



I propose... to show, that, while, from a very small piece of ground, a large part of the food of a considerable family may be raised, the very act of raising it will be the best possible foundation of education of the children of the labourer; that it will... give them the best chance of leading happy lives..

*William Cobbett, from "Cottage Economy"*

CONTENTS	
Next Meeting .....	1
Outings.....	1
Welcome to .....	1
From the Committee .....	2
Report-back.....	2
• John Venn outing	
The Athenaeum – 2026 update	4
As a Matter of Interest .....	5
What is this? .....	6

## NEXT MEETING

**Monday, 6 April 2026 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum**

Members: No entrance fee

Visitors: R40 per person

## THE FORMATION OF THE GROOTBOS FLORILEGIUM

Vicki Thomas has been involved in all aspects of botanical art, from scientific illustration, and publications, to exhibiting art in galleries locally and internationally, teaching, curating and giving talks. She has won awards for her art and for promoting indigenous flora, and has works in very prestigious collections around the world. Vicky tells us what we will see and hear:

"This talk is about the gathering of botanical artists from South Africa and around the world to produce a collection of fine botanical artworks of plants on the conservation area of Grootbos, near Gansbaai. The project has

culminated in a glorious book, which some of you may well know about.

This project was my initiation and has been the highlight of my long career in botanical art (half a century!) and although I have stopped botanical painting now, my enthusiasm for this exacting artform has continued."

## NEXT OUTING

**A new addition to the calendar: Wed, 8 April 2026 at 09:15 for 09:30 to see CHS member Linda Pollard's garden in Constantia.**

Her description of her garden:

"My garden is a bit on the wild side, which is how I like it. My husband is in charge of the lawns and hard landscaping. He is in fact obsessed with the lawns! I love my compost heap and spend a lot of time propagating cuttings. In the height of summer it's quite stressful keeping everything going (especially the pots), even though we have a borehole. But when Autumn comes around, I and the plants breathe a sigh of relief. Hopefully there will still be some colour in April. A garden needs to be shared and enjoyed by others, so I would be very happy to welcome a group of CHS members who may be able to give me some expert gardening advice in return for a tea." There will also be plants for sale.

Limited to 20 members. RSVP to Glenda by no later than **6 April 2026**.

**Wed, 15 April 2026 at 10:00** to visit Hart Nursery

Pam Hart grew up in the nursery trade because of her father being a horticulturist. She learnt everything about the trade from when she was a small child. She has a wealth of experience and knowledge in all things gardening. She likes to use natural aids like honey, cinnamon and brown vinegar and does not use pesticides or chemical fertilisers.

She will be speaking to us about the different Planting Zones in the W. Cape. She will discuss Xeroscaping and how we can plant cleverly to manage difficult conditions and a lack of water. An example she gives is her Hermanus garden. Apparently passersby stop all the time to ask her how she manages to have such a stunning garden and to grow certain plants in the conditions at the seaside. She has succulents, exotics and a mix of plants and because of the clever combinations and use of Xeroscaping methods, she has been very successful.

After these topics are discussed she will follow this with a question and answer session.

Limited to 25 members. Please RSVP to Glenda by no later than **11 April 2026**.

## **WELCOME TO ...**

... Beth Manatura and Nicola Hattingh. We hope that their time with the CHS will bring them as much pleasure as it does for the rest of our members.

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

A big Thank You to those members who have already paid their annual subscription. And an even bigger **Thank YOU** to members who included generous donations with their subs. The Committee is very grateful for all payments received.

## **FROM THE COMMITTEE**

### **Prince Albert Open Gardens**

This is very definitely happening from 25 – 27 September (arrive earlier and/or stay longer, if you wish). Thus far we have 14 people going. Details can only come later this year. Glenda will be in touch so that members who are interested in joining the group can sort out accommodation and transport with each other.

### **Autumn Plant Sale 2026**

This will be held at the home of Bernice Mallet, Pols Acre, 22 Ladies Mile Ext, Constantia.

