

# CHS NEWS

## NEXT MEETING

**Monday, 1 August 2022 at 20:00 at The Athenaeum**

Entrance fee for visitors: R30.

## CREVICE GARDENING – Part 2

Paul Spriggs – *Construction of a Crevice Garden in Hypertufa*  
Christine Pritchard Garden Design – *Making an Alpine Crevice Garden – and what happened next.*

In our introductory video last month, we looked at very large-scale installations of crevice gardening, but they can obviously be made to any size, even if you are in a very small garden or just have a veranda.

Crevice gardens can be made in any container that you have. Maybe use something that you may have decided to send to the tip, like a satellite dish or one half of a Weber that has had its life. There are crevice gardens for everyone – it just takes a bit of imagination – and if you feel you don't have that, at least you have the horticultural skills to plant it up.

- The library is open and you are welcome to borrow books until the next meeting.
- The Plant Table is operational 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 and anything interesting you have to say about the specimen.
- Tea **WILL** be served.

## NEXT OUTING

- **Sat, 13 August at 10:00:** Visit the gardens of the Stonehurst Mountain Estate. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Glenda by 10 August. Limited to 20 members.

## WELCOME TO ...

... Heidi Smuts who joined up at our last meeting, and Kerry Graham. We wish them many happy years with the CHS.

## REPORT BACK

### July Plant Table

Read this in conjunction with watching the video of this month's Plant Table.

*Cotyledon orbiculata* – very good for sunbirds; snails love them which means the plants are getting too much water; easy to grow and they look after themselves.



**JULY 2022**

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*"Those who bring  
sunshine to the lives of  
others cannot keep it  
from themselves."*

*JM Barrie*



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Far left: *Lachenalia bulbifera* – one of the easier ones to keep an eye on; doesn't tend to rot when watered in summer.

Centre: Red Mustard – use as ornamental plant amongst your flowers.

Left: *Antirrhinum* "Snapdragon" – only surviving plant from a packet of mixed seeds; flowering since October.

## SEEN OUT AND ABOUT

Susan and her sister, Sally, recently re-visited a farm near Graafwater, which is between Clanwilliam and Lamberts Bay. This is their 8<sup>th</sup> visit since travel opened up in 2020. Susan says, "These two specimens were the reason for this trip as we specifically wanted to see them in flower and had heard from the owner that this was happening. After finding numerous plants of the *Ornithoglossum* in seed, we were fortunate to eventually spot one in flower, and then one more. Yippee!"

Right: *Ornithoglossum undulatum* "Spinnekopblom" (Spider Flower). Colchicaceae. Up to 20cm high, they have two wavy leaves and fragrant nodding flowers.



*Hessia breviflora*  
"Vuurhoutjies"

(Matches), due to the wine-red anthers. Amaryllidaceae. A bulb which tends to grow en masse. The two leaves are enclosed by a reddened sheath. The flowers are borne in clusters at the tips of erect stalks.



These past few months I have seen plants around Pinelands that I remember from my childhood (and rarely see nowadays) – *Pyrostegia venusta* "Golden Shower" (left); or were just stunning specimens in full autumn foliage – *Acer* (centre); or were entirely new to me, having never seen the flowers/fruits before – *Cussonia spicata* (right).





And the Pinelands verges are doing their thing again. The *Oxalis purpurea* give a lovely display at the top of our road, and *Lachenalia reflexa* are popping up on a stretch of verge well used by pedestrians. I wonder how many of them have noticed this patch of yellow as they pass by.



And, lastly, who recognises this bud (left)? It is also a plant from my childhood, and I know that one of our members has a large plant in their garden. As far as I know it is not commonly grown these days. I am looking forward to seeing it burst into flower.

Glenda

Answer on the back page.

John sent this in, written by Dot Malan

The **Halleria lucida** belongs to the *Scrophulariaceae* family and grows from Western Cape all the way through the south and south-eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal, and then beyond Moçambique.

It's a small tree – or shrub – called a **Notsung** (whatever that means or comes from!\*). It is found in forest, forested ravines and grassland, often along streams or rocky places.

The leaves are drooping, ovate, thinly leathery, shiny bright green above, hairless, base very broadly tapering to square, often asymmetrical, margin finely toothed to scalloped.

Flowers in small axillary clusters on new growth, or in dense clusters on old wood; orange or bright red, tubular curved and rich in nectar.

