



I don't know how people deal with their moods when they have no garden, raspberry patch or field to work in. You can take your angers, frustrations, bewilderments to the earth, working savagely, working up a sweat and an ache and a great weariness. The work rinses out the cup of your spirit ...

Rachel Peden

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NEXT MEETING

Monday, 2 September 2024 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum

Members: No entrance fee

Visitors: R30 per person

TALBORNE ORGANICS

Clare Gove will explain to us how their range of products will nourish our plants and soil to help us create healthy and beautiful gardens throughout the year.

OUTINGS

Sat, 21 September – two Constantia gardens

09:00 to visit the garden of Nicky Louw who says: "Learning is the key aspect of gardening and one can never profess to know everything about it. The pleasures of mass planting that just come back again and again are evident. However, I can never resist something new or unusual. As fellow enthusiasts I look forward to your visit as we enter Springtime."

10:30 to visit the garden of Deirdre Thompson. Having moved from Johannesburg and after many trials and loads of errors, Deirdre started to understand gardening in the Cape. She is an avid plant collector who spends many hours having fun in the garden.

Limited to 20 members. RSVP to Glenda by 18 September.

WELCOME TO ...

... Louise Kinrade, Jill van der Veen and Angela Wessels. We hope that their membership of the CHS will be an enjoyable and beneficial experience.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Website and Facebook: Work has started on these two platforms to update and refresh them, and to allow them to enhance our aims and reflect our activities more closely.

Tea Duty: Thanks again to all who have volunteered to assist Susan with this part of the meeting.

Lifts: This is a work in progress, and Glenda will put those who have volunteered to give lifts in touch with those who have asked for the same. Volunteers are not obliged to come to every meeting – if life happens and you can't make a meeting, simply tell the person whom you lift and another way can be found.

To 'pair' the drivers and passengers, we are asking those who have not been able to attend for a long time and would enjoy a lift to meetings and/or outings to let us know. The areas we can cover at the moment are from upper

Kenilworth/Newlands Road/Protea Road; Rondebosch/Newlands; Constantia and Claremont. If these areas do not cover your suburb, please advise and we will do our best to find someone close to you.

Sale: We would prefer not to have plants in yoghurt pots at the Sale, so if you need pots we will be putting some out at every meeting. Yoghurt tubs (yes, they are so useful!) are used instead of pots that are 12 – 15cm in diameter. If any members have surplus pots that sort of size, please bring them to the meeting so others can make use of them - for the sale, naturally.

Membership Drive: 23 new members have signed up since January 2024, so we have exceeded our target, which is great news. The work being done on both the website and Facebook should support this, as we have a page directed at gaining new members.

The **Spring Pool** will be finalized on September 2, and the prizes handed out at that meeting. The following are entered into the pool:

New Members	Introduced by
Sue Wilkes and Louise Kinrade	Jean Fillis
Rosemary Duncan-Smith	Cherry Mann
Lesley and Andrew Clarke	Angela O'Connor-Smith and John Macfarlane
Cecile van den Broek	Linda Pollard
Gianpaolo Gilardi and Ina Katsani	Cherise Viljoen
Guy Wachter and Antoinette Kolenic	Fee Pegge
Fiona Milanese	Isabella Hayden
Irma Albers	Shirley Shevel
Glenda Moore	Rosemary Nathan
Ingrid Fiske	Chris Wren-Sargent
Angela Wessels and Jill van der Veen	Anne Gleeson
Shirley Shevel	Website application
John Hardie	Website application
Dave Wallace	Website application
Julia Allen	Website application
Karin Schaefer	Website application
Hammaad Railhoun and Ragmat Davids	Website application

NB: If there is an error in the list please contact Glenda immediately so we can rectify matters before the draw.

REPORT BACK

August Exhibits (formerly Plant Table)

Indigenous:

Veltheimia bracteata – needs shade; likes to be crowded and ignored

Exotic:

Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi – approx. 30cm tall; needs sun to semi-shade

Jasminum polyanthum – in full bloom

Lynne: “Covers our fence and around the door, in Sea Point.”

