

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, Bill Elder

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 2 September at 20:00 at The Cape Town Athenaeum, Newlands

Entrance fee: Members – R10; Visitors – R30

EXPLORING GARDENS AND PLANTS OF SOUTH-CENTRAL ITALY

Anthony Hitchcock will tell us about his visit to the islands off the west and east coasts to visit a special garden and look at some wild flora, which included a trip up the Apennines to the tiny medieval village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio to look at alpine flora, to the magnificent Villa de Este Gardens in Tivoli and Hadrian's Villa outside the town.

NEXT OUTING

Sat, 7 Sep at 10:00: Visit the Hout Bay garden of Dalene and Lester Plasket.

CHS member, Stacey Bright's mother has a large garden close to the Disa River. Not only are there plants to see, but there will also be good ideas on how to make the most of recycled materials.

Limited to 25 members. Please let Glenda know, by 4 September, if you would like to attend.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE – SATURDAY, 31 AUGUST 2019

This takes place at 11 Sonnet Quay, Marina da Gama from 09:30 to 14:00.

Melanie's wish list:

- 🌱 Lots of plants, all labelled, of course;
- 🌱 Plenty of help on the 29th and 30th to get the plants sorted and priced;
- 🌱 More help on the 31st to give advice and sell;
- 🌱 Masses of gardeners from all over the Peninsula to buy up all the plants you have grown.

Call Melanie on 082-550-2618 / 021-788-2840 if you have any questions.

WEEKEND AWAY – 11/12/13 OCTOBER 2019

This is your last chance to join the group who have already booked for this weekend.

We always have lots of fun and learn more about the place we're visiting, so if you are interested in joining us, book your accommodation now. It will become difficult to find accommodation the closer we get to this weekend of open gardens. Please advise Glenda once you've organized your booking so you can be added to the list for further communications. If you have any questions, ask Glenda.

REPORTBACK

August Plant Table:

EXOTIC

Raphiolepis kruschenii "Indian Hawthorn"

Tradescantia zebrina – groundcover; slips easily and grows fast; good as a filler for larger areas

Geranium sp – a true Geranium but not South African; it's from the northern hemisphere; pink, white, magenta; fills pot quickly.

Corydalis wilsonii – grows anywhere and everywhere.



Viburnum tinus lucidum (below, left) – copes with shade in winter and sun in summer; white flowers. Often plants with white flowers are pollinated by moths and flies and they are trapped by their fragrance and usually at night.

Perennial Stocks – needs little care; can take light pruning; white, pink and purple; lovely fragrance.

Calceolaria – winter annual; looks like a weed until it flowers.

Ruta graveolens "Rue" (below, right) – distinctive smell; <https://www.hooksgreenherbs.com/ruta-graveolens-rue-buy-herb-plant-online/> says "In the middle ages the Catholic church used a bunch of Rue to sprinkle holy water on the congregation, hence it's common name 'Herb-of-Grace' ironically Rue was also a common ingredient in witchcraft and spell making, in fact during the Middle Ages it was a symbol of recognition between witches. It is also reputed to be an insect repellent, and apparently cats also do not like the smell of the leaves so could be tried as a cat deterrent. Although it can be used in cooking, it is bitter and gastric discomfort may be experienced by some individuals so not recommended, grow it as described for its ornamental qualities."



Irisene – grown mainly for its foliage – golden or dark red; flowers are insignificant

INDIGENOUS

Chasmanthe floribunda (orange), *C floribunda duckittii* (yellow) – grow to more than 1m.

Chasmanthe bicolor grows to 50 – 75mm tall and already extinct in wild; attractive garden plant towards the front of a border; seeds copiously and flowers soon from seed.

Chasmanthe aethiopica is early flowering and finished by May.

Jenny says with plants going extinct in the wild, we have a responsibility to keep them going. Grow and pass on.

Polygala virgata – 2m; seeds prolifically

Aloe ciliaris – yellow or orange; easy growing; sun; rambling; good for hiding ugly walls, tanks etc.

Kniphofia (name unknown) – growing in semi-bog garden in semi-shade; flowers late winter; nectar hidden up in the tubes and birds will come.

Kniphofia praecox – growing in a semi-bog garden in half shade; flowers only in winter; over 20 years, now 2 sq m

Tetradenia riparia "Misty Plume Bush" – grows tall to over 2m; flowers August; only male plants produce best flowers; needs high rainfall; drought-resistant.

