



## From our Chairperson

With Christmas just a few days away, I think the recent rains have been the best Christmas gift we could possibly receive.

It certainly does make life so much easier when we don't have to get up and water before 6:00 a.m., or go out and water after 6:00 p.m. Please remember, we do still have the special concession – one hour outside of watering times (that is, up to 7:00 a.m.), reserved for when you are watering common areas. Our gardeners are allowed to water using irrigation/hoses, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

We do so appreciate the many residents who are watering com-

mon areas. Malcolm Fox is busy sorting out some of the irrigation zones by relocating valves, so that we can switch the irrigation on without getting drenched.

Hopefully, once this has been completed, more residents will be able to help by switching on a zone before the gardeners get here in the morning. This will enable the gardeners to water those areas which need to be watered by hose pipe, before 8:00 a.m. Thank you so much Malcolm!

Our next project is the Garden of Remembrance, to be located in the small cemetery in the Village. We have put together an estimate of

costs for this project. Andre Jeliman, who is in touch with the Matthews family, will be forwarding this estimate to Neven Matthews who resides in Orlando, Florida, in the USA. The family has indicated that they are willing to contribute towards the costs of the project, for which we are very grateful. Thanks too, to Trevor and the Church, who hold services at the Village on Sundays. They have offered to donate a bird bath or a bench for this garden which is also very much appreciated. The garden will be accessible from inside the Village. The existing gate to the cemetery will be bricked up and an arch built in the wall facing the Village. We have already had Brands Treefellers come and trim and shape the existing trees in the cemetery, but the project will really get underway from mid-January 2018.

If any residents are able to pot shade-loving plants for us, which will be planted in the Garden of Remembrance, this would be much appreciated. Please contact any of the Garden Committee members if you are able to assist with this.

We wish all of our residents a happy and blessed Christmas. Thank you to the many residents who assist us where they are able to, and for the many positive comments and phone calls which the Garden Committee receive. Special thanks as always to our fantastic Garden Committee members. We also value and appreciate the hard work done by Clement and his team of hard-working gardeners.

Best wishes

Doreen



## Meet the committee

Doreen Dennehy	Unit 41	5243
Louise (Lu) Penberthy	Unit 163	5389
Margie Lockwood	Unit 133	5451
Beryl Taylor	Unit 161	5388
Jim Taylor	Unit 161	5388
Thersia Tait	Unit 47	5227
Monica Hall	Unit 436	5209
Di Main	Unit 57	5125

Thank you to every person who contributed material or time over the last year. Our gardens are looking better and better every season. A special thank you to:

Mary-Ann Crocker	Unit 85	Juanita Le Roux	Unit 193	Peter Kritzinger	Unit 156
Merle Heasman	Unit 135	Ann Lourens	Unit 301	Lieb van Jaarsveld	Unit 148
Margie Hutchins	Unit 91	Rosemary Woolley	Unit 129	Gladys King	Unit 108
Jean Williams	Unit 112	Joan Penrose	Unit 131	Lyn Sharp	Unit 37
Mandy Green	Unit 303	Billy Diener	Unit 178	Doreen Dennehy	Unit 41
Marion Cloete	Unit 507	Philip Salzwedel	Unit 56		

Sometimes we do not have a name for the person contributing – there was a lady in the apartments who gave one of the gardeners some succulents in pots for the common areas – to you and all the other anonymous contributors – we appreciate your efforts and donations!

## Inside...

Colour of the Sun	2
The Hydrangea	3
Our Trees	4
Versatile Basil	5
Succulent Tips	6
Garden Couch	7

# Colour of the Sun

Browsing through any indigenous plant book or surfing the Internet, a person can only marvel at the fact that most of our indigenous plants produce flowers or bracts in colours ranging from lemony yellow to orange in order to celebrate the sunlight our beautiful country is blessed with.

## Trees:

A breathtaking sight throughout Southern Africa is the numerous Acacia species of which at least one will be in flower somewhere. These exceptionally useful, adaptable and versatile trees come in various shapes and sizes and attract birds and butterflies.



