



121 YEARS

CHS NEWS

September 2024

Far beyond hope the Spring is kind again,
lovely beyond the longing of my eyes.

Margaret Cropper

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NEXT MEETING

Monday, 7 October 2024 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum

Members: No entrance fee

Visitors: R30 per person

WILDFIRES

Dr Guy Preston will give an illustrated talk on the risk of wildfires in the Table Mountain chain of mountains and the measures that can be taken to mitigate them. Prepare for the coming fire season by addressing the key wildfire risks that we all face.

Dr Preston spent his working life with both the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and later the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE). He led the *Working for Water* and the *Working on Fire* programmes, and in 2014 drafted the *Alien and Invasive Species Regulations*. He now does volunteer *pro bono* conservation work.

OUTINGS

Sat, 5 October at 12:00 – re-scheduled visit to Jardim Farm, Noordhoek

We are encouraging people to support the Fish Hoek Garden Club Flower Show which opens at 9.30am and closes at 2pm. It will be difficult to get to the show after the Jardim outing, so the time has been set for 12:00 to give you time to see the exhibits – and buy plants – first.

Jardim Farm is a private property in Noordhoek. The owners, Justin and Angela, built a barn in 2021 which they use as a venue for workshops, strategy days and business functions. The way it has been designed and decorated, plus the connection to nature, creates a special environment. A lot of their workshops are focused on health, healing and wellness, eg during their workshops the participants will go and pick from the vegetable garden and the produce will be used for the lunch.

The farm is beautiful and located in a tranquil green valley. They have horses and the vegetable garden is run by Tanashé. He lives on the property and seems solely responsible for the vegetable garden. He is very knowledgeable and explains his methods of growing vegetables and making compost. He also has worm farms. They have the manure from the horses for the compost.

RSVP to Glenda by Wednesday, 2 October.

Sat, 10 November at 09.30 – visit the garden of member, Anne Gleeson, in Upper Kenilworth. More details later.

President Marianne Alexander | **Chairlady** Cherise Viljoen | **Hon Treasurer** Isabella Hayden | **Hon Secretary** Glenda Thorpe
Committee Members Jenny Scarr, Susan Armstrong, Chris Wren-Sargent, Anne Gleeson, Belinda du Rand
Honorary Members Marianne Alexander, Mary Smith, Adam Harrower, Bill Elder, Ernst van Jaarsveld
22 Rustenburg, Pinelands | 021-531-5713 | info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za | <https://capehorticulturalsociety.co.za>

WELCOME TO ...

... Leandr  Hendricks, Katrina Davidson, Yvette van Wijk, Lisa and Carol Otto and Wendy Godden. We hope that their membership of the CHS will bring them as much pleasure and knowledge as it does the rest of us.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Our **membership** drive, beginning in January, ended at the start of spring with 25 new members added in that time. Two more members joined at the September meeting. We are also noting an increase in attendance at meetings, where we are averaging in the 40s, even though the winter was tough. Let's hope this trend continues!

The Spring Pool winners were:

- 'Current' member, Anne Gleeson, received the R1000 prize for introducing Angela Wessels and Jill van der Veen.
- 'Current' member, Isabella Hayden won R500 for introducing Fiona Milanese;
- 'New' member, Sue Wilkes, introduced by Cherry Mann, won the R1000 prize.
- 'New' member, Gianpaolo Gilardi, introduced by Cherise Viljoen, received R500 for joining up this year.

These money trees were beautifully crafted by Belinda du Rand.

- Fee Pegge (overseas at present) was awarded the special prize of a *Rosa banks alba plena* from Ludwig's Roses and a bottle of Blaauwklippen Cabriolet, donated by Lynn Jarch . This was for being the member who introduced the most new members – Guy Wachter and Antoinette Kolenic.

Photos, clockwise: Isabella and Anne with Cherise and Chris; Sue with her R1000 money tree; the R500 money tree (insert: Gianpaolo); Fee's wine and rose; blindfolded, Clare Gove of Talborne Organics had to choose cards with the winners' names from the twirling umbrella.



