

CHS NEWS

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 6 June 2022 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum

Jenny Scarr has a presentation on Kew Gardens and how it has evolved over the years. Not only is it a lovely garden, but also a scientific institution, herbarium and houses the Millenium Seed Bank.

Which English King had 15 children? What is the connection with our Strelizia? To learn more, come and hear her talk on

KEW THROUGH THE AGES

- There will be no entrance fee for members. Visitors will pay R30.
- The library will also be open and you are welcome to borrow books until the next meeting.
- The Plant Table will be in operation again. Bring your blooms or pot plants and place them on the table. Please fill in a form giving your name and the name of your plant. No need to advise the watering regime but if you have anything interesting to say about the specimen, please write it on the slip.
- Tea will not be served.

REPORT BACK

The 117th Annual General Meeting was held at the Athenaeum for the first time after a two-year absence with 37 members and one visitor. Six apologies had been received.

Without an elected Chairman for the year under review, this report is a compilation of the individual Committee members' reports.

"CHS Committee Report for the year ending 28 February 2022

We spent a second year meeting online, managing a few outings and holding a 'live' plant sale. Again, there was no face-to-face AGM and no year-end party. The Committee held two meetings in person and three via Zoom during the past year, with each member taking a turn to chair a meeting.

Sadly, two great plants-people passed away in the past year – Jane Robertson and Errol Scarr. Their presence has been sorely missed.

We say goodbye to Melanie Stewart, who is not standing for re-election. She was the initiator of the Annual Plant Sale in May 2004, having joined the committee, together with Rod, after the 2003 AGM. They worked very hard at organising the plant sales, held first in their Kenilworth garden, and later moving to the Marina. We thank her for this money-spinning initiative which has brought in much needed funds over the years.

Speakers (Jenny and Glenda)

Although our "meetings" have been online this past year, there has been a wide variety of topics covered by our speakers who have ranged from local to overseas, going as far as the USA.

We had a double bill last March with John van der Linde's "A Bit of Froth on the Bird's Milk", referring to the *Ornithogalum*, and Jenny Scarr telling us about a trip to the "Gifberg and Goegap".

MAY 2022

LOCKDOWN EDITION 22-05

President

Marianne Alexander

Chairlady

Jenny Scarr

Vice-Chairlady

Isabella Hayden

Hon Treasurer

Henry Diesveld

Hon Secretary

Glenda Thorpe

Committee Members

Susan Armstrong Gerald Robertson

Cherise Viljoen Natalie Michie

Honorary Members

Laurie Powis Marianne Alexander

Mary Smith Anne Bean Adam Harrower

Michael Tuffin Bill Elder Ernst van Jaarsveld

*"Flowers leave some of
their fragrance in the
hand that bestows them."*

Chinese Proverb



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This was followed by two MGF (Mediterranean Gardening France) members, Imogen Checketts and Kate Dumbleton, who had given a talk, “Le Jardin Champêtre – a Garden in SW France”, for the online series Garden Master Class.

CHS President, Marianne Alexander’s “Rising from the Ashes”, which showed how plants recover and flourish after fires, went down very well and has received the highest number of views on the CHS You Tube channel.

We have been fortunate enough to tap into the video library of our MGf associates and MPG’s (Mediterranean Plants and Gardens) Catherine Barwise gave a talk on the “Life of Beth Chatto” in June 2021.

Another MGf talk was MGAP’s (Mediterranean Gardening Association Portugal) talk by James and Helen Basson on “Designing with Climate in Mind” in July 2021. We were taken around the world in August by Lyn Mair who treated us to “A Botanical Journey – Trees and Flowers around the World”. In September we crossed the ocean to Iowa, USA where we had “A Gardener’s View of the American Prairie” – these are all the rage currently – a Garden Master Class given by Kelly Norris.

Other local speakers included Sally Hey who showed the varied flowers found while “Going Wild in the Cape Floral Kingdom”, and Mary van Blommestein who spoke on “Collecting for Kew: Francis Masson at the Cape – Expeditions and Excursions by one of His Majesty’s Gardeners”.

Cherise Viljoen gave us a lovely “walk through” of The Sheiling, the late Jane Robertson’s garden.

Also from the USA, University of Delaware’s Doug Tallamy gave a superb talk “Bringing Nature Home: The Importance of Native Plants” on the role of insects as the basis of the food chain and how important it is to use Indigenous Plants to support them. This lecture series was presented by Ohio State University.

In all we hope we have provided something for everyone.

Outings (Isabella, Susan and Glenda, with the help of other members)

The first outing for the year was well attended (22 members), and it was to the permaculture garden and completely sustainable home in Kalk Bay of Andy Jamieson, packed with edibles and useful plants. Andy owns the permaculture business ‘Leaf and Stone’, so he certainly knows how to live in tune with the environment. This was followed by a stop at the Dragon Tree – *Dracaena cinnabari* – in the area.

