

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

FIRST MEETING OF 2020

Monday, 3 February 2020, at 20:00 at The Cape Town Athenaeum, Newlands

LADY ANNE BARNARD, BALCARRES AND THE CAPE

Our speaker, Rosalind Spears, visited Balcarres in Fife, Scotland, last June. Her talk will show photos of the wonderful gardens of Balcarres, the childhood home of Lady Anne Barnard. The magnificent house and grounds are still owned and lived in by the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres and his family, descendants of Lady Anne's family.

She will also tell you the story of Lady Anne's life, including her time in the Cape, and photos of her original watercolours, which are conserved at Balcarres by the family.

Right: Rosalind as Lady Anne Barnard
 Far right: The knot garden at Balcarres



REPORTBACK

What has been flowering in members' gardens over the holidays

Arpad's drought resistant shrub – *Hamelia patens* (below left). He says: "I have not watered it since we have had the water restrictions. It may be difficult to find at nurseries and it is rather difficult to propagate, but it is worth the trouble. It must be cut back really hard in September and it will never fail to shoot and flower. It has small black berries. The insects also like it.

Jean reports that "Jenny was surprised when I brought in an *Amaryllis belladonna* "March Lily" to our Feb meeting last year. She thought it too early. Well, I have 3, ready to flower already. They came up under a mesh cage I had put over the empty area with quite a few big pots of cuttings on top, and were bent, one into a snake like a u-bend. After moving everything, they are straight and beautiful. They will probably be well over by the next (February) meeting, unless more arrive. There are plenty but they do not always flower; I just get the leaves later.

They flower long before the leaves come up, then after many months, the leaves fade away and the ground is bare over Spring and early summer. I must have hundreds now all over the garden (below centre) but only one area flowers, I think the others are buried too deep and in too much shade of other shrubs, but the leaves come up every year. I must dig them all out and move or pass on but then it takes a while to flower again."

Josie's *Dionaea muscipula* "Venus Fly Trap" (below right) is growing on her patio high on the slopes of Signal Hill. The flower was something she hadn't seen before.



IN MEMORIAM

A member for only a year, Pat Ellis was enthusiastic and loved her plants. Sadly, two days after she attended our year-end party in December, she died tragically in her home. Our sympathies go out to her family and friends.

NEXT OUTING

Sat, 8 Feb 2020 at 10:00: Visit the Kenilworth garden of Stuart McLeod. A beautiful 2500 m² English country garden, with quite a few lovely old-fashioned plants, it is large enough to get completely lost in while rambling around.

Please let Glenda have your name by 6 February.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

A reminder to members who, perhaps, don't attend meetings too often.

Entrance fee: R10 for members, and if you bring a visitor, they pay R30.

Plant Table: This section of the meeting gives you the opportunity to show off the flowers, plants or seeds – or any botanical/horticultural curiosity – you have in your garden. You are asked to get to the meeting a bit earlier in order to fill out a slip of paper on which you write your name, the specimen's name and something of interest about it. You then place both the specimen and the slip of paper in one of the vases provided. If you'd prefer to be more organized, take a bundle of the slips of paper home and write them out before you arrive each month.

If you are unsure of the name of your plant, always ask, so you can put the information on the slip of paper. We have a number of knowledgeable members who are able to help. Jenny then talks about as many of the specimens on the table as possible, but they are left out after the meeting for members and visitors to look and learn from the information provided. So please leave your precious flower or pot plant on the table for a while for everyone to get the chance to see – and learn about – the beautiful flora that grows in our suburbs.

Nursery Table: Jane and Cherry run this section where members have brought plants they've potted up or grown on. Very often you will find something you may not have seen for years. These are sold for CHS funds. There are also seeds for swapping or buying.

Library: Our large selection of books is available before and after meetings. You can browse while waiting for the meeting to start, or borrow two or three books for the month – returning them to the next meeting. Debby is the person to talk to if you want to take books home. She will record the books you have borrowed. If you have any at home from last year, please return them to our next meeting.

Tea: This is served to all attendees at the end of the meeting by our volunteer "tea team". If you would like to offer your services and join this team to do a duty at, maybe, one meeting a year, please let us know.

PLANT SALE PROPAGATING

Please continue to grow as many plants as you can (from as few as 5 to as many as possible) for the probable Plant Sale fundraising collaboration with Flourish Garden Club on 16 May 2020.

