



Children, marriages, and flower gardens reflect the kind of care they get.

*H Jackson Brown Jnr*

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## NEXT MEETING

Monday, **1 APRIL** 2024 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum

Members: No entrance fee

Visitors: R30 per person

## CEROPEGIAS – FLOWERS WITH BEAUTY AND BRAINS

Mike Picker is an Emeritus Professor of the University of Cape Town. He has published a number of wildlife guides on insects of Southern Africa, but is also interested in plants. He has a special interest in an unusual group of succulents belonging to the genus *Ceropegia*. These fascinating plants rival orchids in the complexity and beauty of their flowers – however, the unusual appearance of the flowers is related to their need to be pollinated by microscopic flies, and they have evolved a bizarre array of methods of attracting and then trapping the flies.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2024

Our aim is to have 20 new members by September 2024.

To achieve this, the **SPRING POOL** will run from 1 January to 31 August 2024.

- Every member who introduces a new paid-up member/s in that time period earns entry into the pool.
- Each new paid-up member who joins in the time period gets entry into the pool.
- A new member does not have to be invited by a current member to earn entry.
- There are TWO pools: one for CURRENT CHS members, one for NEW CHS members.

The draw will take place at the 2 September meeting.

Prizes will be:

*Current Members' Pool:* 1<sup>st</sup> place is a voucher for R1000; 2<sup>nd</sup> place is a voucher for R500.

*New Members' Pool:* 1<sup>st</sup> place is a voucher for R1000; 2<sup>nd</sup> place is a voucher for R500.

And a special mystery prize will go to the gregarious and ultra-competitive CHS member who introduces the highest number of new members.

If we get fewer than 20 new members, prizes will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

Hot tip: If you are a new member, your name is entered in the new member pool. But if you persuade someone to join after you have joined, you will also be entered in the old member pool. Which doubles your chance of a win.

*Chris Wren-Sargent*

**President** Marianne Alexander | **Chairlady** Jenny Scarr | **Hon Treasurer** Vacant | **Hon Secretary** Glenda Thorpe

**Committee Members** Susan Armstrong, Gerald Robertson, Cherise Viljoen, Cherry Mann, Chris Wren-Sargent

**Honorary Members** Marianne Alexander, Mary Smith, Adam Harrower, Bill Elder, Ernst van Jaarsveld

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## WE WELCOME ...

... Guy Wachter and Julia Allen, as well as Lesley and Andrew Clarke, Rosemary Duncan-Smith, Cécile van den Broek, Susan Wilkes and Shirley Shevel who signed up at the March meeting. We hope their association with the CHS will be a long and beneficial one.

## PLANT SALE – 2025, not 2024

The next sale will take place in Autumn 2025.

The CHS Nursery Table at meetings will still accept any plants you may have to sell, but we will temporarily close that down in the middle of this year so all members can concentrate on potting on and nurturing plants for the sale. Come autumn next year, we hope to have lots of lovely, well-established plants – to rival those sold at nurseries.

## NEXT OUTING

**Sat, 13 April at 09:30** to visit Brigitte de Abreu's Bishopscourt garden, described as tranquil and full of soul. This garden includes succulents, plants that only live in water and plants that only thrive in deep shade, as well as a hot and exposed area with full sun, and a permanently wet area.

RSVP to Glenda by no later than Wed, 10 April.

## SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Renewal of your annual membership is due.

**Membership fees** for 2024 are R230 for single and R350 for family subscriptions. There are no renewal forms to complete but if any of your contact details changed during the course of the last 12 months, please advise so our records can be updated.

Payment can be made by EFT from home and proof that payment has been made can be e-mailed to [info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za](mailto:info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za) or faxed to 086-514-0998. Whether *you* do the EFT or ask a family member or friend to make the payment on your behalf, please ensure that your initial and surname is used as the Beneficiary's reference (this is very important) and Proof of Payment is sent to either the e-mail address or fax number above.

The other option is to pay by debit/credit card at a meeting.

Cash is also acceptable if you are unable to do either of the above, although bringing cash to a meeting will incur high charges to deposit the cash into the bank. We are still trying to keep costs down as much as possible, but we will accommodate you if you have no other way of making payment.

We strongly urge all members to pay via EFT as it is the easiest and safest way.

Please ensure that your name is recorded at meetings, whether paying through Yoco or in cash, so you don't get left off our database.

**NB:** Printed newsletters will no longer be posted.

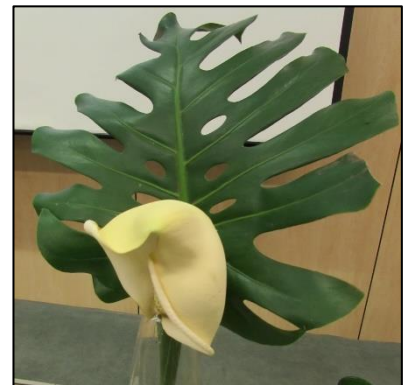
## REPORT BACK

### March Plant Table

#### Exotic:

*Monstera deliciosa-adansonii* "Swiss Cheese Plant" (right) – from Mexico: split leaf *Philodendron*; no watering or fertilizer; sun/shade; pollinated by bees; edible fruit with pineapple/banana flavour. The bloom has a Spadix (flowering cylinder) surrounded by a Spath (or cup).

