

There is one luxury item in the utilitarian garden: a potting shed. I've just built one. It's a fabulous haven among composts and flowerpots and forks. As an escape from the family, I recommend it with no reservations at all!

Alan Titchmarsh

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 1 June 2026 at 19:30 at The Athenaeum

Members: No entrance fee

Visitors: R40 per person

THE GENUS *ERICA*, A PARAGON OF DIVERSITY AND MYSTERY IN THE CAPE FLORISTIC REGION

Dr Ren Hoekstra is a Cape Town-based botanist who spends much of his free time exploring the rugged mountains of the Cape. His passion for plants took root in 2021 when he joined the Custodians for Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW), a citizen science program that works with researchers, rangers, horticulturists, students and other volunteers to survey and protect threatened plant species.

The Cape Floristic Region (CFR) is the smallest of the world's six floral kingdoms, yet it boasts one of the highest levels of plant endemism worldwide. It hosts a significant number of rare and threatened plant species, many of which are highly localised, often to remote and largely inaccessible mountainous areas. The Custodians for Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW) is a citizen science program that works with researchers, rangers, horticulturists, students and other volunteers to survey and protect these threatened plant species, the work occasionally involving extensive field surveys in the remote Cape mountains. The program has contributed to the rediscovery of numerous long-lost and severely threatened plant species, as well as the discovery of several new species, most of which have specialised niches and restricted geographical distributions, putting them at high risk of extinction. The genus *Erica* exemplifies the extraordinary diversity and mystery of the CFR, with almost 700 species being endemic, a significant number of undescribed species still remaining, and new species still being discovered. Our taxonomy working group uses an integrative approach that incorporates ecological and conservation assessments into new species descriptions to strengthen the link between taxonomy and conservation. This presentation will be an exhibition of the exciting ongoing work in *Erica* taxonomy, including insights into long-lost and extremely rare species, and new species discoveries over the last few years. It will touch on the work of CREW, and it hopes to inspire young nature-lovers and researchers to continue actively exploring and engaging with our unique biodiversity to ignite a passion for plant conservation.

NEXT OUTING

Mon, 8 June – 09:15 for 09:30: We will be visiting the very impressive new Coastal Park Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Muizenberg. You will find out exactly what happens to the recycled materials you collect.

Directions and further details will be given to those on the list. Limited to 25 members. Please RSVP to Glenda by Thursday, 4 June.

This R434 million facility marks a major milestone in the City's efforts to divert recyclable materials from landfill by reselling these back to manufacturers to produce new products. Coastal Park MRF is the first to be located on an existing operational landfill site. Constructing the facility on a 65 000m² of land that was underlain by a 5m to 6m thick municipal solid waste deposit and covered by a sizeable building rubble stockpile required innovative and unique engineering solutions.

The state-of-the-art facility is designed to receive recyclables collected through the City's door to door recycling collection programme. The mixed recyclables such as plastics, paper, cardboard, glass and metals are then separated and prepared for re-sale to manufacturing industries where they are used to produce new products.

This forms part of the City's long-term strategy to increase recycling and extend the lifespan of landfill sites by recovering valuable materials from the waste stream before they are disposed of. Once at full capacity, it will receive 65 tonnes of recyclables per day. There will be 160 people employed at full operation. By recovering recyclable materials before they reach landfill, we are extending the life of landfills and saving public money, also helping the environment and creating jobs.

WELCOME TO ...

... Dave de Klerk, Mark Johnston, Ginna Liprini, Kathryn Rowan, Anneliese Schauerte, Anniken Trefelt, Alna Wolff, Jannice van der Heiden, Sonia Visser, Saskia and Lize-Marick Wolfaardt, who were all recruited at our Plant Sale. Teresa Botha and Bradley Croukamp signed up via our website.

We wish them all a time of happy gardening with the CHS, learning from experienced members and enjoying the various activities.

REPORT-BACK

The 121st Annual General Meeting was held on 4 May 2026 attended by 41 members and 2 visitors.