In June twenty members visited Donovan Gilman’s very different garden in Constantia – filled to capacity with all sorts of spiny plants and some very unusual varieties of *Coleus*.

Next, Ernst van Jaarsveld showed us the Special Collections at Babylonstoren. We took the opportunity to present him with Honorary Life Membership of CHS. This was followed later in August when member, Jean Sleight, showed us around the garden of her parents’ house as well as her own garden in Pinelands.

In spring we had Alex Lansdowne taking us for a walk on Rondebosch Common to see what was blooming. The flowers were exceptional after the fires earlier in the year and very good winter rains. Later in September some members paid another visit to Babylonstoren to see the “river” of Clivias in flower, which must be the highlight of that beautiful place.

October had us drooling over Wendy Ackerman’s garden again and in November another member, Adrienne Rust, welcomed us into her Meadowridge garden, where no space is wasted and many beautiful, established plants were admired. We were fortunate to be allowed to take a few cuttings before we left – thanks, Adrienne!

We look forward to members returning to the outings that are organised.

Plant Sale (Melanie)

Over the years, the plant sale has contributed to the CHS income in a most satisfactory manner – a huge thank you to all the members who have made this possible with their generous contributions. The sale last year brought in R9057.

I have enjoyed the plant sale project enormously – I have felt that, as members of the CHS, we should all be nurturing plants, and the plant sale has been an excellent reason for that.

I’d also like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to Jane Robertson, whose incredible support over the years is enormously appreciated.

Jane not only grew plants for the sale, she provided magnificent arrangements, from her garden, as raffle prizes - and they were always spectacular examples of the enormously wide range of plants which could be grown in our Cape gardens.

Most of us have some of Jane's plants in our gardens, and their presence is an ongoing reminder of this incredible plantswoman's expertise ... Jane is greatly missed in so many ways, and we are so privileged to have had her as such a committed gardener and member of the Society.

Thank you all for making the plant sale the growing success it has been for the last 18 years. The past two years were not as good, understandably, but I do hope that it will always be an essential and rewarding project for all the members.

Please do continue to support it – it is financially rewarding for the CHS and, for me, in particular, it has been emotionally gratifying and rewarding too ... growing plants is a really beneficial and satisfying thing to do.

Athenaeum Garden (Isabella)

After Jane passed away, I took on the Athenaeum garden and planted up the right-hand side of the pathway as per Jane's plans. A garden service comes to mow the lawn and deal with the irrigation and so on, but as with any garden there is always cutting back overgrown plants and replacing dead ones. For the last few months of the year the garden was neglected when I was unwell, but the fact that most of the plants survived the summer quite happily is testament to the soundness of mediterranean gardening principles.

In early March the CHS committee invited Jane's family and the donors to the Athenaeum Restoration Fund to afternoon tea and the unveiling of a bench commemorating her work in the garden, with a plaque stating:

Jane's Garden

The garden was created by Jane Robertson between 2018 and 2020

Hortum fecit. Florum capensum delexit.

(She made the garden, and she delighted in the Cape Flora.)

A fitting tribute to Jane.

Secretariat (Glenda)

The past year was less stressful than the previous one, as the new technological skills learnt were no longer something to panic over.

The new year always starts off with the renewal of membership fees and members took to internet banking like ducks taking to water because there were no meetings at which to hand over cash. For this we are very grateful. 15 new members signed up in the year under review.

Compliments received on the newsletters produced each month must be shared with the members. Apart from the usual news, I could not compile these without the input of a handful of enthusiastic members who send me articles and photographs and snippets of interest. The same goes for the interesting links to Zoom lectures and You Tube videos that I receive. It only takes a matter of minutes to send them out and they have helped to keep members in touch with the gardening world.

The monthly Plant Show and Tell has allowed members to show off their plants without having to cut a stem and take them to a meeting. Recording these presentations has also brought the plants to life for those who watch it on You Tube. My thanks to those members who took the time to photograph and provide the useful information for each of their plants. We have some very good photographers among us. But the biggest thanks must go to Marie-Lou Gillespie who very kindly allowed us the use of her private Zoom account, saving us a lot of money.

Although I introduced Facebook and Instagram, my social media skills are sadly lacking and have, therefore, not been used to their full potential. This will, hopefully, be remedied in the coming year by those with the necessary know-how.

Our website has proved its worth over the years and I receive frequent requests from less informed people for help of all kinds – what to do about trees too close to a wall, can we fell trees, what to do about ants eating plants, why are plants dying etc, etc? My thanks to the small database of knowledgeable members who help with answers and advice.

We remain affiliated to MGİ and are kept up to date with what events they offer. CHS members are welcome to sign up for any of their events if you find yourself in any of these countries.

