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Anne Bean, Adam Harrower, Michael Tuffin, Bill Elder

NEXT MEETING

Entrance fee: Members – R10; Visitors – R30

CHELSEA 2019

Leon Kluge will tell us all about this year's exhibit at Chelsea which won another Gold!

NEXT OUTING

Fri, 12 July at 10:00: Visit the Mowbray gardens of Sue Kingma and Tina and Tony Penso.











Sue's 'garden' is a house plant lover's delight. A few original plants remain but most of the garden has been taken over by the need to house her many interesting pot plants and hanging baskets. The Penso's garden is waterwise, mostly indigenous – and quirky. The back was an original Clare Burgess design but our hosts have put their stamp on it over the years with their own plantings. The quirkiness is due to the many garden ornaments and things they have collected over the years.

Limited to 20 members. Please let Glenda know, before 9 July, if you would like to attend.

REPORTBACK

Guilt-free Gardening Talk

Here are Cherise Viljoen's suggestions on how to garden in the drought and how to recognize a plant that is designed by nature to survive our long, hot, summer climate (wind, lack of water, harsh sun):

-  Choose slower growing, more long lived, hardier evergreens and try avoid soft, thirsty annuals & perennials
-  Select those plants naturally geared to survive drought:
 -  silver, grey foliage: *reflects the heat;*
 -  upright, narrow, small leaves or no leaves at all: *all of which reduces contact with the hot sun and so stay cooler – reducing their water-loss though evaporation;*
 -  hairy, waxy, firm-structured, aromatic: *all designed to also reduce water-loss from the plant;*
 -  succulent: *have their own reservoirs of water supply;*
 -  have more underground plant parts and storage organs- like bulbs: *Hide from the sun and wind and so reduce water-loss;*
 -  deciduous in summer: *grow when the weather is cooler and wetter, sleep when conditions are unfavourable.*
-  Garden with **local** indigenous plants which are naturally adapted to the local weather and soil conditions-they've been 'droughted' every summer since the beginning of time and know how to survive.
-  Know your soil type- and match the **plant's preferences** to the sandy or clay soil you have in your garden (don't try grow them in soil they are not adapted to!)

Appreciate the successful plants in your garden, celebrate them even though they might not be what you would ideally like and allow plants to grow where they want to rather than when you put them- should they decide to self-seed in your garden. They are more successful/hardier where they choose to migrate to themselves.

Don't fertilise as often as you used to, and if you do ... aim to grow roots, not leaves, so look for lower N and higher P:K.

Measure how much water your usual watering time puts into a measuring jug ... then dig into your soil to see how far that amount of water penetrated ... then adjust so that you are getting to a depth of at least 60cm for small plants and deeper for larger shrubs and deeper for trees, you want to encourage your plant's roots to grow down where it is cool and hopefully moist, not up in the shallow soil layers where it's hot and dry. Once you know how much water you're actually using and how deep the watering you do penetrates in your garden's soil you can manage your water much more effectively, even if that means having a 'rain event' of watering once a week rather than sprinkling watering every second day.

Don't waste: Use recycled water, catch all the rain with berms/gullies/planting hole basins, don't let water escape your property down storm water drains- do everything you can think of to get as much water back into your soil as possible- SOIL is the best 'water reservoir' that exists for us gardeners.

Mulch, mulch, mulch – with whatever you like and can afford. Just cover and protect your precious soil!

June Plant Table:

EXOTIC

Aechmea kertesziae – flowers once a year. After a Bromeliad flowers, it dies and up come all the babies – giving you 4 plants instead of 1. (Below, left)

Impatiens – grows big and gives a good shape; very attractive and are all appearing again after their brush with death a few years ago.

Strobilanthes flaccidiflorus – Chinese rain bell: often more attractive on the plant than when picked. Many don't like being picked.

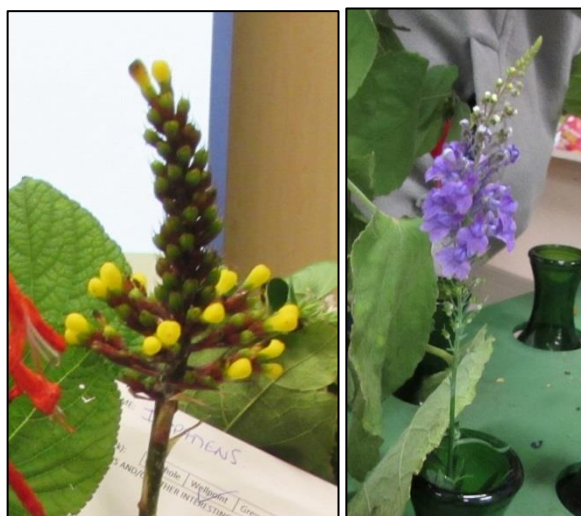
Strobilanthes dyerianus – Persian Shield

Laelia anceps – from Mexico: grows outdoors under a Loquat tree and is ignored all year. Comes in a white form and a blue form, the pink being the more common one; flowers in May/June.

