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# Welcome



Page 14

Page 60

February is already underway and I'm still not sure I'm used to writing 2018 instead of 2017! I really have to concentrate to get it right!

If you, like me, feel that you're stuck in 2017 and aren't quite ready to accept that 2018 is here, then take a look at what we've got lined up for you. One way of getting into the 2018 groove is to see what will be 'trending' this year. Anna tackled an article on this interesting subject, and I'm delighted to read that some of what I personally love is on trend! One of my most most most favourite (can you see that I am excited about this?) trends is 'The Social Networking of Plants', the idea of communities of plants growing together in one habitat, allowing space to breathe and grow – the buzz word is Prairie

Gardens, and I love it! Another is the phrase and philosophy 'Wabi-Sabi' – the art of imperfection. Oh my, this has to become a mantra not only in gardening but also in life – we are all way too serious and way too hard on ourselves. Note to self: I am going to work on this trend personally! If you want to know more, turn to page 14 – it's a great read!

The month of February brings two things to mind – it's super hot and sticky, but it is also the hot month of love – ha! For the former, garden in the cool evening, mulch those garden beds, and drink lots of water! For the other hot subject I say stay hydrated! And remember – it's not about how fancy the gift is, but rather the thought and idea behind it! (And if you have a memory like a sieve, as I do, then put a reminder on your phone now!)

If you're feeling even a little adventurous and in the mood to present the one you love with something made by you, then turn to page 60 – it's an epic gift!

For more inspiring hot February reads take a look at indigenous herbs and their many uses, food-inspired veggie combo pots, and even a smoothie for your garden... Now I've got you thinking!

Enjoy and happy gardening,

Tanya and Garth dressed by:



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# in the garden

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the gardener

# Groundcovers

## for hot, dry banks

**H**ot, dry banks are an integral part of modern suburban developments. They are often retained using specially designed concrete block structures, or they can be left as an earth bank. Either way they need to be softened with greenery, preferably plants that also have a root system that can grow into the soil and help with stabilisation.

Here are three indigenous succulent plants that perform this role with great success. They're neat and tidy and easy to grow, and establish even in relatively poor soils. Always remember that the better prepared the soil is the quicker the groundcovers will accomplish full coverage.



### ***Ruschia lineolata***

(rankvygie)

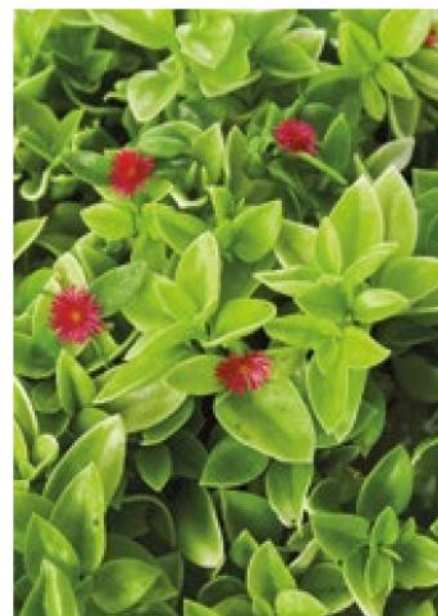
This is a wide-spreading creeping plant that forms a tight, carpet-like network of thin, wiry stems. New growth stems are a mauvish-pink colour that turns brown as they mature, and leaves are short, squat and angular, fleshy and grey green in colour. The leaves are tightly packed on the ground-hugging stems, giving a neat and tidy appearance. During spring masses of pink or mauve flowers with a white stripe on each petal smother the plants. Being cold hardy, this plant is very useful in the parts of the country with harsh winters.



### ***Carpobrotus dimidiatus***

(Natal dune vygie)

Low growing with vigorous trailing stems clothed in green fleshy leaves, these vygies are common on sand dunes on the eastern sea shores. They adapt well to cultivation in gardens and are invaluable for covering banks in the hot, humid coastal parts of the country. Flowers are a magenta pink shade. The sour fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*) is similar but has large yellow flowers. It is common on the southern and western shores of South Africa. Both of these plants are worthy contenders for best plant for retaining banks – after all, that is their role in nature.



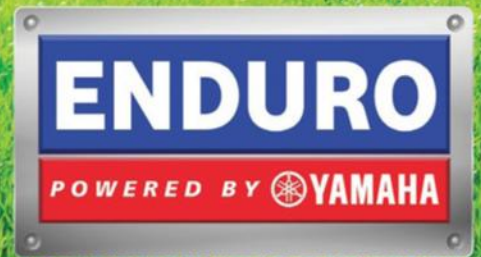
### ***Aptenia cordifolia***

(strawberry mesemb or brakvygie)

This vygie grows into a dense mat of tangled stems clothed in small, heart-shaped green leaves, with small purplish flowers that appear in summer and sporadically at other times. It originates from the eastern coastal regions but has adapted to large parts of the country. Prune back if plants get messy or untidy. Aptenias are easy to grow from cuttings and are very useful as pioneer plants when new developments are taking place. It withstands little or no frost. 🧑🌾



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An hour's drive from Bedford, in a little valley nestled in the mountains, you will find Hilda Marais pottering and creating in her verdant oasis on the farm Skelmkloof.

Findng  
**true beauty**  
amongst  
**the thorns**

The name 'Skelmkloof' sounds as though it comes from a novel, evoking a sense of intrigue and romance. And driving towards it along long, dusty gravel roads, the mountains rising around you, you can't help but wonder what waits at the end of the journey. When you finally arrive a rusted Morris Minor welcomes you, a huge agave peeking through the windscreen and a rusted sign proclaiming 'Life is a journey'.

The message on that sign has become Hilda and husband Francois's mantra as they go about life at Skelmkloof. Their gardening journey started with them trying to establish a traditional English garden here in the middle of the Karoo, but after 30 years of battling Hilda has had to give in to nature's demands and plot another course. Putting 34 dry boreholes, many tears and countless deceased roses behind her, Hilda came up with another plan. Growing up in the Karoo, Hilda grew a love for succulents and would spend hours walking on her parents' farm collecting them, much to her mother's dismay. These became her inspiration.

When she embarked on her new project she was given strict instructions by Francois: There was no money for fancy pots or ornaments and the farm was dry, so there would be no water to waste on her new garden. She would have to dig deep and use what was available on the farm, but at least there was an abundance of scrap metal waiting to be repurposed. In December 2010 she put her mind and hands to work, turning the scrapyards that can be found on any old farm into a treasure-trove. It was then that Hilda found her new beginning, her second gardening life, which is why she refers to her new garden as the 'Second Life Succulent Garden'.

As time progressed, Hilda started bringing the surrounding landscape into her garden. She used a pile of stones under a cast-iron pot to mimic a campfire, planted up a log from a fallen tree with sempervivums, and on the way discovered a whole new world to explore. No tyre was wasted, and everything with a cavity was seen as a potential pot. There was no design in mind and Hilda used what she could find, slowly building each garden bed, guided only by instinct. She recalls a story of a trip she took to town. At the fuel station a truck filled with scrap metal parked next to her. To her surprise she spotted a dilapidated wheelbarrow right at the top of the pile, staring at her. After a lot of pleading and negotiating, the truck driver took the



## GARDEN FEATURE



wheelbarrow down, and R20 later Hilda was the proud owner of a rusty wheelbarrow, which now commands a prime spot in her garden.

Hilda's garden has become a place for her to escape into and take a breath. Around every corner is a surprise waiting to be discovered by visitors. And when life catches up with her, she takes refuge in her greenhouse, chatting to her plants and propagating for her little nursery. She says it's the best therapy and has no side effects. Her quaint philosophy of 'a stranger is just a friend you haven't gotten to know yet' is evident in the affection with which she greets every visitor during the annual Bedford Open Gardens, held in October.

In a planted space of just over a quarter of a hectare, Hilda has created meandering paths between her flowerbeds. Amongst gravel and stones from the farm, mass plantings of echeveria and mammillaria cacti flank the walkways that lead you to the big 'stars' of the garden. Water holes are dotted around, and an old birdcage is filled with seed, showing that Hilda never forgets her feathered friends that fly in for a visit.