- The **website** is firing on all cylinders again, with Claire Shaban working on it recently. She has set up the membership application forms and made the website more user-friendly too. Please have a look and let us know if you have any suggestions for content/information.

You will not be able to post anything yourself, but If you have interesting photographs for posting on our various social media platforms, please send them through, by e-mail or WhatsApp, in the following formats, to the following:



- CHS **Website**: Glenda – info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za as a .jpg file (size between 300KB and 1MB)
- CHS **Facebook** and **Instagram** accounts: Jenny Liedtke – jennyliedtke@gmail.com or 060-959-2926. These .jpg files need to be as high a resolution (otherwise the photos look 'grainy') and as large (anything from 1MB up) as possible. There is an option in WhatsApp to send photos in HD – this means it will be of a higher quality. This is the link: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/22Ux6ug1ry2Gamed/>

Those assisting her, who will also see to posting plant information and gardening tips etc, are:

➤ Isabella Hayden and Marianne Alexander

We have managed to get the **microphone** headset properly linked to the amplifier, and the September meeting was supported by good sound. A second headset will also be purchased soon.

We are hoping to have a fun fellowship picnic at Arderne Gardens on **Garden Day** this year: Sunday October 20th and will inform members of the outcome when we have the arrangements settled.

The outing to **Hart's Nursery**, which we were asked by Pam Hart to postpone because of wind and rain, will be re-scheduled.

We have ascertained that there are no major events taking place on Sunday 13 April 2025, except, of course, for our **Plant Sale**, so that date is now confirmed.

Propagating for the autumn Plant Sale

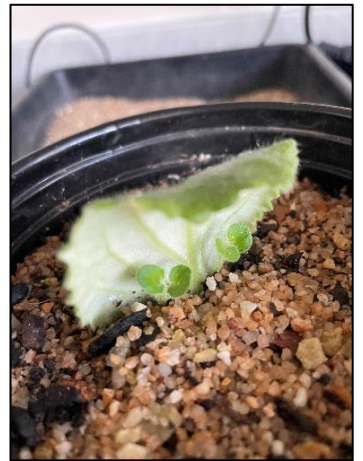
Now that spring is really here, it's an optimal time for taking cuttings and growing seedlings on. Let's make this the year when all our members grow 4 or 5 plants for the sale, plants they can be proud of! It's easy-peasy, just takes a little time and daily attention.



I hope you've taken cuttings of Begonias as I suggested in my last article? What do you mean, not yet?!

Let me show you how easy it is – here's a leaf of an African Violet, brought in flower to our exhibit table during winter. I cut the leaf straight across the bottom, dipped it in rooting hormone (number 1), and inserted it into a groove made in the medium (coarse sand and milled bark). I kept the pot in a warm spot inside, and mist-sprayed daily. You can also cover the pot with a plastic bag to keep the moisture in. Just remember to lift the bag off daily to let in fresh air and to check if the cutting needs misting again.

Now, it's about 3 months later, and here's the same leaf showing new leaflets at the back (right). And that was through winter – it will be quicker in warmer weather. I will leave the plantlets attached to the big leaf, and I'll start feeding with Seagro at half dose. Once the big leaf starts to deteriorate, the young plants can be carefully detached and potted up individually. They will still need a bit of water daily, so I'll keep them in an area in semi-shade with all the cuttings that need watering.

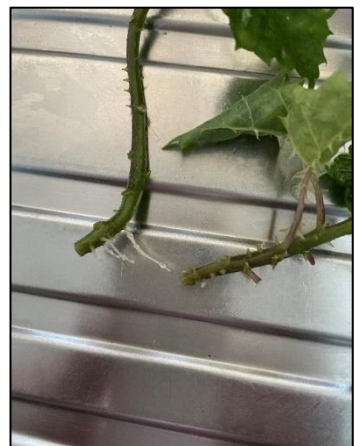


Another super-easy way to root softwood plants is by standing the cuttings in water, for example in a cup, indoors. Change the water daily, check for any rotting leaves or stems and remove those. I took cuttings of my Spotted Nettle two weeks ago and stuck them into two cups on the south-facing kitchen windowsill (left).