Linaria purpurea – an old cottage plant. Also comes in yellow which is like a toad flax. Perennial. (Far right)

Reinwardtia – lovely yellow flowers. Anything flowering at this time of year, is a real bonus.

Malvaviscus arboreus – Fire Dart Bush from north and south America. Hibiscus family, doesn't like being picked.



INDIGENOUS:

Lachenalia bifolia (formerly *bulbifera*) – from Klawer to Mossel Bay. One of the first bulbs to flower. This specimen is grown in a pot but if grown in the garden, the flower heads will be 3 or 4 times bigger. Because locally indigenous, it is easy to grow. Dormant all summer; first rains of winter and up they come. Makes many bulbs below ground so not necessary to try and grow from seed.

Chasmanthe aethiopica – from Darling through to the Eastern Cape; the shorter one which grows about 30cm in height; flowers from April onwards.

Buddleja auriculata – not much scent but full of flowers (below, left).

Knowltonia vesicatoria – likes light shade (below, centre).

Euryops pectinatus – from Gifberg to Cape Peninsula; very drought resistant; loved by landscapers because it's tough in the summer then when very little is flowering in winter, they are full of blooms for a long while.

Crassula capitata – puts on growth in the autumn, then flowers; growing under roof overhang so gets very little water (far right).

Hypoestes forskalii – tropical Africa and Middle East; grows to about 1m

Justicia petiolaris – lovely lavender blue flowers; flowers for months and months.

Pelargonium peltatum hybrid – trailing; semi-succulent; flowers well in the heat; can be used for ground cover, tubs, containers.



JENNY'S CHOICES FOR THE MONTH

INDIGENOUS:

Haemanthus coccineus – would have flowered March/April; after the first rains, up come the leaves and the happier the leaves are, the better it will flower next year. (Below, left)

EXOTIC:

Salvia gesneriiflora – from Mexico: there are lots of plants in our gardens from Mexico that do remarkably well. This plant was originally from Anne Bean. (Below, centre)

MOST UNUSUAL:

Poinsettia – a short-day plant so they flower in the winter. Those you get at Christmas time have been kept under black covers to initiate their bracts, which are the flowers. The flowers are actually in the centre. This one is genetically very confused – part is genetically white or cream; part is genetically red with a little bit of cream; and part is very confused. Started out as dark green for a whole year and a summer and it has only now started going coloured. It was re-potted and has grown a lot bigger. Google says that the leaves should fall off when they come into colour. these leaves don't look too good but that could be the cold winter nights we've experienced recently. Being a more tropical plant it should be kept on a patio where there is warmth and protection overnight. (Below, right)



CONNECTION WITH MGİ

Jane Yeats reports on the Mediterranean Gardening Association of Portugal (MGAP) Conference, April 2019 – *"Bringing the Mediterranean landscape into your garden"*

As a CHS member, Jane automatically qualifies to partake in any garden visit, outing or conference organised by an associate of Mediterranean Gardening International (MGİ). This year it was Portugal's turn and here is what Jane has to say about her recent trip.

"On the last weekend of March, Allan and I and our friend, Athol McLaggan, flew in to Portugal via Luanda on TAAG (Angolan Airlines). We took a train to Tunes in the Algarve to reach our hotel, practically on the beach, in the seaside village and resort of Armacao de Pera. (Allan and Athol immediately took a plunge in the Atlantic as they did every day we were there – a little chilly for me as the spring water temperature was still only 16°C.) That evening we met up with our group and Rosie Peddle, our cheerful, funny and no-nonsense tour organiser. Twenty delegates had come from the USA, France, the UK, Scotland, Australia, Chile and SA for the Algarve pre-tour. Over the next few days we got to know and like everybody; gardeners are good company.

On day 1 we started out with residential gardens designed by Marilyn Ribeiro (another dynamic tour leader), putting into practice (a) waterwise principles and (b) the use of Portuguese indigenous and Mediterranean appropriate plants. It was a surprise to hear how hard she has battled to implement both of these in her local landscaping practice. I think it's fair to say we take these concepts for granted here in the Cape, but in Portugal they are still novel and meet with resistance from clients as well as the old school gardeners who are used to green lawns and lush vegetation. In any event the new garden was thriving and included a meadow garden on the adjacent plot, largely left to its own devices so as to encourage seasonal wild flowers. The gardens we saw over the following days varied in size and scope but were all about the theme of gardening for the climate, working with nature rather than fighting against it, valuing and utilizing local plants, preserving what's left of natural ecologies and re-wilding where possible.