Abutilon “Chinese Lanterns” from tropical and sub-tropical regions of Asia, Africa, Australia and the Americas – a large group of tropical shrubs grown for their colourful, bell-shaped or lantern-like flowers; they flower from July to September.

Anne: “Mine are under trees and grow long stems reaching for the light; the leaves are pretty and the main reason for growing them.”

Ilex x altaclarensis 'Wilsonii' – originates from Asia; it is very pretty because of the shiny leaf and berries in winter; it grows as a dense evergreen shrub; grows to around 3m

Anne: "Pity I don't get berries at Christmas time. I don't feed it especially; it just gets the general compost and some Atlantic pellets."



Top row: *Veltheimia bracteata*; *Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi*; *Jasminum polyanthum*
Bottom row: *Abutilon*; *Ilex x altaclarensis* 'Wilsonii'

Lewisia cotyledon

Family: Montiaceae (previously Portulacaceae family)

Lewisia's are cold-hardy, easy to grow succulents with low maintenance needs and are water-wise plants. They originate from the USA's Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountains. They are also known as "Cliff Maids".

They like to grow in moderately fertile, gritty soil or rocky places. Indoors they need bright light or full sun and a warm environment without draughts. There are 19 known species, many evergreen, but others go dormant, like bulbs. They need well drained soil and good drainage, especially in winter as the crown which grows close to the ground gets too moist and can rot. A good tip is to try and grow them in a similar situation to their natural environment. If they are tucked into a rockery or crevice garden, preferably grown sideways and at an angle, it means any excess water will drain away. Fine gravel can be spread on the soil under the leaves to also create effective drainage.

They take full sun, but in very warm areas partial shade is best. Their leaves grow close to the ground in a rosette shape of fleshy spoon shaped green leaves. *Lewisia cotyledon* "Elise Mix" is available in South Africa. From late spring to early winter they have sprays of brightly coloured and very pretty flowers, in shades of pink to magenta, yellow, peach and orange. These flowers grow about 10-15 cm above the rosette of fleshy leaves on delicate stems.



It is best to water regularly but let them dry out in between to prevent rotting. Fertilise once a month with an all-purpose fertiliser at half strength. Protect from aphids, slugs and snails. The plant can spread by having a mother plant send out babies (offsets). Remove offsets in early summer or after flowering.

Source: gardenista.com and thegardener.co.za

RECOMMENDED READING

T. P. (TOM) STOKOE by Amida Johns and Peter Slingsby

Reviewed by Jean Fillis

This book is all about an amazing man, an immigrant to our country which changed his life when he first saw our amazing plant life growing on the Cape mountains.

He left the UK in 1911, at age 43, to join his brother at the Cape Times as a lithographer. The first weekend, while walking in the mountain above Camps Bay, he was amazed at the variety and magnificence of the Spring flowers he saw. Once he had joined the Mountain Club and went on outings and rock climbs, he started looking for plants on the mountains.

He made friends with the flower sellers in Adderley St and joined them on the picking trips to hunt for new species. In later years he complained that too many plants were being collected before they could set seed, especially for the Flower shows.

He collected and pressed over 20,000 plants for Kirstenbosch, sent seeds to Kew and had about 30 plants named after him, from Ericas, Restios to his favourite, the Golden Mimetes (now extinct). These included Disa, Watsonia, Gladiolus, Chinonia, Agathosma, Oxalis, Aspalanthus, Muraltia and many others. He also had a Beetle, a Pass, Kop, Bridge, and a Kloof named after him.

In the Hottentots Mt, aged 86, he had a serious accident with his Benzine stove, setting his tent, which he had waterproofed with Lanoline and petrol, alight. It not only burned him, all his clothes and his boots, but set the mountain alight. The Flower sellers helped put it out, then walked with him for three hours to the road. He stood with only a cardboard box over his body, waiting for a lift to a nearby farm to get help. He was never given a permit to camp on the mountains again, but instead went out with Professor Rycroft from Kirstenbosch.

On his 89th birthday in the heat of February he took only 3½ hours to climb Platteklip Gorge to attend the War Memorial service, returning the same way, as he refused to use the Cableway. He then climbed the highest peaks around Quoin point in February for his 90th birthday.