Yesterday, I found two stems had rotted, but two were starting to show signs of rooting (below, right). When enough of them have developed roots that look strong enough, I'll pot them up and grow them bigger in the shade. They will need cutting back to encourage

branching, otherwise they can put out long branches.

At this time of year, plants have plenty of growth hormones to stimulate growing during the warmer months, and these hormones also promote rooting. Softwood cuttings can be taken of daisies, pelargoniums, lavender, origanum, thyme, and larger shrubs like Brunfelsia, Azaleas and roses, to name a few. If the tip is very soft, pinch it out, and if the leaves are quite large, cut them smaller to minimize water loss by transpiration.



Divide plants that form clumps – Japanese Anemones, Alstroemerias and ornamental grasses, for example. And dig up the seedlings of plants like Gaura to grow them on in pots. Think about what will be flowering in autumn and try to propagate those plants – flowering plants will always be first to sell.

Bring your questions to the meeting and one of us will be able to help you, I'm sure.

Isabella Hayden

REPORT BACK

September Exhibits (formerly Plant Table)

Indigenous:

- *Ornithogalum juncifolium* (grass-leaved Chinchinchee) – sun; tender; moderate water; evergreen; 30cm x 10cm; natural habitat = damp grassland.
- *Bulbine latifolia* – rosettes of leaves up to 20-30cm; seeds itself and comes up in odd places.
- *Bulbine frutescens* – sprawling; been slow in shade; otherwise grows easily.
- *Chasmanthe floribunda* var *ducketti*
- *Tetradenia riparia* (misty plume bush), formerly *Iboza* – undemanding; needs heavy pruning after flowering. The type of display depends on whether you have a male or female plant. Male and female flowers are borne on separate plants in spikes which differ in size and shape. The male flower spikes in profusion create more the 'mist' effect than the female flowers, which tend to be more compact.
- *Zantedeschia rehmannii* (miniature Arum) – lives in a pot. Pronunciation is zan-te-DES-kee-a ray-MAHN-ee-eye.
- *Cyrtanthus* – seasonal bulb
- *Cyrtanthus mackenii* var. *mackenii* has white flowers and *C* var. *cooperi* has yellow or cream flowers – thrives on neglect in pots.

Sparmannia africana (Cape stock rose) – 4-8m x 4m; half day shade; semi-shade/dappled shade; water well, especially while young; evergreen; prune back hard once a year.

Antoinette gives more information about the Sparmannia:

The stamens are sensitive to touch. When an insect, or a finger, bumps or brushes the flower the mass of stamens puffs out even further. One can watch as the mass opens itself out, rather like watching a hairy caterpillar puff itself up when threatened. The scientific term for is haptanasty. In this case it is thought that the movement aids pollination by pushing pollen out and onto the visitor's body.



The knobs on the filaments are thought to mimic 'feeding anthers', and when visitors try to exploit them, they come into contact with the fertile stamens and stigma and effect pollination. Feeding anthers is the term used for the anthers of plants that offer up their anthers or parts of them as bait to pollinating insects, so that visitors eat them and take up and move the pollen incidentally as they are feeding.

According to Mabberley (2008), the reflexed petals of the flower keep the stamens and anthers dry during rain. The cupped petals fill up with water and it overflows gently, a drop at a time.

Source: PlantZAfrica

Exotic:

- *Camellia japonica* "Elegans" – one of the Camellias that can take sun. This was a great relief, as the tree that was providing shade fell over years ago, and it has continued happily in the sun.
- *Aechmea cordata* – copes with neglect; in quite deep shade.