Hilda's favourite succulents are her echeveria, the strange leaves and textures keeping her fascinated, but she also remains fond of a list of other plants that grow in the veld, a connection with nature that Hilda has not lost since childhood. The little blue flower from the lachenalia, bulbous plants like the pachypodium and the echinocactus all hold a special place in her heart.

As we walk through the garden she bends to care for a new addition, and the light catches her red hair. I'm reminded of her love for roses and can't help but admire her, a gardener who refused to give up gardening, but found peace and happiness amongst the thorns.

## Hilda's Tips

1. It's important to love what you plant, otherwise it will just be a waste of time and money.
2. Gardening is the best possible therapy for any ailment. Indulging in gardening has healed a magnitude of wounds.
3. Gardening teaches us valuable lessons about patience and endurance.
4. When planting succulents it is important to remember that they don't like wet feet. Good soil drainage is very important.
5. Succulents and cacti have the most beautiful flowers, and with a bit of tender loving care you are in store for a great surprise.





## GARDEN FEATURE



### Get the look (opposite)

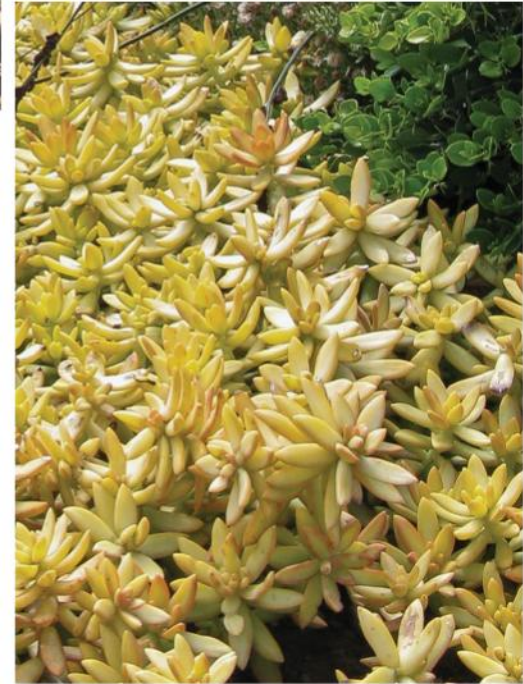
Here's Hilda's gallery of her favourite succulents:  
TOP LEFT: *Echinocactus grusonii* is a barrel-shaped cactus covered with sharp golden spines. No wonder it's often called mother-in-law's cushion. Grows easily in a diverse range of climates.

TOP CENTRE: *Pachypodium lamerei* is known as the Madagascar bottle tree due to its prominently swollen trunk. Grown mainly for the plant's sculptural shape and form.

TOP RIGHT: *Echeveria 'Giant Blue Curls'* is one of the many new hybrid rock roses that seem to grow to almost giant-like proportions. The huge leaves are ruffled and brightly coloured.

MIDDLE LEFT: *Sedum nussbaumerianum* is a low-growing succulent with a shrubby habit. Lovely golden leaves with a waxy texture adorn the branches all year. Colour intensifies with winter cold.



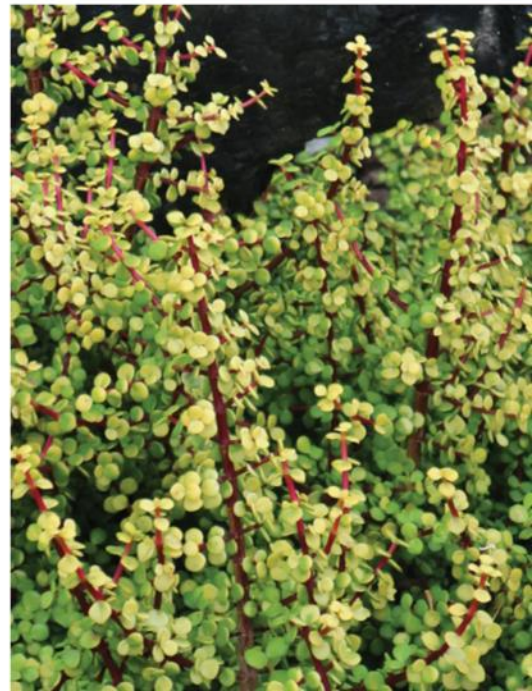


MIDDLE CENTRE: *Agave attenuata* has beautifully smooth leaves arranged in very symmetrical rosettes. A long, curved inflorescence covered in hundreds of cream to green flowers appears when each plant matures.

MIDDLE RIGHT: *Agave potatorum* is commonly known as the butterfly agave. Different hybrid forms or selections of this beautiful succulent are on the market.

BOTTOM LEFT: *Sempervivium tectorum* is the common house leek, which originates from Europe. A tiny succulent that has big appeal.

BOTTOM RIGHT: *Portulacaria afra aurea* is a low-growing form of the indigenous pork bush with yellow leaves. A good succulent for growing on hot banks. 🗝️





# Garden TRENDS 2018

**“All good news for gardeners this year, as everybody is advised to stop and smell the roses for a change...”**  
- Garden Media Group

The 2018 garden trends report published by the international Garden Media Group focuses heavily on nature as the best recipe for mental happiness. They forecast that the new status symbols for folks across the world will be wellness and health. This bodes well for the horticultural trade, as gardening every day is exactly what we need to have a happy mind and a fit body.

We have summarised this report so that you know what's trending this year, and will also use it as a guideline for informative feature articles in the following months' issues.



## HIGH FASHION

## CHALLENGE

### Climatic conditions

Historical weather patterns can no longer be relied on to predict what the future will bring. It is therefore logical that we should be focusing much more on plants and garden design to combat heat, drought, strong wind, heavy rain and floods, veld fires and freezing temperatures.

### Hardy plants

It's safe to assume that local nurserymen will concentrate far more on heat-resistant plants like new aloe hybrids, agaves that do not have invasive potential, and also a wider selection of cacti and succulents, including the marketing of more species from our indigenous treasure chest of succulents. This trend is already visible in local nurseries, where these plants are no longer hidden away but proudly displayed and boutique grown, and have become the darlings of both experienced and inexperienced gardeners, as well as hobbyists. So if you're planning a colourful and texture-rich succulent bed or an interesting rock garden, you are definitely on trend!

The overall theme on which this report is based includes clean air with purifying plants, relaxation gardens rather than demanding gardens, and plant-based diets.

### Wind-resistant hedging and screening

The idea is already becoming established that tough and fast-growing indigenous plants like *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* (camphor bush) and *Searsia crenata* (dune crow berry) used as hedging can do wonders to change the microclimate in a garden. They protect tender plants against strong winds, they provide shade, preventing the soil from drying out too fast, they bind soil, reducing run-off, they aren't plagued by pests and diseases, and they provide a green corridor for wildlife. The equally tough but exotic *Escallonia x 'Iveyi'* is a good screening plant that should also be remembered, as it will grow successfully in any climate including the coldest.



*Tarchonanthus camphoratus*

## Water-permeable paving

Paving that allows water to drain into the soil is ever popular, and a very 'green' option. So if you use large stepping stones spaced far enough from each other to have plants like mondo grass between them, you are still in fashion. All kinds of informal paving with natural rock and wood are trending, and so are gravel gardens. Solid paving is out!



Modern landscaping hinges on land art and land forms designed in the form of berms or hollows shaped to lead excess water to plants needing it the most. This comes into play when designing a modern zoned garden with plants with different water requirements.

## Controlled growing conditions

First prize would be your own hot house, allowing you to grow edibles all year long, or to protect tender plants from nature's ravages. Top-end structures would include solar panels for heating or cooling mechanisms. Another advantage is reduced water consumption, and a controlled environment to reduce pest and disease infestations. But you can dream smaller, as a windowsill garden can supply equal pleasure with lush herbs or flowering potted plants. Wooden crate or raised beds for growing vegetables and herbs are becoming even more popular, as the gardener simply has more control over



them. Poor soil that is difficult to cultivate and even space problems can be overcome this way, because you can simply fill these containers with good quality commercial soil. These options also give disabled and older gardeners a chance to garden easily.

