



Pleasure is the flower that fades; remembrance is the lasting perfume.

*Stanislaus Jean de Boufflers*

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## NEXT MEETING

**Monday, 3 June 2024 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum**

**Members: No entrance fee**

**Visitors: R30 per person**

## NATURE CONNECT

Lynette Munro will tell us about different ways of funding conservation initiatives in the greater Cape Town area. The open spaces need maintenance, care and money. We have the most diverse plant heritage and yet, paradoxically, we are the least aware of preserving it. She will outline different ways of funding, dividing them into 5 and grading them from low to high. The lowest would be a one-off model, then working up to the highest, the most permanent. Of course, the best would be the last: an ongoing commitment and the importance of managers who would oversee the areas. Lynette will describe various places, like the Paarden Eiland City Improvement District, which she uses as examples.  
<https://natureconnect.earth/>

## REPORT BACK

The 119<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held at the Athenaeum on 6 May 2024 with 32 members and five visitors in attendance. Four members tendered their apologies.

### 1 CHAIRLADY'S REPORT:

"We lost three stalwart and Honorary Life Members of the Society during the year. Michael Tuffin died in April aged eighty-five. He had been frail for a number of years. Laurie Powis passed away in June, aged ninety-one. In August, aged ninety-three, Anne Bean also passed away.

We had a number of interesting talks during the year on a variety of topics. These began with Rosalind Spears talking about Agatha Christie's house and garden in Devon close to where Rosalind lives, followed by Cherise Viljoen talking on Kirstenbosch and Arderne Gardens. Morné Faulhamer spoke in April about Horticulture in Holland, which was fascinating, and in May Andy Hackland spoke about his tissue culture lab.

In June we looked at bulbs with Charles Barnhoorn, manager of Hadeco and we looked at fertilizers and sprays produced by Makhro in July. Alan Horstmann gave an illustrated talk on Cape flowers in August and, in September, John van der Linde told us the history of the Wollemi Pine, a fairly recent discovery in a gorge in Australia. In October Marianne Alexander spoke on the Floriade in Europe. November saw Louise Nurrish telling us about her work with Living Roots, where they take men off the streets, teach them about gardening and horticulture and give them a profession. December was our annual party and in February Morné returned to talk about Salvias.

Our outings are always immensely popular as they are restricted to members. We started the year with a visit to Streetscapes in Vredehoek, followed by Meuse Farm and a lovely Bromeliad garden, both in Hout Bay. April took us to the quirky Constantia garden of Richard Theron.

In May, we visited another garden in Constantia, Neville Wylie's, and in June Ninon Carrington's Kirstenhof garden. July took us back to Hout Bay to the Future Found garden and September we visited the Silvermine Wetland near Clovelly. In October Gerald opened The Shieling on two occasions to groups of members, and November there was a scheduled visit to Tokara. The August outing to Intaka Island had to be cancelled due to harsh weather.

A highlight of the year is our Plant Sale, which was held on the 9th of September in Belinda du Rand's garden, and we made an amazing amount of R15 000.

Every year we make donations from our income, and this year we again sponsored a bus to Kirstenbosch for scholars which cost R3 000. We donated R3 000 to Living Roots, and Rondebosch Common received a R1 000. A donation of R900 went to the maintenance costs of the Athenaeum garden, which we continue to sponsor both financially and with the help of Cherise.

As you can see it has been a busy year! Although our membership has not recovered to the pre-COVID levels, we are hoping to encourage more members with our varied programme. It is only through members bringing friends and encouraging new members that we can hope to grow.

I would like to thank all the committee for their hard work, which goes towards keeping the society viable. In particular, may I mention Glenda and Dutch who do so many tasks. Glenda does the newsletter and much else, and Dutch has kept a very focussed eye on our financial state.

Next, I must thank all other members who help in so many ways: assisting with tea, bringing interesting plants to the meetings, making suggestions, running the library, propagating for the monthly sales table, as well as the annual sale and undertaking duties in a variety of roles and places. It is a privilege to have such enthusiastic members, and I thank you for your continued support of the CHS."