A year later, a camping trip in March 1959 with Professor Rycroft was abandoned due to poor weather but Stokoe became ill and ended up in hospital, dying a few weeks later. His ashes are interred on Stokoes Kop in the Kogelberg reserve, one of his favourite hunting grounds.

UNIQUE CLIVIA SPECIES UNDER THREAT

Submitted by John van der Linde, our Clivia expert

THE UPSURGE IN POACHING OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FLORA HAS TAKEN A NEW TWIST.

Ever since the Covid-19 pandemic, South Africa's arid areas have been under intense pressure from plant poachers with an exponential increase in the illegal harvesting of its unique plant species. Initially, the most targeted species were dwarf succulents called *Conophytums*. As a result of this upsurge in illegal harvesting most *Conophytum* species now fall into the 'endangered' or 'critically endangered' categories of threat.

Now there are fresh concerns about South Africa's floral heritage, as the criminal syndicates behind the illegal trade in plants shift their attention to other species destined for international markets. A case in point has been the targeting of *Clivia mirabilis* (right, in its natural environment), a kind of lily which is found in a very small area on the border of the Western and Northern Cape provinces. This species was first described in 2002 and its name (*mirabilis* for 'miracle') comes from the fact it occurs in a most unlikely location. Whereas most clivias are forest dwelling and thrive in moist environments, *Clivia mirabilis* survives in harsh, dry conditions. As with all clivias, they are very slow growing and take years before they flower.



Photo: Andre Swart

According to David Garriock, chairman of the Clivia Society, the chances of these plants surviving outside of their natural habitat are incredibly slim as they are uniquely adapted to their environment. He surmises that the rise in demand is because enthusiasts are keen to cross breed with them.

CapeNature confirmed that the first indication of interest in the illegal trade in *Clivia mirabilis* emerged in October 2023 when 18 plants were confiscated in Belhar, Cape Town, along with succulents.

A breakthrough came in December 2023, when 16 people were seen with feedbags later found to be stuffed with clivias. Only four were caught. Nevertheless, the authorities seized all the bags containing close to a thousand plants. Those who were arrested revealed that it was their third incursion into the habitat where these clivias are found.

Since then, there have been some 50 known incidents, leading to 47 arrests, many of whom were foreign nationals. Over 4000 *Clivia mirabilis* plants have been confiscated (right, some of the bags found), a serious concern given the limited distribution of this uniquely adapted species.



The Clivia Society are in discussions with the South African National Botanical Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) to find ways to assist in maintaining the growing number of confiscated plants, providing surveillance equipment, as well as conserving what remains of the wild population in order to save this species from extinction in the wild.

They believe that new strategies may need to be looked at – such as the sale of pollen or seeds to clivia enthusiasts – to take pressure off the wild population. In the meantime, a few society members are helping to keep the confiscated plants alive and are providing growing medium and fertiliser. Returning these plants to their original habitat is not an option while the threat is ongoing.

The fact that this clivia occurs on a provincial border has complicated law enforcement due to differing provincial regulations. Landowners in areas targeted by plant poachers are also impacted by groups illegally crossing their properties, as well as removing plants. This is an additional burden to the safety and security of landowners and farm workers.

The Northern Cape's Department of Agriculture, Environment Affairs, Rural Development & Land Reform (DAERL), CapeNature and the Clivia Society have been working together with landowners and the South African Police Service (SAPS) to try and combat the poaching of the wild population.

To date, some 650 different plant species having been confiscated by South African law enforcement officials. In the illegal trade, scarcity, unique shape and size and growing international demand are driving factors.

The fact that illegally harvested plants are now targeted by crime syndicates makes the issue that much more alarming. A significant number of plants are harvested on orders received from middlemen within the syndicates which deal in these plants.

The illegal trade is well organised and targets local community members who are enticed to go out and dig up plants. Small rural communities are impacted when arrests occur, but the real criminals carefully keep themselves out of reach from the arm of the law.

Combating the illegal harvesting and trade in succulents and other collectable plants is one of the major biodiversity conservation challenges facing South Africa. SANBI with partners such as WWF South Africa has been working together to harness resources to address the problem.

