



**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

## NEXT MEETING

**Monday, 2 March 2020, at 20:00** at The Cape Town Athenaeum, Newlands  
Entrance: Members – R10; Visitors – R30

### WEIRD AND WONDERFUL ENCOUNTERS WITH PLANTS

Marianne Alexander will take us on a 40-minute whirlwind trip around the world, showcasing some of the most weird and wonderful plants she has met. From thrombolites – built up over centuries by colonies of microscopic bacterial cells, to the grass tree *Xanthorrhoea australis*, trigger plants and Wollemi pines in Australia; cactus and yaretta *Azorella compacta* in South America; baobabs and pitcher plants from Madagascar; to cannon ball trees in Asia.

## NEXT OUTING

**Tues, 3 March 2020 at 10:00:** Visit the Constantia garden of Penny Petersen.

Penny tells us: "The property had been owned by one other family and was left unattended for 15 years. We took on an overgrown alien-infested project, but I had a sense that there were some good bones to work with and soon uncovered the original garden layout, as well as remnants of an old nursery selling Waratah Protea.

Over the past 8 years the garden has survived two renovations, which forced me to create a temporary nursery each time. The new garden is a year old and compliments the modern architecture of the house, with simple grass plantings, hues of grey and dots of blossoming fruit trees. The pool was converted to a natural pool and the driveway is permeable eco blocks, allowing rain to seep back into the earth. The wild rambling garden is a work in progress, a haven for bees, birds, old fruit trees and the barefoot gardener and her Dad."

Please let Glenda have your name by 29 February.

## REPORTBACK

### February Plant Table

#### INDIGENOUS

When you look at this plant table, who would think that it's January/February and we're still suffering a drought – it's 31° today and 33° tomorrow – and look what we've got!

*Scadoxus multiflorus* – growing very well in a pot, giving 8 flowers this year, and watered by borehole, grey and stored rain water.

*Pelargonium* sp?? – a very prolific flowerer for months; cutting taken from play park in Langebaan; grows wild and inclined to take over its Newlands garden

Giant *Agapanthus tetraploid*? – from a Fish Hoek garden

*Duvernoia* – just started flowering

*Portulacaria afra* "Spekboom" – flowered for the first time in 30 years! The reason could be that it is now in the blazing sun all day and getting very little water.

"Dwarf" *Aloe*

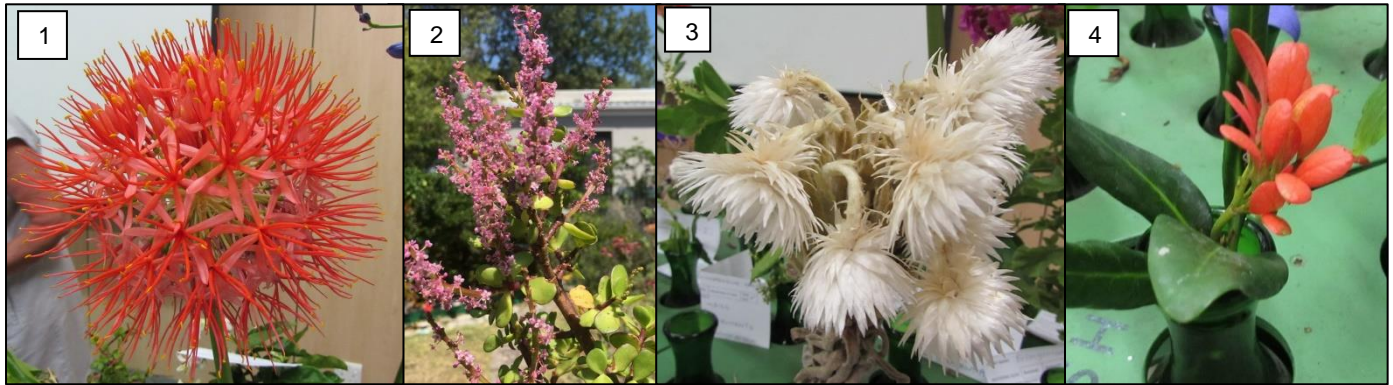
*Syncarpha vestita* (from wild) – a perennial; grows on rocky flats and slopes and flowers Nov to Jan; found in the Table Mountain National Park and in the mountains above Grabouw. Does anyone use this in their garden? Is it because the plant looks tatty after flowering?