Acceptance of the Chairlady's Report was proposed by Isabella Hayden and seconded by Cherry Mann.

## 2 TREASURER'S REPORT:

"The Audited Financial Statements for the year ending 29 February 2024 have been issued separately.

### Income Statement

Our income, when compared to the budget, was down by about R3 900 in respect of subscriptions. This was offset by increases of R4 600 and R3 200 respectively for the Plant Sale and investment income, resulting in overall increased income of about R4 600. This was however offset by an about R5 800 increase in expenses resulting mainly from donations being R4 900 higher than budgeted.

The end result was a deficit of R1 200.

### Balance Sheet

The Society's balance sheet decreased from R96 490 to R93 298 (book value) with the market value at 29 Feb 2024 being about R158 000 versus about R154 000 last year. The financial position of the Society can therefore be considered to be healthy.

### General

My thanks go to Isabella Hayden for volunteering to take over the Treasurer's duties as from 1 March 2024 and to Nick Starke for once again auditing the Society's accounts.

(Sgd) HJ Diesveld

Acting Honorary Treasurer (2023-24)"

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Chris Wren-Sargent and seconded by Rodney Hahn.

In the absence of a replacement, Henry Diesveld had continued as Treasurer since the 2023 AGM. All those present were in agreement that he should now take up his rightful position as the Auditor for this financial year.

## 3 ELECTION OF PRESIDENT:

Marianne Alexander had agreed to stand for another year and all members in attendance were in agreement that she be elected for another year.

#### 4 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE:

Marianne Alexander advised that four of the current committee – Jenny Scarr, Cherise Viljoen, Glenda Thorpe and Chris Wren-Sargent – had been nominated for re-election. Isabella Hayden was co-opted earlier in the year in her new position as Treasurer and had also been nominated. Anne Gleeson had agreed to join the committee and had completed the relevant nomination form. All members present were in favour of these members standing for the ensuing year.

Marianne Alexander stated that a member with technical (IT and/or sound) skills was needed to be on hand when needed. She wished the committee success in obtaining new speakers and outing venues.

#### 5 GENERAL:

Cherry Mann suggested a compromise for those members who resign because they are unable to attend meetings for a variety of reasons. She felt they could become Associate Members and offered a reduced fee, which would allow them to receive the newsletter and attend monthly outings.

Another suggestion was to set up a WhatsApp group for those who did not drive at night, and wished to attend meetings, to ask for a lift from other members. Younger members could also make themselves available to offer lifts.

These suggestions will be discussed by the committee.

### May Plant Table

#### Exotic:

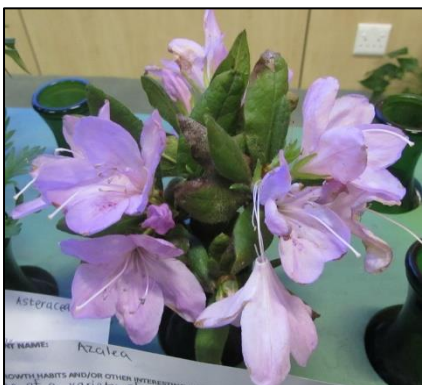
*Azalea* – one of a variety of Azaleas that grow in the shady part at the back of my garden beds. There is a lot of dappled light. They get compost twice a year (acid type) and I make sure I give them lots of water in the hot months, especially February. They get a general feed of Atlantic Ocean organic pellets.

*Justicia petiolaris* – family Acanthaceae – very attractive small shrub with soft velvety leaves; very pretty flowers that are mauve; flowers almost all year; attracts butterflies. Is managing well in semi-shade. It only produces a few flowers at a time.