## Understanding the social networking of plants

The idea behind this trend is communities of plants that complement each other,





so natural prairie gardens with swathes of grasses and floriferous perennials are hot news! If you're still planting 'one of a kind', leaving large areas of soil unplanted, you are creating a lot of maintenance for yourself. The 'one specimen look' in a sea of mulch is not desirable either. Rather pick a limited palette of adaptable plants, and sent them to ground in numbers. Try the 'fruit salad look'! The idea is to manage rather than to maintain – less work for much more pleasure...

## HIGHLY DESIRED

### Trees!

A new trend is called 'forest bathing'. This does not mean trekking through a huge forest or standing naked under a tree when it is raining to save shower water. It simply means a little quiet me-time in the company of green giants. It's therefore important that we don't allow trees to be chopped down left, right and centre. It's equally important that we take time to choose the appropriate tree for different situations, and to support all tree-planting initiatives in our communities. Trees are the green lungs of our urban areas...

## WABI-SABI

### The art of imperfection

'Wabi-sabi' is a Japanese term referring to the art of imperfection and maturing gracefully. In practical terms, it means that we should reduce the size of our erstwhile perfect lawns, replacing them with natural-looking veld grasses and hardy groundcovers, and making peace with the fact that they create a wilder look.

Instead of dead-heading seed-laden perennials, you are now encouraged to leave them to self seed again. You should also regard some insect infestation and bite marks on the leaves of plants as a good sign of thriving wild life, rather than spraying



everything in sight. Companion plants that deter pests or enhance the taste of vegetables is on the forefront of gardening organically.

Recycling old stuff like rusted garden tools and kitchen utensils by planting them up and displaying them artfully around the garden is still high fashion.



## FASHION COLOUR Purple!



Planting lots of purple-flowering plants in your garden will act like Viagra to your soul and eyes. If you're already following a plant-based diet, you're advised to grow protein-rich plants like quinoa, broccoli, corn and kale, to name a few. To create fashionable menus for entertaining, you will have to start growing purple vegetables like purple carrots, beets, eggplants, blackberries and purple sweet potatoes. If you want to paint and decorate your garden furniture, or anything on your patio and even indoors, ask for the colour called 'Verdure', which is one of the Pantone colours for 2018.



## BUZZ WORDS FOR 2018

- Happy mind, happy body.
- Human control with plants and rain-scaping.
- Social networking of plants.
- Wabi-Sabi (imperfection).
- Breathing room.
- Flexitarian (a plant eater).
- Purple punch. 🍷

Source: [www.gardenmediagroup.com](http://www.gardenmediagroup.com)

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

### 'Pause architecture' and quiet places

We all need a space to hide away from cellphone noise, and especially the sometimes aggressive commentary and judgemental remarks on social media. The Garden Media group calls this 'pause architecture'. These spaces can be an indoor garden with houseplants, including palms, ferns, and hanging kokedama gardens, or a lovely patio, enclosed courtyard garden, or even just a shady corner with a garden bench to sit on.

## FIRST ON OUR MINDS:

### Water!

As water is the elixir of life, it stands to reason that human beings will always be attracted to it. According to the garden trends for 2018, water features from large and elaborate fountain creations with dramatic lights, quiet reflection pools and rumbling rills, to simple, portable water features, are definitely a yes!

Ways to harvest water and also slowing down runoff are equally on the forefront, and we expect lots of new technology in this area.



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# Clever *with* Colour

## Harmonious colours

In last month's article on colour we discussed complementary colours and the wonderful contrasts they create in a garden. This month we highlight harmonious colour schemes using colours with the same undertone.



## What is a harmonious colour scheme?

Colours that are positioned alongside one another on the colour wheel are known as harmonious colours. Colours ranging from red through mauve, violet, blue-violet, blue and blue-green have a blue undertone while yellow-green, yellow, yellow-orange, orange and red-orange have a yellow undertone.

Red and green can each exhibit a leaning towards a blue or yellow undertone and care must be taken, with red especially, to ensure that the undertone matches other red-flowering plants to enhance the colour scheme.

## The psychological effects of colour

As mentioned in the previous article, bright colours with a yellow undertone will naturally warm and add energy to a space, while those with a blue undertone have a cooling and calming effect.

It's interesting to hear gardeners expressing an aversion to one or more colours – often yellow and orange – and so they will naturally choose plants in the opposite spectrum.





## Working with achromatic colours

Black, white and the combination thereof, namely grey (and silver-grey), are referred to as achromatic colours. The term 'achromatic' is used particularly in the print industry and loosely defines 'black and white'.

White and silver are wonderful accent colours, especially in a harmonious colour scheme consisting of pink, mauve, violet, blue-violet, blue and blue-green. They add a touch of elegance – and even romance – to any composition.

Depending on the undertone of the grey, it can also look striking when combined with the warmer spectrum of colours, especially in a succulent garden.

While black plant material is hard to come by in our temperate climates, other than the well-known black mondo grass, *Ophiopogon japonicus 'Nigra'*, there is nothing stopping you from using black accessories such as planters, tiles and upholstery to achieve a dramatic effect.



### TOP LEFT

*Ophiopogon japonicus 'Nigra'* and next to it the combination of black leaves against the warm orange and yellow of the aloes.

### ABOVE

Grey can look striking with warmer colours

### LEFT

A striking combination of blue-green foliage and container against a neutral background





This warm, harmonious planting with the addition of a contrasting colour.



## Garden styles

Most harmonious colour schemes are used to depict a traditional country-style garden. A popular colour scheme is a combination of tones of pink and mauve through to violet, blue-violet and blue, scattered with pops of white and silver-grey.

A succulent garden that is ablaze with winter colours will consist mostly of plants in harmonious tones of yellow through to orange-red, with a delightful mix of yellow-green or blue-green foliage.

The good news is that there is a plant to meet your every need in terms of the creative choices you make, irrespective of whether your choice of plants leans towards exotic or indigenous species. If you can't find a flowering plant to add to your colour scheme, you may well find a foliage plant that will have a similar effect.



## Where to start

As with a complementary colour scheme, always start with your favourite plants that you intend to keep. However, instead of now working across the colour wheel to create a complementary colour scheme, you will make your choice from your preferred range of colours that lie alongside the colour of your favourite plant, and work progressively through that spectrum.

Depending on the style or theme you have chosen, you will either choose warm or cool colours.

You can then introduce pops of white or silver in amongst your cool colours or, in the case of a harmonious scheme in the warmer colours, choose a complementary colour from across the colour wheel to add a bit of drama. A popular choice would be either violet (purple) or blue-violet with yellows, yellow-orange, orange and red-orange. 🌱

### ABOVE LEFT

A study in yellow undertones in this succulent composition.

### ABOVE

A study in blue undertones.

### LEFT

White adds a touch of elegance to this combination.

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# The matter of

# Flax

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ornamentals.

The name 'phormium' is derived from the Greek word phormos, which alludes to basket making. The strong fibres in the flax leaves were used by the Maoris for centuries for just that purpose, and flax fibres were one of the first exports from New Zealand, also for the manufacture of rope. Phormiums were cultivated for the supply of fibres right here in parts of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands during the last century.

Today, though, New Zealand flaxes are grown more for their ornamental horticulture value. The long, leathery, sword-shaped leaves that are held in fans emerging from fleshy rhizomatous roots make a bold statement in the garden, and they form small to large clumps of attractive foliage in a wide array of colours and variegations.

## Older cultivated ornamental flax

Garden phormiums are derived from two different species, both of New Zealand origin. *P. cookianum* (also referred to as *P. colensoi*) or mountain flax is of a lesser stature than *P. tenax*, the true New Zealand flax. Both of these are grown in their plain green foliage form as well as in simple

yellow or cream striated variegations on green foliage. They are large plants forming clumps that can become overwhelming if left to grow to their own devices. These older flax types are only really suitable for background planting in really large gardens and landscapes.

