

From our Chairperson



As we approach autumn and the Vaal Dam reaches 100%, water restrictions in Gauteng have been lifted. The recent good rains have made the Village lawns look lush again.

A reminder to residents to continue making “water saving tips” a part of our daily lives. We need to be constantly aware of the fact that water is a very precious resource. Please remember to avoid watering during the hottest times of the day and not to let sprinklers run in one place for longer than is required. We cannot afford to waste water!



The committee

Doreen Dennehy	Unit 41	5243
Tracy-Lee Daling	Admin	5500
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
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Monica Hall	Unit 436	5209
Sidney Roodt	Unit 386	5150

During March, we will be planting more trees and indigenous shrubs in common areas around the Village. We really want to take advantage of the softer ground following all the recent rain which will certainly make planting a lot easier. Once again, we appeal to residents to “adopt” a tree or shrub planted near your unit. Please remember that these are “young” trees which will need about half a bucket of

water twice a week. Shrubs will need watering three times a week. In addition, you will see the gardens on either side of the walkway leading to the Service Centre being changed into a much more attractive feature.

We are also planning to plant African Daisy seeds around the Village which should provide brilliant splashes of colour throughout the coming months. All in all, a lot to look forward to in the Village gardens as autumn approaches.

Our next fund raiser will be a raffle and Tea Party on 22nd of April. Tickets will be on sale from early April in the Reception area of the Service Centre. Raffle tickets will cost R10 and the prize will be a “pamper hamper” meant to spoil you – the draw will take place at the Tea Party. The Tea Party tickets cost R40 and can be purchased in the Reception Area of the Service Centre or from Garden Committee Members. A lady from Efekto / Mayford will give a talk prior to the tea and live

background music will be provided during the afternoon. The Tea Party will start at 3 p.m. and, as before, we value your support in our efforts to raise funds to improve the common area gardens in the Village.

As always, my sincere thanks to all the members of the Garden Committee.

We have a superbly dedicated and hard working group of residents who willingly give many hours of their time to improving the Village gardens. This garden “team” work extremely well together (TEAM standing for Together Everyone Achieves More) and have become great friends in the process. Long may this continue!

Doreen



Hazel Richardson
Unit 334
Joan Leppan
Unit 304
Veronica Christianse
Unit 103



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Plant of the Quarter

A genus of succulent plants containing over 500 species of flowering plants.

Aloes come in a variety of growth forms, from small miniatures to tall single stemmed or branched trees, with some species forming large, tangled shrubs. The usually swollen and succulent leaves are lance or sword shaped. They are arranged in terminal clusters (rosettes) and are armed along their margins with usually sharp teeth. The fleshy leaves vary in colour from grey to bright green and are sometimes striped or mottled. The most common shape of flowers are tubular and are brightly coloured in various shades of red, orange and yellow. The vast majority of Aloes flower in winter while some exotic forms flower in spring. The seeds of the Aloe are often equipped with a single wing to help with dispersal. Aloes are mostly long-lived plants especially the larger species. An Aloe Dichotoma was estimated at being 145 years old. It is one of the few fleshy plants that readily survive veldt fires. The plant above ground may be totally destroyed but the fleshy root stock

will vigorously resprout. It is of interest to note that Aloe Vera can be traced back 6000 years to ancient Egypt where it was presented to deceased pharaohs as a burial gift.

Aloe Vera or 'true aloe' is widely grown as a source of Aloe Vera pharmaceutical products. Aloe Vera juice is a goeey, thick liquid made from the flesh of the plant leaf. The juice is made by crushing or grinding the entire leaf, followed by various steps to purify and filter the liquid. With a mild, tolerable flavour, the juice mixes easily into shakes and smoothies. An excellent supplement, the Aloe Vera juice balances the PH levels and reduces acidity. It hydrates the body and packs a hefty punch of nutrients that optimises organ function. It is a rich source of antioxidants and vitamin. It neutralizes the effects of UV radiation and helps prevent fine lines and wrinkles.

Contained within the juice are vitamins BCE and folic acid. It also contains trace amounts of calcium, copper, chromium, sodium, selenium, magnesium, potassium, manganese and zinc. It also is the only plant source of vitamin B12. Excellent news for vegetarians and vegans!



250ml of Aloe Vera juice contains no sugar and only a few calories. The uses of Aloe Vera juice are legion. The plants low toxicity makes it a safe and gentle remedy for heartburn and other related digestive problems. Rinsing tomatoes, apples and vegetables in Aloe juice will block the growth of bacteria thus keeping them fresh for extended periods without refrigeration. Aloe Vera extract is a safe and effective non-chemical mouthwash. The plants natural ingredients, which includes a healthy dose of vitamin C, blocks plaque, and provides relief to ulcers, swollen or bleeding gums or thrush.

