



**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, 6 April 2020** – Cancelled due to 21-day national lockdown!

Marijke Honig was scheduled to talk on *Green Buildings and Landscapes of the 21st Century*. This will be scheduled for a date later in the year.

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### FUTURE MEETINGS

**20:00** at The Cape Town Athenaeum, Newlands

Entrance: Members – R10; Visitors – R30

**Monday, 4 May 2020 – AGM**, followed by Marianne Alexander and her *Weird and Wonderful Encounters with Plants* – the talk we didn't get to hear in March.

**Monday, 1 June 2020** – Roger Stewart will tell us about *Walter Synott, The Plant Collector*, who was an Irish 1820 settler and sent 'more new and rare Cape bulbs to England than any other individual'.

**NB:** All meetings are subject to the lifting of the lockdown. Keep up to date with CHS events by visiting our website, phoning or e-mailing (details below).

### NEXT OUTING

**Sat, 25 April 2020 at 10:00:** Alex Lansdowne will show us the newly upgraded wetland at Arderne Gardens. If you haven't visited in a long time, you will have the opportunity, either before or after, to take in the other new areas that have been created, and marvel at the changes in the garden.

Please let Glenda have your name by 22 April.

**NB:** All outings are subject to the lifting of the lockdown.

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### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you to those members who have already renewed their annual subscription. That leaves 75% of our membership who still need to pay their subs.

So, if you have found our talks and outings worthy of signing up for another year, please do so – you know who you are. The best option would be to do an EFT and return the form (attached) by e-mail or fax. Please do not deposit cash into the CHS account over the counter or through an ATM, as this incurs large bank charges. If this is the only way you can make payment, please include the extra levy as shown on the renewal form.

The last resort would be to pay this at the AGM – if it takes place, but that is the deadline for renewals. You will be removed from the membership database until such time as payment has been received.

### WELCOME TO ...

... new members, Jackie Kallaway, Marlene Schmidt, who signed up recently and Linda Papathanasiou who has returned to the CHS after a number of years. We hope they will all enjoy their time among us.

### REPORTBACK

#### March Plant Table

##### INDIGENOUS

*Metarungia longstrobis* "Sunbird Bush" (right) from northern and eastern parts of South Africa – local sunbirds do not know that this is full of nectar; bees have discovered it; shade or semi-shade; large shrub; very drought-hardy; never gets watered, even though it is from a summer rainfall area; no maintenance



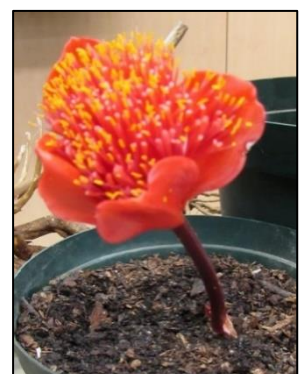
*Polygala myrtifolia* (below, left) – a narrow-leaved form which is better for coastal areas as it handles the wind better; attracts Carpenter bees; growing on Kirstenhof greenbelt garden. *P. myrtifolia* was planted there a few years ago and being watered regularly with wellpoint water for 2 to 3 years, grew to 5m. This 2-year old seedling is dwarfed and only 1m high. The possible reason: it has only been rained on.

*Leonotis leonurus* (below, second from left) – creamy-yellow form; grows lower than the orange, about 1.2m; flowers Mar/Apr; loved by sunbirds; needs heavy pruning; drought resistant.

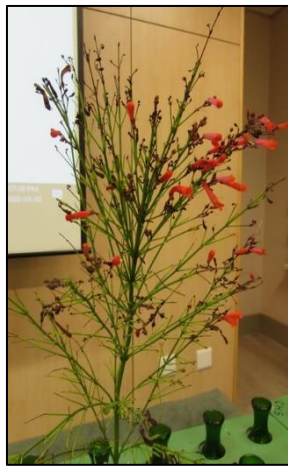
Seedling of *Podocarpus falcatus* "Outeniqua Yellowwood" (below, third from left) – about to become a weed in the Western Cape.

*Haemanthus coccineus*? "April Fool's Flower" (below, right) from Betty's Bay.

Baobab seedling



## EXOTIC



*Catopsis* (far left), a Bromeliad – smooth leaved; very lax flower head; flowering for 2 – 3 months already

Pomegranate – sun; low maintenance; survives on rain water only

*Russelia equisetiformis* (centre) – sprawling and needs to be cut back every year

*Lavatera maritima*?? (left) – related to mallows and Hollyhocks; flowers all spring and summer; 3.5m high and wide; slips taken from verge in

Kalk Bay when the nursery moved its site.

*Eucomis comosa* "Pineapple Flower" (below, left) – flowers Dec to March; tuft of leaf-like bracts on top are small in this species; cream flowers with a purple centre

*Gaura* (below, right) root – In May 2017, a branch of a 3.5m diameter plant, that was growing in paving, was brought for display (right). This month the plant was cut off at ground level to clear the way for new paving – this root was found under the paving.