Do you have any unusual, uncommon or special plants that you would like to have propagate? Have you always struggled to propagate these yourself? Would you like more of that plant? Are you happy to share the rest of the cuttings/seedlings with other CHS members and the greater gardening community? If your answer is 'yes' to all these questions, please let Glenda know, because in preparation for the above we have access to advanced propagation facilities for growing these treasures of yours.

Seeds or cutting material can be brought to a Monday meeting. Please ensure the cuttings are in water/moist wrapping. Everything must be clearly labelled with your name and the plant's name.



IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM PHILIPPI HORTICULTURAL AREA CAMPAIGN

You may recall that the City is allowing development to take place in Philippi where farms produce the most wonderful vegetables for the market. The PHA went to court in October and later issued this letter:

Dear Friends

World Hunger Day 16.10.2019 was ironically also the date that Cape Town’s locally grown food ended up in the High Court fighting for its existence. (See <https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/legal-fight-for-philippi-horticultural-area-to-begin-at-western-cape-high-court-34966064>)

We are confident that our case is solid, shining a light on substantive, procedural and unlawful decisions made by administrators in the City of Cape Town and Department of Environmental Affairs. We now wait on High Court Judge Kate Savage to make a ruling, expected early in 2020. Our next date is 18.03.2020, with the third in the latter half of 2020.

The PHA Campaign wishes to thank all those who are walking this journey with us to protect the PHA Farmlands and Cape Flats Aquifer. Your moral and material (see below) support is invaluable.

Best wishes

Nazeer Soday and Susanna Coleman, Campaign Organisers

PHA Food and Farming Campaign

FNB Business Account

Acc: 626 056 90199

[Please email phaletters@gmail.com for 18A tax deduction certificate]

Extract from WESSA Western Cape online newsletter

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF GANDHI’S BIRTH

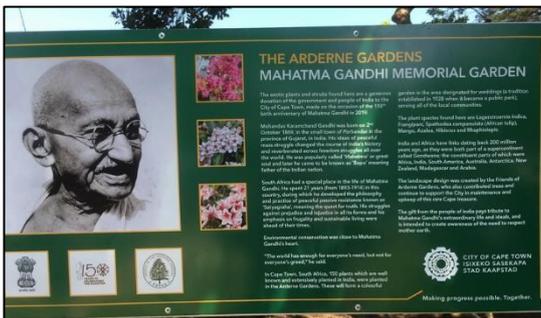
In September 2019, the Friends of the Arderne Gardens (FOTAG), in conjunction with the City of Cape Town and the local Indian community, held a ceremony to honour the memory of Mahatma Gandhi who spent 21 years in South Africa.

A story board was erected and 150 trees and shrubs (donated by the people of India), commonly grown in India, were planted up in the newly designated “wedding garden” area. The species are *Lagerstroemia indica*, *Frangipani*, *Spathodea campanulata*, *Mango*, *Azalea*, *Hibiscus* and *Rhaphiolepis*.

Extract from the story board: “Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2nd October 1869, in the small town of Porbandar in the province of Gujurata, in India. ... Environmental conservation was close to Mahatma Gandhi’s heart. ‘The world has enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed’, he said.”

Clockwise from right:

Hank Lith, dual CHS and FOTAG member, planting one of the 150 shrubs; Indian dancers entertaining the crowd; Gandhi’s granddaughter reading the story to the guests; the board depicting the participants in this event.



JANUARY IN THE GARDEN

Get your garden into shape

Get your garden into shape now. Yes, it's a fabulous new year with so much to look forward to, especially in your garden.

Sow

What better way to get your garden and health back on track and into shape than by sowing delicious leafy greens for those summer day salads. The following greens can be sown now:

- Lettuce will always be a firm favourite.
- Rocket is a trendy addition to salads and many other hot meals too. Its peppery taste is delicious and mild in the young leaves.
- The baby leaves of both Spinach and Swiss Chard are increasingly being used in salads.
- Baby beetroot leaves are a chic new addition to contemporary salads and cooking. They are just as yummy as they look on the plate.
- Kale is a prized ingredient in many healthy smoothie recipes.

Leafy greens are very easy to grow and will reward you best if you pick the leaves regularly and pinch out flower buds later in the season. Be on the lookout for cutworm, snail & slug damage to plants. Aphids love the hot summer months as much as we do. While you are shopping for "table greens" grab a few "tiny leafy greens" like Mint, Basil and Parsley plants to complement the other leafy greens.

Did you know that Basil and Tomatoes are **great companion** plants? This means that when planted next to one another, they both improve each other's flavour. We also know that they are great companions in food too.