Bay tree

*Saintpaulia* – African Violet

Paw-paw



#### Indigenous:

*Leonotis ocymifolium* – not as tall as *L. leonurus*; still attracts sunbirds (right)

*Euryops chrysanthemoides* – family Asteraceae – a rewarding shrub with dense branches and pretty oak-shaped leaves; flowers all year but mainly March to September; large flower with deep yellow gold centre; the bright flowers attract pollen and nectar-feeding insects, butterflies and seed-eating birds; growing well in semi-shade; flowers do not close overnight. (next page)





*Hypoestes* – white (below centre)

*Delosperma* 'Pickle plant' (below right)



***Mahonia*** (below)– from Anne's garden and more detail given by Isabella:



I know this plant as *Mahonia lomariifolia*, but it's gone through several versions – *Mahonia oiwakensis* subsp. *lomariifolia*, *Berberis oiwakensis* – and the common name is Chinese Holly Grape. It can grow as large as a small tree – 5 to 6m tall. Anne said she has a good view of the flowers from her upstairs window, so this is a mature specimen. The leaves are evergreen, large and very spiky, and the whole plant can look like a massive, prickly fern. It flowers in autumn and then develops blue-black berries.

They are very slow-growing and can be pruned to keep the plant smaller and bushier. I'd suggest wearing protective gloves and eyewear to do the job and cut off up to one-third of each branch in spring.

As the common name suggests, this Mahonia grows in China, Myanmar and Taiwan. It can take very cold conditions and grows at altitudes of up to 3800m. Interestingly enough, the species has naturalised in some parts of Gauteng and Pretoria (see [https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0006-82412018000100001](https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0006-82412018000100001)) but it hasn't been classified as a problem plant yet.

Anne fills us in on her home-grown *Justicia petiolaris* (below):

**Family: Acanthaceae**

This attractive small evergreen perennial shrub is also called Blue Justicia, Kissing-leaves and Kiesieblaar. It is found in woodlands and forest areas mostly in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal.

It is semi-hardy with lots of branches and the leaves are soft, oval and hairy or velvety and there are different sizes of leaves on the same plant. The flowers have mauve-blue or pink-purple shades. They are an unusual shape as they have 2-lipped pouted flowers, hence the common names given to them. The throat is white and the petals have stripes in a darker shade of mauve-blue. The flowers are small and not prolific and the flowers on the stem tend to flower one after another. They are very pretty flowers and still give a lovely show, making this a useful shrub for the shady spots of the garden as they add some colour. The fruit is a club shaped capsule that explodes to release seeds. The shrub can be pruned after flowering. It grows well in shade to semi-shade with filtered light and flowers in summer from November well into Autumn and sporadically all year round. This shrub can grow from 100mm to 1 metre in height. It thrives with sufficient water and will benefit from receiving compost and a good feeding of slow release fertiliser.



The *Justicia* flowers are pollinated by a number of insects and attract various species of butterflies. The insects attract birds, making this plant useful in attracting wildlife to the garden.

Source: pza.sanbi.org

***Kleinia galpinii*** – Susan reports on her own plant:

**Family: Asteraceae**



*Kleinia* was formerly known as *Senecio*. It is a small, succulent, waterwise shrub which should be allowed to dry out between watering. It will grow from slips.

Finding this plant fascinating, I have subsequently spotted and bought *Kleinia petraea* (formerly *Senecio jacobsenii*) which has long trailing stems, and *Kleinia stapeliformis* which has pencil-like softly spiny stalks. This can be seen in the Kirstenbosch Conservatory almost facing you as you come in the door. All have similar orange flowers.

Please note: I am not convinced of the name *galpinii*, as all references show smooth-edged, not toothed, leaves.

**NB: The Committee has a request for all our growers who supply plants for our sales table at meetings.**

Do you grow plants that are unusual or hard to come by? If you are, could we ask that you point this out to Cherry, who 'Manns' the table, or whichever member is selling on the night? If the plant is not labelled or easily identifiable, due to its lack of flowers or resemblance to a more common variety, its significance must be pointed out to the salesladies. In the busyness of talking and selling plants this could be overlooked.

Catching the attention of the salesladies could be difficult. The alternative would be to label the plant at home or ask for a label/s from Cherry when you arrive at the meeting. Another suggestion is that you provide a reasonable selling price, for buyers to know they are purchasing something that is more than ordinary. We all understand what it takes to grow the more unusual varieties of plants.

Another sales table request. Often there are plants left over that did not sell. Instead of Cherry lugging them home and having to look after them until the next meeting, we would like to ask that you take your plants home and keep them growing, either for a future meeting, or for our Plant Sale in approximately 10 months' time.