## Shrubs:



**Freylinia lanceolate** is a large shrub or small tree that flowers sporadically throughout the year. Also known as honeybells this shrub has a charm all of its own and attracts hosts of butterflies, bees and other pollinators. Originally from the Western Cape, it fares equally well in summer and winter rainfall areas. This plant loves moist areas but will do well in any position if watered well during the hot summer months.

**Calpurnia aurea** is a waterwise large shrub or small tree that will thrive in full sun. The feathery leaves are found at the end of the branches.



In winter, big bunches of fragrant, yellow, pea-like flowers appear that attracts many bees and birds that pollinate the flowers and feast on the nectar.

**Leucadendron** Hybrids and Species are low maintenance, water wise bushes, also known as cone bushes. New species were made available for gardeners to use, not



only in the Cape, but inland as well. These plants will grow to one meter high and can withstand light frost. When well established the plants will be drought tolerant but should not be allowed to dry out completely, especially during winter.

## Perennials:

Nothing says 'summer' quite like the **Arctotis** Hybrids. These fast growing plants loves full sun in a rocky



border, planter boxes or containers. Plant in well composted soil and water well during the winter in the summer rainfall areas.

## Ground covers:

**Dymondia margaretae** or silver carpet has silvery-green foliage as the name suggests. This ground



cover grows quickly and works well as a soil stabilizer for slopes. The plant is used to great effect as a lawn substitute and is able to handle light traffic. Plant the drought tolerant plants in full sun, but they will also be able to handle some shade during the day.

## Annuals:

It's a sight people travel long distances to see and never forget: field upon field covered in shimmering orange, yellow and white daisies.

**Dimorphotheca sinuate** or better known as Namaqualand daisies are easy to grow and can now be found in most winter and spring gardens. Sow the seeds in early April and enjoy your own flower show from late July to well in September depending on the weather and whether or not you remember to water the plants occasionally.



# Hydrangea

## Christmas Roses

Hydrangea is a genus of 70-75 species of flowering plants native to Southern and Eastern Asia and the Americas, but now prolific in most temperate parts of the world.

Hydrangeas are shrubs 1 to 3 metres tall but some varieties grow into small trees, while others form vine like growths reaching up to 30 metres ! The plant is mainly deciduous in temperate zones. They have large oval foliage with serrated edges and flowers are produced from Spring to early Autumn.

The flowers are generally white, but in some species can be blue, pink, light or dark purple. Colour of the flowers can be affected by the PH of the soil. An acid soil will result in blue flowers while an alkaline soil (PH above 7) will result in pink flowers. The ability to produce pink or blue flowers is also influenced by the cultivar.

Hydrangeas are popular ornamental plants, grown for their large flower heads with over 600 named cultivars. Best pruned on an annual basis when the new leaf buds appear. If not cut back, the bush will become 'leggy' noting that the big leaf varieties flower on old wood. An interesting note is that some herbals recommend hydrangea root for the treatment of conditions of the urinary tract, but it is strongly advised to refrain from ingesting

any form of the plant as it contains cyanide and is toxic. However, large quantities will have to be ingested to cause any real harm.

Hydrangeas do well in partial shade. Morning sun is ideal for copious flower production. Established large leaf varieties will cope with full sun, but may need to be watered more frequently.

Hydrangeas are propagated by root stock or cuttings. To grow from a cutting, cut a branch approximately 15cm long and remove leaves from the bottom two leaf nodes. Cut largest leaves crosswise down to half their size. Rooting hormone will speed up the process, but cuttings will grow successfully without the use of hormones.

Place the cutting into a pot prepared with potting soil, press down gently until about 5cm into the soil. Place the pot in a sheltered location out of direct sunlight and keep moist. In about 2 to 4 weeks, the cutting will be rooted and your hydrangea propagation will be complete.

Hydrangeas are undoubtedly among the showiest flowers in a summer garden, and ideal for the vase, and beautiful in dried arrangements. Although not indigestible, their non-invasive root system make them an ideal showpiece in any garden.

## Easy Arrangements



Bunch together in a vase on their own (top) or add leaves (bottom) for a different effect. Combine with other flowers (right) as a base of your composition.