WWF made funding available to support SANBI with capacity for the implementation (including co-ordination) of a National Response Strategy and Action Plan to Address the Illegal Trade in South African Succulent Flora. This plan was approved by national government in 2022.

Among the challenges in giving effect to the strategic plan are a lack of funding and capacity but national and provincial government, together with partner organisations, are working hard to overcome these hurdles. A team effort by conservation departments, the police, NGOs, landowners and local communities is ultimately the first line of defence in trying to protect the Succulent Karoo's globally recognised biodiversity.

The ultimate objective is the long-term survival of South Africa's rich succulent flora whilst promoting sustainable socio-economic development within the country.

What to do if you come across plant poaching

If you notice any suspicious activity, please contact the nearest SAPS Stock Theft and Endangered Species Unit. You can also bring this to the attention of the relevant conservation authority. In the Western Cape the conservation agency is CapeNature. In the Northern Cape it's the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform.

Members of the public can also report any suspicious activities around wildlife to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's environmental crime hotline which is 0800 205 005 or the SAPS hotline 10111

Source: https://www.wwf.org.za/our_news/news/?49662/Unique-clivia-species-under-threat.

OUR VERGES

We were greatly inspired by what Kathy Fish and her team does for the verges in Noordhoek. Some of our members have planted up the verge in their suburb. Some are left to do their thing! Here are a few examples:



Mike Picker's verge
in Barbarossa



Belinda du Rand's
verge in Constantia



Cherise Viljoen's verge
in Marina da Gama



Unmowed public
verge in Pinelands

OUT OF AFRICA

by Toby Musgrave

The sheer richness of the flora of South Africa has been drawing plant collectors for nearly four centuries, and as the recent discovery of a new species of *Clivia* shows, is by no means fully documented. Toby Musgrave charts the courses of the plant-hunting pioneers.

‘Fairest Cape in the whole circumference of the globe’ wrote Sir Francis Drake in June 1580 as he rounded the Cape of Good Hope on his return to England. Had he stopped and seen the plants growing there, he may have been even more eloquent, for the Cape floral kingdom is one of the world’s richest, most diverse botanical regions, home to more than half of South Africa’s 24,000 plant species.

Initially at least, collectors were limited to the area around the Cape itself. The first visitor to gather plants seems to have been a Dutch missionary, Justus Heurnius, who in 1624, explored the shores of Table Bay while the crew of his ship, *The Gouda*, made repairs.

His countryman Jan van Riebeeck established the first permanent European settlement in 1652, which later became Cape Town.

It was not *until* 20 years after this, however, that the first professional botanist, Paul Hermann (who explored when his ship put in en route to Sri Lanka) collected at the Cape. There he found the first pelargonium, *P. cucullatum*, and is remembered in the genus *Hermannia*, which contains herbaceous and subshrubby species bearing bell-shaped honey-scented flowers.

On his return to Holland, Hermann inspired one of his students, a Dane, Hendrich Oldenland, to become the second botanist to explore the Cape. Oldenland’s workload – he held, among other positions, gardener to the Dutch East India Company’s garden, superintendent of roads, town engineer and land surveyor – was so strenuous that he seems to have worked himself into an early grave. Thankfully, however, his collection of herbarium specimens survived, as did those of his successor, Jan Hartog.

Hartog also ventured inland, and on one occasion sent back to the Governor a package containing ‘62 sorts of seeds, four sorts of aloes, two sorts of bulbs, two packets of dried plants and one of herbs’.

By the turn of the 18th century, around 1,000 Cape species were known to science, but remarkably, things then went quiet until the arrival of three plant hunters in 1772. Apart from the area around the Cape itself, South Africa’s flora remained a largely untapped source of riches, and the subsequent history of plant collecting mirrors (or in some cases preceded) the movement of farmers and settlers further and further east and north, into what was to become the Free State, Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal.