- *Allium triquetrum* “Three cornered leek”, a member of the Allium family and originates from the mediterranean – the whole plant is edible; the stem with the flowers is 3-cornered, hence the Latin name ‘triquetrum’; it appears in the garden in spring and dies off in a few weeks; tastes like a mix between spring onion and chives; flowers are pretty bells with a green stripe; very pretty in salads; chop up in salads or replace onions and chives.
- *Borage* (also known as Star Flower), an annual herb in the flowering plant family Boraginaceae, native to the Mediterranean region – known to help treat several conditions, including asthma, rheumatoid arthritis and skin conditions, and a tea; both leaves and flowers are edible; flowers make a pretty garnish; its vivid flowers attracts pollinators; leaves and stems have a prickly fuzz, which acts as a deterrent for insects; a companion plant for the vegetable garden.
- *Raphiolepis indica* (Indian Hawthorn) – shrubs and small trees in the family Rosaceae, native to warm temperate and sub-tropical regions – they have a dense growth and are very useful in the garden; abundant clusters of delicate pink or white blossoms in late winter/early spring, followed by black berries; the foliage can be red to bronze, ageing to dark green; bees love them.
- *Sedum palmeri* (syn *S. compressum*) from Mexico – up to 25cm x 50cm; sun/semi-shade; cold, hardy; regular watering from spring to autumn; allow to dry out between waterings; well-drained soil; flowers late winter/early spring.
- *Bryophyllum manginii* syn/ex-*Kalanchoe manginii* (Beach bells), family Crassulaceae, from Madagascar – 30-40cm x 30-40cm; evergreen, succulent perennial; sun/semi shade; semi frost-hardy; regular low water; trailing habit; blooms late winter/spring.
- *Bryophyllum manginii* X *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana* hybrid, from Madagascar – 30-40cm x 30-40cm; evergreen, succulent perennial; sun/semi shade; semi frost-hardy; regular low water; trailing habit; blooms late winter/early spring.



Left to right: *Bulbine latifolia*; *Chasmanthe floribunda*; *Tetradenia riparia*; *Cyrthanthus*

