



121 YEARS

# CHS NEWS

November 2024

If I had two loaves of bread, I would sell one and buy hyacinths,  
for they would feed my soul.

*Quran*

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## END-OF-YEAR PARTY

**Monday, 2 December 2024 at 18:00 at The Athenaeum**

**Please note the earlier starting time.**

Come and join other members for an evening of fun, fellowship and food. The cost will be R30 per person. This will include a chance to win a prize in the lucky draw. Extra tickets can be bought for R10 each.

Should you have any garden-related items to donate for prizes, please advise Susan Armstrong ([susanarmstrongsa51@gmail.com](mailto:susanarmstrongsa51@gmail.com)) or 072-369-6826)

All you need to bring is a plate of eats – either savoury or sweet. If you haven't yet indicated what favourite snack you will be providing, please advise Glenda so she can tell others, who are waiting to hear, what is still needed. If serving spoons are needed, please bring them along, with your name on them.

Wine and fruit juice will be available.

## OUTINGS ...

... are in abeyance until February 2025.

## WELCOME TO ...

... Lynette Morgan. We hope that membership of the CHS will bring her as much pleasure and knowledge as it does the rest of our members.

## FROM THE COMMITTEE

**On the Tech front:** Don't forget to send photos of your beautiful blooms, or a fantastic verge or garden you have seen, with names and descriptions, to Jenny Liedtke ([jennyliedtke@gmail.com](mailto:jennyliedtke@gmail.com) or 060-959-2926). She will post them on Facebook and Instagram but please ensure the photos to WhatsApp are a decent size (500KB or more) – they are usually under 100 KBs and the resolution is poor.

**On the Plant Sale front:** This is happening in 2025 – Sunday morning, 13 April – to see if it is a day that suits gardeners and families, rather than a busy Saturday morning. It will be held in Constantia again.

If you have used pots, hanging baskets, stakes and garden equipment *in good working condition*, please save these and bring them along on the setting-up days prior to the sale.

There will also be a stall to sell garden-related items like bird feeders, birdhouses, pots etc. More details about this will follow in due course.

## REPORT BACK

### November Exhibits

#### Indigenous (from left to right):

*Anisodonteia julii*

*Plectranthus zuluensis*

*Pelargonium* – large leaves because of growing in shade.

*Pelargonium betulinum*

*Psychotria capensis* – shade; easy; birds like the seeds.

*Gnidia pinifolia* – fynbos shrub; 1mtall; easy to grow; flowers have pink-red buds, open creamy white; fragrant in the evening; sun; drought-hardy.



#### Exotic (from left to right):

*Trimezia northiana* "Walking Iris" from Brazil

*Zygocactus* – indirect light; occasional water.

*Cane Begonia* – potted; indirect light; occasional watering.

*Lonicera capsifolium* "Bush Honeysuckle"





*Dyschoriste hildebrandtii* from Malawi

*Lathyrus Latifolius* "Sweet Peas"

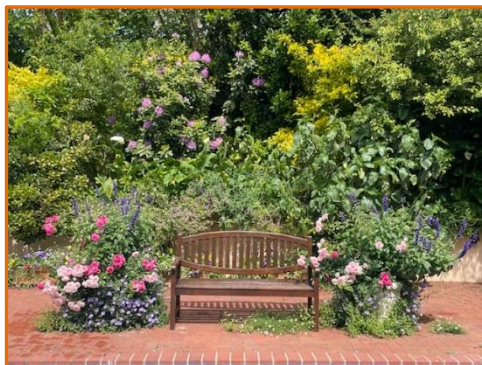
*Russelia equisetiformis* "Fountain Bush" – drought-hardy; flowers spring to autumn; growing in half-day sun.

Variegated *Bougainvillea* – smaller than most Bougainvilleas; flowers all year except in winter; grown in a pot.