Chairperson's Report for the Year Ending 28 February 2025

"The Cape Horticultural Society is 123 years old this year and thriving despite many societies struggling to keep up with the times and to keep their membership growing.

The Cape Horticultural Societys' mission statement is a testimony to all our members' plant passions. We ...

- ... promote the growing of a variety of different plants for the benefit of all animal and insect life and believes that a garden with birds, butterflies, chameleons, lizards and frogs, and alive with insects, represents a healthy garden in which plants flourish and the balance of nature exists;
- ... advocate for the growing of water-wise plants, both indigenous and exotic, provided that the exotic plants are not invasive; and
- ... encourage the use of natural, organic fertilisers, and discourages the use of chemical fertilisers and poisons in gardens and only supports the use of chemical supplements under certain conditions such as to enhance nutrient-deficient soils.

Our focus this past year has been engagement on social media, members and FUNdraising.

Our garden and plant interests are evident in our active WhatsApp Group chat, with daily sharing of inspiration, information and knowledge.

One of our most successful ideas is the seasonal raffle, and with the funds raised (R5540) we will be choosing something horticulturally meaningful to contribute to.

As chairperson I am blessed to have a lively active committee full of enthusiasm and suggestions, each of whom is committed to their portfolios, and to ensuring the members feel included and are having a wonderful experience within our special green CHS space.

- Glenda Thorpe (secretary): all things and fountain of CHS knowledge
- Chris Wren-Sargent (vice-chair): fundraising initiatives, sound, plant sale, weekend away
- Isabella Hayden: treasurer, plant exhibit table
- Anne Gleeson: outings, plant exhibit table labels, plant sale, weekend away
- Belinda du Rand: speaker's assistance, fundraising, social media
- Susan Armstrong: teas, nursery table, library, plant sale
- Marianne Alexander (president): social media, newsletter articles

Co-Opted

- Lisa Otto: social media
- Joy Currie: assistant treasurer, weekend away

I would like to give the committee's heartfelt thanks to Dutch Diesveld who served as the CHS treasurer for 12 years and has assisted Isabella for the past 2½ years. His service was given with a calm practical efficiency, and patient tolerance laced with a lovely sense of humour. We are deeply grateful to Dutch for the time he gave to the CHS, and the generous spirit in which he served.

Members who are regularly assisting the committee are Nick Starke, Daniel Conradie, Elwyn Whitford, Jean Fillis, Wilma Tindall and Cherry Mann.

Nick serves as our representative on the Athenaeum board and has been supporting us with his wisdom and experience whenever needed. Daniel is doing the seed exchange and the plant exhibit table too. Elwyn has been great with teas and tasty biscuits. We also thank Jean for her library book reviews, Wilma for seeing to the advertising of meetings/events in the local media and Cherry for her assistance with the nursery table.

We have many members supporting these committee members, and even more members we can call on anytime should we have a little something extra needing to be taken care of. I would like to thank you all for your wonderful support as you are integral to the success of the CHS.

CHS members enjoy fellowship, attend regular meetings with great guest speakers and outstanding outings with garden tours. We can take home unusual or free plants or seeds and learn about featured specimens. The monthly newsletter entertains and keeps us in the loop, and any questions asked receive knowledgeable expert responses. The annual Plant Sale, raffles and plant shares are also part of what we enjoy. Then we can stay updated on plant fairs and garden events, join green activities, share experiences on Instagram and Facebook and vote to have a say in all this at the AGM. Not a bad list!

To keep the Cape Horticultural Society thriving and relevant in the years ahead, we will be looking for members to help with:

- ✓ Monthly meeting Give-Away-Plant purchases.
- ✓ Monthly contributors to our newsletter
- ✓ Teas
- ✓ Auditing our financials
- ✓ Garden Day celebration.

And by 2028 we need

- ❖ A new secretary
- ❖ A new vice chair

I ask you to volunteer to do something small and manageable. Even if you play only a supporting role, when these all come together we can enjoy a huge success and see this unique South African plant society into its next 100 years.

I look forward to us continuing celebrating our passion for plants and all things green in the coming years."