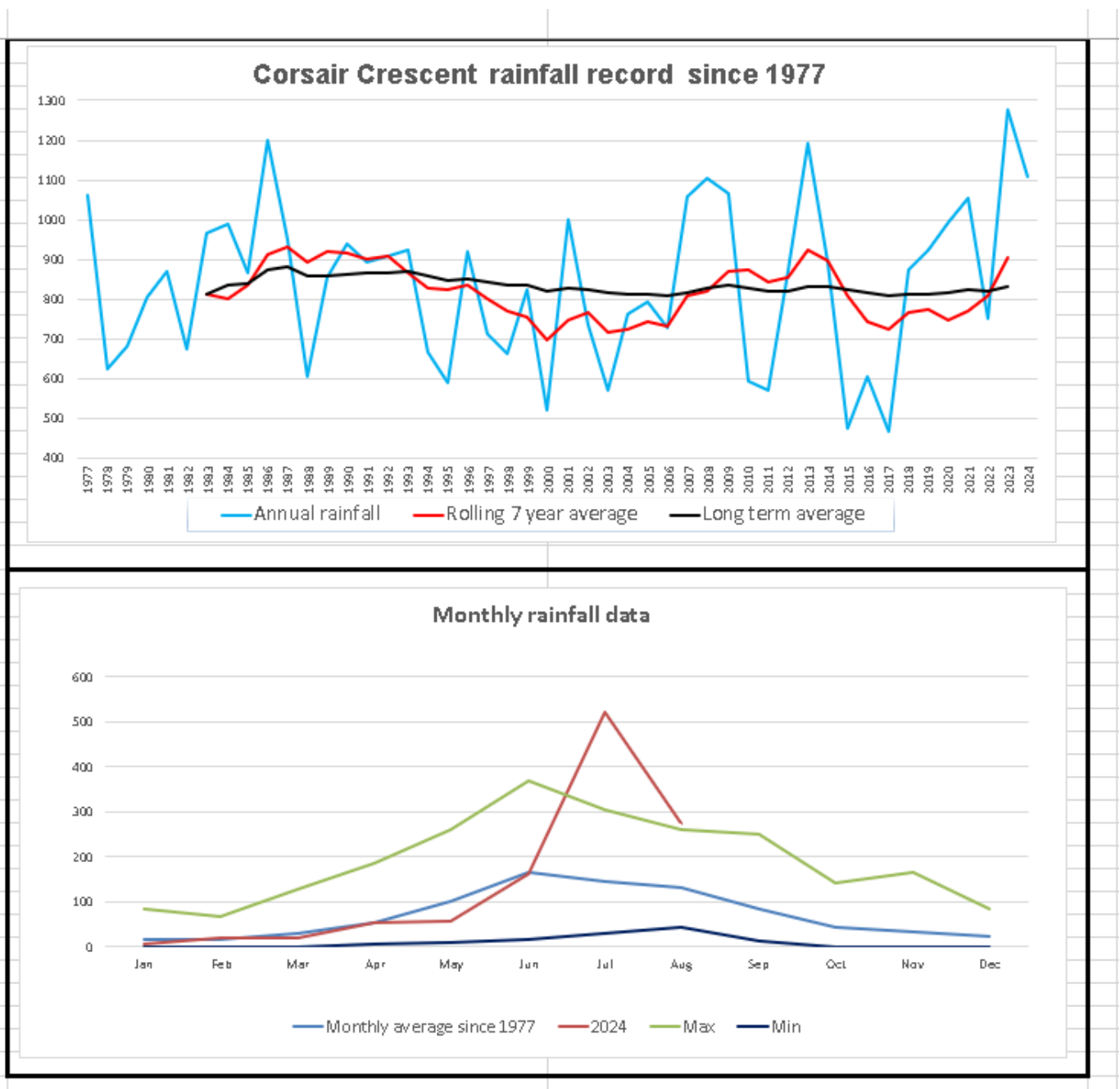


Left to right: *Camellia*; *Borage*; *Raphiolepis*; *Bryophyllum manginii* x *Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*

RAINFALL FACTS

Henry “Dutch” Diesveld gives us some interesting facts derived from his rainfall records for Barbarossa, Constantia, that he has kept since 1977.

- July 2024 was the wettest month ever at 520 mm, compared to a long-term July average of 145 mm.
- The previous wettest month was June 1977 at 367mm.
- 300mm in a month has only been exceeded 5 times in the last 47 years.
- Not to be outdone, August 2024 was the wettest August on record at 273mm, compared to long-term average of 130mm.
- The 2024 total to date is 1109mm, vs the long-term yearly average of 831 mm.
- The wettest ever year was 2023 with 1278mm.



OUT OF AFRICA – conclusion

by Toby Musgrave, co-author of *The Plant Hunters*,
a broadcaster and garden historian

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

Niven spent a brief three months back in Britain in 1803 before returning south for a further nine years. This time his employer was a syndicate that included the nursery firm of Lee and Kennedy and – despite the fact the Napoleonic War was raging – the French Empress Josephine. Niven was able to boost her collection of heaths at her garden in Malmaison from 50 species in 1805 to 132 – 30 of them newly described.

On his arrival back in Britain in 1812, Niven quit botany and went into business in his native Pennicuik, dying in 1827. He is remembered in the genus that bears his name – *Nivenia*, the shrubby ‘bush irises’.

The next great plant hunter, William J Burchell, son of a Fulham nurseryman, travelled to South Africa in 1810 (after his fickle fiancée ditched him in favour of the captain of the ship that was bringing her to him in St Helena). Instead of a wife, Burchell dedicated himself to botany.

Once finding 105 species in the space of a mile, Burchell (accompanied by a group of missionaries) set off in January 1811 on an epic four-year journey that took him east and north from Cape Town to beyond Kuruman.

At Zandvlei in the Prieska district, Burchell picked up a ‘pebble’, only to find it was a plant – now *Lithops turbiniformis*. Turning south from Kuruman, on 15 September he crossed the Orange River near the centre of modern South Africa, where he discovered the country’s only poppy, *Papaver aculeatum*.

Burchell returned slowly, heading South to Grahamstown, then west, reaching Cape Town in April 1815. Packing his finds, he set sail for home with 40,371 preserved plant specimens and accompanying notes, seed of more than 2,000 species, and 270 bulbs.

Before his death in 1820, Banks sent another plant hunter to the Cape. James Bowie, son of another London seedsman, had spent four years collecting for Kew in Brazil before being dispatched to South Africa, where he spent seven years. After a year and half collecting near the Cape, Bowie began to move further afield.