Repeat the same arrangement to create a "long" arrangement on a table or sideboard (top).

Use the full head as a stopper in long narrow vases for a completely different type of arrangement (left). Change water daily.

# Our TREES

In this issue we continue to showcase the trees that we plant with the money raised by the committee.

From Trees of Southern Africa by Keith Coates Palgrave and Field Guide to Trees of Southern Africa by Braam van Wyk and Piet van Wyk.

## **Bolusanthus speciosus**

*(Tree wisteria or Vanwykshout)* – A graceful small to medium deciduous tree with a narrow crown of glossy weeping foliage and rough dark brown to black deeply grooved bark. In spring, stunning long sprays of blue to mauve sweetpea-like flowers appears and is then

followed by flat narrow fruit pods borne in clusters. This beautiful drought-resistant tree does not have an aggressive root system and is also quite popular as a bonsai species.



## **Combretum hereroense**

*(Russet bushwillow or Kierieklapper)*

A semi-deciduous small tree with green to grey-green leaves, densely covered with brown velvety hairs below giving the whole tree a brown look. Greenish yellow flowers in elongated spikes appear in spring and the four winged fruit pods turn from green to dark reddish brown when ripening.

Bushbabies feed on the gum from wounds on the trees and the fruit is made into a traditional tea in Zimbabwe.



## **Calodendrum capense**

*(Cape chestnut or Wildekastaiing)*

A semi-deciduous ornamental tree with a spreading canopy. The bark is pale grey and the shiny dark green leaves turn yellow in autumn. Large pink, orchid-like flowers with long narrow curved petals dotted with dark maroon glands in terminal, branched heads

cover the tree in mid-summer. The tree is host to several swallowtail butterfly species and the flowers attract butterflies and insects. The fruit is a large five lobed woody capsule with a knobby surface and is eaten by monkeys and birds.



## **Ptaeroxylon obliquum**

*(Sneezewood or Nieshout)*

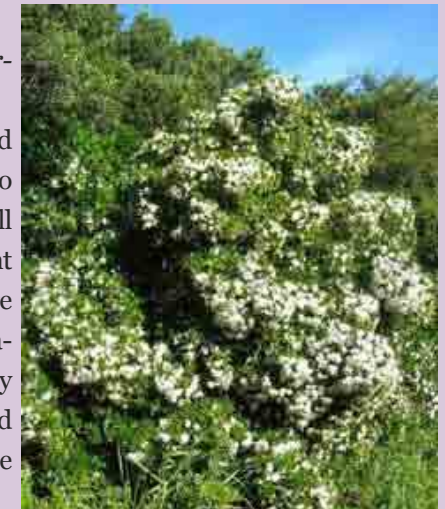
This neat well shaped tree has a sparse, rounded to cone-shaped crown of glossy dark green leaves that may turn to golden, red and bronze in autumn. The bark on young trees is pale grey and smooth while that of older trees is darker grey, furrowed and inclined to flake. From spring to summer sweet-scented yellow flowers are carried in short sprays and are followed by small two lobed grey brown fruit capsules holding winged seeds. The tree

is host to insects and insectivorous birds and Citrus Swallowtail butterflies. When working with the wood the peppery smell of the oil in the sawdust brings on rigorous sneezes hence the common name. Chips of wood placed in cupboards ward off insects. Snuff made from powdered wood is traditionally used to soothe headaches and a bark remedy is taken for arthritis and rheumatism.

## **Pavetta lanceolata**

*(Weeping bride's bush or Treurbruidsbos)*

Covered in masses of fragrant white flowers from November to January this large shrub or small tree makes a striking focal point in a small garden. The flowers are followed by clustered green pea-sized fruit that ripens to a shiny black. Sunbirds sip the nectar and a wide range of birds enjoy the fruit.





# Versatile Basil

plants grow between 30 and 45 cm high; some are annuals and others are perennial. The most common is sweet basil (Genovese) an annual with a strong scent, green medium-sized leaves and white flowers. Coming from Genoa in the north of Italy it is used in pasta sauces and salads.

es and salads.