Your assistance would be appreciated.

## Outings – April and May

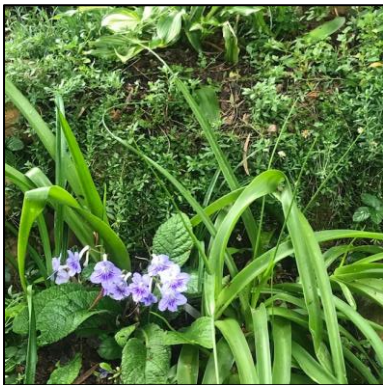
The De Abreu garden in Bishopscourt:







Quiet contemplation among the ferns, *Alocasia*, *Streptocarpus* and water lilies



The Paarman garden and entertainment pavilion in Constantia:



Admiration for the planted wall, *Streptocarpus*, grasses and amazing pool







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## IN MEMORIAM

Gerald Robertson

24.12.1942 – 23.04.2024

Gerald worked tirelessly behind the scenes, and was generous to a fault, in helping Jane to achieve her dream of an indigenous garden at the Athenaeum. Being a CHS representative on the Athenaeum Board, he was instrumental in getting JoJo tanks installed on the property for Jane's use.

He decided to join the CHS Committee and was elected in May 2022. Since then he was a great help when it came to sorting out the technical difficulties regularly experienced at monthly meetings. His biggest frustration was that the equipment worked for him when testing but played up on the night.

He also took on the task of editing the videos taken of the monthly speakers' presentations. All of this he did with determination, to 'make it work'. His conscientiousness in addressing whatever task he set his mind to was an example to us, as was his kind and gentlemanly behaviour towards all.

Over the past year he had also played host, in between the few Zoom meetings, by providing a venue for our Committee to meet.

He spent a lot of time at the Athenaeum trying to improve the audio equipment and the projector. His last task was to get an up to date projector installed, very much for our benefit (and the other societies). This was finalised on the day he died, so he never had the benefit of seeing the improvement he engineered.

Gerald was a deep thinker, an intelligent and intellectual man whose quiet reserve hid immense capabilities. He had an extremely kind heart and a sharp sense of humour. He will be missed.

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## SOUTH AFRICA'S ROSE-GROWING FAMILY – part 2

Continuing Ludwig Taschner's Rose History in South Africa.

Nurseries that were established in the Western Cape to propagate fruit trees (peaches, plums, apricots, apples which also belong to the Rosacea family) by budding and grafting on a root stock included roses into their programme. The novelty roses of the days were already hybrids of the tough European types and the much more tender, but repeat flowering roses that came from China. They did not have such natural vigour and did much better when bud grafted onto a root stock. Mr Zierau of Paarl Nurseries was the most prominent nursery for ornamental shrubs, trees and roses early 1900 in the Cape. It was eventually taken over by new owners in 1970 but closed down recently.

I came across a catalogue from a Parys Nursery on the Vaal of 1928 listing around a thousand varieties. Checking them through I found that we still grow about twenty of them these days.

Groot Mariko Nursery also propagated fruit trees and roses. Two of their apprentices in the 1920<sup>th</sup>, Egmont Behrens (Behrens Nurseries) and Christian Muller (Floradale Nurseries) became prominent nursery owners and rose

growers. Jan Herholdt of Potchefstroom had to help his father with his vegetable farming. At an early age he started his own nursery, propagating fruit trees. Almost by chance he stumbled onto roses, soon realised that this could be a profitable business and expanded on it when he established Herholdt's Nursery in Eikenhof south of Johannesburg. He made contact with the famous Meilland in France and was invited to spend some learning time with them, which he did. As the Meilland representative he was able to release the latest rose varieties and having learned the how from Meilland he started his own rose breeding. Varieties bred by Jan Herholdt and still around are Southern Sun, Angel Bells, Kristo Pienaar, Gary Player, Nightingale, Mimi Coertse, Betty Herholdt and Herero.

After the second World War several rose nurseries in the Magaliesburg region popped up. Mon Reve Nurseries, Rosalind Nurseries, Magaliesburg Rose Nurseries, Doornkloof Nurseries, Eden Nurseries, Thatchwood Nurseries.