## Modern hybrid phormiums

Today numerous named hybrid and cultivar phormiums are grown for their strikingly beautiful variegated foliage. They are largely hybrids between the two different species, with many selections arising as mutations in nursery-cultivated plants. Being of a much smaller size, these ornamental flaxes are favourites in small gardens, their unique foliage shape, texture and colour contrasting superbly with other foliage plants as well as many other conventional flowering shrubs and perennials. Look out for the wide array of these hybrids on offer in local nurseries. Some have dark plum to almost black foliage while others are much paler, in shades of gold, cream and green. Pink- and red-stripped forms always capture attention amongst the more conventional cultivars. Hybrid names like '**Apricot Queen**', '**Bronze Baby**', '**Rainbow**

**Surprise**', '**Platt's Black**' and '**Flamingo**' go a long way in describing the finer details of each cultivar.

Select the correct phormiums for your own specific requirements based on the mature size of each specific type and their leaf colouration. Size can vary from dwarf types growing little more than 40cm tall to large types with leaves in excess of 2m in length. Flaxes grow in almost any soil conditions and adapt to a wide array of growing conditions. They thrive in sun or dappled shade and can withstand a fair degree of cold winter weather, although they have been known to frost in extreme cases. If that happens they generally regrow from the roots after the winter cold is passed. A little winter protection with frost cover or straw helps them to survive unscathed in the very coldest climates.

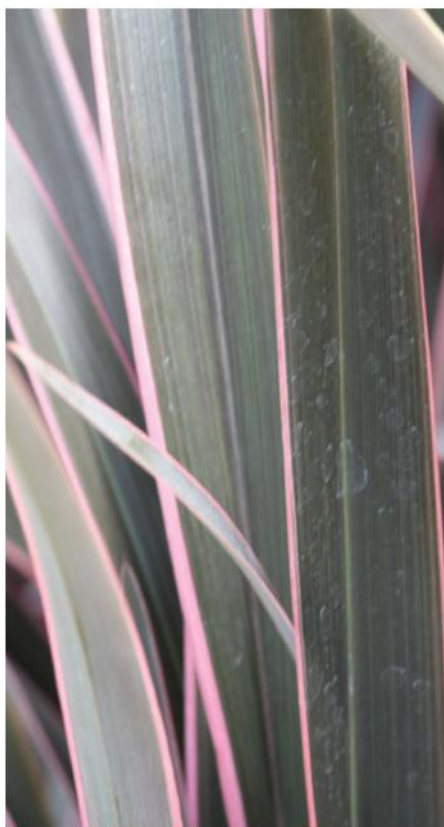
Tall flower spikes emerge above the foliage, adorned with numerous bronzy-red tubular flowers that are rich in nectar and attract birds and insects to the garden.

## How to use them in the garden

There are numerous different ways to use phormiums effectively in the modern garden. Larger-growing types make good



**Phormium 'Pink Panther'**



**Phormium 'Pink Stripes'**



**Phormium 'Rainbow Queen'**



*Phormium 'Flamingo'*

hedge or screen plants, and can even be used to grow a maze (labyrinth) as they are tough and enduring without being unfriendly to humans.

Their attractive foliage makes them ideal focal points or feature plants, while they are lovely in mixed plantings in pots and window boxes. They are also excellent grown en masse for groundcover or under-storey planting in large, expansive landscapes, and are good around swimming pools, entranceways and in rock or pebble gardens.

Flaxes are relatively hassle free and are very easy to grow throughout much of the country. Keep them in good health by cutting away old or spoilt foliage, and thin out mature clumps every three years. Spray spotted leaves with a general purpose fungicide to control the problem.

## Questions and answers

**Question:** My 'Pink Stripe' phormium seems to be losing the pink variegation in the leaves. What is the cause of this and what can I do?

**Answer:** Some phormium plants that are growing vigorously in the ground start reverting (losing the variegation in the leaves) to the more dominant form of their lineage. This may be plain green or brown leaves depending on each individual type. Either dig up the clump and remove the parts that have reverted and throw them away, or cut back the plant to almost ground level and then remove any new growth that doesn't show signs of colouration when the leaves regrow.

**Question:** I have just moved into a new property with large overgrown phormium plants dominating a neglected shrub border. Should I remove these plants?

**Answer:** Old, neglected phormiums look very untidy. Prune back to ground level and allow the plants to grow new fresh leaves and then assess whether they are still out of place. A rejuvenating pruning sometimes gives plants a new lease of life.

**Question:** Can I grow phormiums in a bog garden that I am establishing on the edge of a stream that runs through my farm garden? PS. I live in a very cold area.

**Answer:** Flaxes grow in moist or damp soils but not in flowing water. Hybrid phormiums tend to be more cold sensitive than their larger relatives. Winter protection may be necessary on some of the younger plants for a year or three. 🌱



*Phormium 'Apricot Queen'*



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INDIGENOUS

# Indigenous colour planting palettes



*Geranium incanum*



**W**e South Africans really are spoilt for choice when it comes to indigenous ornamentals that look gorgeous in gardens. Every shape, size, texture and, of course, colour seems to be available to us. Interestingly, green is the most common flower colour in all the world, but with a few exceptions it's not really a colour that stands out. Let's take a closer look at some of our showiest indigenous flowering plants by flower colour to help you build up an indigenous palette for your garden.

### **Yellow for cheer**

There are so many yellow-flowering plants that we might tend to get a bit blasé about the colour, but sunshine-yellow is always a cheerful addition to the garden. Consider these pretty, yellow-flowering plants for your garden.

**Euryops:** There are several euryops species that are grown commercially as ornamentals. Their foliage textures, growth habits and flower size may vary, but what they all have in common is masses of cheerful yellow daisy flowers.

**Creeping gazanias:** If you're looking for a carpet of pretty, perennial wildflowers that can take tough conditions, look out for these! **Gazania rigens** comes in green, variegated, and silver-leaved forms and is a virtually bomb-proof groundcover.

**Calpurnia aurea:** This small tree produces very showy golden yellow blooms and is very well suited to small gardens.

### **Pink prettiness**

Pinks range from vibrant magentas to soft, tranquil shades. Combine it with white, blue or purple and enjoy those pretties!

**Barlerias:** Barlerias, also known as bush violets, are extremely rewarding. Choose between **Barleria obtusa**, which flowers profusely in spring, and **Barleria repens**, which flowers on and off all year but particularly in spring and autumn. Both species are available in blue-purple forms.



**Crassula multicava:** The fairy crassula is a charming, low-maintenance, drought-resistant groundcover that thrives in sun or shade. As if this weren't enough, it flowers often and generously.

**Dais cotinifolia:** The pompom tree has to be one of South Africa's best pink-flowering trees for smaller gardens. However, do ensure that you plant it in well-drained soil.

### **White elegance**

The wonderful white garden at Sissinghurst in the UK has inspired many gardeners. There is certainly something very elegant about a garden with nothing but white flowers, but white looks good with absolutely any other colour too. Try these worthy white-flowering plants out in your garden.

**Freylinia tropica:** Despite its tropical-sounding name, the white freylinia is remarkably cold tolerant. It develops a tidy growth habit without help but also responds very well to clipping and shaping.



*Freylinia tropica*

***Falkia repens*:** With a cute common name like 'oortjies', you would expect an adorable plant, and falkia doesn't disappoint. This flat-growing groundcover is a real little charmer.

***Dombeya rotundifolia*:** The dombeya or wild pear drops all its leaves in winter, then bursts into an explosion of spring blooms that will really get you into the spirit of the season.

 **Red passion**

Fiery reds draw the eye like a magnet, and plants with red flowers attract the nectar-feeding sunbirds too. Add visual excitement with these red-hot garden delights.

***Tecoma capensis* 'Rocky Horror':** You get red Cape honeysuckles, and then you get 'Rocky Horror'. This super-vigorous cultivar has bigger and better everything. Recognise it by its extra-big flowers and leaves.

***Aptenia cordifolia*:** A tough and vigorous groundcover, aptenia has red or purple flowers. It will grow in sun or light shade and is great for covering areas you don't want to fuss over. You'll get flowers on and off all year.