*Platycodon grandiflorus* – small perennial

*Alberta magna* – a monotypic genus of flowering plants in the family Rubiaceae. Most species have been transferred to the genus *Razafimandimbsonia*, except for the type species *Alberta magna*. It is native to KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and is commonly known as Natal Flame Bush. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberta\\_magna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberta_magna)

*Leucadendron* – was lanky but cutting back has bushed it out

*Podocarpus falcatus* "Yellowwood" – grown from a seed



EXOTIC

*Salvia* – grows well from slips

*Mandevilla*

*Dipladenia*

*Tibouchina* – come in blues and pinks and usually have velvety leaves; very attractive even when not in flower

*Medinilla* from the Philippines – big shrub

*Passiflora caerulea* (5) – ornamental; brought from Wisley

*Passiflora fati confetto* (6) – lovely colours

*Alstroemeria* – come in a wide range of colours; lovely as cut flowers

*Adenium arabicum*

*Balsam* – showing seed pods

*Euphorbia millii* – can grow indoors; lovely for a garden with lots of succulents; they add form; never seem to be without flowers; a good animal deterrent

*Euphorbia millii* – hybrid from Thailand

*Epidendrum* “Wedding Valley” (7)

*Lewisia* (Portulaca family) (8 – in pot below Epidendrum) – flowers through summer; only the second time flowering; wide variety of colours; first seen in Barrydale

*Hoya carnosa* – flowers normally found upside down covered with drops of nectar; climbs or rambles through a shade house or a verandah; a number of species

*Citharexylum spinosum* “Fiddlewood” (Verbena family) from America and West Indies – fragrant flower; used for food, medicine and musical instruments

*Sanseveria* (named for an Italian prince), Liliaceae (9) – many different species; make a good groundcover; grows in sun or shade; fragrant white flowers every few decades; poisonous. Uses: purifies air; antiseptic bandage; bow strings

*Hibiscus syriacus* from China and SE Asia, now worldwide – national flower of South Korea; sun or shade

*Yucca* (10) from SW USA and Mexico – flowers mid-summer; to 3m tall; very sharp tips to leaves; spectacular flowers

*Heliotrope* – growing in a pot; needs regular trimming back





Jenny explains: "Hybrids are easier to grow. Proteas, for instance – the straight species one has problems with, but growing hybrids have more vigour, are resistant to soil problems and are much, much more garden-worthy plants. Look at hybrids differently. They are not for the purists who only want to grow species. Hybrids are just very much easier."

**FEBRUARY'S FAVOURITES**

**INDIGENOUS:**

Rodney's *Crinum moorei* – summer flowering bulb

<http://pza.sanbi.org/crinum-moorei> says: *Crinum moorei* is found in the South African eastern seaboard coastal forest from the northern Eastern Cape (Port St Johns area) in the south to northern KwaZulu-Natal (Mtunzini District). It grows well in light shade at higher altitudes if protected from frost.



**EXOTIC:**

Sue's *Adenium obesum* hybrid – can be grown in high light indoors; no winter water.

[worldofsucculents.com](http://worldofsucculents.com) says: *Adenium obesum* is native to the Sahel regions, south of the Sahara (from Mauritania and Senegal to Sudan) and tropical and subtropical eastern and southern Africa and Arabia.



Visit [www.capehorticulturalsociety.co.za](http://www.capehorticulturalsociety.co.za) for more photos of the plants brought to meetings.

**February garden visit:**



This Kenilworth garden had a number of interesting and unusual plants, of which some of the names escaped us. The berries (above) and flowers (below) were a "tree fuchsia", but what is its botanical name? The grey-leaved plant (bottom right) also needs a name. Brought from Hilton, KZN, but its origins are unknown. A very attractive border was made up of *Dianella tasmanica* (top right). Would you agree that this is a Dianella? If you are able to enlighten us as to the names of these plants, e-mail the information to Glenda.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Another year has passed and membership of the CHS needs renewing. The Committee does hope that you have found our talks and outings worthy of signing up for what we hope will be a busy and interesting year.

The necessary form is enclosed/attached. Please print, complete and bring it with your payment, to the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Failing that, completing and returning it by e-mail, with an accompanying EFT notification, would be appreciated.

## 2020 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

This will take place from 28 – 31 August, with a pre-Conference tour to Namaqualand from 23 – 27 August. There are still two places available on the tour. Details are available from Glenda.

We have lined up Tony Rebelo, Cherise Viljoen and Mary van Blommestein, amongst others, as speakers. The programme for the Conference will be provided once we have tied up a few loose ends. There will also be a few garden visits.