A modern waterwise Mediterranean garden for an agritourism questhouse, by Marilyn Ribeiro



Madeira Echium paired with African salvia, in a gravel bed



An attractive stairway built from rough local stone, with creeping succulent



Day one also included a huge lunch of local dishes like wild boar and prune stew, piri-piri chicken, cod and bread mash, all washed down with carafes of wine. The restaurant was on a hillside in Monchique, the highest and greenest part of the Algarve. After lunch we visited a large garden on a fairly steep side



of the mountain, featuring a terraced orchard and alongside the house an Islamic-style courtyard garden with a water tank and rill, fed from a spring above the orchard.

Far left: Monchique terraced garden

Left: Islamic-style courtyard garden with water feature

Eucalyptus stands have taken over large areas of the Algarve, replacing native ecosystems and creating a major fire hazard in the long, hot summers. On day 2 we drove into the countryside to a small holding where an area of eucalyptus plantation had been cut down, and with minimal intervention the native vegetation was returning, with all sorts of surprises popping up, presumably from seed lying dormant or reintroduced by birds or wind. This seems analogous to the spontaneous regeneration of fynbos when pine plantations are cut down here in the Cape. The plants returning were different species of cistus, lavenders, thymes, ground orchids and most importantly young trees, which will eventually take over as native forest, oak species predominating. This property also featured a large eco-pool and an entirely off-grid home.

Green and purple lavenders in their wild habitat



After a big seafood lunch, again washed down with carafes of wine, we took a walk along 4.5km of the Costa Vicentina, along the cliff tops overlooking the sea. The beautiful coastal vegetation was strikingly similar in texture and colour to the Cape peninsula – small tough dark-green leaves, hairy grey leaves, the familiar mauves and yellows of the flowers. Also familiar was spreading sour fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*), a noted invader in Portugal. Unfamiliar and so rather odd was the dwarf fan palm, one of only two palms indigenous to the Mediterranean.



Algarve coastal vegetation, so similar to the Cape coastal. Invasive sour fig in foreground.

Armeria maritima, shaped by tough coastal conditions.

We wrapped up day 3 with a visit to the 2 year old MGAP botanic garden which is dedicated to the plants of the Barrocal. It's taking shape on a hectare of stony hillside, and already showing the potential of the plants of this particular area of the Algarve. You can follow this and other MGAP projects on their website www.mediterraneangardeningportugal.org.



The group under a fine old carob tree in the MGAP botanical garden. Almonds, olives and carobs are remnants of the site's previous agricultural use.

to abruptly turn back for shore. It was a dash to the nice warm bus that was waiting to take us on to the Alentejo region and the small city of Evora. Over dinner we met up with more delegates from Europe (including Portugal, Cypress and the Netherlands), joining for the main conference.

Day 1 of the Evora conference started with two fabulous lectures in the main auditorium of the University. James and Helen Basson explained the involved in putting together their 3 Chelsea show gardens, all featuring Mediterranean habitats, and all gold winners. The first "after the fire" was funded by themselves (it costs at least GBP 60 000 to present a show garden), and showed the regeneration they see after the regular fires in the countryside around Nice where they live. The second was a 'dry garden' full of native plants of Provence, true to the origin of its sponsor, perfume company l'Occitane.

The 15th Century castle of Monsaraz, from an orange orchard



ideas behind, and what was

The most recent in 2017 was the controversial (for some) Malta quarry garden, showing how a massive barren site can be spontaneously re-colonised by plants. For this project, seed of Maltese natives were specially sourced and some plants cultivated for the first time.

Then Olivier Fillippi stalked across the stage slowly emphasizing the beauty of each of the different regions of la Garrigue (landscape surrounding the Mediterranean basin), most of them quite austere. These are regions of strong winds, poor stony soil and prolonged drought. He emphasized the rhythm of the landscape, the repetition of plant forms (especially low mounding shrubs) and empty space, and how this has been and can be successfully reflected in gardens. It was riveting.



After the lectures we headed out to a herdade (agricultural property) where the same family has practiced mixed farming for 5 generations. Cork oaks are stripped every 9 – 10 years (this only happens in a critical 2 week period in May or June), Spanish pigs are fattened on the sweet acorns of the Holm oaks, olives are harvested for oil, sheep are shorn for their wool, and the more recently planted vineyards are producing wine – these activities have a seasonal rhythm. The beautiful rolling landscape here is called *montado*, a semi-cultivated oak savannah that is self-sustaining, needing and getting minimum human intervention.