*Philadelphus coronarius* "Mock Orange" or "English Dogwood" – from southern Europe; hardy shrub; use as single specimen plant or as informal hedging; grows approximately 2.5m tall; creamy-white fragrant flowers in late spring, early summer; blooms appear on graceful canes; low maintenance; drought tolerant.



### Outing to Anne Gleeson's garden



A group of CHS members had a wonderful afternoon in Anne's garden.

The garden is very much in keeping with the style of the house, which is covered in *Trachelospermum jasminoides* (above and below, left) in full bloom and beautifully scented.





*Gorgeous roses with Convolvulus, and striking double pink Impatiens – a few of the many plants and trees that Anne lovingly tends.*

## WASPS

### NATURAL PEST CONTROLLERS

What good are wasps? You may be surprised. They are pollinators, and efficient pest controllers, feeding innumerable insects such as caterpillars and aphids to their young. As the weather warms in spring, mated queen social wasps (most wasp species are solitary, see box below) emerge from winter torpor. An early mild spell then a cold snap can be fatal – only perhaps two or three queens from each of the previous year's nests survive. Wasps do not reuse old nests, but establish a new one every year.

Spring is a tough few weeks for queen wasps. They must find a nest site, but also need nectar from early spring blooms. They must also forage for wood fibre to begin their paper-like nest, which can be sited in loft spaces, wall cavities, under or in garden sheds and wood stores, in trees, hedges or holes in the ground.

Each nest, I believe, is a piece of sculpture. Made of masticated timber, it is a thin, papier-mâché globe of hexagonal chambers where the queen lays her first eggs. In spring you may see large queen wasps frantically foraging, rushing prey back to the nest for their larvae.

### SOCIAL WASPS' LIFE CYCLE:

We all know that wasps can sting – several times each -so it is safest to keep well away from them. But understanding their life cycle can help put things into perspective.

The first worker generation takes on the queen's chores. For the rest of the season, the queen lays eggs; most become infertile females (workers) but, eventually, she lays eggs that develop into males and fertile females (queens).

By late summer, the queen stops laying and wasps are at their most numerous. They then seek sugary foods to feed the new queens, males and remaining larvae. Our food and drinks can be attractive to foraging wasps, hence their pestering of alfresco diners. Wasps occasionally feed on honeybees and can raid colonies, but this is rarely a cause of colony failure.

#### WASP FACTS:

**Taxonomy:** Worldwide, there are more than 100,000 wasp species.

**Social:** The relatively few social wasp species, including common wasps and hornets, are in the Vespidae family.

**Solitary wasps:** Non-social wasps are often parasitoids, laying eggs on – or actually inside – other insect species.

Virgin queens mate, then seek out safe places to overwinter, and emerge in spring to start the cycle again. Before calling a pest controller to apply pesticides to a wasp nest, think about the results. If the nest is high and rarely approached, it may not be a hazard; knowing its location and avoiding confrontation is often enough to avoid stings. Live and let live, and you will benefit from the pest control a wasp colony brings.

Source: RHS The Garden – April 2017

*Observing garden fauna with wildlife columnist Jean Vernon*

## INVASIVE WASPS IN CAPE TOWN

*Exotic, invasive wasps can compete against our indigenous wasps. Under the National Environment Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), Act 10 of 2004, the German wasp and European paper wasp are designated as Category 1b Invasive Alien Species. This legislation states that: • These wasps need to be managed as part of an invasive species control plan.*

### EUROPEAN WASP *Polistes dominulus* INVASIVE

ID Yellow tipped, upward pointing feelers

- Often seen on lawns looking for caterpillars or moisture; also seen drinking water or collecting fibre to make nests. Fly with their legs hanging down.
- Longer than a bee; 15-19mm long with a narrow body. Queens are not easily distinguished from workers.
- Usually rather docile but will attack if threatened. More active, aggressive and more likely to attack on hot days however, they do not swarm and chase a target.
- Nest under eaves or in sheltered places.
- Spray the nest just before sunrise or after sunset with Doom (Active ingredients Pyrethroids)





**GERMAN WASP - *Vespula germanica* INVASIVE**

- Black feelers which point down. Stout, more like a bee.
- Generally, nests underground.
- Aggressive. If disturbed quick to defend nest, and sting, swarm and chase.
- Queens are larger; 15mm long.
- Do not try and destroy nest without bee suit (very hazardous!)