Ingesting 2 table spoons of Aloe Vera juice per day lowers blood sugar levels. Extensive studies in phytomedicine has resulted in confirmation that Aloe Vera may have a profound treatment in type 2 diabetes. Please note that it should not replace any medication currently in use !

Aloe Vera skin care products need no introduction. Creams, lotions, body butters, masks, cleansers.....in fact too many to mention them all. All wonderfully beneficial and totally natural to compliment your beauty regime. The gel obtained from the water dense leaves contains complex carbohydrates and many compounds that make it a very effective face and body moisturiser, and pain reliever. Excellent in the treatment of skin rashes, sunburn, nappy rashes etc...

Aloe Vera products of all ranges are readily obtainable from any leading pharmacy, health shop or supermarket. You can safely

Aloe

use the gel squeezed from your own Aloe plant, but topically only. Please do not ingest any gel that has not been professionally refined.

Unlike other succulents and cacti, it is difficult to propagate Aloe Vera from a leaf. Most gardeners plant Aloe Vera using an offshoot which results in more successful plants.

I am sure that after reading all about this remarkable plant, it will get the respect and admiration it deserves.



Indigenous bulbs and corms for a Colourful Winter and Spring garden



Babiana angustifolia

The small corms produce hairy deeply pleated leaves from 10 to 30cm long. Deep blue to violet fragrant flowers appear in spring. Plant the



corms with the top about 3cm below the soil surface in containers or plant pockets in rock and gravel gardens. Babianas require full sun and very well

drained soil. Mulch the plants with compost in June or July and water well about twice a week during winter and spring. Feed with a light dressing of organic or liquid fertiliser during the growing season. In clay soil or wet areas plant the Babiana villosa corms with deep red or purplish pink flowers in spring. humidity, use containers you can enclose in glass or plastic to keep humidity high. Until the cuttings can take up water through their yet-to-grow roots, high humidity is the best way to prevent moisture loss from the leaves and rooting medium.

Chasmanthe

Winter growing deciduous bulbs with sword shaped leaves and tall spikes of showy flowers in late winter. These low maintenance plants add seasonal interest to any part of the garden. Plant the fast growing corms 5cm deep and 30cm apart in full sun. They will multiply freely forming dense stands. Water well during winter and do not remove after flowering as they will tolerate summer rainfall or irrigation provided the soil is well-drained. In shade or semi shade areas plant *C. aethiopica* for flowers in May or June. For red and yellowish green flowers plant *C. bicolor* in full sun. The tall, up to one meter flower stalks of *C. floribunda* produce dark orange flowers in July and *C. floribunda* var. *duckittii* pale yellow flowers in July.



Freesia (Above)

These popular spring flowering bulbs have been extensively hybridized, but the larger flowers on longer stems often lack the wonderful perfume of the wild species. The plants have fan-shaped foliage with elegant spires of funnel shaped flowers. Plant the freesia bulbs in a sunny or semi-shade spot in large groups to make a real show in spring.

Ixia

Another winter growing genus of about 65 species from the South Western Cape region. The flowers are brightly coloured often with dark centres.

Ixias require full sun and well-drained soil mixed with equal parts of silica sand and sifted compost. The small-flowered white var.



polystachya prefer damp places and light shade, while the large mauve var. *crassifolia* requires full sun and makes a good container plant.

Kniphofia bruceae

Also Known as the Red hot poker, this is another winter flowering species with lush green foliage and striking red, orange or yellow flowers. Tidy them up by removing dead foliage and lift and divide large clumps.



Lachenalia

A genus of small bulbs producing tubular flowers, in a range of colours, grouped on a flower stalk. Plant in an area with full morning sun and afternoon shade or group at least 50 bulbs together in a container on a patio. The leaves of *Lachenalia aloides* are green or heavily spotted with purple and the flowers range from shades of bright yellow to orange with maroon tips. *Lachenalia bulbifera* is a smaller species with bright red flowers from April to September.



Indigenous bulbs and corms continued...

Ornithogalum thyrsoides

Commonly referred to as Chinche-rinchee make excellent cut flowers that will last weeks. Plant the corms in autumn, 2cm deep and water well during the winter and spring. The first white flowers will appear in late spring and the plants will continue to flower into summer. They will tolerate summer moisture provided the soil is well-drained. O var. saun-

green leaves are closely set in a fan shape and finely veined. Cup-shaped flowers in bright pastel colours, on long thin stems, can be 3 to 4 cm in diameter. Plant the bulbs in March and water well during autumn and



winter. In a container these cheerful plants will brighten any patio.