***Schotia brachypetala*:** Although the coral tree is



*Schotia brachypetala*



*Tecoma capensis* 'Rocky Horror'

tempting to mention, the weeping boerboon is a tree worth having in your garden. Grow it as a large shrub or small tree, and expect it to have an 'interesting' rather than upright shape.

## Cool blues

Blue is a relatively rare flower colour in the plant world, but with our diverse flora it comes as no surprise to find that blue-flowering indigenous plants aren't hard to pinpoint.

**Plumbago:** Some plants won't be overlooked on any plant list, and our indigenous blue plumbago is one of these. It's particularly useful as a hedge or to cover ugly palisade fencing.

**Scabiosa:** Scabiosas range from low-growing rosette forms to small shrublets, and you get them in blue, white or pink. The flowers are just gorgeous, and they'll produce several flushes of blooms each year, especially if you deadhead after flowering.

**Bolusanthus speciosus:** Our indigenous tree wisteria is a sight to behold when it blooms. Unfortunately, this beauty doesn't seem to do very well in winter-rainfall areas.



Plumbago



Scabiosa



Polygala

## Purple and lilac

Royal purples and soft lilacs are tranquil colours. Use them as a foil for contrasting yellows, or blend them in with shades of pink. You have so many options that it's hard to choose, but here are a few favourites.

**Polygala:** There are several species and genetic variations. The compact '**Southern Shores**', also known as '**Petite Butterfly**', is a tidy little shrub to about 1m high, while the **Polygala myrtifolia** is a large shrub that can even be used as a very small tree.

**Geranium incanum:** Soft mounds of fine-textured foliage turn into cushions of blooms as soon as spring arrives. Create your very own flower meadow, or use it as an edging for perennial beds.

**Virgilia:** The *keurboom* or blossom tree is a big favourite with South African gardeners thanks to its fast growth and gorgeous flowers. It's big enough to make a nice shade tree, but also small enough to work well when you don't have a whole lot of space for a tree.

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## And all the colours in between: ask and search

No matter what colours you want to bring into your garden, there'll be indigenous plants for you to consider. Your local nursery will have qualified horticulturists who can advise you as to what's available and what works well in your area.

The National Biodiversity Institute also has a super website with a huge database of plant info, and if you'd like to do your homework from home before setting out to choose plants, its advanced search feature allows you to search plants by flower colour plus a great many other parameters. Check out [pza.sanbi.org](http://pza.sanbi.org) for all the best info compiled by experts. 🌱

# Beat the Heat

## Help your roses to keep their cool

- Hot nights bother the roses more than the heat during the day. Cool them down by watering in the early evening. The heat quickly dries off the leaves, so they won't get fungal diseases, and there is less evaporation than watering during the day.
- A thick mulch covering the soil in a rose bed is essential when there is insufficient water, but don't pile the leaves up against the stems. The area around the stems should be open for the water to penetrate, otherwise it is just the mulch that gets wet.
- Keep as many leaves on the bush as possible, and just break off the head of the dead roses. Check for red spider and spray as soon as you see evidence of it. A fortnightly spraying of Ludwig's Insect Spray should keep light infestations under control if you drench the underside of the rose leaves.

## To fertilise or not?

Fertilising with Vigorosa should only be delayed until the end of the month if February is extremely hot and dry, otherwise fertilise mid-month as normal. When it is hot and dry it is best to keep new growth to a minimum as it draws up extra water. Always water well after fertilising.

## Watering

Gardeners always ask how much water they should give? The simplest answer is between 15 – 20 litres of water a week. This can be grey water, and if only buckets are allowed then two buckets of water a week should be enough. If you have a mist irrigation system, 5 – 10 minutes a day is not enough for the water to penetrate down to the rose roots, which are about 30cm below the surface. Rather water for one hour once a week or for 40 minutes twice a week. The type of soil also makes a difference. With heavy soil that retains water, watering can be less frequent but with sandy soil it is better to supply smaller amounts more often.

## GET THE LOOK

So simple – a bench under an arch of fragrant **'Climbing Rose Magic'** becomes a perfect retreat on a hot summer afternoon, or a romantic rendezvous for a Valentine's date.

As this is the month of romance, use fragrant roses to bring romance into the garden. Other fragrant roses to add to the garden are **'Fragonard'**, an Antico Moderno rose that has won awards for fragrance, and hybrid teas **'Bewitched'**, **'Ecstasy'**, **'Garden Princess'**, **'Just Joey'**, and **'Perfumery'**.



'Just Joey'



'Bewitched'



'Ecstasy'



'Garden Princess'

### And if it rains...

- Constant rainfall is also a threat to the well-being of the rose. Without a film of fungicide on the leaves, black spot will cause defoliation, and lots of leaves are needed during the shorter days to produce flowers. Spray with Chronos as soon as the weather allows it and repeat three weeks later.
- If you did not summer groom at the end of January, there is still time to do so. Remove diseased and twiggy growth, thin out the centre of dense bushes and cut down the very tall growers by a third.
- After a long period of rainfall it's necessary to water the roses bushes more often to acclimatise them once again to the dry heat. Should the soil be compacted, loosen it, digging in a little composted manure if you feel it is necessary, and renew the mulch.
- Continue to groom your roses by cutting off spent flowers, disbud hybrid teas and pinch out the centre bud of the floribunda clusters.



### Downy mildew in sub-tropical areas

This fungal disease is a problem in subtropical regions because it damages the capillaries, preventing normal sap flow. The flower buds don't develop, eventually the leaves drop off, the bark bursts open and in severe cases the plants will die. Spray weekly with a broad-spectrum fungicide that contains the active ingredient mancozeb, and use a sticker like Picanta. 🍷

Romance for 365 days a year...?



Happy Valentine's day!



... plant a red Ludwig's rose today!



# Beautiful Velddrif bell-bush for water-wise gardens

## *Freylinia visseri*

**F**reylinias or bell-bushes are shrubs or small trees in the snapdragon family *Scrophulariaceae*. There are nine species, eight of which are endemic to South Africa and found mainly in the southern Cape. The exception, *F. tropica* or the Waterberg bell-bush, occurs from Limpopo to the Chimanimani Mountains in eastern Zimbabwe. Bell-bush flowers have long perianth tubes and widely spreading petals, and flower colour is mainly in shades of lilac, mauve, magenta and purple. White forms also sometimes occur, and the honey bell-bush (*F. lanceolata*) has light- to bright-yellow flowers.

The Velddrif bell-bush, also known locally as *suurlat* (sour rod), has an interesting history. It was collected for the first time by the Swedish botanist Carl Thunberg during his travels in the Cape during the late 18th century, and he sent a pressed specimen to the Herbarium in Uppsala, Sweden. He didn't document exactly where he had found it, and the plant was not recorded again until 1947, when Mr Floors Visser, a farmer in the Aurora area on the Cape west coast, collected a flowering specimen on a farm near Velddrif, which he sent to the Compton Herbarium at Kirstenbosch

for identification. It was identified as an undescribed species of *Freylinia*, but no further investigations were made. Unfortunately, the owner of the farm ploughed up the whole population of *Freylinia* plants in 1954, to expand his wheat fields, but Floors Visser managed to rescue four pieces of the plant and two of them survived and became well established on his own farm near Aurora. Subsequently, Ernst van Jaarsveld at Kirstenbosch contacted Floors Visser, and in 1983 Ernst and I visited him on his farm and were able to bring back cuttings to Kirstenbosch, where they rooted easily and became established in cultivation. The plant was named in honour of Floors Visser, in recognition of his conservation efforts in saving this species from extinction. A second population of the Velddrif bell-bush was subsequently found on a farm near Hopefield in the 1990s, surrounded by wheat fields, and the plant remains critically endangered in the wild, since it is currently only known from this population. The plants occur on open flats in deep sandy soil, in an area experiencing winter rainfall and extreme heat in summer.