Plant

January is always a good time to plant up areas with colourful seedling annuals. The "heat is on" so what better way to brighten up the garden and get it into shape than by planting sun-worshippers. Some great choices to beat the heat will be:

- Salvias will flower throughout the summer and autumn months. Their upward-pointing sword-like flowers range from fire engine red for an eye-catching display, through to purple and deep blue to a powdery blue and more. They are waterwise and easy to grow in pots too.
- With their botox-looking pouty lips, from which the Snapdragons get their name, Snapdragons have become fashionable again. Striking colours and multiple blooms that seemingly stand to attention are simply charming. Dwarf varieties are great as pot or hanging basket fillers too. Keep moist while young. Snaps can reward you by continuing to flower into winter.
- Petunias are one of those plants that you may pass over in the nursery since they are sometimes sold with only a flower or two on the seeding plants. However, without special treatment and not too much water, they will flower more and more as they grow and put on a spectacular show of colour when mature. Tip: Petunias love the mild winter months too and will carry on growing in winter.

Bedding besties

More colour, colour, colour!

- Vinca plants which are as tough as nails when mature are what some people term the Impatiens for sun due to their similar-looking flowers. Don't be fooled into thinking that these are the same as the Vinca's of old – these new hybrids, flower profusely and easily.
- The new age Zinnias are also a sight for sore eyes when they flower. They create a tremendous meadow-like profusion of blooms. The dwarf variety is a charming cutie.

If you like strong, bright colours, then you need to plant Celosia which are commonly known as Cock's Comb. The flowers may have a flattish crested plume or an upright feathery plume. They deliver on rich, bright, almost neon colour.

Be on the lookout for yellow patches appearing suddenly in your lawn from early January. This is a sure sign of the night-time foraging Lawn Caterpillar, (also known as Army Worm). To be sure place a moist bag or cloth on the patch in the evening and check underneath in the morning. If it is caused by Army Worms, they would still be crawling under the cloth thinking it is still night. Ask your local GCA Garden Centre for the correct treatment method.

Power up the plants

We may have slimming on our minds in January but our garden needs nutrients to boost our plants and get the garden into shape. A good option is Bio Ocean as it contains fishmeal and kelp which give your plants an extra boost. Your garden and pots will benefit, but remember to fertilise between the plants on moist soil and to water over the fertiliser afterwards.

Pruning & Rose Care

A light summer pruning is recommended for roses in January. We know that it feels difficult to prune a plant that may still be flowering but it will help to extend quality flowering into winter. Cut back stems by up to one-third of their length.

Continue using a cocktail rose spray i.e. a combination of a fungicide and insecticide every two weeks to avoid leaf drop. Fertilise monthly and add mulch or top up the existing mulch. Now all that is left to do is to continue good, deep watering ... and you will be so happy with your "blooming success" over the coming months.

Blooming Babes

The popular indigenous Cape Leadwort, better known by its scientific name *Plumbago*, (*Plumbago auriculata*), is a great filler plant to cover large open spaces. It is an extremely tough, fast growing rambling, shrub. It grows in any soil and is drought tolerant. It gets covered with trusses of pale blue or white flowers which are a favourite nectar source for butterflies, it also makes a great hedge. The flowers of the cultivar 'Royal Cape' are of a considerably deeper blue.

Another indigenous beauty is our very own Cape Forget-me-not, (*Anchusa capensis*). It's tall stems that rise above the lower growing foliage have clusters of petite blue flowers with a white centre. They also attract butterflies with their nectar-rich flowers as well as other beneficial pollinating insects like bees. The pretty blue flowers are edible and a fab addition to salads or desserts. A well-drained soil is favoured by these drought resistant plants.

'Bougs' or 'Bougies' are our affectionate nicknames for the spectacular *Bougainvillea* plants that can put on an unrivalled explosion of colour for months in our gardens. They are fast-growing and drought tolerant. Bougs are happiest in full sun whether they are spread-eagled over a pergola, wall or in a large pot, (smaller varieties are preferred for pots). Guess what? They also attract butterflies!

Water-wise

Due to the popularity of succulent plants in recent years, we are spoiled for choice in our local garden centres. They are just so easy to grow and lots of fun to combine in the garden, or even in a potted patio garden since many of them have gorgeous tinges of yellow, orange and red on their green, grey or blue-grey leaves. You can't go wrong with Sedums or Crassulas which are mostly indigenous and all water-wise and sun-lovers. There are many different shapes and sizes of plants in these two groups of plants that both go by the common name of Stonecrops. A popular sedum with tall dusty pink flowers is the Autumn Joy Stonecrop (*Sedum 'Autumn Joy'*) and among the Crassulas, the Jade Plant, (*Crassula ovata*), is a medium-sized shrub with tiny white or pink flowers.