Please remember the dates and keep those days free. You will be advised of all the events and the costs in due course. We hope you will attend this first-ever international event organized by the CHS. This Conference will allow you the opportunity to meet like-minded gardeners from other Mediterranean climate countries.

## PROPAGATING FOR PLANT SALES

Following on from last month's CHS News, please continue to grow as many plants as possible for the Flourish Garden Club Plant Market on **16 May 2020**.

From Melanie:

The CHS will benefit from the proceeds of this sale, which will help with sponsoring horticultural students or making it possible for the less advantaged children of Cape Town to get to see the wonder of Kirstenbosch, or any other outreach project we may have.

Flourish has also asked if we will help by being available, on the day itself, with our knowledge and expertise so that people can be advised about what they should buy and where to plant things, which is very important.

We also ask you to propagate special things that you are prepared to share; special plants that you possibly had trouble starting and, being successful, can now pass on.

On the other hand, if you're not happy about starting them off and afraid you won't be successful at propagating, take cuttings (see below) and bring it to our Monday meetings. These will be handed out to the experts at Flourish as they are more than happy to grow on slips and things that we bring. Put names to your special plants.

Also a very good thing, indeed, is that we will be given the "leftovers" from this sale, so we will be starting the CHS Plant Sale (to be held on 5 September 2020) with plants we've grown on from this May sale.

So, all in all, we stand to make a fair amount of money and this will enable the CHS to do some good with the extra funds.

From Isabella:

I must say that this time of the year, in the heat, is a fantastic time for taking cuttings. They root much faster in the heat than they do through winter. You do need water to keep them going, but they don't like to be soggy.

So, when you take your cuttings, take a whole lot of the same, as one or two are certain to die. If you're planning to bring them to us at a meeting to pass onto Flourish, cut them the day before or on the day, put them in a plastic bag with a little bit of water. If they are succulent cuttings, just put them in a paper bag. Try everything – Pelargoniums, you can divide your spring flowering bulbs, divide Agapanthus, tree cuttings, but most of all we are looking for those exciting old-fashioned plants that you can't find in nurseries anymore.

From Cherise:

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.

## LOADS OF TOADS

The Western Leopard Toad is one of the most endangered of the Western Cape toads and, as such, deserves protection. Their habitat is in the fynbos, where they forage happily, eating insects etc. They are dry land creatures, only going down to wetlands to breed for a few days of the year. Encroaching developments and a bigger network of roads are spelling great danger for them.

Research is currently being undertaken to find out more about these engaging toads. We think it takes 3 – 5 years for them to mature, so they have to survive some years before then. At breeding time – usually around the first warm week in August – the breeding adults migrate to the wetlands to breed. Wetlands can then sound as if a Harley Davidson rally is in progress, as they make a very loud “purring” noise. This is a dangerous time for the toads, as many get run over by cars on the roads. As the females can attain a size of 15cm, and the males 10cm, they should be easy to see by motorists. Unfortunately, many drivers don’t care what they run over, and thus the breeding stock is diminished in this manner.

Round about November to January, the baby toadlets emerge from the wetlands and try to reach safety in the fynbos. As they are about 11mm long, they are in danger of being trodden on, and people should be aware of this when walking around wetlands at this time. We have noticed that they seem to move when a little rain has fallen and it is nice and cool.

Interesting facts about the toads are that the distinctive markings on their backs are unique to each toad, and they can thus be easily recognised, so if you have one in your garden, take a photo and see if you can keep a check on your special toad, or if you have more than one.

They can become quite tame and be found in gardens quite a long way from the wetlands. When the weather is hot, they can sometimes be found in bathrooms. As they are very laid back, they can easily be picked up and put outside. They don’t drink water, but have patches on their bottoms, through which they absorb water. Dog’s water dishes are often used for this purpose.

The brownish patches on their heads do contain a toxin that can make domestic pets very sick if the toads are bitten or really threatened. They can, however, be very safely handled, as this doesn’t seem to stress them at all.

Evanne Rothwell, *Full Circle*

## FROM A WEBSITE, TO FACEBOOK AND NOW ..... INSTAGRAM!



What do you do with the many horticultural photographs you have stored on your cellphone? Do you manage to share them with others? Or would you like to show off your blooms to a wider audience?