*Freylinia visseri* forms an erect, multi-stemmed shrub 2 – 3m high, and

produces suckers. The upright, rod-like stems are clothed in narrow, leathery leaves with pointed tips, and the striking flower clusters are produced in the uppermost part of the branches in spring and early summer (September to November). Although the plants occur in sandy soil in the wild, they easily adapt to heavier, well-drained media, are not fussy about pH levels, and benefit from the addition of well-rotted compost. They perform best in full sun all day, but will also do well in morning or afternoon sun, and can take light frost. They are highly recommended for difficult seaside gardens and mixed fynbos beds, placed towards the rear of wide borders, or used to screen unsightly backgrounds. Young plants need regular, deep watering for about three months after planting, but once established, these long-lived shrubs are very waterwise. If that were not enough, the nectar-filled flowers attract sunbirds and butterflies to the garden! 🌱

*Freylinia visseri* is available in limited quantities from Good Hope Gardens Nursery near Cape Point (060 509 4288).



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SOLUTIONS

## Aphids

Aphids are notorious plant pests and vectors for many diseases. A tree can cope with small numbers, but large populations can cause serious damage, resulting in deformed leaves, leaf drop, and twig and branch damage. Various preparatory treatments are available for aphid control.

TEXT and PHOTOGRAPHS Paul Dohovan

# LEMON PESTS and diseases

Lemon trees attract a wide variety of pests and diseases, many of which can quickly spread across the tree and onto neighbouring trees if not dealt with promptly. Fortunately most can be treated with easily obtainable treatments.

### Citrus canker

Of all the diseases afflicting lemon trees, citrus canker is possibly the most serious. It's caused by a bacterial infection that results in yellowish, halo-like scabs on the fruits, leaves and twigs. The bacteria is spread by wind, insects, birds, garden implements and anyone who brushes up against the tree. If left unchecked, the disease spreads quickly and can result in blemished fruit, fruit drop, leaf loss and even death of the tree.

Treatment is prevention rather than cure, with a liquid copper fungicide. If the tree becomes infected there is no cure and it must be destroyed to prevent the disease from spreading to other trees.



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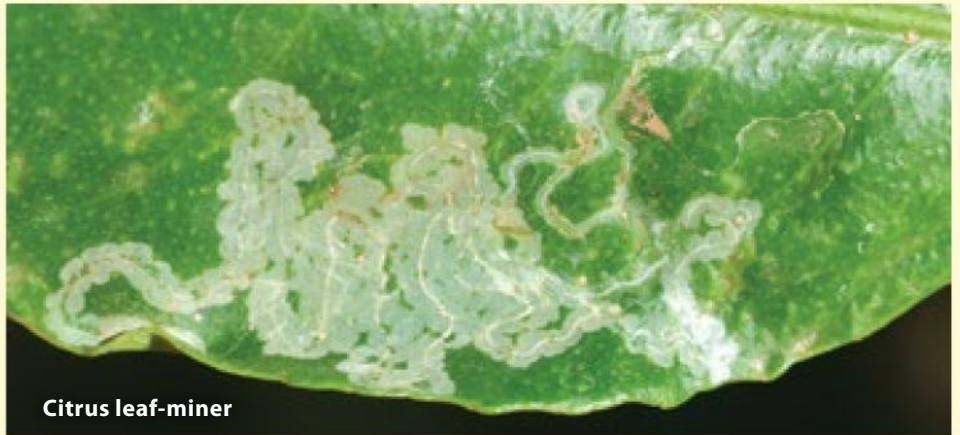
Sooty mould

### Sooty mould

Sooty mould is not a disease in itself, but caused by honeydew, a by-product of the feeding habits of other pests such as aphids, leafhoppers, mealybugs, scale insects, psyllids and whitefly.

Honeydew is a sweet and sticky liquid excreted by these pests as they process the large quantities of sap they suck from the plant. This liquid forms an ideal surface for certain moulds to grow on. Without the honeydew, sooty mould will not grow. So, wherever you find sap suckers, you will encounter sooty mould.

The mould has branching, thread-like hyphae that give it its shape and colour. The fungi itself does not infect a plant, and



Citrus leaf-miner

its main damage lies in it reducing sunlight penetration to the leaf, affecting the plant's ability to photosynthesise. This can lead to stunted growth, premature aging of the leaves, leaf drop or even the death of the plant.

### Root rot

Several soil-borne fungi can result in root rot. It affects the trees' health, causes the leaves to turn yellow, and causes defoliation and dying back of foliage. Root rot can also attack the fruit if it is spread from the soil onto the plant by splashing rain, watering and irrigation systems.

Control is generally through reduced watering and keeping the root crown free from standing water. Prune the lower branches so that they are at least 60cm off the ground and remove leaves and fruit that fall to the ground. Spray with a fungicide.

### Citrus swallowtail

The caterpillar most often found attacking lemon leaves is that of the citrus swallowtail (*Papilio demodocus*). The caterpillars, which resemble bird droppings in the early stage, chew the leaves, reducing the plants ability to

photosynthesise, which in turn leads to stunted growth. Unless there is a heavy infestation, well-established trees can sustain an attack by these caterpillars. Younger trees suffer most and a handful of caterpillars on a small tree can completely destroy it. Physically remove the caterpillars or spray the tree with an insecticide.

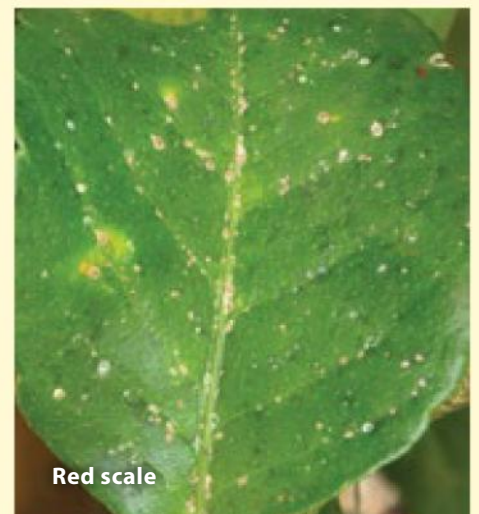
### Red Scale

As a sap sucker, scale insects can be found on all parts of the plant, though they are more noticeable when on the fruits, which take on a reddish-brown, speckled appearance. As the female feeds, she produces toxic saliva that results in the formation of small yellow spots. A heavy infestation can lead to pronounced discolouration, leaf droop, deformation of the shoots and dying of the fruit-bearing twigs.

Any control of red scale must be aimed at preventing the insect from establishing itself, or at the very least targeted towards the early instars, as later instars are difficult to control as they are protected by a waxy shield. Horticultural oil should be sprayed on the tree, to suffocate the scale and eggs.



Citrus canker



Red scale

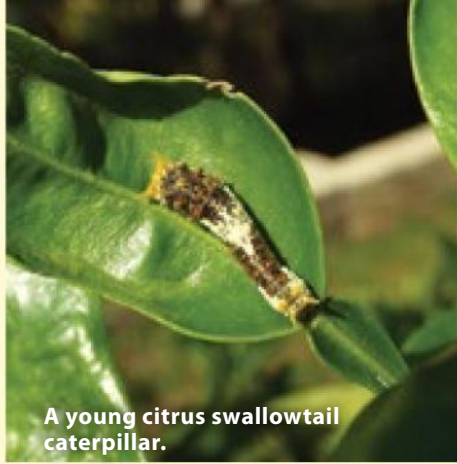
## Leaf-miner

What appear to be tunnels winding their way through the leaf are usually caused by the larvae of certain moths, sawflies, flies, beetles and some species of wasps. The larvae's tunnelling reduces the leaves ability to photosynthesise, leading to poor growth and low flower and fruit production. The larvae of some species may also chew through the stems and root system.

At the first signs of leaf-miner intrusion the tree should be treated with a suitable insecticide. Systemic insecticides offer a better chance of killing the larvae than contact ones, as they are absorbed by the leaf and kill the larva as it feeds.