There are only a few weeks before Sunday 3 May, when we will be in full CHS Sale mode, snapping up the gorgeous plants our members have been nurturing for months. Then onto the Tea Garden for a catchup chat (maybe even a dash of skinner!) with old friends you have not seen in ages. All enjoyed with a cup of well-brewed coffee and some home-baked waist-stretching calorific comestibles. Doesn't that sound great?

Of course it does. You can't fault life, can you?

But first we must get to that Promised Land, and some work lies ahead. So let's pull together, in true CHS style:

### **Let's talk plants**

Use this month to get your plants into as good a condition as possible. Make sure they're planted into plastic pots and not into yoghurt tubs, please – but do keep the tubs to cut into strips for labels.

If anybody needs pots, please ask Isabella ahead of the April meeting.

Feed your plants early this month – this will be the last feeding you need to do. Seagro is a great all-round fertiliser; Talborne is very good too but works over a longer period so save that for your own plants, maybe!

Make sure any dead leaves or twigs are removed, and harden the plant off by introducing it slowly to sun, if sun is what it needs.

Write the name on a label with a permanent marker and stick the label into the pot. If you don't know the name, take photos and ask on the WhatsApp group. It will make the work much easier on the day when plants are dropped off for the sale.

Finally, make a note in your diary to come to the sale on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. We'd love to see lots of CHS members attending – and your friends, even if it's just to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a slice of cake.

#### **Other mundane matters**

**Boxes:** Please could members collect cardboard boxes, which buyers use to carry their plant purchases. The flatter fruit/veg boxes are best, but all medium-sized boxes that can carry about 5-6 plants are great. Bring them when you drop off plants before the sale.

**Duties:** Glenda will shortly be sending out the duty list. Please be generous and volunteer **both before** the Sale and **on** the day. Not only do you get a sneak preview of the sale plants, but you also get to meet people and have a good time generally.

**Tables:** We are going to need to borrow a number of camping/outdoor tables for the tea garden, as well as work surfaces.

**Raffle prizes:** If you can donate a raffle prize, that would be really welcome. Joy Currie (083-357 -2876) is the person to contact to let her know what you have.

**Gardenphernalia:** Please bring items you no longer use, such as tools, pots, seedling trays and stakes (in working condition, please), or any gardening decorations. We will take them off your hands and sell them.

#### **Last, this is very important!**

**Our venue lies on a busy road**, between Constantia (Checkers) Emporium circle and Christ Church. We are managing access safety via a plan, and there will be people on hand to assist visitors. But we will have to be wide awake, careful and patient. Please accept that there will be vehicle restrictions around access. These arrangements will reach you shortly before the Sale.

Andrew Clarke has agreed to manage access and parking, but he is going to need (wo)manpower.

**I ask members of our Society to volunteer for duties at the gate, so that all visitors remain safe. The duty list is coming your way soon.**

## **REPORT BACK**

#### **Autumn Seasonal Raffle**

Once again, there were lots of prizes to choose from and many members went home very happy with their prize winnings. Thank you to everyone who provided prizes.

This will be repeated in July – our Winter Seasonal Raffle.

#### **Outing to Coniston in Muizenberg**

We were greeted with a perfect day for our visit to Coniston. We visited last year this time and this visit we had over 30 people. John first took us around Muizenberg Park to see the work that has been completed and to show us Phase 3 which has now been given the go ahead by the council. This is a costly project and the reason for John opening his garden and home to visitors is to raise funds. Everything he has in the garden is inspired by all the time spent in Singapore and his various travels.

John is a larger-than-life character and his home and garden reflect his creativity, passion and zest for life. He has created different rooms making up the garden and it is all on different levels with water running through it from a natural stream. We entered into the Japanese garden which includes a bridge, tree ferns and bonsai. The one side of the garden has indigenous plants and the other exotic. There is a conservatory with orchards and a desert garden. There is even a dell-like area (a bit like Kirstenbosch) where you walk across flat rocks with water flowing underneath and the damp and cool is exactly like the feel you experience in the Dell. The secret to this garden seems to be a wall of New Zealand Christmas trees on the south side which protect the garden from the wind. He also has plenty of water as the stream runs through the property. We were then treated to refreshments including banana bread made using the bananas grown in his garden.