Serruria aemula – Grower says: "I love the foliage, as well as the pink flowers. The tips of the leaves turn dark red – an interesting variegated look at this time of the year; grows on the verge."



Left to right: *Chasmanthe* varieties, *Aloe ciliaris*, *Kniphofia* ?, *Kniphofia praecox*, *Tetradenia riparia*, *Serruria aemula*

Leucospermum "Tango" – flowers prolifically; one of first to flower; grows on the verge.

Leucospermum cordifolium – flowers prolifically for months; grows on the verge.

Leucadendron – bush was overgrown and leggy, but a light regular pruning is getting it to bush out from the base.

Sparaxis metelerkampiae – grows wild at the back of the Clanwilliam Dam; threatened by the raising of the dam wall.

Pot of succulents – an idea for a feature on a stoep wall or dull corner

Strelitzia reginae – flowers all winter; 2m tall

Pelargonium

Kalanchoe

Left to right: *Leucospermum* "Tango", *L. cordifolium*, *Leucadendron*, *Sparaxis metelerkampiae*



CHOICES FOR THE MONTH

INDIGENOUS:

Lachenalia hybrid of *L. flava* (below, left) – for colour in the garden during May, June, July, go the bulbous route

EXOTIC:

Variety of *Bromeliads* (below, centre) – good under trees; hang in a pot in a tree; waterwise; some of the leaves are really beautiful but when they produce flowers, it's an added bonus; a huge range of flower types – many different genera involved, mainly from South America.

UNUSUAL:

Leucospermum reflexum "Rocket pincushion" (below, right) – from Cederberg; grows on the verge.



PSHB – POLYPHAGOUS SHOT HOLE BORER

Following Morné Faulhamer's talk this month, he was asked to give his view on the threat to our trees by the PSHB (*Euwallacea fornicatus*) – of the Ambrosia beetle family. This is his perspective:

"A lot of hoo-ha has been made about it – and rightly so.

First of all, I have been called out to a number of gardens by people who have heard about this. They see little holes and get excited about what it could possibly be.

If we look at Ambrosia beetles around the world, there are something in excess of 400 species so there are a lot of these beetles that bore into wood. Just because your tree has a hole in it doesn't mean it's doom and gloom. We have an indigenous species of beetle which does that, predominantly in dead wood.

The thing about this little Shothole Borer is that, first of all it is very, very small. That's one of the ways you can identify it. It is only 3mm in diameter. So the ole that it makes is very, very small and one of the tell-tale signs is that it looks like somebody shot the tree with a shotgun – so lots and lots of little small holes. And that distinguishes itself from our indigenous beetles and the Ficus Borer, which make quite big holes.

It comes predominantly from Vietnam area, where they occur naturally. My argument, right from the beginning is that Vietnam has lots of trees, so sooner or later we are going to find the solution to the problem, be it biological, be it chemical, who knows.

A little bit of history about how it came into the country. It came through the port of Durban and the first time it was noted was in Pietermaritzburg, but prior to that they noticed it in Durban itself and that is the point of entry into South Africa. The chances are that it came in pallets.

The natural migration of the beetle itself is over very short distances; it doesn't fly very well, so it has hopped from one tree to another, maybe 10 – 20m away. Its vector is not flying 50Kms somewhere. And then, obviously, it migrated, with transport, up to Gauteng where they noticed it as being a big problem for the first time. Problems have been picked up in Knysna as well as in Cape Town. One of the first things mooted was "we must stop the movement of trees in South Africa from a horticultural point of view".

I was at one of the meetings and I raised my hand and said "I think that's a little bit crazy". If you do that you've got to stop the movement of pallets in South Africa, because I had done a quick calculation and if you take the number of pallets that move between Cape Town and Jo'burg on trucks in a year – and this is a conservative figure – it's over 400 000! Every single Interlink carries 28 pallets and there are 50 Interlinks on the road every single day. You do the math!

We don't even move anywhere near as many trees. So the vectors of the movement need to be controlled. Maybe the movement of firewood is very important. We're not going to make this little guy go away. We've seen that from other countries like California, where it started in 2011, and had devastating effects in the agricultural sector. I think if we are realistic in SA, horticulture does not have to worry as much as agriculture about this little guy. If it gets into the Macadamia and Avo trees in SA they've got a very big problem. And the reason for that is they're looking at chemical means of controlling it. The Borer is not the problem. The Borer carries with it a fungus and it's the fungus that kills the trees, not the Borer. They have a symbiotic relationship – the beetle's larvae eat the fungus and that's why it is a problem. The fungus interferes with the sap flow of the tree and that's how it ends up dying. So there are ways that they are looking at to control it systemically with fungicides and also chemicals. I believe, long term, the most success we had with beetle control has been with the use of natural pheromones to attract the males. It's been done with White Oak Borer Beetles very successfully in Mpumalanga and I believe if they find the right pheromone to attract the males and to stop the reproduction of this little guy, we'll have a lot of success with it.

