HAPHAZARD GARDENER – NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2018

Pelargonium cucullatum subs *cucullatum* has grown vigorously on Table Mountain this year. The journey over Ou Kaapseweg has been enlivened by the clusters of bright purple flowers (below) on the hundreds of shrubs on both sides of the road. So I thought this month I'd write about Pelargoniums. The first book I looked at was *Geraniums & Pelargoniums* and this got me thinking about why these two plants are confused.

They both belong to the *Geraniaceae* family and two of the eleven genera are Pelargoniums and Geraniums. (Ah! Confusion number one).



The table below sets out some of the differences:
To start with they are different botanically.

Pelargonium	Geranium
Flowers: five unequal-sized petals with the upper ones larger than the three lower ones. There is often darker veining on the upper petals.	Flowers: five equal-sized petals all shaded the same
Thick and succulent stems	Delicate stems
Have a recognizable, pungent scent eg. lemons and roses	Mostly unscented
Are good in containers and make useful houseplants	Work well as a groundcover and don't like the indoors
They have always attracted breeders and as a result there are several thousand cultivars	More species-based with far fewer hybrids
Grown from cuttings and seeds	Grown exclusively from seed

(It is also significant that the spell check allows 'geraniums' but not 'pelargoniums').

The only cultivated South African geranium, *Geranium incanum*, was a feature in our garden before the drought. It was easy to grow in the sandy soil and self-seeded profusely. It does, however need plenty of water.

This pelargonium hybrid grew easily from a cutting (photo 11). I tore stems from the mother plant leaving a 'tail' at the end. After leaving it for a day to dry out, I placed the end in a rooting hormone powder and planted them in the soil from our garden enriched with some home-made compost. Three months later this is the result.

The *Pelargonium citronellum* (photo 12) with its strong lemon-scented foliage was also grown from a cutting.

Pelargoniums also grow from seed. *P. Capitatum* (photo 13) easily self-seeds and they have found various sunny spots to add colour to the garden. It is very waterwise. Apparently *P. capitatum* arrived in Australia clinging to sheep's wool. This *P. 'nutmeg'* (photo 14) produced a fine crop of seeds.



Some pelargoniums with interesting leaves can look good in hanging baskets (photo 15).

One of the drawbacks of growing pelargoniums is that the more vigorous growers become scraggly over time. They can be cut back about two thirds to just above a node. I used these prunings for cuttings.

I finish this month with some of the other pelargoniums in our garden (photos 16, 17 and 18).



I used the following sources when writing this Journal.

Brown, Neville and Graham Duncan *Grow Fynbos plants* (This book has an informative chapter on growing fynbos pelargoniums.)

Feltwell, John *Geraniums & Pelargoniums*

Pienaar, Kristo *Gardening with indigenous plants*

[Ed: And this, sadly, is the last journal of our Haphazard Gardener. Peter Henshall has been faithfully writing this monthly journal for three-and-a-half years. I would like to thank him and his garden and neighbourhood for providing us with many months of interest and entertainment. His garden will soon be no more as our Haphazard Gardener moves on to find new ways to garden.]

SAVE THE PHA CAMPAIGN

You will remember that we had Nazeer Soudy and Susanna Coleman at our September meeting to tell us what was going on with their campaign to stop the City of Cape Town developing on the farmlands in Philippi.

At that meeting, we agreed to do our bit to keep the Cape Flats Aquifer from being destroyed, so if you feel strongly enough about this problem, here's your chance.

Firstly, voice your objection by linking into this petition:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/The_Western_Cape_Premier_and_Mayor_of_Cape_Town_We_demand_the_long_term_protection_of_the_Philippi_Horticulture_Area/?sufvlib

Simply type in your e-mail address and click on 'sign'.

Secondly, using the following information (put it into your own words), send separate e-mails to the addresses below:

The Philippi Horticulture Area (PHA), the unique 3,000ha farmlands located within the City of Cape Town and in the heart of the Cape Flats has been the city's breadbasket since 1885.