All rose plants were still field grown, dug up in winter and shipped bare root to the private customers all over the country. The big marketing ploy was to take a stand in the flower hall of the Rand Easter Show and show off blooms of the available varieties. Orders were given by the visitors, many of them farmer's wives.

Floradale Nurseries in East London distributed colour catalogues in the early days of colour printing and Jesmond Dene Nurseries and Olivier Nurseries were the main suppliers of rose plants in Natal.

Jan Herholdt branched out taking over Eden Rose Nurseries in Noorder Paarl with the part owner and manager Willie Krause playing a dominant role in the rose scene in the Western Cape.

Not to forget that Kenneth van der Spuy, South Africa's first war plane pilot and Air Marshall started a rose nursery in his wife Una's magnificent huge garden near Stellenbosch.

Hermann Buss, an immigrant nurseryman from Germany worked for Paarl Nurseries before the second world war, was then interned during the war to start his own rose nurseries in Kameeldrift, Pretoria. Ludwig Taschner came to work for him in 1962. When Buss Nurseries was taken over by a group in 1970 Ludwig left after some travelling started Ludwig's Roses in 1971 north of Pretoria with the fixed idea to change rose growing and marketing altogether.

From a slow start after much experimenting with timing and soil mixes Ludwig's pioneering worked out well. Roses were now propagated from inception in black plastic bags, which had become available just a few years earlier. By then garden centres popped up everywhere and they were very pleased to be able to purchase rose plants for re-sale on a regular basis. Other rose growers virtually had to follow suit.

However, it was not just the rose plant production that was changed, but also the release of new varieties. Whereas it was custom for rose nurseries to order budwood of new varieties (which now arrived by air) from rose breeders in Europe and the USA, re-propagated from them and released a new variety, these were too often to be short lived since they were not really suitable for South Africa's hot climate.

Ludwig Taschner had been in correspondence with rose breeders for some years and was given exclusive agreements for testing their new varieties for a number of years. It meant budding a few plants of several hundred numbered varieties, planting them out, caring for them and observing their performance with regard to sun hardiness, vigour, quick re-flowering, fragrance, firm petals that do not wilt in the hot sun and very much a certain hardiness to fungus diseases.

Corresponding with the breeders on the performance of their roses Ludwig's were given the green light to name and release of their new varieties which did not perform in the colder climates. Over the past 40 years Ludwig's selected over 300 varieties many of these named in honour of SA personalities and places.

I soon realised that it was not enough anymore to just grow and sell roses. Whereas in the past roses were ordered by catalogue or at shows in Autumn there was much time for planning as to where to plant, to dig the holes, fill them with compost to await the arrival of the bare root bushes in July. Young gardeners usually had the benefit of advice from mothers, aunts and mother in laws. Urbanisation too forced lots of novice gardeners to go out and find information on rose growing. And with the roses having become items of impulse buying, the dissemination of information on rose care became essential.

My own learning curve was steep with running a garden service in the first two years being confronted with roses panted in all sorts of soil and positions. They all received special treatment and we managed to even get the strugglers to flourish. Of course, any dead heading meant budding eyes for our rose propagation. Being able to



identify most of the roses in gardens was of course an advantage. I involved myself in the Rose Society of South Africa and became editor of their publications for almost 40 years and I had a monthly column in the Farmer's Weekly for several years in the seventies. And I did get to know the country and the variations of rose growing by going out, judging garden competitions, giving talks and pruning demonstration. I remember driving all the way to Sannieshof very early one morning seeing the endless field of Maize etc. and wondering how many attendees I will have. There were two hundred ladies all dressed up and keen to learn from me. Another time in 1988, I flew to P.E. leased a car to drive to Murriesburg in the Karoo, arrived in the dark, not a car or person to be seen on the streets, went to the town hall and was greeted by a busy team of ladies beautifying the hall for the next day. Again, hundreds of ladies (and a few gentlemen) arrived early the next day and we all had a fabulous time. Naming the 'Karoo Rose' and the day thereafter stopped over in Graff-Reinet naming a rose in honour of that city. Both roses are still going strong. From the early days we issued catalogues at first with abbreviated descriptions, later more elaborate, introducing a system of symbols in height fragrance flowering ability or suitable for exhibition or as cut roses. With digital photography and printing our catalogue now boasts eight hundred varieties all depicted with a colour photo, description and symbols. Fifty thousand catalogues are distributed free of charge every year. By many they are hoarded and regarded as the "bible" on rose growing.