The problem is when you start using systemic fungicides and insecticides you basically eliminate using it in agriculture, especially with things like avocados. So horticulturally, I don't it's going to go away but it will be a contained thing and we will be able to manage it and carry on. We will lose trees along the way – like oaks, because they are old already and they are susceptible to the Borer. The problem is that we have right from the beginning said they would focus on the exotic trees. They are also targeting many of our indigenous species, including Acacias. We haven't yet been in a position from a horticultural point to view to draw up a complete list of trees which are less susceptible than others. We are not at that point yet. Obviously the horticultural industry would like to know that and then we would be able to advise on what to rather plant – it may have less of a chance than another species but we're not there yet.

Once you do notice that you do have it, the best remedy is to cut down the tree and destroy the wood as quickly as possible, preferably by burning. There is a way that one can solar dry the wood and kill the beetle but it's quite a laborious process. The best is to just chop it and burn the wood. Don't transport it outside the area. That's how they found the vector of movement in Johannesburg to increase.

So, in a nutshell – it's not going away.

As far as Alien Invasive Species control goes, it's ironic. We know it's a problem and yet we have to wait until October before the Shothole Borer is promulgated under the regulations of the Biodiversity Act for the Government to be able to act. You see this is the irony of the environmental management, not only in SA, but in the world. People will recognise something as a problem but then it's got to through the bureaucratic quagmire to get to a point where people say we are now forced to do something about it. In Johannesburg, the City has been very slow to react because they say it's not our responsibility. The moment it gets put under the Regulations, it becomes their responsibility because it will be listed as a Category 1a Invasive Species. The moment it's a 1a, it becomes the Government's responsibility to control it. But kudos to the City of Cape Town because they managed to react and

they are doing something about it. They started awareness campaigns before waiting for that to happen. So, we take our hats off to them, because they see it's a problem, they know it's going to happen anyway and at least they haven't sat back saying it's not their responsibility. The moment it's their responsibility, there's a financial implication for the City."

CHS News featured information on this in September 2018 and again in March this year. Read them online at <https://capehorticulturalsociety.co.za/2014-2/>

to find out more, visit www.invasivescapetown.org.za or <https://polyphagous-shot-hole-borer.co.za>

A new PSHB Tree List has been published which uses evidence-based data to identify 21 reproductive host trees. These are:

Exotic Trees

Australian Blackwood
Avocado
Boxelder
Castor bean
Chinese maple
English Oak
Honey locust
Japanese maple
Liquidambar
London Plane
Pink flame
Southern magnolia

Indigenous Trees

Fever
Flat crown
Coast coral
Common coral
Natal fig
Wild plum
Pigeonwood
Paper bark thorn
Wild frangipani

Shot Hole Borer infestation has been found in 151 species of trees in South Africa.

CHS / MGI INTERNATIONAL EVENT



You may have picked up from previous newsletters, or heard me make mention of this at meetings, but over the last eight months a small working group has been meeting to plan what CHS could offer the members of MGI in August 2020.

For those who don't know, we are affiliated to Mediterranean Gardening International, an international group of societies for people with an interest in Mediterranean plants and gardens. Each society is independent but we come together to share our knowledge and experience of gardening and plants in the Mediterranean climate zones of the world. Since 2016, an international event – or conference – has been held every year for members to meet and do exactly that.

Towards the end of 2018 we were approached to host this event in 2020. We jumped in 'feet first' and, at times, I think maybe we were a bit ambitious, but an invitation to attend was finally sent to all member societies. At this stage it appears the majority of MGI members are still enjoying their summer vacations and thinking about things other than committing to visiting Cape Town in 2020. We hope this will change by the time the deadline of 10 September arrives.

The extent of the Conference is from Friday, 28 August until Monday, 31 August, which will be based at the Athenaeum and will include speakers on various aspects of the flora, biomes and gardens of The Fairest Cape as well as garden visits in the greater Cape Town area. The theme running through this weekend is looking back at what we gave to the world, what we are doing now and what is being done for the future. These talks will be open to all CHS members, but more about that next year.