President

Marianne Alexander was re-appointed to this position for another year.

Committee

Committee members elected for the coming year are Susan Armstrong, Belinda du Rand, Anne Gleeson, Glenda Thorpe, Cherise Viljoen, Chris Wren-Sargent with the addition of Lisa Otto, Joy Currie and Barbara Patton. The Office Bearers will be appointed at the first Committee Meeting after the AGM.

Honorary Members

The Committee had the privilege of awarding Honorary Membership to three remarkable women whose passion, knowledge, and dedication have greatly enriched our society and inspired generations of gardeners.

- ✿ Trained at Kew Gardens, **Jenny Scarr** came to South Africa after marrying fellow horticulturist Errol Scarr and lectured in Durban for 10 years. Over the years, she has generously shared her knowledge of orchids, plants, and indigenous bulbs with members and gardening enthusiasts alike. A past Chairlady of the CHS, Jenny's passion for horticulture and willingness to teach have left a lasting impact on our society.
- ✿ **Glenda Thorpe's** dedication to the CHS has gone far beyond her role as secretary. For many years she has worked tirelessly behind the scenes with efficiency, warmth, and good humour. From writing newsletters and sharing horticultural updates to helping keep members connected during Covid, Glenda has played an invaluable role in keeping the CHS thriving and welcoming.
- ✿ Growing up in the nursery trade, **Pam Hart** developed a lifelong passion and deep knowledge of gardening from an early age. As the face of Hart Nursery, established in 1993, Pam has dedicated herself to environmentally friendly and water-wise gardening practices. Together with her husband Gary, she has inspired generations of gardeners through her nursery, talks, and commitment to gardening in harmony with nature.

We thank Pam (left), Jenny (right) and Glenda (centre), for their extraordinary contributions to horticulture and to the CHS community. Their passion and generosity continue to enrich us all.



FROM THE SALE COMMITTEE

Plant sale report from Chris, Plant Sale Manager

"Sale 2026 did not have the most propitious start. Why? Well, let me tell you how it went:

We began with a sub-committee that lost two members and a venue before our first meeting. Susan went out of

commission after her back op, and Belinda went out of the province to a family event over the weekend we had chosen for the sale, so things looked a bit thin. The appeal went out, and a quiet voice from Ladies' Mile answered. Bernice offered her garden, and we heaved a sigh of you know what.

Everyone who saw the garden loved it as a venue, and we knew the tea garden would work as well, but that road was a concern and became my dominant sale issue over the next two months. Two on-site meetings with Andrew Clarke, and a plan evolved. Thankfully, that plan worked very well, with no accidents occurring during the Sale at all. More relief.

With a small sub-committee of three, we knew we had to delegate to members from early which worked a charm. All of these members gave time, thought and effort to make their areas work well:

Glenda: Cash table

Linda Pollard: CHS Promotion

Joy Currie: Raffle, with prizes gathered by Lynne Jarcho and Cherise

Anne: Tea Garden

Isabella: Plant pricing and display, information and floats

Tony Penso: Gardenphernalia

Andrew Clarke: the Gatekeepers



Angela waiting for customers at the tea garden; Linda and Cecile ready to sign up new members; Nick and Ninon (behind Nick) working hard at taking payments for plants and raffle tickets.

Friday and Saturday were the days on which plants came in. By Saturday midday the tables were all up and our plants on display, after a huge effort by Isabella in the light rain. It was time for the stallholders to move on site, and they did so quickly and professionally.



Jill and Cherry placing plants in their correct categories; laden tables; a very wet Isabella doing a final check of the table layout.

The Sunday was really lovely: the rain disappeared and the sun came out to grace our sale. The setting was magnificent: Bernice's garden had space, a winding entrance and plenty of interesting nooks to wonder about, and the plants looked great against the lawn. Honorary Member Adam Harrower opened the Sale with a dramatic flourish. The tea garden was an absolute treat, and our members enjoyed catching up with old friends over a hot cup. And Sue's seed table (run with Daniel) was a hit, selling numerous packets of unusual seeds to buyers.