### MARCH'S MARVELS

#### INDIGENOUS:

Rodney's *Scadoxus membranaceus*: summer flowering bulb from east Cape Province, KwaZulu-Natal; it is the smallest of the known *Scadoxus* species, entirely evergreen and low growing, its height varies from 150–400 mm, depending on the form.



Source: <http://pza.sanbi.org/scadoxus-membranaceus>

#### EXOTIC:

Rodney's *Ornithophora radicans*: A lovely little orchid that looks nothing like an orchid.

<https://www.backyardgardener.com/plantname/ornithophora-radicans-ornithophora-orchid/>

tells us: An epiphytic orchid with compressed pseudobulbs and grass-like leaves, to 7 inches long. The greenish-white or greenish-yellow flowers have cream-colored lips, and appear on slender racemes in fall. Grow epiphytically on bark slabs, or with epiphytic orchid potting mix in slatted baskets. Requires filtered light and high humidity throughout the year, with less water in winter.



### March garden visit

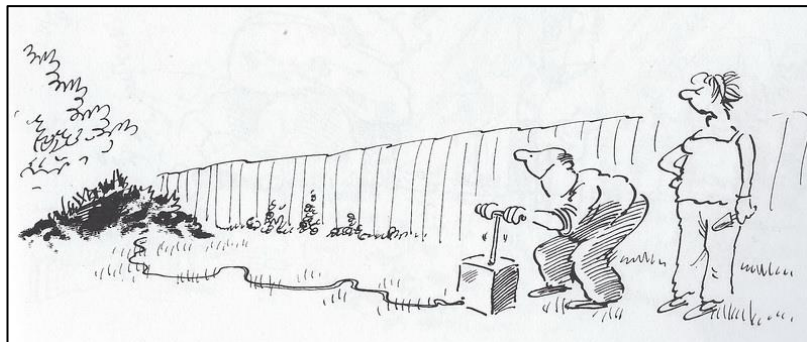
We visited the Constantia garden where the proposed Flourish Garden Club Plant Market is due to take place.

This had been an old garden (it formerly housed a Waratah nursery) and much of the property, which is vast, is still wild and very interesting, with a great variety of trees and shrubs. The natural swimming pool is filtered through a pond that was created next to it (below, far right).



Collection of Streptocarpus

## SOMETHING TO DO WHILE UNDER LOCKDOWN?



“I still think you’d get a better spread with a fork!”

From “The Crazy World of Gardening”, Cartoons by Bill Stott

## PROPAGATING PLANTS DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

Isabella reminded us at the last meeting about the potting up we have been asked to do. Flourish Garden Club will advise after Easter whether this Plant Market will take place or not. BUT, we would still like you to continue propagating and to hear how many plants you will have available for the sale. So, please keep taking cuttings of the “old-fashioned” plants you have in your garden and let us have your numbers by 6 April.

Isabella, in her isolation, has this to tell us:

“Now that I’m stuck at home, I have time for gardening again! Autumn is a good time for propagating so I thought I’d share what I’m doing in the hope that it will inspire you to try it yourselves.

### DAY 1

***Ruellia species*** (below, left)

This is the easiest way to propagate! I dug up rooted sections of this low-growing groundcover (approx. 15cm) and potted them up in potting soil, then placed them in semi-shade. It flowers through the summer and is reasonably waterwise. Takes dry semi-shade or, if watered regularly, full sun.

***Tradescantia sillamontana*** (below, centre)

Also very easy – either dig up rooted pieces, or root from cuttings (quick to root). This lovely furry grey groundcover (approx. 30cm) multiplies by underground stolons but is not as rampant as the weedier *Tradescantias* (Wandering Jew). Bright pink flowers through summer attract bees. Very drought-hardy, good for morning sun. The whole plant goes dormant in winter and re-sprouts in spring.

### DAY 2

***Leonotis ocymifolia*** (below, right)

I wonder if these pieces of Klipdagga will root in water? Let’s give it a try. It’s a smaller shrub than its well-known cousin, *Leonotis leonurus* (Wild Dagga), and it flowers more often. The flowers are a rusty orange but they’re still good for attracting sunbirds. Don’t forget to change the water every couple of days!





## Pelargoniums

Does your old pelargonium look like this (right)? And it never flowers anymore? Easy to fix – just cut the bush back hard (below, left). Then use the top ends of the cut branches to take cuttings. Cut below a healthy node, (below, centre) and remove excess foliage. Place in a sandy soil mix to root. Use a stick or pencil to make a hole for the cutting – don't just shove it into the soil, as the vascular system could get blocked by grains of sand. You can use rooting hormone if you have it, but *Pelargoniums* are mostly quite easy to root even without it.