Fruit is fleshy, ovoid, black when ripe, crowned by the dry remains of the style – it is edible, but not tasty! Some parts are used medicinally.

The flowers attract the birds, especially nectar feeding ones, who act as pollinators. The sunbirds love this tree.

Easily planted in gardens, this one (right) was planted about 22 years ago, when we moved into our cottage at Constantia Place and started a garden from scratch – planting all the trees except one *Khaya* which was already there.



\**Halleria lucida* | PlantZAfrica ([sanbi.org](http://sanbi.org)): The derivation of the common name *notsung* is not entirely clear. It could be derived from the original Khoisan name. Marloth thought that it was derived from the name *nutzeng* meaning usufruct (the right of temporary possession of what is another's on condition that such possession causes no damage to it) given to it by early German foresters employed at the Cape, where these foresters had free use of the wood and fruits without need for a permit.

## SPRING PLANT SALE

Many of our growers showed enthusiasm in continuing to nurture their potted plants for us to hold another sale. The Committee decided to give this a try as a way of gauging the public's support for a second sale in the year.

So the date is **SATURDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2022!!**

The wonderful turnout two months ago may have been a flash in the pan, but we'll never know how keen people are to buy well-priced plants any time of the year unless we give them the opportunity. Autumn was the right time for getting plants into the garden, but we also know that Spring gets everyone excited about getting into their gardens. Let's see if we can help them fill up their beds and pots to make a lovely display in their gardens.

Some of you took your unsold plants back to look after them. If you haven't found a home for them, please hang onto them until October. The plants you had in May that were too small to sell, I hope that they are almost bursting out of their pots and awaiting the day they will have a new home.

Should you have anything else you feel would sell, please put them in packets and label, or tie them into bundles. Ask if you're not sure about something.

🌱 Do you have a garden-related product to sell? If you would like to have a stall on the day, please speak to Glenda.

We have just over two months to get organised so here are a few things we can all do.

- Pot up a six pack of herbs giving time for them to grow into decent sized plants. These seem to be very popular with the public, but we didn't have enough. I can't tell you what particular herbs were being requested, but a variety would be nice.
- A suggestion from a member: "Little Orchard Nursery (Diep River) has a lot of perennial 6-packs at the moment – choose the ones you like, grow them and then keep one for yourself!" Good idea.
- Nurture your plants by making sure they are not getting too much water from the rain.
- Take cuttings when you prune your deciduous plants now – hydrangeas, roses, trees, frangipani, wisteria, and more. Keep them only slightly damp, but don't leave them out in the rain or they might rot. They will take quite long to root, but it's a good way to use pruned material. If they don't make the grade by Spring, there's always next Autumn. 😊
- Collect 1 Kg yoghurt containers or 2 lit./5 lit. ice cream containers – long strips are easier for the cashiers to see in pots with lots of foliage; The strips for price labels need only be about 1cm wide; labels for plant names can be made wider. You can deliver the cut labels to the October meeting.



As always, help on all fronts would be welcome. Think about what you would be prepared to do and let Glenda know the amount of time (an hour; two hours; or more) you can give to helping out with:

- Pricing the plants before the 8<sup>th</sup>;
- Placing the plants in the relevant sales areas;
- Selling and advising on the day;
- Taking cash, but we also have a card machine and Snapscan;
- Manning the tea garden; or
- Anything else that might arise.

🌱 During the morning of the sale, we are planning to have a demonstration on how to plant up a crevice garden. Jenny has the container, but she is looking for Slasto (anyone have a front stoep or path that they want to get rid of 😊?) or similar small pieces of rock. The completed garden will be the raffle prize on the day.



*(Courtesy of American Rock Gardening Society)*



## TRUE COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Our visit to Lakeside this month proved how a group of concerned citizens can come together to make something work.

Before we visited Margaret Moir's garden, we met at the nearby park where she told us how the community garden came about. Being an avid gardener, in 2020 she decided to put in some slips on the park. This aroused the interest of the surrounding neighbours and in a short space of time there were more than 60 volunteers eager to build a garden and beautify this uninteresting patch of Council ground. The interest has not waned and everyone contributes in some way – with plants, money, weeding, hard landscaping, watering etc, etc. Here are the results.



Far left: The well-established garden, and

Left: A new bed, beautifully edged with bricks, waiting to be planted up.