From sitting in comfort in front of a computer screen this past year, we hope the coming year will see the less comfortable seats being filled for meetings at the Athenaeum."

Treasurer's Report for the year ending 28 February 2022

"The Financial Statements for the year ending 28 February 2022 are attached. Also attached are the restated Financial Statements for 2021, which were adjusted due to the conversion into a donation of the outstanding MGİ Conference refund, resulting in the R7 036 loss reducing to R2 417. As could be expected, the Covid-19 pandemic again played havoc with the finances last year and made budgeting a hit and miss affair.

Income Statement

When compared to pre Covid-19 years (2016-2019), our income and expenses were down approximately R17 000 and R11 000 respectively.

We ended up with a deficit of R10 212, compared to the R17 200 deficit forecast at the AGM last year.

Balance Sheet

The Accumulated Funds decreased by about R10 000 to R79 107. However, as the market value of our investments is about R45 000 higher than the accumulated fund values, the financial position of the Society remains healthy.

Budget 2022 – 2023

A budget has been drawn up and is attached and indicates a deficit of R2 500. It is based on the assumption that normal meetings at the Athenaeum will continue for the rest of the year.

Annual Financial Statements Approval

No-one was found who would do an 'audit' of these financial statements. They were therefore presented to the Committee, who believe that they give a fair presentation of the CHS's financial position. The Financial Statements are accordingly submitted for members' approval at the AGM."

The Treasurer explained that audits can cost in the region of R28 000, or an audit review about R14 000. There is also a less expensive option. It would be preferable for a member to offer their services as Honorary Auditor. The CHS Rules only state that the financial statement and balance sheet "shall be audited", which was not very specific. Therefore, he felt that the Rules be amended to avoid having to pay for expensive audits.

Our President, Marianne Alexander, who was happy to remain in this position for the ensuing year, as well as the 8 nominated Committee Members, were unanimously elected for the 2022/23 year. They are Susan Armstrong, Henry Diesveld, Isabella Hayden, Natalie Michie, Gerald Robertson, Jenny Scarr, Glenda Thorpe and Cherise Viljoen.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

... Jenny Scarr and Isabella Hayden, who were recently elected by the new Committee as Chairlady and Vice-Chairlady respectively.

NEXT OUTING

Sun, 19 June: Visit Delaire Graff estate in Stellenbosch. A time is still to be confirmed but if you are interested, please RSVP to Glenda by 10 June when further details will be available.

MAY MEETING PLANT TABLE

These plants were brought in by members:

- *Plectranthus oertendahlii* – grows from E Cape to kwaZulu Natal; more a pot plant than a garden plant.
- *Barleria obtusa* in blue – good for sun or shade; does not overseed but about 6 extra plants arrive each year.
- *Barleria* in white – sprawling, large shrub; more delicate than *B obtusa*.
- *Leonotis leonurus* "Wild Dagga" – nectar-rich; cut back after flowering.
- *Clivia gardenii* – can handle deep shade; flowers in autumn.
- *Hypoestes aristata* "Ribbon Bush" – grows in shade or sun; seeds prolifically; prune back each year.
- *Aloe ciliaris* "climbing aloe" – large, sprawling; flowers all the time.

- *Zauschneria californica* “Californian fuchsia” – lanky plant; good for large pots; flowers all summer.
- *Salvia* ‘Black and Blue’ – sunbirds love it; big bush; prune back annually.

Below, from left to right:

- *Nerine fillifolia* – from the E Cape towards kwaZulu Natal; this particular pot thrives on neglect.
- *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* – approx. 5m tree; attracts many bees, flies and birds when in flower.
- *Metarungia longistrobus* – large shrub for semi-shade or morning sun; very drought-hardy; flowers rich in nectar.
- *Lachenalia corymbosa* (was Polyxena) – from the W Cape.



AUTUMN PLANT SALE

Our willingness to offer our driveway and carport area (what was I thinking?) as a venue for the Plant Sale soon changed to using the entire back garden, which turned out to be a very good idea.

As Melanie said in her report (above), “we should all be nurturing plants, and the plant sale has been an excellent reason for that” and hoped that members would continue to support the plant sale as this would “always be an essential and rewarding project for all the members”. And, boy, you have proved her right!

Over 2½ days, 36 obviously green-fingered members arrived with their load of nurtured plants, all labelled as instructed, and with the help of another 18 members, these were priced and placed in their respective categories. By start of business on Saturday morning, we must have had close to 900 pots spread over our back garden. It was a wonderful sight and I wished they could stay there as it made our garden look so good.

In addition to the abundance of plants, there were stalls selling compost, metal art, greeting cards, bug hotels, plastic timber garden furniture and indoor plants.

Excess books from the CHS library were also up for sale, together with another donation of books.