And, far right, are 10 *Pelargoniums* in a pot in the semi-shade. Always take a lot more cuttings than you think you'll need, because some of them won't survive.



## DAY 3

### Aloes

Some of my summer-flowering *Aloes* have gotten old (left) and unattractive, so I've gradually been taking out the ugly ones and rooting new pieces. Simply cut off the tops of the aloes with a piece of stem at least 15 – 20cm long (centre). Strip off the lower leaves, especially if they're dried up anyway. Lay the cuttings in the shade for a week or so to form a callous at the bottom. Plant them in soil in a semi-shaded spot until they're well-rooted, then transplant them to where you want them to grow. These are not very large-growing aloes so the cuttings are quite manageable, but you can do the same thing with larger *Aloes*.

Cuttings that I rooted in situ about two months ago – flowering already (right).



More to follow as Lockdown continues ..."

Isabella's Plant Table left-overs:

If you don't grow plants from cuttings, you're missing out! The following photos are plants from the CHS plant table – specimens that members brought in to show their flowers. Below left a very pretty Impatiens (I think it's Impatiens? Balsam?) gave me two cuttings, both rooting successfully. I had to keep pinching off the flowers so that the cuttings' energy went into rooting – very floriferous. Thank you to whoever brought this to the meeting! I can't wait to make more plants so I can have a big splash of colour.

The *Greyia flanaganii* (right) was grown from a cutting brought in by Nicola, I think? It would have been during spring while it was flowering. I got two cuttings out of the specimen, and one is planted in a large pot in my complex where it gets water once a week. Matchbox for size comparison. Much faster-growing than I expected!



## 2020 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Sub-committee organizing the Namaqualand tour and Conference planned for August this year has, sadly, made the decision to cancel this event due to the uncertainty of the times. There is the possibility that this will be deferred to the same time in 2021 but the Sub-committee will re-assess the situation later in the year.

## GARDENING AND EXERCISE

Online article submitted by John van der Linde, published in The Times – 20 March 2020.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/gardening-and-exercise-are-the-secrets-to-happiness-zdntn096q?shareToken=48d3afaa70bc9c50a6293b77cb676e1d=>

### Gardening and exercise 'are the secrets to happiness'

Gardeners have known it for centuries, but now research has shown that outdoor activities, such as growing vegetables and flowers, help to stimulate a positive frame of mind and promote happiness

Drugs might provide a temporary fix, gurus might fool the gullible and there are still some foolish enough to think that money will solve all their problems.

However, anyone who has ever put the cares of the world behind them by digging potatoes will know that happiness is working the allotment.

It is something that gardeners have known for centuries, of course, but now researchers have backed them up. In a study that also revealed the power of jogging to boost happiness, experts found that exercising outdoors and gardening were associated with the highest feelings of exhilaration.

The research found that being outdoors, close to trees or parks, was a consistent factor in feeling happy. Fittingly, Londoners also derived deep pleasure from being within sight of the Thames, doubtless inspired, depending on their generation, by Wordsworth's lines on Westminster Bridge, or the Kinks and *Waterloo Sunset*.

The study used data from around 500,000 moments of happiness recorded by 13,000 Londoners between 2011 and 2018. Participants scored their level of happiness for each moment, on a scale from zero to 100, using an app called Mappiness, and logged what they were doing at the time.

Researchers then plotted the location of each joyful snapshot alongside the time of day, levels of noise recorded by the phone and the weather.



The researchers pointed out that the results did not prove that the activities caused the associated happiness, as participants may have chosen an early evening walk along the Thames at sunset to reflect the mood they were in already. However, the authors said they clearly showed a positive effect on wellbeing from proximity to nature and certain activities.

Running, exercising or taking part in other sports was associated with a seven percentage point rise in levels of happiness while gardening or digging an allotment correlated with an increase of six percentage points.

Happiness also rose 3.9 percentage points during bird watching or observing nature, and two points when walking or hiking.

Being outside is good, the results showed (happiness up 1.6 points): being in a vehicle bad (down 0.64 points). Water is good, too: moments of happiness scored 2.2 percentage points higher when located within 50 metres of the Thames, higher than being close to a canal (1.8 points) or close to a pond or lake (1.3 points) although the sample size was small for the latter.

Parks and countryside are also beneficial: being in a public green space was associated with a one percentage point rise in happiness and the same held for a street or other outdoor location with significant trees nearby. The same goes for good weather. Unbroken sunshine added two percentage points to the happiness score: rain or high winds knocked a point off.

Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, associate professor of economics at Saïd Business School, Oxford University, who led the research for the World Happiness Index, said that a high-quality environment was central to wellbeing but protecting this was hard for politicians. He pointed to the gilets-jaunes protests in France in December 2018 over President Macron's attempt to raise fuel tax.