### LOCAL PAPER WASP- *Polistes marginalis* - DO NOT KILL

- Nest hangs from a 'stalk' in bushes or under eaves.
- Usually rather docile but will attack if threatened.
- Does not swarm or chase.



For more details go to:

<https://theconversation.com/invasive-wasps-threaten-south-african-ecosystems-what-the-public-can-do-to-help-stop-the-spread-233568>

iNaturalist -

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/european-paper-wasp-invasions>

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/german-common-yellowjacket-invasions>

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/paper-wasps-of-usa-and-south-africa>

by Marianne Alexander,  
in consultation with Dr Veldman



"Buzz off!"

Source: *The Crazy World of Gardening* –  
Cartoons by Bill Stott



## BENEFICIAL INSECTS FOR YOUR GARDEN

The idea of having insects of any variation, living within the garden you work so hard to maintain, can manifest a troublesome stream of thought. In truth, there are several tiny creatures that create a healthy dynamic for your greens. In understanding how these insects operate, it is possible to work with them to create a natural balance within your own garden.

Here are the most common insects that can be a benefit to most gardens:

**Ladybugs** – These familiar beetles work overtime to clear your garden of unwelcome guests. Harmless to humans, ladybugs will feast on aphids. They also lay their eggs directly onto aphid colonies, feeding on these leaf eaters three weeks before they hatch. A ladybug not only eats up to sixty aphids a day, but they also have a ravenous appetite for other small mites and leafhoppers.



**Parasitic Wasps** – Fortunately, these are not the stinging wasps most tend to find alarming. These wasps feed on pollens and nectars, quite similarly to the ladybug. Once they have found a home within your garden, they most commonly will begin to eat most anything in the grub/worm family. These particular wasps are in need of moisture to survive, thriving on gardens that are well-watered with moist soils.

**Praying Mantis** – One of the larger species, these creatures are just as much interesting to have in a garden as they are helpful.



Praying Mantis can be purchased in egg form, and placed amid shrubbery or large leaf plants. After they have hatched, they will dine on large beetles, fruit flies, moths and crickets. They require a certain degree of humidity, and are hard to spot, as they tend to avoid direct sunlight.



**Green Lacewings** - These winged bugs were initially native to Australia. They are now found worldwide, commonly used in gardens to ward off caterpillars and white flies. Green lacewings commonly do not eat other insects. Their main interest is that of insect's eggs. Although, if eggs are not in abundance, they will use their paralyzing venom to consume up to 200 aphids per week.

**Dragonflies** - The dragonfly is not only of assistance to your garden, but also the tending gardener. Dragonflies eat mosquitoes. They generally gravitate to tall reedy plants, weaving in between them to catch prey. Importantly, any

pesticide used to eliminate mosquitoes will also kill off dragonflies. So, after spotting dragonflies and understanding their diet, sprays for mosquitoes can be eliminated.

In an effort to minimize the use and cost of pesticides, allowing beneficial insects to house themselves within a garden is also a benefit to the gardener. In most cases, the trick is to make sure your beneficial insects outnumber insects that can create damage. Invite beneficial insects into your garden by providing nectarous flowers and flowering plants. Also providing a garden with flowers that bloom at alternate times throughout the year will keep your helpful insects from traveling to find a new food base. While it is possible to purchase these critters, it is sometimes most effective to encourage those that are already living within your garden. Allowing your garden insects to work for you may provide astonishing results.



Source: Pamela Ravenwood [Lambert Smiths Insecta](#)

## AS A MATTER OF INTEREST ...

Take a look: [\(2\) Mandy McKay - AVAILABLE Another recently completed painting.... | Facebook](#)

Photos: Google, K Gleeson, A and G Thorpe