The first rose I named after a personality was 'Vera Johns' in 1977. The rose is still popular although young gardeners have no idea what claim to fame she had. Esther Geldenhuys was the gardening guru in the Free State. Her park like garden was open to the public every October. I made sure to get her to try out my new varieties in that harsh climate. Esther was most impressed with one of them that was particularly free flowering, but best of all had pointed shapely blooms made up of very firm petals and lasted for ever in a vase. During a National Rose Convention held in Kroonstad and organised by Esther and her team this particular rose was officially named 'Esther Geldenhuys'. Esther is very proud of this rose and even more so when an American visitor told her that he has "her" growing in his garden in the US. Esther too went out to give talks on gardening and roses and her no nonsense down to earth style made many gardeners to plant roses doing it right from the start.

There was another Geldenhuys family involved in roses. They have their farm Laurentia, in Muldersdrift and were growing cut roses for the market between Peach and Plum orchards. Those were old varieties which no florist would look at today. Louw Geldenhuys was persuaded to plant new varieties under the novel SARAN shade cloth and soon after were the first flower farmer in Africa to export rose blooms on a regular basis to Germany for decades. Supplying them with plants was a good side of my business and many of the varieties that I persuaded them to plant made furore. Cora Marie (Dallas), Antique Silk, Frisco, Johannesburg Sun, Madelon, Vivaldi, Porcelain, Frisco are just a few of them.

From the start Ludwig's Roses was open to the public. Gardeners are welcome and we love talking to them. Obviously gone are the days when we drew many thousands of visitors on Krugerday. Sport, Television and Casinos are our competition.

I also realised that selling of roses is never a self-service item. They are expected to grow in a garden for twenty years and it needs to be the right variety with regard to colour, height, fragrance and for sentimental reasons also the name. Whenever I noted a keen interest in the rose by any of our production employees I would further him / give extra training and moved them to our sales team. Many thousands of satisfied customers will testify to the knowledgeable service they receive. Since it is impossible for general garden centre to keep the full range of rose varieties nor specialist staff we decided some years ago to open up rose centres in other regions and this has worked out very well for us, for the gardener but also for the local garden centres.

All this I could not have been done on my own. My enthusiasm on roses and positive outlook on life somehow brought out loyalty in staff and family. We still have employees who started with me, Budders, Drivers, sales personnel, administrative staff and best of all that my wife, three children and my nephew are keen on roses, love the farm and are fully involved in the day to day management.

Maybe this will free me of many duties and I will get around to write a book not on the nitty gritty how to grow roses but a fascinating brew I have in my head on people involved with roses.

To be continued ...

## AS A MATTER OF INTEREST ...

Here are a few plants that didn't make it to the Plant Table.

Elwyn tells us that her *Justicia aurea* (Yellow Jacobinia) (right) thrives mostly on neglect!!!

"I prune it once a year and sometimes I forget to water that area. Roots are shaded by an *Abelia* and shares a bed with irritating, but beautiful Inca lilies. It gets some morning sun, but mostly afternoon sun and is the best out of all 6 that I have."

Isabella has *Gladiolus dalenii*, as well as *Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Firesticks' (below) which is more than 2m tall. Every now and then *Pelargonium* flowers appear amongst the branches.



Wilma's *Oxalis* collection is beginning to flower. She knows this as *Oxalis* 'Ted Oliver' and thinks it must be in the *hirta*



family (left).

She was told by Jim Holmes that they were on a hike when Ted pointed out this *Oxalis* to him – location and unknown species. Jim took it to Stellenbosch University who never acknowledged it. Quite recently the University named it *O. species nova* which, of course, means new species. You decide what you'd like to call it.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO LEON AND HIS TEAM!