Farm track through typical montado (Oak savannah), with farm hound

Having had a magnificent lunch of farm produce, the day ended with the conference gala dinner where it was announced that the Cape Horticultural Society would be hosting the next conference!

The final day began with talks in the morning, and then my favourite garden of the entire tour – an historic quinta (country estate) belonging to a 92 year old lady. This property was partly kept tended, with a large formal clipped garden and a beautiful tiled shrine. But it had mostly run wild, with old white walls collapsing and several abandoned water features – delightful.

Rounding off the day there was a fabulous tea and a history tour of the convent Sao Paulo, restored as an hotel.



Wisteria in the entrance courtyard of Quinta do General



Clipped hedges and a filling of arums



Fallen flowers from the Judas trees colour the empty swimming pool



The cloister garden of Convent Sao Paulo, wonderfully atmospheric and a cool retreat in summer



The next morning we said our goodbyes, and very sincere thanks to Rosie and the other organisers, and made our way back to Lisbon for 3 days of museums, galleries and shopping. The national tile museum is fabulous, and we'd recommend the Gulbenkian museum for its well-designed public garden."

Reflective pools, Jardim Gulbenkian

WELCOME TO ...

... Anne Gleeson who is our newest member. We hope she will enjoy her time with us.

CREATING CHAMELEON AND HONEY BEE FRIENDLY GARDENS

by Michele King

How to create a chameleon-friendly garden

In the greater Cape Town area there are three species of chameleon to be found, the most common being the Cape Dwarf Chameleon (*Bradypodion pumilum*). The survival of chameleons is at risk because of urbanisation. Gardeners can help chameleons by turning their gardens into suitable habitats to sustain them. Chameleons need a fairly large area in which to roam, which is a problem if yours is the only chameleon-friendly garden in the neighbourhood. However, if you can persuade enough of your neighbours to go chameleon friendly too, you can create a series of linked gardens giving them enough of a habitat to maintain a healthy wild population. (Please note that indigenous chameleons are protected and buying or selling them, or keeping them as pets, is illegal.)

Chameleons need good vegetation cover and a mix of plants of different sizes to provide perches for juveniles and adults. Small shrubs with thin branches, like the Kluitjieskraal False Buchu (*Agathosma ovata* 'Kluitjieskraal', the Tygerberg Spiderhead (*Serruria aemula* var. *congesta*), the Ninepin Heath (*Erica mammosa*), the Pink Sage Bush (*Ocimum labiatum* until recently known as *Orthosiphon amabilis*) or restios such as the Namaqua Thatching Reed (*Thamnochortus bachmannii*) will provide small perches for the youngsters. Larger shrubs such as the Box-leaf Phylica (*Phylica buxifolia*), Golden Pagoda (*Mimetes chrysanthus*) and Dune Crowberry (*Searsia crenata* until recently known as *Rhus crenata*) will provide more sturdy perches for the bigger chameleons.



Cape Dwarf Chameleon: Photo: Krystal Tolley, provided by Hippo Communications

A garden with many large or mature trees with no undergrowth or low-hanging branches is not good for chameleons. Overcome this problem by thinning the trees and planting an understorey of shade-loving perennials and shrubs, such as the Silver Spurflower (*Plectranthus oertendahlii*), Cwebe Asparagus Fern, (*Asparagus densiflorus* 'Cwebe'), Fireball Lily (*Scadoxus multiflorus* ssp. *katharinae*) and Cape Stock-rose (*Sparrmannia africana*). Bad news is that the lawn will have to go, or be drastically reduced – but that's actually good news for your water bill. To a chameleon a large lawn is like a desert, without food, protective cover or perches, that they have to cross. Replace it with more garden beds or groundcovers and

low-growing shrubs such as the Lilac Carpet Geranium (*Geranium multisectum*), Wild Violet (*Monopsis unidentata*) and Tyson's Euryops (*Euryops tysonii*).

The final vital ingredient is food. Chameleons eat small insects, including flies, fruitflies, moths, butterflies and small grasshoppers. This means that to provide food for chameleons you have to make your garden friendly to insects too. Stop using insecticides and allow your garden to achieve a natural balance between predators and prey. Lay down biodegradable mulch, such as woodchips, leaves, or partially decomposed compost, and keep a compost heap, both of which provide food and breeding places for insects. And grow indigenous plants that have flowers or fruits that attract insects. By making these changes, in addition to providing a home and food for chameleons, you are increasing local biodiversity, and aiding beneficial insects, such as honeybees, by providing them with food.