Tritonia

Another cormous perennial with more than 28 species identified in Southern Africa that has been hybridized for gardens throughout the world. The leaves are sword shaped with a prominent midrib. Multiple flowers are set one sided or spiral up the thin stems and the buds start opening from the bottom. Plant during March in well composted soil and water regularly. The colours range from white and cream, orange and red to pink and pale lilac.



dersiae originated from the eastern regions of Southern Africa and bear white or cream flowers.

Sparaxis

The hybrids of these colourful cormous perennials have become very popular in our gardens as spring bulbs. The sword shaped



Most herbs are suitable for container cultivation. They can easily be sown from seed or bought from nurseries or garden centres. Choose containers which give herbs a deep root run where they can be left undisturbed. Use a gritty, well-drained compost, adding up to 25 percent by volume of coarse grit or perlite to a loam based compost. Keep the compost moist, but never soggy. Use balanced fertiliser to encourage leafy growth, rather than potassium-rich fertiliser that might promote flowering.

Ten of the best herbs to grow in containers

Mint – You can use it for everything from tea to mojitos, to mint and coriander chutney. Its also easy to grow – it'll even cope with difficult shady spaces that only get a little sun. It needs regular

feeding to grow well. Put each plant in its own five litre pot, keep it well watered and pick it regularly.

Chives – Use in salads, snipped up over soups, or added as garnish. The flowers are cheerful in the spring, taste yummy – and the bees love them too. This is another easy one to grow and only needs four or five hours' of sun. Make sure it doesn't dry out, as chives like damp soil.

Sage, Bay, Thyme and

Rosemary – Easy to grow with unique flavours, these classic herbs are excellent for soups, stocks, meats, pastas and more. They don't like wet roots – so grow in well-drained soil and take care not to over-water. You can grow sage from seed, the others are better bought as plants or grown from cuttings.

Parsley – This is slow to get going from seed but once established

Planting HERBS in Pots

A collection of herbs in containers in a sunny place near the house is a great asset for both garden and kitchen

will give you leaves for nearly two years before it flowers and dies.

Coriander – Planted in the spring, coriander quickly flowers and goes to seed. You can try and delay this (by keeping it well watered and fed, growing it in a more shady space, and cutting the leaves regularly), but it will happen eventually, whatever you do. Don't worry: the flowers are magnets for hoverflies (whose larvae eat aphids) and the green seeds are delicious.

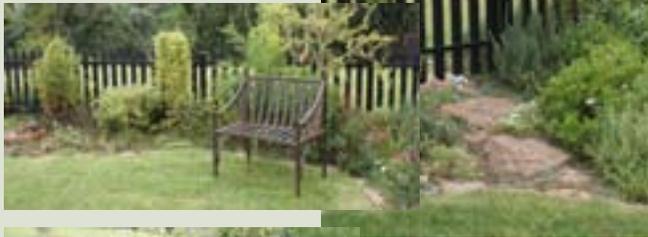
Basil – It's best grown in a warm, bright, sheltered spot. It also doesn't like going to bed with wet roots – so grow in well-drained soil and water in the morning.

Sorrel – Plant six to eight plants in a window box with at least four hours sun and it will give you a flavour hit all year round. Pick the outer leaves and it will keep producing new leaves.

Garden Committee Members in their own gardens

In this issue we are not featuring a single garden. The Garden Committee members submitted photos of their own gardens to share...
If you want your garden to feature in this newsletter, please contact any of the Garden Committee members.