Basil can be grown from seed, sown directly in the soil in spring. The soil needs to be rich and well-drained and in a warm and sheltered spot. Basil grows very well in containers on a kitchen window sill, and will repel flies.

Crush a leaf and rub it on your skin to repel mosquitos. You can also grow basil in pots on the patio and purple basil makes a good centrepiece in a hanging basket.

Pick basil leaves when young and always from the top to encourage new growth. Tear the leaves rather than chop and sprinkle over salads, sliced tomatoes, pasta fish, cold rice and in herb butter instead of parsley.



## One of the best known basil recipes is pesto sauce

- 1 table spoon pine nuts
- 4 table spoons shredded basil leaves
- 2 cloves garlic chopped
- 75g Parmesan cheese
- 6 tablespoons olive oil

Blend the pine nuts basil and garlic until smooth. Add the oil slowly and continue to blend the mixture until you have a thick paste. Season with salt to taste. Pesto sauce will keep in a sealed container in the fridge for at least a week.



## Snow pudding with basil custard

### Ingredients

For snow pudding:

- 7.5 ml gelatin
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1 cup boiling-hot water
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 large egg whites at room temp

For custard sauce:

- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed basil leaves
- 3 large egg yolks
- Garnish: basil leaves

### Make snow pudding:

Stir gelatin into cold water in a large bowl and let stand 5 minutes. Stir in hot water, sugar, and lemon zest and juice until sugar has dissolved. Set bowl in an ice bath and stir often until mixture is cold and thickened (consistency will be similar to that of raw egg whites), about 45 minutes. Beat gelatin mixture with an electric

mixer at medium-high speed until very frothy, 1 to 2 minutes. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until they hold soft peaks.

Add egg whites to gelatin mixture and beat at high speed until tripled in volume and thick enough to form a wide flat ribbon that holds its shape on top of mixture when beater is lifted, about 5 minutes (longer if using a hand-held mixer). Transfer to a large serving bowl and chill until set, about 3 hours.

### Make custard while snow pudding sets:

Bring milk, sugar, and a pinch of salt just to a boil in a small saucepan, stirring until sugar has dissolved. Remove from heat and stir in basil. Let steep, covered, for 30 minutes.

Put yolks in a small bowl. Strain milk mixture through a sieve into another bowl, pressing hard on the basil. Discard basil and return milk to saucepan. Whisk about 1/2 cup warm milk mixture into yolks, then whisk into remaining milk in saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until custard coats back of spoon.

Transfer custard sauce to a bowl and chill, stirring occasionally, until cold, about 2 hours.

### Assemble dessert:

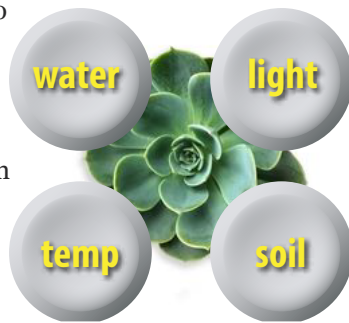
Spoon snow pudding into glasses or bowls and top with custard sauce.

# Succulents – Tips For Healthy Plants



Succulents come in a huge range of colors, shapes, and sizes, and require little in the way of care – just a lot of sun and a bit of water.

The four main elements to consider when caring for succulents are water, light, temperature and soil. But first, it's important to understand what defines a succulent and where these plants are found in nature. Both of these pieces of information will lead to some logical conclusions about how to care for the plants.



Succulents generally come from arid regions of the world: deserts, rocky cliff-sides, and other areas that either don't get much year-round rain, or have rocky, dry soil that leaves plants without easy access to water on a regular basis. Succulents have adapted to these harsh, dry climates by storing water in the tissue of their leaves or stems to keep themselves alive through the dry season.

Succulents are adapted to arid climates, and therefore require minimal water. The first rule to watering your succulent is to make sure its soil is dry before you water.

If the roots of a succulent are kept wet for too long, they can rot and cause the plant itself to rot. On average, watering once a week is ideal.