Plants to feed honeybees in the garden

Honeybees are also facing threats to their survival. The amount of land available to them to forage for pollen and nectar is continually reducing, mainly due to the expansion of cities and towns, with the result that they cannot find enough food to sustain their colonies. Bees are also attacked by pests and diseases, and killed by pesticides. Honeybees are pollinators of thousands of wild plants, as well as many of our food crops. Without them, many indigenous plants would be unable

to set seed and survive into the next generation, and we'd have to go without many fruits, nuts and vegetables, and of course there would be no honey.

Gardeners can help honeybees by planting more plants with flowers rich in nectar and/or pollen that provide food for them. Bees visit and feed on a wide variety of flowers, so there are hundreds of plants to choose from. Next time you walk through Kirstenbosch, or on the mountain, take note of which flowers they visit and add them to your garden. Also try to choose plants that flower at different times to spread the availability of food throughout the year.

Bees love most *Buchus* (*Agathosma* species), and they feed on many Cape Heaths (*Erica* species). Many members of the protea family are excellent bee plants, particularly the Spiderheads such as (*Serruria aemula*), Golden Pagoda (*Mimetes chrysanthus*) and Conebushes, such as the Spicy Conebush (*Leucadendron tinctorum*), as well as most Proteas (*Protea* spp.) and Pincushions (*Leucospermum* species).

Restios, such as the Thatching Reeds (*Thamnochortus* spp.), are wind pollinated and the male flowerheads produce masses of pollen that is busily collected by the bees. Bees also feed on the flowers of *Asparagus* species, White Ironwood (*Vepris lanceolata*), Sour Fig (*Carpobrotus deliciosus*) and many Vygies (*Lampranthus*, *Drosanthemum*, *Ruschia*), many daisies including Dune Daisy (*Felicia echinata*), Silver Lace-leaf Ursinia (*Ursinia sericea*) . . . the list goes on.

Information supplied by Alice Notten

References and further reading:

For more information on the plants go to PlantZAfrica (www.plantzafrica.com)

For more information on chameleons go to Krystal A. Tolley's website: <http://krystaltolley.wix.com/krystaltolley>

For more information on the Global Pollination and Honeybee Forage Project, go to the SANBI website: <http://www.Sanbi.Org/Programmes/Conservation/Pollination-And-Honeybees>

TEST YOUR BOTANICAL/HORTICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Which South African spreading groundcover has "invaded" Portugal? | 2. What is an "herdade"? |
| (Answers in the MGJ article) | |

ITEMS OF INTEREST AND DATES TO DIARISE

- 🌱 **CHS Annual Plant Sale:** 31 August 2019 – Let Melanie know (rsp@telkomsa.net) what you've been potting up and caring for in preparation for the sale. Having the names of the plants that will be available, especially those that are more unusual, will help to entice the public to come and buy.
- 🌱 **CHS Weekend Away:** 11/12/13 October 2019 to *Barrydale in Bloom*. Book your accommodation for a weekend of horticultural delights – open gardens and local places of interest to visit. Once you have made your booking, please advise Glenda. A programme for the weekend will be drawn up and sent to you.
- 🌱 **CHS International Conference:** 28 August – 1 September 2020 – plans for this event are currently in progress and the sub-committee will be making an announcement shortly.
- 🌱 An article, *Little Dragons with a Sweet Tooth Pollinate the Mysterious Hidden Flower* by Ruth Cozien, has been published and the author says:
 "This story is exciting, 1. just because there are lizards pollinating! 2. because while lizards visiting flowers is not unknown, Guthriea's exclusive dependence on lizards for pollination is almost unprecedented globally and 3. before this discovery visitation by lizards was thought to be mostly limited to islands. Pollination of Guthriea by crag lizards is among the first non-island examples of specialized pollination by reptiles and the first for continental Africa... Read more here
<https://www.ukzn.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Little-Dragons-with-a-Sweet-Tooth-Pollinate-the-Mysterious-Hidden-Flower.pdf>"
- 🌱 Peninsula Fynbos: The FloraDoc app has been released for the iPhone. It is a flower identification app for the Cape Peninsula, comprising a photographic library of all the indigenous and naturalised plants occurring on the Peninsula. If you are interested, ask Glenda for more details.
- 🌱 Botanical Art Exhibition: 6 – 27 July at Irma Stern Museum – "*Tipping Point: Threatened Plants of Southern Africa*". For more information visit: www.irmasternmuseum.org.za
- 🌱 McGregor Magic Garden Festival: Sat, 21 – Tues, 24 September (Heritage Weekend) – a wide variety of talks and displays, including open gardens.