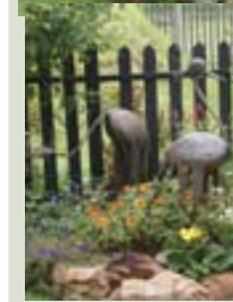
Jeremy and Doreen



John & Di

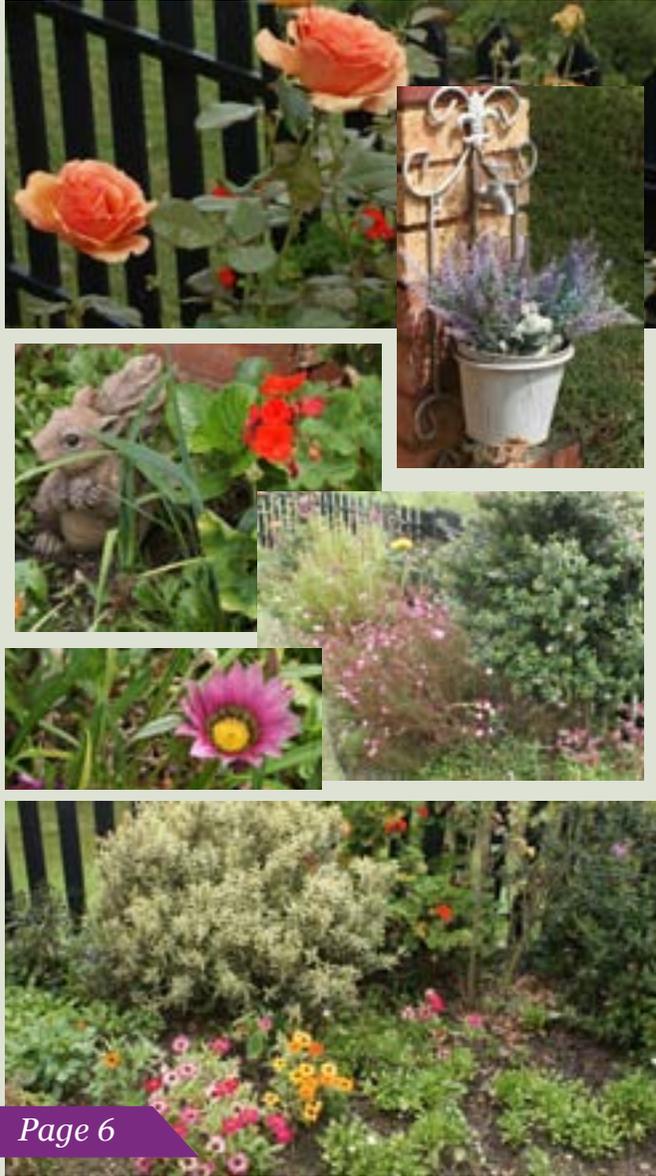


Jim and Beryl



Garden Committee Members in their own gardens

Chris and Louise



Martin and Margie



Johann and Thersia



From the Garden Couch



How dirt makes you happy

By Bonnie L. Grant

Antidepressant microbes in soil: Prozac may not be the only way to get rid of your serious blues. Soil microbes have been found to have similar effects on the brain and are without side effects and chemical dependency potential. Learn how to harness the natural antidepressant in soil and make yourself happier and healthier.

Natural remedies have been around for untold centuries. These natural remedies included cures for almost any physical ailment as well as mental and emotional afflictions. Ancient healers may not have known why something worked but simply that it did. Modern scientists have unraveled the why of many medicinal plants and practices but only recently are they finding remedies that were previously unknown and yet, still a part of the natural life cycle. Soil microbes and human health now have a positive link which has been studied and found to be verifiable.

Did you know that there's a natural antidepressant in soil? Mycobacterium vaccae is the substance under study and has indeed

been found to mirror the effect on neurons that drugs like Prozac provide. The bacterium is found in soil and may stimulate serotonin production, which makes you relaxed and happier. Studies were conducted on cancer patients and they reported a better quality of life and less stress.

Lack of serotonin has been linked to depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder and bipolar problems. The bacterium appears to be a natural antidepressant in soil and has no adverse health effects. These antidepressant microbes in soil may be as easy to use as just playing in the dirt.

Most avid gardeners will tell you that their landscape is their "happy place" and the actual physical act of gardening is a stress reducer and mood lifter. The fact that there is some science behind it adds additional credibility to these garden addicts' claims.

The presence of a soil bacteria antidepressant is not a surprise to many of us who have experienced the phenomenon ourselves. Backing it up with science is fascinating, but not shocking, to the happy gardener.

Mycobacterium antidepressant microbes in soil are also being investigated for improving cognitive function, Crohn's disease and even rheumatoid arthritis.

Common area Gardens

The Good and the Bad

	All residents who help with watering common areas
	Armchair critics – get involved!
	Residents that help the committee in numerous ways. (See list below)
	Residents that actively recycle their waste. You save the planet and help the village.



Thank you to the following residents for the plants, shrubs, seeds, bulbs etc. they donated for the common gardens:

Joan Penrose – Unit 131; Lyn & Alan Sharp – Unit 37; Martie & Kobus Booyens – Unit 118; Beulah & Brian Miskin – Unit 159; Yvonne & George Ralph – Unit 132; Mario Dona – Unit 62; Ingrid Wohlers – Unit 416; Margie & Martin Lockwood – Unit 133; Rosemary Woolley – Unit 129; Thersia & Johann Tait – Unit 47; Doreen & Jeremy Dennehy – Unit 41; Jean Barrie – Unit 154; Vicky Walters – Unit 66; Sid & Jeanette Marks – Unit 187