However, if you're in a very hot climate and your succulents have excellent drainage, you may need to water 2-3 times per week. Conversely, if your succulents are in cooler or more humid temperatures, you'll want to water more lightly and less frequently. If your succulents are in containers without good drainage, you should be careful to water only enough to wet the area of the soil around the base of the plant, where its roots are concentrated; there is



no need to water all of the soil in the container, as it will take longer for that water to evaporate or get used by the plant, and the roots may rot from being too wet for too long.

Plants that are being watered too much will often start to rot around the base of the plant, and the leaves will turn black and/or mushy and will often become covered with mold.

If you notice any rot on your succulent, remove the rotted parts of the plant, and if the soil is still wet, remove the plant from its soil and allow its roots to dry out before repotting it in fresh, dry soil. Sometimes this will keep the rot from spreading and will save your plant.



Most succulents need at least 3 hours of direct sun every day, either outdoors or in a window. Placing succulents in a position to receive sunlight in the morning is ideal, as afternoon sun is harsher and more likely to damage plants.

Sometimes succulents can be damaged by too much direct sun and will become "sunburned," with scars on their leaves. In the summer in hot climates when the sun is harshest, providing filtered sunlight is best for succulents.



Succulents that aren't getting enough sunlight will often start to stretch out to reach towards light sources.

If you notice your plant is appearing to grow very tall, but its leaves are becoming spaced farther apart, or the center of a normally rosette-shaped plant is starting to grow taller and away from the center of the plant, these are signs not of growth but of stretching. Succulents that are not green in color (purple, pink, red, and black) will also often lose their color and turn green if they don't get enough sunlight.

Along with sunburn scars, succulents getting too much sun will have their colors start to look "washed out" rather than vibrant.

Succulents can handle a wide range of temperatures, as long as they are getting an appropriate amount of sunlight and water. Extremely hot weather can lead to succulents drooping if their soil is left too dry in high heat. And in temperatures below freezing, the water stored in the plant can freeze, causing permanent damage to the plant tissue.

Always use "cactus mix" soil for planting succulents; it allows for much better drainage than standard potting soil. It is available at most nurseries.

If you can't find cactus mix, you can make your own by adding perlite, vermiculite, pumice, and other gritty, pebble-like materials to potting soil. Having larger bits mixed into the soil helps water drain through the soil quicker so that it doesn't retain too much water.





## *From the Garden Couch*

### The real meaning of plant catalogue terminology:

“**A favourite of birds**” means to avoid planting near cars, sidewalks, or clotheslines.

“**Grows more beautiful each year**” means “Looks like roadkill for the foreseeable future.”

“**May require support**” means your daughter’s engineering degree will finally pay off.

“**Moisture-loving**” plants are ideal for landscaping all your bogs and swamps.

“**Carefree**” refers more to the plant’s attitude than to your workload.

“**Vigorous**” is code for “has a Napoleonic compulsion to take over the world.”

“**Grandma’s Favourite**” – until she discovered free-flowering, disease-resistant hybrids.

“**Annuals**” mean disappointment once a year.

*“A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.”*

*“A man should never plant a garden larger than his wife can take care of.”*

### Gardener’s axioms

1. Your lawn is always slightly bigger than your desire to mow it.
2. Whichever garden tool you want is always at the back of the shed.
3. The only way to ensure rain, is to give the garden a good soaking.
4. Weeds grow at precisely the rate you pull them out.
5. Nothing ever looks like it does on the seed packet.
6. Autumn follows summer, winter follows autumn, drought follows planting.
7. The only way to guarantee some color all year round is to buy a garden gnome.
8. However bare the lawn, grass will appear in the cracks between the patio paving stones.
9. Evergreens go a funny shade of brown in the winter.

## A time to get together

Christmas is a time to get together

As well to enjoy our wonderful weather

Family and friends will surely meet

For a wonderful feast to share and eat

Spend time in your garden to reflect

And their watering this season do not neglect

Although Christmas is almost nigh

Do not to allow our garden to dry

During the Season so happy and gay

Just remember that your flowers are here to stay

Do your very best for them this holiday

And they will continue their beauty forever

and aye

If you are wondering for a gift to give

Maybe a flower with beauty that lives

Could adorn the parcels you lovingly wrap

For friends, family and a little boy’s cap