Top: Beautiful flowers in the Japanese area of the front garden.

Above, left and right: Views of the back garden rooms and water features.

### THE ATHENAEUM – 2026 update

In its role as a meeting place and home of many clubs, societies and professional institutes, the Athenaeum today has a warm place in the hearts of many Capetonians. Altered inside in 1967, and having gone through some changes over the years – part of the land was sold in the 1990s – the Athenaeum now sits proudly between the buildings of Boundary Terraces. It is currently having a facelift inside and out and the garden, when in full bloom, is wonderful. The rooms available are a Drawing Room, a beautiful L-shaped room featuring two original fireplaces and magnificent mirrors; the Newbery Hall which seats 70 and is set up for sound; the Dorothea Bleek Boardroom with its 12-seater table; and the Du Toit Room which is perfect for dance, drama or exercise. The Goodwin Room is rented to a tenant. There is also a small kitchen suitable for the plating of snacks.

A flat attached can accommodate the management couple, needed for regular supervision and help to keep meetings and functions running smoothly. Air conditioning within the Newbery, and spacious grounds outside, give an air of modest luxury that is a perfect setting for functions that range from philatelic auctions and orchid competitions to lectures by distinguished visitors to the Cape.

The Trust that runs the Athenaeum was first constituted in 1949, later becoming registered as a non-profit organization in terms of the Companies Act. The charges to Societies, NPOs and the public for using the Athenaeum are moderate, especially for yearly bookings for regular meetings. Applications for becoming a member Society are considered by a Board of Directors, elected each year at a meeting of members and society representatives. With ample after-hours parking and a good situation close to transport routes, the Athenaeum has proved a successful centre for Cape societies, clubs and institutions.

The CHS began holding meetings at The Athenaeum in 1974. As a Member Society, our current representative on the Board of Directors is Nick Starke.

## AS A MATTER OF INTEREST ...

- A few housekeeping rules for those who haven't been with the CHS for very long:
  - Our meetings are held monthly on the **first Monday** of every month, except January, and including public holidays. Be sure to collect a ticket (no payment), for the lucky draw, on arrival. On seasonal raffle nights you are only asked to buy raffle tickets.
  - Outings are organised on a monthly basis, for the most part. The host(ess) of the garden visit will set a limit for the numbers to attend. Therefore, it is essential that you RSVP individually for an eye to be kept on numbers.
 

If an outing is not well supported, the members on the list will be given the opportunity to invite a family member or friend to join the group. These guests will be charged R40.
  - Should you have good suggestions for outings and speakers, please tell Anne (083-562-8368 – outings) or Cherise (065-100-4564 – speakers). The best would be for you to offer your garden for members to see.
- Here are the details of our upcoming Plant Sale in May.

**Cape Horticultural Society  
Annual Plant Sale**

**SUNDAY 3 MAY  
9.00 TIL 13.00**  
22 Ladies Mile Ext  
Constantia

**ACT NOW**  
Plant in Autumn  
for  
flowers in  
Spring

**UNUSUAL PLANTS**  
TREES, SHRUBS, BULBS  
& SUCCULENTS

**TEA  
COFFEE  
EATS**

**EXCELLENT PRICES**

**EXPERT ADVICE**

**ENQUIRIES**  
Chris 0604022089  
info@capehorticulturalsociety.co.za

**CARD FACILITIES AVAILABLE**

**Cape Horticultural Society  
1903**

**WHAT IS THIS?**

Do these look familiar to you? Send Glenda your answer and you'll find out how correct you are in the April newsletter.



Only one member attempted identification of last month's photos. Here are the correct answers:

The leaf stalk of an Arum Lily (*Zantedischia*)



The seeds of a *Pavonia praemorsa*



Photos: A Gleeson, G Leigh, B du Rand, A and G Thorpe  
 Any and all photos taken at CHS events may be used in the newsletter and on social media.