The City of Cape Town is processing developments of 50,000 houses, 2 shopping centres, a private prison, private school This will delete the farmlands and destroy the Cape Flats Aquifer.

Where will our food and water come from when silica sand is exhausted and farmlands are paved over by roofs and roads, and the most unique agricultural land in the world is a hole in the ground filled with water? The PHA Food & Farming Campaign is fighting to defend the farmlands from the illegal manner (see links below) in which the city's governors are promoting developer proposals: against the law, against policy, against the interests of its own citizens.

6 Reasons why you should care about the PHA:

- The PHA is a unique horticultural area producing over 150 000 tonnes vegetables and flowers per year.
- The proximity of the PHA to consumers means minimal transport costs: fresh, affordable vegetables available throughout the year
- The PHA farmlands and seasonal wetlands are the last naturally occurring recharge for the Cape Flats Aquifer
- South Africa is a climate-vulnerable country. The PHA is blessed by ideal micro-climate, sandy soils and abundant aquifer water and thus can provide food and water security for the city for eternity
- The PHA employs almost 4 000 workers mostly from vulnerable groups such as women and youth. This has the potential to increase.
- The PHA soils are the sink for atmospheric CO₂ and CH₄ in the city. Soil purifies aquifer water and is a natural reservoir for water and atmospheric carbon. In this way PHA helps with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

5 CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TO KNOW:

Right to food. Local government is required to progressively realise the right to food.

Right to have the environment protected. For the benefit of present and future generations.

Right to water security. National Water Act (Act No 36 of 1998) prescribes that water requirements for aquatic ecosystems and basic human needs be reserved before allocation for other uses.

Right to good health. Malnutrition is a direct result of lack of access to vegetables and affordable, nutritious food.

Right to administrative justice [s33] of the Constitution and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (PAJA). All administrative decisions, such as granting environmental authorisation and making planning decisions must comply with all of the relevant considerations taken into account by the decision-maker.

End your messages with:

I am part of the resistance supporting the PHA Food & Farming Campaign to protect the PHA.

Sincerely

(Your name)

premier@pgwc.gov.za;

Mayor.Mayor@capetown.gov.za;

anton.bredell@pgwc.gov.za;

alan.winde@westerncape.gov.za

Copy your messages to phaletters@gmail.com

NEW TREASURES OF THE INCAS

Published in RHS's April 2003 issue of *The Garden*

Written by Martyn Rix, a plantsman, plant explorer and author.

An increasing number of Alstroemeria (Peruvian lilies) and closely related Bomarea species are being introduced from South America. Martyn Rix looks at the potential of these exquisite plants in British gardens.

"*Alstroemerias* are familiar to many as long-lasting cut flowers, resembling small lilies with their curved, spotted petals and twisted leaves scattered up the stem. There are many cultivars in wide range of colours, making good plants in warm, sunny positions, provided the roots are protected from frost.

Most *Bomarea* are climbers, related to *Alstroemeria*, but with smaller, tubular flowers, concentrated into dense, pendent heads of orange, red, pink and green. Seldom seen and less hardy, they are easy to grow, even rampant, under glass but can be contained in pots.

There are two genera in *Alstroemeriaceae*, all from tropical and South America. The third is rare and monotypic *Leontochir ovallei*: an impressive scrambling plant with rounded heads of red, orange and green flowers above glaucous foliage. It is native to the dry, sandy Atacama Desert in Peru and Chile.

Alstroemerias

Alstroemeria species come in a wide range of sizes and colours. The inner petals are usually a different shape and colour from the outer ones, while the upper two are erect and streaked, advertising the flower to butterflies, bees, moths and other insect pollinators.

At present, about 70 species of *Alstroemeria* are recognised, mainly from two areas: Chile and northern Brazil. Chilean species are hardier and easier to grow, and the ancestors of most cultivars. Toughest of all and most familiar to British gardeners is *A. aurea* with yellow or orange flowers. Originally from *Nothofagus* woods in southern Chile, yellow forms are said to originate further south and come from higher altitudes.