"As much as people appreciate a good environment, the policies to achieve it are very difficult," Dr De Neve said.

"Introducing policies for responsible consumption and improving the climate are difficult for people. It takes them out of their comfort zones and reduces their immediate wellbeing notwithstanding that they appreciate the outcomes of these policies."

### Why you just can't beat roots

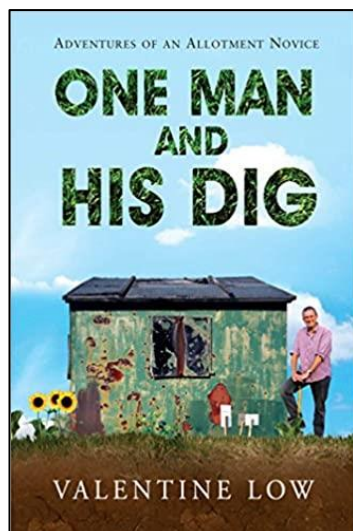
It is like Zen Buddhism, but with carrots. Allotments are wonderful places, but they are also disaster zones (Valentine Low writes). The lettuces bolt. The potatoes get blight. There is nothing worse than seedlings devastated by slugs.

But that is what makes it all satisfying. For every disaster there is a triumph. For every cabbage ruined by caterpillars there is a perfect carrot; for every beetroot calamity there is the sheer joy of the arrival of the peas.

Every year some things work and some don't and you learn to accept it. My neighbour told me that slugs were all God's creatures. How right he was. But nothing wrong with a bit of (organic) slug killer, just in case. On an allotment the outside world recedes.

There is happiness, serenity and, with any luck, some delicious veg for dinner.

*Valentine Low is the author of One Man and His Dig*



When Valentine Low decided to forego his world of dinner parties with the chattering classes to take on a pastime usually indulged in by old men with flat caps and rollups, he had little idea of the sea change it would bring about in his life. A year down the line he had developed a worrying obsession with potatoes, a resourcefulness that borders on kleptomania and an ever-strengthening relationship with a cheery Irishman named Michael (who thinks that zeitgeist is something nasty you get on your cucumbers).

By turns entertaining and informative, and packed with allotment wisdom -- everything from who was responsible for the desecration of the purple sprouting broccoli (that'll be the pigeons) to how to build a proper manure heap -- *One Man and His Dig* is an indispensable guidebook for all green-fingered urbanites.

<https://www.amazon.com/One-Man-His-Dig-Adventures/dp/1847391281>

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which summer flowering bulb comes from the Eastern Cape/KwaZulu Natal?

(Answer on page 3)

2. Which pastimes are the 'secrets to happiness'?

(Answer on page 6)

## INSTAGRAM continued



Last month we told you how to view the CHS Instagram page in order to see what members are growing in their gardens, or other gardens they have visited. Perhaps you're not interested in following anyone else's Instagram posts, but love photographing your plants garden and elsewhere. Well, for our Instagram page to expand, more photographs are needed. We do have 185 followers but only 28 pictures to look at. This is a call to our avid photographers to send us your favourite pics.

### Photos taken with a (proper) camera:

- 🌱 Download your photos to your computer and save them as JPG files, each with its plant name.
- 🌱 Open a new folder (call it Instagram pics) and copy the photos you would like to have on Instagram into this folder. This will make it easier to find them for the next step. Try and have 4 photos at a time with a size of between 600KB and 2MB per photo.
- 🌱 Open this link <https://wettransfer.com/> in your internet browser (this is a free service) and follow the prompts:
  - Agree
  - Add files – find your 'Instagram pics' folder and click on the file name and click Open. You can Add More. When done ...
  - Type in the e-mail address to send them to: [josie.noyce@gmail.com](mailto:josie.noyce@gmail.com)
  - Put in your e-mail address
  - Send a message to Josie (administrator for the CHS account), perhaps giving a bit of description for the photos.
  - Transfer
- 🌱 Josie will post them to the CHS Instagram page.

### Photos taken with the camera on your cellphone:

- 🌱 From your Photo Gallery, choose the photos you want to have shown on the CHS Instagram page and WhatsApp them to Glenda (also an administrator for the CHS account) on 071-558-7425, giving the name of the flower/plant or description of the photo. She will post them to the CHS Instagram page.

GIVE IT A TRY!

## NOTICES

- 🌱 CHS Plant Sale: 5 September 2020

## DATES TO UN-DIARISE

- 🌱 Kirstenbosch/BotSoc Plant Fair: 4/5 April 2020 – Postponed
- 🌱 Tokara Autumn Open Garden and Rare Plant Fair: 18 April 2020 – Postponed
- 🌱 Flourish Plant Market: 16 May 2020 – Awaiting a decision
- 🌱 CHS-MGi Conference: 28 to 31 August 2020 – Cancelled