Plant and tea lovers enjoying what they love most.

At midday the raffle was drawn and winners contacted. They were Georgina Charlesworth, Willem Kemp, Chris Wren-Sargent, Sally Klootwyk, Carla Houghton, Clara Mervis, Thomas Elliott and Thalia Rodkin. Our thanks to the various suppliers who donated prizes, as well as the members who provided extra prizes to make up 10 beautiful hampers.

At 12.45, after selecting out four trays for sale at our meetings, the remaining plants were given away to all who could carry them out – one less matter to deal with after the event! And then it was all over, and the lawn was rapidly cleared.



Fee and Guy selling their home-grown trees; Andrew with his handmade garden items; Calvin selling Sue's house plants.



Paul thrilled buyers with his *Hoyas*; local farmers selling their veggies; Marja doing some final dismantling.

We signed up 11 new members on the day, which is very heartening indeed.

Some figures: The raffle brought in R3590, and the tea garden R5500, both record figures. The final profit from this year's Sale was R23500.

My thanks to Isabella and Anne for their thought and effort, to Glenda for her efficient help and attention to detail, and to all who contributed in any way, whether by doing a duty or propagating plants or even by just being there.

Lastly, to Ron and Bernice Mallet, I thank you kindly for allowing us the run of your house, and for your delightful generosity of spirit in doing so."

REPORT BACK

May Quiz Night

The AGM was followed by an evening of fun – a first for a CHS meeting. Kathy, the quizmaster, and Jill, the points keeper, were very organized, the questions all plant-related – some easy, others not so – and a great time was had by everyone present.



The winning team with their *Streptocarpus* prizes; Kathy and Jill admiring their gifts.

HOUSE PLANTS continued from Nov 2025

Calathea and *Maranta*

The beauty of nature can be admired in observing the delicate embroidery on the leaves of these very pretty plants.

Origins: Both are native to tropical regions of South America, and are located along the large rivers. They have proved themselves to be excellent house plants, especially for large indoor displays. The *Calathea* and *Maranta* genera both belong to the Marantaceae family.

Morphology: They are perennial herbaceous plants that are rhizomatous and are either almost deprived of aerial stems or have a very short one, as in the case of *Maranta*.

The leaves, large in *Calatheas* and smaller in *Marantas*, are on long stalks with a green background, and are variously shaped and coloured, or have very bright and regular stripes. The lower surface is almost always uniformly reddish or it reproduces, in different shades, the same design that is on the upper surface. The flower and fruit are necessary to make the botanical identification, but do not have any ornamental value.

If we exclude *Maranta arundinacea* that is cultivated in India and Oceania, but mainly in Central America for arrowroot starch, the other species are popular both as greenhouse and house plants, and for gardens in the tropics.

Cultivation: They are warm temperature plants that almost all require a 75 to 80°F temperature (less than 100°C), a high humidity, and reduced light. These, of course, represent the conditions peculiar to their original environment.

Calathea is sensitive to strong light; the *Maranta* is more tolerant in this respect.

They are propagated in spring by division of the clumps and of the rhizomes; reproduction by seed is utilised by breeders.

They grow best in a mixture that is rich in organic matter and can be made of six parts organic matter and two parts top soil to one part sand. During the vegetative period they need frequent watering.

Glenda Thorpe

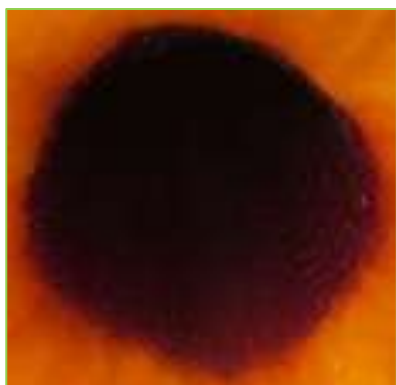
Source: House Plants in Colour
Orbis Publishing – 1974

WHAT IS THIS?

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



Here are the names of last month's close-ups:



Thunbergia elata
"Black-eyed Susan"



Ceropegia radicans

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