*Malus* "Crab Apple": a genus of about 32 – 57 species of small deciduous trees and shrubs in the family Rosaceae. Native to the temperate zones of Europe, Asia and N America; very pink blossoms in Spring, followed by crab apples in late Autumn; pollinated by insects, particularly bees. 'Not so good for eating', says Anne, 'but I make crab apple jelly'.





*Coleus* sp. (left): afternoon sun; regular water; grows well from cuttings

*Oxypetalum* (formerly *Tweedia*)

*Cobaea scandens* "Cup and Saucer Vine": seeds brought in from UK; a bit of a thug!

*Trachelium*: seeds itself in cracks in walls

*Nepeta cataria* "Catnip": grown in a container

*Hamelia patens* "Firebush" – shrub; can cut back hard

Australian gum tree with plums: very large; fast-growing

*Allium tuberosum* "Garlic chives"

#### Indigenous:



*Scadoxus membranaceus* (left)

Arum Lily "Green Goddess" (right): propagated from seeds; almost full shade; grown on windowsill.

*Adenium* "Impala Lily"

*Hermannia*

*Protea* "Pink Ice"; most vigorous and floriferous



*Plumbago auriculata* – family Plumbaginaceae:

a shrub with a scrambling habit; in summer the bush has pretty trusses of pale sky blue flowers; the main flowering period is Nov – May; also a white (*P auriculata alba*) and a darker blue "Royal Cape"; flower is visited by butterflies; good to cut back after winter as it flowers on new wood; propagate by rooted suckers. Traditionally used to treat wounds, warts and broken bones.

#### *Crinum moorei* vs *Amaryllis belladonna* "March Lily"



Isabella says: "I must admit, I have never been too clear on the difference between *Crinum moorei* flowers and those of *Amaryllis belladonna*, so I spent time looking that up. Both belong to the Amaryllis family, and both have large bulbs whose necks are usually visible above the soil. *Crinum moorei* prefers semi-shade and flowers in summer (the one brought to the plant table is flowering in autumn), and the individual flowers on the umbel open in succession, not all at the same time. The flowers tend to appear every year and are almost always light pink, and the flower scape is green and quite thick. *Amaryllis belladonna* flowers best in full sun and it can flower anytime from February to April. All the flowers open more or less at the same time, and they vary from light pink to dark pink, and sometimes white, with a yellow centre where the anthers and pistil arise. The flower stem can be green but usually has a purple tinge. They are notorious for not flowering every year, but they will flower prolifically after fires."



***Ruttyruspolia* “Phyllis van Heerden”** (submitted by Marianne Alexander)

It is a rare generic hybrid that shows that even in plants, when white is mixed with red, the result is pink! It is a hybrid between two species placed in separate genera in Acanthaceae: *ovata* Harv. And *Ruspolia hypocrateriformis* (Vahl) Milne-Redh. var. *australis* Milne-Redh. The former has white flowers with tiny central, purple dots, while the latter bears scarlet blooms. The resultant plant is vigorous and very decorative. The yellow hue of the leaves in autumn is a bonus.

Source: plantZAfrica.com

*Pelargonium abrotanifolium* is an erect, branched shrublet, 500 mm high. The slender, woody branches bear feathery, grey-green leaves, which are pleasantly scented. The inflorescences are

unbranched, each peduncle bearing 1-5 flowers. The flowers vary from white, pink to mauve and veined in red or purple. Flowering time: throughout the year.



***Salvia namaensis*** (Common name – Nama Sage) – (Submitted by Isabella Hayden) one of the smaller indigenous salvias, originating in the Karoo, Namaqualand and the Free State, and also found in Namibia and Botswana. Grows to about 1m, with small, aromatic, divided leaves and little flowers of white tinged with blue appear in spring and late summer. The overall "jizz" of the plant is a fresh, bright green, dainty shrub, very different to the predominantly grey-green, large shrubs which most indigenous salvias form. Makes a great low hedge and is water wise, of course. Can be grown from cuttings.

Photo courtesy of

<https://www.e-geoponia.gr/futa/salvia-namaensis-futo-el.html>.

***Pontaderia cordata*** “Pickerel Weed” – from USA: pond plant; has become invasive. (Submitted by Anne Gleeson) This is a rooted aquatic perennial plant native to the Americas. It grows in wetlands, lakes and rivers mainly from Eastern Canada to Argentina. The name “Pickerelweed” came from the Pickerel Fish with which it is thought to coexist.