Below: Margaret's verge; her hearty *Tecomaria capensis*; a lush, jam-packed corner of her tiny garden



## HOW TO TURN YOUR GARDEN INTO A CARBON SINK – part 2

By Isabelle Gerretsen – 13th June 2022

For those on a mission to transform their gardens into a carbon sink, growing long-lived trees seems like the most obvious option. To make your garden climate-resilient, **the RHS recommends** planting a mix of drought-tolerant trees, such as snow gum and **holm oak**, and ones that can withstand waterlogging, such as red maple and **golden willow**.

*Garden trees absorb significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, but it also helps to have a diversity of plants.*

But trees are far from the only plants that can help offset your garden's carbon footprint. Native grasses have extensive root systems – reaching more than 2ft into the ground – and act as **reservoirs for carbon**, which transfers into the soil when the roots die and decompose.

Woody shrubs, such as spindle and sweet briar and herbs like rosemary and thyme, can help boost your garden's carbon stocks, Nex recommends in her book.

If you're set on sprucing up your garden with colourful crops, it's best to

steer clear of annual flowers which need to be dug up every year – releasing locked-in carbon in the process – and opt for hardy perennials instead, such as peonies and sunflowers, says Nex.

Planting hedges is another worthwhile investment. A well-grown hedge, rich in biomass, helps suck carbon out of the atmosphere and into plants and soil. One study found that **hedgerows store similar amounts of carbon to woodland**. Hedges also harbour rich biodiversity and are teeming with wildlife. A British ecologist who monitored an old hedgerow near his home in Devon **counted a remarkable 2,070 species**, ranging from pollinators to lizards and mammals, visiting or residing there.

Ponds may also play an important role in gardens' fight against climate change. One study of small, lowland ponds in north-east England found that **they stored much higher rates of carbon** (79 to 247g per square metre per year) **compared to surrounding woodland or grassland (2-5g)**.

However, not all ponds act as carbon sinks. A US study found that man-made ponds collecting stormwater run-off in Florida **emit more carbon than they store** in their mucky sediment.

"That finding means some ponds are doing us an ecosystem 'disservice,'" Mary Lusk, the study's co-author and assistant professor of water and soil sciences at the University of Florida, said when the **study was published**. "Our results suggest that when they're new, [the ponds] emit large proportions of carbon from the landscape."

*Ponds can actually reduce the amount of carbon stored in a garden, but they have many other benefits*

Ponds can also emit large amounts of potent methane into the atmosphere. One study by the University of Exeter concluded that ponds smaller than one square metre **are responsible for releasing around 40% of all methane emissions** from inland waters.

However, not all environmental benefits are about carbon – and ponds come with many other advantages, such as boosting biodiversity. In fact, some charities say that adding a pond to your garden is one of the **best things you can do for wildlife** (more on this later in the series).

"If you are disturbing the sludge at the bottom of the pond, your pond will release more methane than it will absorb carbon," says Nex. To keep the noxious gas contained, Nex recommends removing dead foliage from your pond surface as rotting debris will give off methane and netting it in the autumn.

Gardeners who adopt low-carbon practices will be rewarded with thriving biodiversity and borders brimming with lush plants.

"My plants now grow so much better. It's very flattering to me as I'm not doing very much!" says Nex. "It has really improved the appearance of my garden – it's quite breath-taking actually."

Source: [How to turn your garden into a carbon sink - BBC Future](#)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

🌱 **Fri to Sun, 16 – 18 September:** Calitzdorp Succulent Society's Vetplantfees 2022. For more details and to book go to [www.vetplant.co.za](http://www.vetplant.co.za).

🌱 **Sun, 9 October:** Celebrate Garden Day as a group and win prizes. Watch this [https://youtube.com/shorts/h\\_mep0RBG2c](https://youtube.com/shorts/h_mep0RBG2c) to give you an idea of what you can do. If it's allowed, we will celebrate this the day before at our Plant Sale, so watch out for details.

If you should hear of plant exhibitions, open gardens and the like taking place, please send details to Glenda.

Answer: *Solandra maxima* "Cup of Gold"

Photos: S Armstrong, A and G Thorpe, D Malan


**Presents**  
**Vetplantfees 2022**  
**Annual Succulent Celebration!**  
 Calitzdorp, Western Cape, South Africa  
 16 -17-18 September, 2022  
 At the Station in Calitzdorp  
 Admission FREE!

