

CHS NEWS

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 6 March 2023 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum

The CHS Nursery is open. Bring excess potted plants to sell.

HISTORICAL CAPE GARDENS

Cherise Viljoen of Cherish Plants, and a CHS Committee Member, will present a photographic presentation on the Arderne and Kirstenbosch gardens, with snippets of information about what makes them so special, their history and noteworthy plants.

NEXT OUTING

Thursday, 16 March at 10:00 in Hout Bay: Meuse Farm and a Bromeliad garden

Meuse Farm is an organic food farm of 3 acres in the Hout Bay valley, run by Iming and Jaco. The meaning of the word "meuse" is the bowl-shaped hollow in grasses where an animal (like a hare) has turned in a circle to make a comfortable place to sleep, leaving evidence of its body. In Sally Mann's *Hold Still*, she says "Each of us leaves evidence on the earth that in various ways bears our form".

We'll also visit the small, private garden of Esther Haines in Hout Bay to see her collection of bromeliads (and hopefully the Plectranthus will be in flower then too). The terrain is steeply sloped with uneven steps, but Esther says that visitors with mobility issues could look out over the garden from the patio, as well as looking around from the bottom garden.

Limited to 15 members. Please RSVP to Glenda by Monday, 13 March.

REPORT BACK

Membership fees for 2023 will remain at R200 for single and R330 for family memberships. Renewal notices will be sent separately.

The **Amendments to the CHS Rules** were accepted with the proviso that clause 12, adopting financial statements, be re-worded.

A small group visited the **Streetscape's Rugley Road Garden** in Vredehoek where Colin took notes.

"We were hosted by Streetscapes' employee, Thandi, and head gardener, Richard. He has had a long experience in veggie gardening and was able to offer ready advice in response to the many and almost continuous questions put to him.

An efficient, simple, yet impressive multistage composting system (started by an intern from Switzerland) provides nutrients for the beds, the garden being totally organic.

Composting: leaf fall from the beds and from around the garden is mixed into the sandy, poor soil in the previously uncultivated new beds – to improve drainage and as a starter for the soil enrichment process. Local residents also keep the compost bins going by delivering their kitchen waste.

FEBRUARY 2023

President

Marianne Alexander

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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

"Happiness held is the seed; happiness shared is the flower."

John Harrigan



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Instagram – capehortsoc

There is no municipal electricity or metered water supply to the park. Water for irrigation is provided from a rain tank supplied from Table Mountain springs higher up.



Richard lives in a hut on site, thereby providing security at weekends when the gardeners are not present. He has lighting provided by a small solar cell.

Streetscapes operate 3 gardens around Cape Town, plus a farm at Kuils River. Rugley Road Garden on the corner of Rugley Road and Buitenkant Street. There is also the Trafalgar Food Garden – in the block bounded by Roeland, Cobblestone and Kuyper Streets. The third one is Kent St – in the block bounded by Kent, Drury, Bloemhof and Canterbury streets (near the Roeland St Food Lovers Market). The farm has the addition of about 100 chickens which provide eggs for their sale days. They also produce honey.

Income for the venture is earned through:

- sales of garden produce, to walk-in customers (Monday to Friday), or on Saturday sale days from tables on the pavement outside the entrance gate
- funding from donors, who receive three monthly feedback reports.

Homeless folk (Streetscapes clients) wanting to come off street living are encouraged to move into accommodation, provided either by Streetscapes (who own a 25-person communal house, and a few 2-person flats) or else into one of the homeless shelters around town operated by other organisations.

As well as working in the garden growing vegetables (for which they earn a stipend), clients attend talks and are given assistance with substance abuse rehab (where appropriate), GBV, life skills and other courses that will assist them to become self-sufficient, self-reliant and not feel the need to return to street living. Clients not keen on garden work have the opportunity to engage in other types of work eg cleaning up streets and outside city restaurants (a partnership between Streetscapes and the Cape Town City Improvement District)

A doctor comes on-site bi-weekly to attend to Streetscapes clients' medical needs.

All in all, a most worthwhile and educational visit – most encouraging to see what Streetscapes are doing."

Photos above, clockwise from top left: *compost sieving and bagging; Richard answering questions from Colin; the layout of the beds; having vegetables collected for our members; paying for the produce.*

February Plant Table

Indigenous

Gloriosa superba (orange) and *G. superba* 'lutea' (all-yellow version) – Liliaceae family: rhizomatous climber; Lutea grows taller than the orange but not as tough

Knifophia pauciflora from KwaZulu Natal: new yellow variety; needs copious amounts of water

Eucomis: from grassland, summer rainfall areas; flowers turn towards the light;

Eucomis vandermerwei: dwarf summer-growing bulb

Haemanthus coccineus: from Table Mountain

Exotic

Hibiscus siriacus (hybrid) bought as a small flowering *Hibiscus* but after approx. 2 years it reverted to large flowers! One part of it sometimes produces small pink flowers.

Hibiscus mutabilis, a large shrub, bought as *H. mutabilis* but flower is always pink; leaf is large and furry

Grevillea 'Lady O' – Proteaceae family: from Canberra, Australia; attracts birds; small shrub 1.5 x 1m; flowers most of the year (Sept to Nov); requires little water

Capsicum annuum 'Black Pear' ornamental pepper; full sun; regenerates after pruning

Impatiens balsamina: annual; grown from seed in Spring; likes full sun; good pot specimen

Orchids

Miltonia Sunset

Oncidium Rex 'Witrivier'



Top row: *Gloriosa superba*; *Hibiscus siriacus*; *Hibiscus mutabilis*

Bottom row: *Grevillea Lady O*; *Capsicum annuum*; *Impatiens balsamina*

Members' plants

Plants from Isabella:



Left to right: *Perfect bud of Scadoxus puniceus*; *Laportea grossa* "Spotted Nettle"; *Scadoxus multiflorus katherinae*; *Crassula perfoliata* (formerly *C falcata*)

There are lots of reds flowering now because their pollinators are about at this time – certain butterflies, bees and sunbirds.

Plants from Diana:



Who remembers Diana Hurter who left our shores a good few years back? Well, she settled in the UK and has now become a member of Mediterranean Plants and Gardens, our MGi affiliate in the UK. Diana has made contact and decided to share these photos with us. She says:

"I have kept up my nostalgia for Cape plants as you can see from these pics. My pride and joy is *Cyrtanthus herrei* [far left] that became so large, I was able to donate a bulb to RHS Wisley. My Clivias [left] sit outside during the summer after the frosts and, with the weather so mild, one has decided to flower again. Mad!



[Left]: I have some tiny succulents and some Crinums too (though they stay in my conservatory all year)."

Thank you, Diana. It is good to know you have some South African beauties in your conservatory and are continuing your horticultural passion as a member of MPG.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

- Should you have heard a good speaker elsewhere, please get contact details and pass onto a committee member.
- There will be no Plant Sale this May as plants need time to grow. There could be a Plant Sale in October, to coincide with Garden Day, but a venue is needed. This could also take the form of some kind of demonstration. Please let us hear your ideas.
- At our meetings, there are seeds available for the taking. Give them a try and see what comes up.