## South African citrus thrip

Citrus thrips are tiny orange or pale yellow insects that feed on the sap of young leaves, fruits and branches. The appearance of silverying of the leaf surface, brown frass markings on the leaves and fruits, grey to black markings on fruits, and deformation of the fruit are signs of citrus thrip. The tree should be sprayed with an insecticide towards the end of a main flowering period. Keep the tree well irrigated and properly fertilised to keep its strength up. 🧑‍🌾



A young citrus swallowtail caterpillar.



Citrus thrip



Citrus swallowtail

## THE

ROSES

APHIDS

## SECRET

CITRUS

APHIDS  
RED SCALE  
PSYLLA  
LEAF MINER

## BEHIND

LAWNS

MOLE CRICKETS  
ANTS

## EXCEPTIONAL

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INDIGENOUS

# Beautiful and useful

INDIGENOUS HERBS FOR YOUR GARDEN

*Salvia chamelaeagnea*

**W**hen we think of herbs, several worthy plants spring to mind, but few of them are indigenous. Could it be possible that our indigenous plants also offer culinary delights and potential medicinal benefits?

The latter topic is controversial. Most herbal remedies have not been thoroughly studied, and so-called 'complementary medicines' should not be considered as a replacement for well-researched, proven cures when one is seriously ill.

Nevertheless, our unbelievably rich biodiversity has led to a great deal of interest in our indigenous herbs within the research community. After all, most medicines we use today have at least some relation to the plant-based medicines of yesteryear.

Let's begin by looking at some of the indigenous plants you can add to your culinary repertoire before taking a brief look at common home remedies using indigenous plants for minor ailments.

### **Cook it up!**

Mentioning all the indigenous plants that can be used to add zing to your cooking would be a tall order. To get started with indigenous cookery, grab these five commonly available indigenous plants and enjoy those aromas!

### **Wild garlic**

There are few people who can resist the flavour-enhancing properties of garlic, but growing regular garlic isn't something everyone succeeds at. However, our common wild garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*), with its pretty sprays of lilac blooms, is a great culinary herb that's ridiculously easy to grow.

Simply chop the leaves finely and add them to your



*Tulbaghia violacea*

cooking as a garlic substitute. Just remember that our garlic is a lot stronger than the conventional sort, so adding too much is all too easy. You can also use the flowers in salads or to top off elegant cocktail snacks. The flavour is sweetish with garlic overtones. If you have wild garlic plant in flower, pick one and taste it for yourself!

### **Wild sage**

Once again, we're looking at an easy-going genus that just about anybody can grow, and you have so many options! *Salvia africana-lutea*, *Salvia caerulea*, and *Salvia chamelaeagnea* are all gorgeous garden plants that grow into vigorous shrubs. Pick a few leaves and use them in any dish that usually requires sage. Chicken dishes are an obvious choice, but you can also try baking finely chopped leaves into savoury biscuits to serve with cream cheese, topped with a wild garlic flower.



*Salvia africana-lutea*

*Carissa spp.*

### Num-num

If you've ever tasted the tart fruits of the num-num (*Carissa spp.*), you'll know that they're pretty moreish. But have you considered making delicious jams and jellies with them? They're great as a topping for desserts like ice-cream and cheesecake. So, once those jasmine-like flowers have turned into yummy fruits, consider saving some to make jelly! Just spoon or squish out the pips through a sieve, add an equal volume of sugar to the fruit, and cook it up!

### Scented pelargoniums

The scented pelargoniums, also known as geraniums, are known for their delightful aromas, and there's such a repertoire of flavours hiding in just this one genus! Rose-scented geraniums are fabulous in muffins, cakes, bakes and desserts, and other flavours include nutmeg, mint and even lemon. If you have time, consider candying a few flowers to use as stunning toppings for cakes baked with a few finely chopped leaves to flavour.

*Pelargonium graveolens*

## Buchus

Most of us are familiar with the mountain buchu (*Agathosma betulina*), but of all the buchus it is the most difficult to grow. Luckily for us there are many other buchu species that provide a feast of appetising aromas to inspire your inner chef. Look for garlic, lemon and aniseed aromas, to name but a few. You need only touch the foliage for those aromas to emerge, so use these herbs quite sparingly.

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## Folk remedies

**Just as a reminder:** if it's serious, see a doctor! Pregnant women should also check whether herbal medicines are safe for their baby. For minor ills, try planting these easy-to-grow indigenous pretties in your garden

**African wormwood or wildeals:** This pretty plant, with its feathery silver foliage, helps with common colds, coughs and fevers. Just use a couple of leaves or a single sprig and add hot water. It tastes bitter, but it works. Many people report that it is



*Agathosma betulina*



*Bulbine frutescens*

also good for upset tummies and even for clearing intestinal parasites.

**Aloes:** We all know that *Aloe ferox* has given birth to a thriving aloe gel industry, but just about any species of aloe can help with skin healing. If you have a mild burn, for instance, kill the pain and promote healing by bandaging a peeled leaf to the spot. The cool feeling of relief is instant. Try it on any inflamed area and sigh with relief!

**Bulbine frutescens:** Nature offers us a tube of soothing ointment in the form of bulbine leaves. Simply pick a leaf and squeeze it – a clear gel emerges, and it's the perfect treatment for itchy bites. There are also reports saying that large amounts squeezed onto a cut will help to stop bleeding. As with aloes, it's very soothing on minor burns.

**And those culinary herbs too:** Wild garlic and wild sage are said to have antiseptic properties, and both are believed to help to build the immune system. Num-num is rich in vitamin C, pelargoniums are great as a calming, sleep-promoting tea, and although the other buchu species may not be as powerful as the mountain buchu, they're still good for coughs and colds.

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## Look around, read up, and enjoy!

There's a lot of information on useful indigenous herbs out there, so you will find food for thought if you look more deeply into this topic. Meanwhile, be sure to have the plants mentioned here in your garden – they're both beautiful and useful! 🍷

*Further Reading (Very Interesting)* <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0254629911001190>

Keep your cool  
with these

# LEMONY HERBS

*lemon verbena*  
*lemon balm*  
*lemon thyme*  
*lemon grass*  
*tea tree*  
*citronella geranium*

There is something special about lemony herbs. In summer they're cooling, and in winter they're comforting.





### When the heat's on, reach for lemon verbena

Lemon verbena (*Aloysia triphylla*) has the strongest lemon taste and fragrance of all the lemony herbs. On scorching days a sprig of lemon verbena in iced water is as refreshing as a slice of lemon. It's even good in a gin and tonic!

**Try this:** Lemon verbena syrup is the basis for many drinks and desserts. All you need is 1 cup water, ¼ cup sugar and ¼ cup torn verbena leaves. Bring the water, sugar and bruised verbena leaves to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Cook for 30 seconds, remove from the heat and allow to cool. Strain and use.

- Add the syrup to sparkling water.
- Make a cocktail by mixing a cup of syrup with ¾ cup dry gin, ¾ cup chilled club soda, and ¼ cup fresh lime juice. Garnish with fresh verbena sprigs.
- Use the syrup to flavour fruit sorbets and jellies.
- Substitute finely chopped lemon verbena leaves for lemon zest in cakes, desserts and savoury dishes.

Start the day with cleansing and energising lemon verbena tea.

### Growing tips

This herb grows into a bushy, 2m high and wide shrub with sprays of small white flowers in summer. It likes full sun, light soil that drains well and regular watering. It is sensitive to cold and will lose its leaves in winter, but can be cut back in spring and will sprout again. It can also be grown in a large container.

### Did you know?

Lemon verbena keeps its strong taste when dried. Place leaves on a rack or newspaper in a cool room and allow to dry until the leaves feel crisp. Add the dried leaves to salt or sugar grinders. Make lemon verbena-infused sugar by blending six dried sprigs with two cups of sugar. Store in an airtight container. Sprinkle the lemon sugar over muffin and cake batter before baking, add to icing sugar or when stewing fruit.

TEXT Alice Spenser-Higgs



### Healthy summer smoothies: lemon balm is best

Don't be fooled by the delicate lemon flavour of lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*). This tonic herb has muscle, with powerful healing properties that include a detoxing action that strengthens the immune system, aiding the body to deal with the effect of preservatives and other chemicals in our diets. It also soothes and relaxes, helping overcome chronic fatigue. Use in healthy shakes, especially if the early morning rush leads to skipping breakfast.