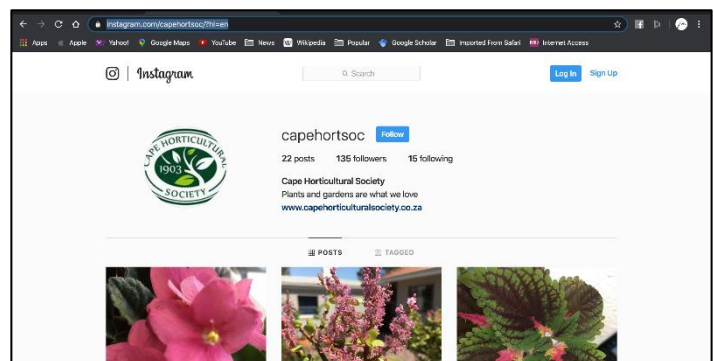
There’s not much on the page yet (only 22 posts) so we’re hoping members will now sign up and start posting photos of their wonderful plants, flowers and gardens.

To give you a taste of what it’s all about, from your computer, the link to capehortsoc (our CHS Instagram page) is:

<https://www.instagram.com/capehortsoc/?hl=en>

At this point, all you can do is view the photos. By clicking on the individual photo, you will be told where it was taken and a little bit about the photo.

- 🌱 If you’re intrigued and wish to follow other posts (other garden-related groups/individuals), click on Sign Up (top right)
- 🌱 Don’t be put off by the “Login with Facebook” block. Underneath is where you sign up for Instagram.
- 🌱 Type in your name, give yourself a username (something recognizable to others – you may have to try a few times before Instagram accepts it), and put in a password.
- 🌱 Write down this information in case you need it in the future. 😊
- 🌱 Click on Sign Up



When you are in Instagram, you can click on Search to find other people you may wish to follow, by typing in their name.

More information next month on how to post your photos from your cellphone.



## SHASTA DAISY ORIGINS

Having read 'Fresh as a Shasta daisy' (*The Garden*, July, pp518-21), I would like to provide some additional information concerning the origins of the Shasta daisy.

Before 1900 there were no true 'Shasta daisies' in our gardens, although in 1894 an article in *The Garden* described a daisy called 'Maurice Prichard' as being a great improvement on *Chrysanthemum* (now *Leucanthemum*) *maximum*.

In the USA, Luther Burbank spent 15 years crossing four daisy species, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, *L. lacustre*, *L. maximum* and *Nipponanthemum nipponicum*, to create the first Shasta daisy, introduced in 1901.

In the UK, the Read family in Norfolk carried out much breeding of Shasta daisies. One day Horace Read was travelling on a train, when out of the window he spotted a double wild moon daisy (*L. vulgare*) on the side of an embankment. On his return journey, he pulled the emergency cord on the train, jumped out, dug up some of the plant and continued his journey! He used this plant as a parent to produce the well-known cultivar 'Esther Read' (1931), named after his daughter. The other parent remains unknown, but is thought to have been either the true *Leucanthemum maximum*, or of the Burbank hybrid Shasta daisies.

I believe that the early so-called 'Shasta daisies' produced in this country were merely selected forms of *L. maximum* and *L. lacustre*, or a combination of both, but that most of the later types were more genetically complex, involving *L. vulgare* and other species.

It appears that Burbank's Shasta daisy is also the result of a mutation called gigantism, where every cell is two to three times larger than those of its ancestors, increasing the size of all plant parts.

Mrs A D Allen

National Collection holder of *Leucanthemum x superbum*  
Devon

Source: A letter published in *The Garden* August 2002

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What is the correct name for the Natal Flame Bush?

(Answer on page 1)

2. On which continent would you find an *Azorella compacta*?

(Answer on page 1)

## NOTICES

🌱 These bags were left behind at the last meeting. If they belong to you, you may collect them at the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

🌱 Bea's response to her request for pots: "I have had the most overwhelming response from CHS members to my request for small pots for rooting spekboom cuttings. My car is now not only filled with pots, but with a huge amount of spekboom cuttings as well, ready to be taken to Mamre this week. Please will you forward my sincere thanks in your next CHS newsletter to all those members who so generously supported my call." She reported back after her trip to Mamre to say that they managed to pot up 100 Spekboom cuttings!!



## DATES TO DIARISE

🌱 Kirstenbosch/BotSoc Plant Fair: 4/5 April 2020

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

🌱 Flourish Plant Market: 16 May 2020

🌱 CHS-MGi Conference: 28 – 31 August 2020

🌱 CHS Plant Sale: 5 September 2020

Photos: J Noyce, A and G Thorpe