It has an erect stem and a horizontal rhizome and can grow to up to 2m. The flowers feature on a large spike in violet blue or white about 5-15cm long and it flowers through spring to autumn. The purple flowers have yellow blotches which attract bees. The leaves are heart shaped with rounded lobes. Young leaves can be eaten raw or cooked and the seeds are edible.

This plant is used in water features and ponds. It is considered an invasive species in South Africa especially in areas of Kwazulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. It can spread through seeds that drop into the water and from the rhizomes that create spreading clumps.

Pickerelweed competes with indigenous species, blocks drainage outlets and obstructs access to bodies of water.



Source: [invasives.org.za](https://invasives.org.za).

### February and March Outings

The Constantia gardens of Aila and Jenny were both steeped in horticultural history.

Aila's garden was planted many years ago by a lady who loved a variety of shrubs and trees. These were left to grow and grow and grow and by the time Aila bought the property, she found very precious trees of days gone by. With lots of cutting back and tidying up, they can now be seen.

Jenny's property also had magnificent well-established trees originally planted by a former Kirstenbosch employee. The alien trees were felled, cut and used for the fittings and furniture in the house – and are stunning.





(L) Aila's garden



(R) Jenny's garden

This month we visited another Constantia garden, that of Mike Picker. The highlight of the outing was to see his greenhouse with his *Ceropegia* collection. [For those who missed it, make sure you attend on the 1<sup>st</sup>.]



Above, from left to right: Mike with part of his large collection; another section where most of the flowers are over; Marie-lou getting up close and personal with a flower. What a wonderful way to observe flowers through a magnifying glass headset.

Below, from left to right: *Ceropegia sandersonii*; having a lecture on the intricacies of the pollinating ritual; a *C radicans* cutting that flowered before being planted.



### Athenaeum Garden

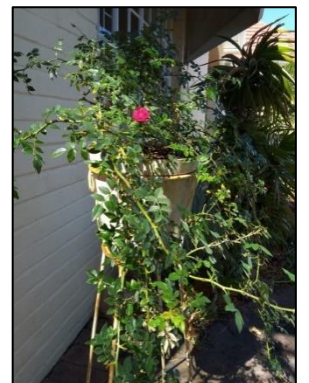
Don't forget to let Cherise ([cherise@cherishplants.com](mailto:cherise@cherishplants.com)) know if you have any of these plants for her. Please provide well-established plants that will survive the harsh conditions. Planting can take place in a month or two's time.

*Eurypos, Statice, Pelargonium, Erioccephalus, Tulbaghia, Cotyledon, Senecio, Salvia*

### Rose Give-away

A beautiful, well-grown rose plant, thanks to the generosity of Ludwig's Roses at Chart Farm, was a gift to every member and the visitor they brought to the meeting.

Most of these have been collected from Belinda. Those not yet collected before the April meeting will be available, at the 1 April meeting, on presentation of the slip you were given at the last meeting.



Right: Red Cascade



AS A MATTER OF INTEREST ...

CABBAGE WHITE BUTTERFLIES AND WASPS (submitted by Marianne Alexander)



Did your nasturtiums, cabbages and other brassicas, get turned to lace by caterpillars last spring? The culprits are the larvae of the introduced cabbage white butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*).

Fortunately nature has come to the rescue in the form of a tiny parasitoid wasp, *Cotesia glomerata*, which was described by Carl Linnaeus as long ago as 1758

The wasp lays its eggs in the caterpillars. The larvae

emerge – there can be anything from 20 to 30 – after 2 to 3 weeks, usually killing the caterpillar. They then spin cocoons on or near the host caterpillar. Adult wasps hatch out of the cocoons about a week later.

Cabbage whites are not indigenous and it is not known how they arrived in South Africa. *‘The earliest recorded sighting was that of a female in late July 1994, in my garden in Sea Point’* writes Andre Classens in a back issue of *Veld and Flora*. When this invader butterfly was discovered in New Zealand in 2010 the Department of Conservation offered a monetary reward (\$10 dollar) for the capture of each butterfly. After two weeks, the public had captured 134 butterflies. With continued control they were all eradicated.

Sources: New Scientist, Veld and Flora and others



1 – Adult Cabbage White butterflies live on nectar	2 – Eggs of Cabbage White butterfly
3 – The young larvae (caterpillars) emerge and are found hidden under the leaves. They feed on plants containing mustard oils which makes them distasteful to predators, such as birds.	
4 – As caterpillars eat, they grow and move about so are more easily spotted.	5 and 6 – Eggs of wasps laid in the caterpillar emerge and spin their cocoons
7 – Wasps hatch	

A reminder: the CHS’s 119<sup>th</sup> AGM will take place on **Monday, 6 May 2024**. Nominations for members to join the Committee are being called for. Think about it and either speak to a committee member or get another member to nominate you.