Andrew Sparrman and Carl Thunberg, both Swedes, landed in April 1772, followed in October by Francis Masson from Aberdeen, a passenger aboard *HMS Resolution*. Sparrman joined Captain Cook’s ship (in Masson’s berth) as *Resolution* continued on Cook’s second circumnavigation, returning to the Cape in March 1775. He collected here until his return to Sweden in 1776. Sparrman’s most spectacular discovery was spiky-flowered *Paranomus sceptrum-gustavianus* (Gustav’s sceptre), a member of the protea family he named for his monarch, Gustav III.

PROLIFIC COLLECTORS

While Sparrman was voyaging with Cook, Thunberg made a number of plant-hunting expeditions at the Cape, including two with Masson, who was to be the most prolific of the late-18th century trio.

Masson’s collecting trips not only encouraged further exploration, but also cemented the foundations of Kew as the world’s premier botanic garden. Joseph Banks, who had sailed with Cook on his first epoch-making voyage aboard *HMS Endeavour* (1768-71) and briefly stopped at Cape Town, did not join Cook’s second expedition. Instead he began establishing a policy to scientifically study the flora of Britain’s growing sphere of interests overseas. As he needed patronage, he set about persuading King George III that as ‘the world’s most important monarch’ it would be fitting for him to have the most comprehensive plant collection.

And where better, he suggested, than His Majesty’s favourite royal garden at Kew, which already housed his mother’s exotic plant collection? To justify his costly dispatch of plant hunters around the world and to prove the

validity of his policy, Banks needed an early success. Remembering his brief, dazzling encounter with South Africa's flora, he decided it was the perfect destination for Masson, Kew's first professional plant hunter.

During his first stay of 30 months, Masson made three exacting major trips. His first expedition lasted 4½ months and covered 1,000 miles. He arrived back from the third in Cape Town on 29 January 1774, with the beautiful *Strelitzia reginae* (bird of paradise), *Erica tomentosa* and *Amaryllis belladonna* among scores of new species.

He returned to Britain in 1775 to great plaudits: as the Rev M Tyson observed in a letter dated 5 May 1776, 'Mr Masson showed me the New World in his amazing Cape hothouse, erica 140 species, many proteas, geraniums and cliffortias more than 50'.

Banks was of course delighted, and sent Masson collecting to Iberia, the Azores, Madeira and the Caribbean before allowing him to return to South Africa in January 1786. He remained until March 1795, when growing political unrest forced him to return to England. He resolutely ignored the prohibition the Dutch authorities placed on him not to travel further than a 40-mile radius from Cape Town, making a series of long clandestine treks into the interior. Sadly, little is known of his precise movements, but in March 1786 he sent Banks seed of 176 species including more Cape heaths and *Zantedeschia aethiopica* (arum lily).

MASSON'S LEGACY

In terms of South Africa plant hunting Masson was the key that unlocked the door and revealed the full diversity and beauty of the country's flora. He discovered in excess of 400 new species, including gladioli, amaryllis, *Cineraria*, *Streptocarpus*, proteas; 88 species of heath, 9 different *Kniphofia*, agapanthus, *Ixia*, 47 *Pelargonium*, lobelias; and bulbous plants including, *Sparaxis*, *Watsonia*, *Haemanthus*, *Tulbahia* and oxalis.

Masson died a sad and lonely death in the frozen North American winter of 1805 (not before introducing *Trillium grandiflorum*), but perhaps his most enduring memorial is the cycad *Encephalartos altensteinii*. His original introduction from 1775 is still growing in the Palm House at Kew, surely making it the world's oldest pot-plant.

Little is known of the travels of another Scot, James Niven, who arrived three years after Masson's first collecting period, in 1778. Employed by George Hibbert, a rich amateur, he remained for five years, sending home a 'valuable herbarium of native specimens' and new plants, including five new species of proteas – Hibbert's passion.

To be cont

Source: *The Garden*
January 2003

AS A MATTER OF INTEREST ...

- With the excessive rain we have recently experienced, here are the figures for Constantia, Pinelands and Sea Point:

	Jun 2023	Jun 2024	Jul 2023	Jul 2024
Constantia	-	102	-	370
Pinelands	207.8	70	70	347.5
Sea Point	150.34	73.1	55.62	233.72

- Jimmy of Happy by Nature Nursery has been awarded the tender to take over the Kirstenbosch Garden Centre site.



A post worth sharing