Indoor Plants

Peace, especially in our homes can be a good New year's resolution – so it may be time to try a Peace Lily or a Peace in the home plant.

The Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum wallesii*) can grow in low-light conditions – which effectively means that it can thrive almost anywhere in the home. It has large, glossy green leaves, is very forgiving when not pampered and has large, flag-like white blooms that brighten any room with an air of sophistication.

Peace in the home plant (*Soleirolia*) requires bright light and regular watering and can be combined with other plants in a mixed bowl, happy in a terrarium or simply in a pot on its own. It is said to bring peace into the home, so why not give it a try?

Coastal Gardening

- Plant more Chives, Oregano, Marjoram, Thyme, Sage, Coriander and remember to plant your first crop of seed potatoes for an early winter harvest.
- Remove or prune back low branches of trees if more sunlight is required for lawn or bedding plants below the trees.

Source: Atlantic Fertilisers online newsletter

PS: Always be mindful of the Level 3 watering times that are still in place – Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays before 09:00 and after 18:00. Borehole and well-point users should also be prudent in the use of their "free" water.

SPEKBOOM LABYRINTH

The largest labyrinth in Africa is being built in Stellenbosch to remind society of its carbon footprint and the impact carbon emissions are having on the environment. The 13 circuit labyrinth is the largest in the world to be made with Spekboom trees (*Portulacaria afra*). Did you know that Spekboom can sequester more than 4 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year per hectare planted, making it more effective than the Amazon Rainforest at sucking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere? The labyrinth is being built at Stellenbosch Bridge Smart City, near Klapmuts.

Source: horti.co.za

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Where did Lady Anne Barnard grow up?
(Answer on page 1)

2. What is the botanical name of the Peace Lily?
(Answer on page 5)

DATES TO DIARISE

🌱 Tokara Autumn Open Garden and Rare Plant Fair: 18 April 2020

APPEALS

- 🌱 Bea Heymann is looking for a press (as used for flowers) which is larger than normal. If you have something suitable, please call her on 021-433-2221 or 082-821-8068.
- 🌱 Bea is also very involved with the Mamre community and is also in need of as many small pots as possible for the Mamre gardeners. They are currently making a lot of cuttings and need small pots to allow the cuttings to root and to grow a bit before transplanting them into the soil. She hopes to get the pots soon so that the Mamre community don't lose their enthusiasm in the interim! Contact details above.
- 🌱 The Botanical Society of South Africa is seeking your support for this new and first-of-its-kind book illustrating the fruiting twigs of 381 trees. The final product is the culmination of ~40 years work

THE AUTHOR, Trevor Ankiewicz, is a now retired Saasveld Trained forester (1965) with a long and illustrious career in forestry, horticulture and nature conservation. On retirement he qualified as a Nature Guide. Thus, over his working life and in retirement, he has had the opportunity of visiting most parts of South Africa - where he has been able to collect and illustrate all the species in his book. The reason he chose to illustrate fruits is that like so many tree-lovers, he found it difficult to identify many tree species from their leaves – since leaves are the most variable of all the plant parts. Fruits, like flowers, have much more stable shapes and sizes – and unlike flowers are mostly more persistent. Thus, if you scratch around under the canopy you may also find remnants of fruits and/or seeds that can be a useful tool for identification.

And thus, his book was born!

When asked about how he chose the trees to illustrate Trevor replied: "When I first planned this book my concept of a tree was a long-lived woody plant, which developed a sturdy trunk and an impressive crown. Unlike some authors of tree guides I did not regard aloes as trees in the true sense of the word. Our beautiful cycads and tree ferns, to my mind, are also not included here as real trees. In my travels I have yet to come across the colourful Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*) and that delightful Pride-of-de-Kaap bauhinia (*Bauhinia galpinii*) as a shady, truly recognizable tree! However, as the book developed this distinction between a tree and what I regarded as a shrub became more and more blurred. Over time I came to realize that habitat and climate greatly influenced the stature and growth of these plants. A classic example is the ubiquitous Sweet thorn (*Acacia karroo*), which occurs as a stunted bush in the dry river courses of the Great Karroo, yet develops into an impressive tree with a sturdy black bole and rounded crown in the Mpumalanga Bushveld". And so, the choices were made – 381 in total...

If you are interested, ask Glenda for the order form.