On either side of this event, delegates will have the opportunity to participate in the optional pre- and post-Conference tours:

- 🌿 A 5-day coach tour to Namaqualand / Nieuwoudtville/ Lamberts Bay / West Coast National Park, from Sunday 23 to Thursday, 27 August;
- 🌿 A 1-day drive on Tuesday, 1 September, to either Silvermine / Hout Bay – weather permitting, or Stellenbosch / Worcester – depending on numbers; and
- 🌿 A 3-day coach tour to the Overberg including the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust / Flower Valley Trust / Cape Agulhas / Harold Porter National Botanic Gardens from Wednesday, 2 to Friday, 4 September.

Dutch is looking after the financial matters, Glenda is providing all the admin and secretarial input, with Marion providing much needed insight into tour organising, while Jenny and I are providing information on what we believe will be of interest to our guests.

We have just completed a 'dummy run' of the pre-conference tour and in the five days we were away we covered 1350 Kms looking for suitable coffee spots and toilet facilities which are often in short supply – as well as flowers! Hopefully there will be more flowers next year as we have seen better, especially the further north one goes.

Nearer the time we will be looking for more hands and feet to help with the domestic side of making this Conference run smoothly, so please diarise the dates and bear it in mind when making plans for next year!

Should the tour numbers not fill the coach we will be able to open it up to any CHS members who would like to participate.

We look forward to meeting our international delegates – exactly a year from now!

Errol Scarr

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF HORTICULTURE

WOMEN IN THE FIELD!

With August having been Women's Month, I thought it would be an appropriate time to think about and reflect on the many notable women who have influenced the horticultural and botanical world as we know it today. Female illustrators, adventurers, authors, and scientists alike have helped advance our knowledge of the great plant world. The illustration and art industry was largely female-dominated throughout history, and this led way for many who were interested in plants and botany to explore their interests, and created a platform for women kind to advance into science and combine the two disciplines. I wanted to take a look back at some pioneers in the industry...



Elizabeth Blackwell

Elizabeth Blackwell was a Scottish illustrator born in 1707 who was the first woman to formally publish a species and brought unknown medicinal plants from the new world to life in her book "A Curious Herbal". Many of the plants featured in Elizabeth's book were studied by her in the Chelsea Physick Garden, London, and her illustrations were well received as a much needed update on the apothecary field.

Harriet Margaret Louise Bolus was a South African botanist and boasts the legacy of authoring more land plant species than any other female scientist! Writing and documenting until the age of 92, Harriet wrote of in total approximately 1494 species.

A founding member of the Botanical Society of South Africa, Harriet was the curator of the Bolus Herbarium and published multiple botanical books in her lifetime.

Bolusanthus, the Tree Wisteria, was named in her honour, and Harriet remained a pioneer in the exploration and research into the flowering plants of South Africa.

Vera Scarth-Johnson was a botanist and an active campaigner against developments that could adversely affect the natural environment. After not being able to find anyone willing to employ a female horticulturalist, Vera started a market garden of her own.



**Harriet Margaret
Louise Bolus**



Vera Scarth-Johnson

made a member of the Vatican Pontifical Academy of Sciences, of which there are only 74 other members worldwide, and was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Vera continued throughout her life to teach people to treasure and look after the environment. Vera was awarded the Medal of Order of Australia for her contribution to the arts and the environment during her lifetime.

Johanna Döbereiner was a pioneer in the study of plant-microbe interaction, who settled in Brazil after having to flee from her home in Czechoslovakia to Germany at the end of World War II. Johanna pioneered research into nitrogen fixation, a fundamental area of knowledge that changed how we grow crops and how we view the relationship between plants and soil! Johanna's research and findings lead to the reduction in need for chemical fertilizer and allowed a more natural and sustainable path in regenerating our soil. This research led to a huge increase in Soybean production which is one of the largest and most important crops today. Johanna was



Johanna Döbereiner



Anna Atkins

Anna Atkins, last but not least, made history by being the first author to publish a book containing photographic images. Anna Atkins had an extensive botanical collection and herbarium, and with this she created the first cyanotypes—copies made using chemicals—of her botanical collection, effectively creating the first botanical blue prints. Anna was close with her father, and was trained in science, receiving an education deemed unusual for a woman of her time. Only a year after the cyanotype process was discovered, Anna applied the process to her algae and fern specimens and made history, leading way to the delicate photographic preservation of many species.