Distinctive *A. psittacina* (syn. *A. pulchella*) and *A. brasiliensis* have tall stems topped by umbels of tubular red and green, or red flowers, streaked with black; the uppermost petal is longer than the rest, the lowermost is shortest, and the petal bases are tubular to hold nectar. Plants have developed these characteristics to attract hummingbirds, their likely pollinators, though it is reported that flies and butterflies also visit the flowers.

The other well-established *Alstroemeria* species is variable *A. ligtu*, found growing in dry mountain scrub in Chile and Argentina. Most garden strains are seedlings; the massed flowers have narrow petals in orange or pink shades, but they can be white or pale yellow – even deep red in *A. ligtu* subsp. *Simsii*, while *A. ligtu* subsp. *Incarnata* is pink.

All forms are good garden plants for a sunny, sheltered position in well-drained soil. Although hardy, it is best to cover them with a deep layer of straw in intense cold. Slugs and snails are their main enemies.

Probably the most frequently seen *Alstroemerias* in UK gardens are *A. ligtu* hybrids, derived from *A. angustifolia* (also called *A. ligtu* var. *Angustifolia*) and *A. haemantha*. Their soft pink to orange shades seem quite at home in blowsy cottage-garden borders. *Alstroemeria* species are less commonly seen, but are beginning to make their way into wider cultivation in the UK. Some *Alstroemeria* tend to be grown only by specialists, and dwarf species such as yellow *A. pygmaea* are popular alpine-house plants. *Alstroemeria pelgerina* has pink flowers with a large red zone on each petal, while *A. angustifolia* has pale pink petals, the upper three speckled and with a yellow bar across the middle; both species are low-growing and suitable for a well-drained raised bed.

Alstroemeria pauperula (better known as *A. violacea*) is one of the most beautiful species, but rare in cultivation. Flowers are violet-blue, with a white patch on the upper petals. Introduced from northern Chile, it grows on coastal cliffs in the Atacama Desert; in this almost rain-free area, it is watered mostly by winter fogs, and blooms in early spring. This winter-grower needs bright, frost-free conditions and a dry summer resting period.

Also from Chile but until recently seldom seen in the UK, *Alstroemeria pulchra* is now available as young plants or seed.

Bomareas

Up to 120 species of *Bomarea* are known from Mexico down the Andes to Chile and Argentina. Lowland and forest species are tall, fast-growing climbers with curling stems up to more than 6.5m. Shoots flower when they reach the light. At higher altitudes, *Bomareas* may lose their climbing habit and resemble tall *Alstroemerias*. Most are frost tender but can be tried in sheltered spots.

Propagation

Many species are readily obtained as seed, and both *Alstroemeria* and *Bomarea* are easily grown on from seedling to flowering size in two or three years. Plants of both genera set ample amounts of seed after flowering. This is best sown fresh because dry seed is sometimes slow to germinate. As *Alstroemeria* seed germinates in cool temperatures (5-10°C / 41-50°F), sow in autumn in a glasshouse after soaking in warm water overnight. Seedlings should then be kept cool after germination to mimic conditions that occur naturally in the Chilean winter. *Bomarea* seed is best germinated at 15°C (59°F) in early spring. It also benefits from a soak in warm water if it is dry.

Both can be propagated by division of the brittle, fleshy roots. Because of the danger of rotting, this is best carried out in spring, when plants start into growth. Vigorous clumps of *Alstroemeria* may be moved in late summer after flowering, when the soil is warm and there is time to re-establish before winter.

The range of these exciting, beautiful and colourful plants is ever expanding as new species are introduced. At present, British gardeners are barely scratching the surface of what may prove to be a treasure trove."

[Ed. Well, that was 15 years ago and look at the wonderful colours and varieties we have today.

I now know the name of the *Alstroemeria* that has invaded our garden for the past 10 years – *A. psittacina* (right).

Photos: Peter Henshall, Marianne Alexander, The Garden and Glenda Thorpe