The *Vigna caracalla* “Snail Vine” that was still going begging, was used as a raffle prize and raised R460.

The idea of serving teas was suggested so, with offers of help and lots of delicious donated edibles, our outdoor paved area was transformed into a tea garden which raised R1140!



Plants being delivered, checked on and priced – despite the awful weather.

*Getting ready for the crowds**Making a sale**Pre-sale ...**Customers enjoying a cuppa**... and post-sale!**The covered sales area**Eager buyers*

With glorious weather, happy helpers and delighted buyers, the morning was a great success. More plants were sold during the week and we now have just over 200 plants left over which will be going back to their growers to nurture for another four months (should be easy during the wet weather) when we will hold a Spring Plant Sale. It seems our garden has hit the right spot!

*Filling the boxes with purchases**Some of the leftover plants*

With money still coming in and bank charges that are awaited, the provisional figure for this event is wait for it ... R17 000,00!! We will advise you of the final amount once all income and expenses are tallied.

So, a very, very big thank you from the Committee (especially the Treasurer) to all those members who grew plants, helped before and at the sale and after, donated eats, or just came along to buy. Give yourselves a pat on the back – that was a wonderful team effort and we can all be congratulated on pulling it off.

Until Spring – when we will do more of the same, if you're up for it!

Glenda

BERGVLIET OUTING

Two small groups had the pleasure of viewing a garden with a difference – succulents of every shape and size, interspersed with a few non-succulent plants.



The use of *Portulacaria afra* (Spekboom) ground cover as a border was a lovely idea.

Left: A picture of diversity – colours, forms and textures.

Right: A small area of the garden that had an English cottagey feel.



MEMBERS' PLANTS

Jean is very excited about her *Lewisia* which is blooming at the moment.

Source: [Lewisia cotyledon - Wikipedia](#)

Lewisia cotyledon is a species of flowering plant in the family Montiaceae known by the common names Siskiyou *Lewisia* and cliff maids. It is native to southern Oregon and northern California, where it grows in rocky subalpine mountain habitat. It is an evergreen perennial growing from a thick taproot and caudex unit. It produces a basal rosette of many thick, fleshy oval- or spoon-shaped leaves up to 9 cm (4 in) long.

The specific epithet *cotyledon* ("small cup") refers to the shape of the leaves.

Source: [How to Grow and Care for Rainbow *Lewisia* \(thespruce.com\)](#)

Origins of the Names, Place in History

The genus name of *Lewisia* comes from American explorer, Meriwether Lewis. Lewis and Clark encountered *Lewisia rediviva* on the famous expedition (1803 to



1806) they undertook at the behest of President Thomas Jefferson and brought back specimens. Frederick Pursh, a botanist, is responsible for the name. Pursh also established the genus, *Clarkia* in honor of the other famous explorer in the duo, William Clark.

Jefferson had a great interest in botany. A genus is named for him, as well: *Jeffersonia*. Think of *Lewisia*, *Clarkia*, and *Jeffersonia* as the all-American plant trio.



Jenny's *Schlumbergera* varieties are looking quite stunning. The photo on the far right has 3 different colour flowers on one plant.



Far left: Melanie's very showy and beautiful *Phalaenopsis*.

Centre: Roy shows off this gorgeous *Fuchsia*.

Right: Nicky's *Haemanthus albiflos*

FEMALE PLANT HUNTERS

Sadly, hardly any women appear among the annals of important botanists and plant collectors. It is no coincidence that during the period of the great pioneering plant hunters, the 18th and 19th centuries, very few women indeed received the kind of education that would provide them with that prerequisite knowledge for botanists, a thorough grounding in Greek and Latin. Nor did women travel with a degree of freedom or independence. As a consequence, doubtless many serious botanizing women remain unrecorded by history. Fortunately, the American woman Jane Colden and Englishwoman Marianne North are among those who are still remembered for their contributions.

Jane Colden is celebrated as America's first female botanist to use the Linnean system to classify native wildflowers. Her father, Dr Cadwallader Colden, was the Surveyor General of the Colonies and a member of the King's Council of New York. He was a Scotsman with a keen interest in botany. He corresponded with Linnaeus, and his documenting of the plants that grew on this estate west of Newburgh, New York, resulted in the volume *Plantae Coldenhamiae*. Jane Colden received little formal education, but gained some basic knowledge of Latin through her study of plants and of Linnaeus. Acknowledged as a serious collector by contemporary naturalists and botanists, she knew John Bartram, the botanist John Clayton and the London plant collector Peter Collinson. Following correspondence with Dr Alexander Garden of South Carolina (after whom the genus *Gardenia* was named), Colden published a number of scholarly articles on *Hypericum virginicum* (St John's wort).

[Source: RHS Latin for Gardeners, chapter on Plant Hunters]

... to be cont.