When one types "botanists in history" into Google search, many great names like Carl Linnaeus, Gregor Mendel, and Robert Brown come up, who indeed shaped our botanical knowledge. However, despite the suppression of women in science, many made great contributions, and not just the women mentioned above! Certainly, in a modern society where equality between men and women in science is becoming more of the norm, women still continue to make great strides in new discoveries, creations and conservation of our natural world.

Stacey Bright

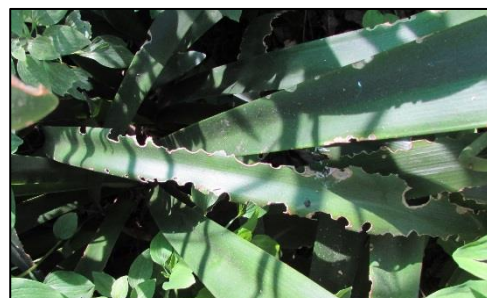
CLIVIAS – BEAUTIFUL BUT VULNERABLE

Clivias are surely the loveliest of our spring flowers, but many gardeners are struggling to keep their plants healthy. Unfortunately, clivias seem to be vulnerable to a host of pests and diseases.

The leaves of clivias may have become scorched just because they are no longer in the shade. Move such plants to a shadier spot or where they will be in the early morning sun.

The largest pest and easiest to spot is the 'lily borer' or amaryllis caterpillar. Remove by hand, or dust or spray the plants with an insecticide like Karbadust.

Another pest that attacks even hardy succulents is the snout beetle. It is small and not easy to spot since it forages at night, leaving the edges or even the centre of leaves punctured with small brown holes. When you have been watching a cluster of clivia blooms slowly opening and in the morning find the flowers shredded to ribbons, the culprits might be snout beetles, snails or slugs.



Spray with an insecticide like Ripcord, which is partially environmentally compatible. For snails and slugs the pick-off-and-squash or dissolve-in-salt-water methods are known to most of us, or use snail bait.

For Mealiebug, if you use a spray like Chlorpyrifos, make sure to drench to base of the plant, even the soil around it. Chlorpyrifos also helps to eliminate Thrips, those very small, elongated brown insects that feed on the underside of the clivia leaves.

In the list of diseases to which clivias can be prone is 'agapanthus fungus', which causes the leaves to turn brown and die back from the tips. It is not wise to cut off only the tips or to drop the parts of the leaves cut off, as you could merely be spreading the fungus.

Soft crown rot is a devastating disease probably caused by a bacteria that attacks the leaf bases and rhizomes. Previously healthy plants wilt and fall over. Do a full cover spray with Dithane M45 or Kaptan.

Feed clivias with 3:1:5 during the summer growing period.

Published in the 25th Anniversary edition of Village Voice, the Pinewood Retirement Village newsletter by the Garden Committee – July/August 2019

[Ed: for Mealiebug especially, adding a household detergent to sprays also helps.]

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What is the Latin name of the PSHB?

(Answer on page 3)

2. Who wrote "A Curious Herbal"?

(Answer on page 6)

Mother's father had a touch with horses; she had the same with flowers.
She could grow them anywhere; at any time, and they seemed to live longer for her.

She grew them with rough, almost slap-dash love, but her hands possessed such an understanding of their needs they seemed to turn to her like another sun.

Laurie Lee

from "A Gardener's Journal",
a Helen Exley Giftbook

DATES TO DIARISE

- 🌱 CHS Annual Plant Sale: Sat, 31 August from 09:30 in Marina da Gama.
- 🌱 Weekend Away in Barrydale: Fri, 11 – Sun, 13 October. Book your accommodation now and advise Glenda in order to receive the proposed programme.
- 🌱 McGregor Magic Garden Festival: Sat, 21 – Tues, 24 September (Heritage Weekend) – a wide variety of talks and displays, including open gardens.
- 🌱 Water Oak Farm Open Day: Sat, 5 October.
- 🌱 Constantia Open Gardens: Fri, 18 and Sat, 19 October.
- 🌱 Elgin Open Gardens: Sat/Sun, 26/27 Oct and 2/3 November.
- 🌱 Stellenberg Estate Open Gardens: Sat, 9 and Sun, 10 November
- 🌱 2020 International Conference: Fri, 28 – Mon, 31 August 2020. This will give us an opportunity to meet members of Mediterranean Gardening International.