He made one inland journey in 1821 north from Algoa Bay to Graaf Reinet and Erste Poorte in the Coleberg district, otherwise he explored east along the coastlands, reaching as far as Bathurst, Grahamstown and the Great Fish River. Bowie found *Streptocarpus rexii*, but his most important introduction was probably *Clivia nobilis*, still a popular house plant, which he discovered on the Quagga Flats by the Great Fish River.

Other collectors who visited in the 19th century included German Johann Franz Drege who hunted from 1826 – 34, amassing a collection of about 200,000 species. Drege is best remembered, however, as the pioneer of South African biogeography, being the first to establish its distinct botanical regions.

IN THE VICTORIAN ERA

From 1859-62, Thomas Cooper worked for Wilson Saunders (and the botanic gardens of Kew, Edinburgh and Dublin) in order to fill his famous garden at Reigate, and his exploits. Instead of Cape Town, he used Worcester, a little inland, as his base, and his journeys to Natal, the Drakensberg mountains and the Orange Free State make him one of the furthest travelled of South Africa’s plant hunters. Among his discoveries were two succulents that bear his name, *Aloe cooperi*, and *Stapelia cooperi*; *Asparagus setaceus*, still a popular house plant, and *Galtonia candicans*.

With Ludwig Pappe’s appointment as the first Colonial Botanist in 1858 – his task ‘to perfect our knowledge of the flora of South Africa’ – botany became even more of a British ‘home industry’. Yet Pappe’s work had been given a kick-start by all the earlier active collectors – and by one notable, more sedentary botanist. William Henry Harvey, an Irishman, arrived at the Cape in 1835, but his appointment as Colonial Secretary the following year prevented him from travelling and collecting widely. Instead he began compiling the first comprehensive tome on South Africa flora already described.

In 1838 the first volume of *Flora Capensis* (The Genera of South African Plants) was published, but three years later, worn out from his full-time job and full-time hobby, Harvey returned home to become Professor of Botany at Dublin. To give an indication of his achievement, the third volume of his magnum opus was published a year before

his death in 1866; the fourth ran to six parts; and the task was finally completed in 1933 – almost a century after Harvey began it.

MORE CONTEMPORARY FINDINGS

Perhaps the last word in the history of South Africa plant hunting should be reserved for the foursome who visited in 1927: Lawrence Johnston of Hidcote fame, Collingwood (Cherry) Ingram, Reginald Cory and George Taylor. Times had changed since Masson and the like explored on foot or horseback. As their ship docked, this intrepid group set off on two motor cars on their three-month, 6,000-mile expedition northeast to Pretoria. There were still gems to discover, however- the most notable from this trip was probably *Kniphofia triangularis* susp. *Triangularis*.

But this was by no means the end of plant exploration and discovery in Sout Africa. Only two years ago botanists found a previously undescribed species of *Clivia*, dubbed *C. mirabilis*,

In a nature reserve in the semi- arid Northern Cape. Unlike other clivias it is adapted to summer drought so may make an excellent house plant.

In the 422 years since Drake's famous words, South Africa has yielded up her botanical treasures to a succession of devoted, brave and (sometimes) eccentric individuals. Many of their trophies continue to grace our gardens, conservatories and homes. Sadly, the men who risked so much to bring us such an abundance of beauty are too oft forgot. I, for one, salute and thank them.

Source: *The Garden*
January 2003

AS A MATTER OF INTEREST ...

- **Clivia Show – 28/29 September 2024** at DF Malan High School in Bellville
- **Noordhoek Open Gardens – 19/20 October**
- **Video camera** – does anyone have a camera they no longer use and would like to donate to the CHS? We have been borrowing one up to now.
- **Super Salvias:** Wilma Tindall has these growing in her garden at Cape Farms, West Coast:

L to R: *Salvia lanceolata*; *S. thermarum*? (Goudini Sage);
S. caerulea; *S. africana lutea*



Photos: I Hayden, C Mann, W Tindall, A&G Thorpe, Google