#### ● Mango Magic shake

Liquidise ½ cup peeled fresh mango, ½ teaspoon kelp powder or 2 crushed kelp tablets, 1 tablespoon chopped lemon balm leaves, 1 tablespoon parsley and 1 chopped stalk of celery. Add water if the mix is too thick.

#### ● Power High-C shake

Liquidise ½ a tomato, ½ cup fresh orange juice, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon honey, 1 teaspoon raw, peeled ginger root (about 1 large slice) and 1 teaspoon lemon balm. Add water if the mix is too thick, and extra honey to taste.

#### ● Lemon and Rosemary Lift

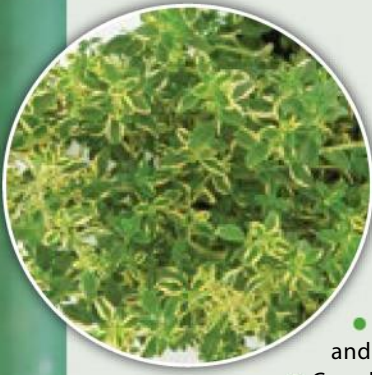
Make a tea from 1 sprig of rosemary, 1 lemon-grass leaf and two sprigs of lemon balm. Add the tea to half a cup of liquidised fruit such as kiwi fruit, paw-paw or pineapple.

### Good to know

The best time to harvest lemon balm is in the afternoon, when its essential oils are strongest. The more often you pick, the more leaves it produces.

### Growing tips

This compact perennial (30cm high) grows in full sun to partial shade and is good for window boxes and containers. It doesn't mind poor garden soil if the drainage is good. Water regularly on hot days. Use an organic fertiliser that will supply all the needed elements for optimum growth, as it is a heavy feeder and can quickly show deficiencies, making the plant more susceptible to diseases. However, an oversupply of nitrogen causes soft growth that has less medicinal value.



## For summery feasts and lingering lunches

just add **lemon thyme (*Thymus x citriodorus*)**

This robustly flavoured herb easily ranks in the top 10 of culinary herbs. It's the herb of choice for potjies and braai marinades, and it is equally delicious added to salads and salad dressings.

### Try this:

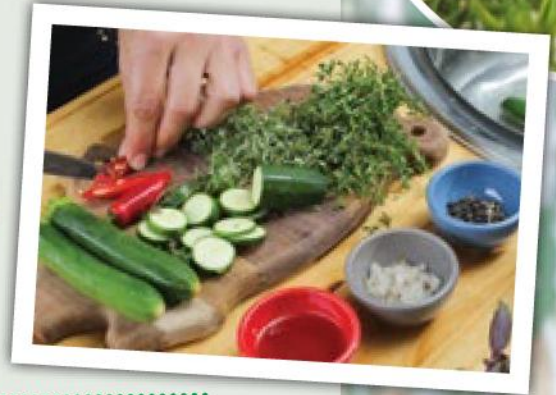
- Add sprigs of thyme to slow-cooked chicken dishes and roast chicken (under the skin and in the cavity with a peeled onion).
- Crumbled dried thyme and mix with breadcrumbs for coating fried chicken or port cutlets.
- Use to flavour baked or sautéed vegetables, especially mushrooms and baby marrows.
- Bake lemon thyme with fish, especially salmon and trout. Make foil parcels, with the fish skin-side down, topped with lemon thyme, lemon slices and butter, and bake for about 30 minutes.
- Make a lemony pasta dish by grinding a sprig of thyme, rosemary and garlic with a little pasta cooking water to make a paste. Fry chopped onions and tomatoes, and when that is cooked add the paste and simmer for a few minutes. Stir in cooked pasta.
- Lemon thyme combines well with bay leaf and parsley as the classic *bouquet garni* for flavouring slow-cooked meat dishes and soups.

### Growing tips

Lemon thyme is a small, shrubby perennial that likes full sun and gritty soil that drains well. It is an excellent herb for growing in containers. It is frost hardy but likes protection, and if you harvest regularly keep a pot or two in a warm sunny spot for a good supply of leaves.

### Good to know

Lemon thyme stalks are very tough. Strip the leaves off the stems or use whole sprigs and remove them after cooking.



## For added tang - snip some lemongrass

Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) has a strong scent and zesty taste that pairs well with garlic, fresh chillies and coriander, all stalwarts of Thai cuisine. It also adds a lemony lift to stir-fries, marinades, curries or fish, chicken and pork dishes.

### How to cook with lemongrass

Cut the stalk off at ground level, slice off the lower, broader part and remove the tough outer leaves so that the yellow inner section remains. Chop that section into smaller pieces and bruise to release the lemon flavour. Add these during cooking, but remove them before serving. The inner stalk can also be finely chopped or blitzed in a food processor and added to the dish.

**Try this:** To make green curry paste blitz together the following ingredients: 4 – 6 chopped and de-seeded green chillies; 2 shallots, roughly chopped; 5cm piece of fresh ginger peeled and grated; 2 crushed garlic cloves; a bunch of coriander; 2 lemongrass stalks, chopped; the juice and zest of 1 lime; the grated zest of an extra lime; 1 tablespoon of crushed coriander seeds; 1 teaspoon ground cumin; 1 teaspoon black peppercorns; 2 teaspoons fish sauce or light soy sauce, and 3 tablespoons olive oil. Store in a jar in the refrigerator for up to three weeks.

### Growing tips

Lemongrass is a perennial, clump-forming grass that grows up to 1.5m high and 80cm wide. Plant it in full sun, in well-composted soil and in a protected area of the garden, and water regularly in summer. It is frost sensitive and should be cut back in spring to encourage new shoots.



## Summer stings and bites – tea tree and citronella geranium

While citronella geranium naturally repels mosquitoes, tea tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) is a strong, effective natural antiseptic that helps to heal insect bites and stings.

On hot summer evenings when mozzies are about, keep a pot of citronella geranium close by and rub the leaves over your arms and legs. The lemony scent is pleasant and a lot healthier than chemical sprays.

Tea tree is used in traditional Aboriginal remedies and has become widely used. Infusions of the leaves and flowers are used externally to wash insect bites and stings as well as skin infections such as athlete's foot and ringworm.

An infusion also works as a mouthwash and gargle for sore throats.



### Growing tips

Tea tree grows into an attractive small tree of about 8m high with the most beautiful textured bark. Plant in full sun. It can take cold temperatures.

### Try this

Use citronella geranium to make a delicious citrus-scented sauce for ice cream, stewed fruit or for pouring over a baked dessert. Combine  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup orange juice, 2 tablespoons finely chopped citronella geranium leaves, 2 teaspoons grated orange rind, 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, 1 tablespoon honey and 2 teaspoons finely chopped rosemary leaves. Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 – 10 minutes until thickened. Strain and serve.

### Growing tips

Citronella geranium grows into a compact shrub of about 1m high and spread, with lovely pink flowers in spring. It is best to grow it in full sun to have the highest amount of essential oils in the leaves. 🌱



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# Super Smoothies

Smoothies are a great way to use your home-grown fruit and veggies, and to get your daily requirement in one quick and tasty meal.

**H**ere are three of our favourite smoothie recipes, but don't be dictated to! There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to delectable combinations, so use whatever you've got in the garden or the fridge. Experimentation is the name of the game!

## Peanut butter and banana smoothie

Peanut butter is a powerhouse of energy and nutrients, and its natural flavour ally is the equally nutritious banana.

### Ingredients

1 banana, chopped  
1 tablespoon peanut butter  
1 teaspoon raw honey  
¼ cup plain yoghurt  
1 teaspoon chia seeds  
¼ cup raw rolled oats

1 dash of cinnamon

Milk or almond milk, to make your smoothie as runny as you like it

### Instructions

1. Combine all the ingredients in your blender. Start with only a little milk.
2. Adjust the consistency by adding milk, if necessary. Similarly, add more honey if your smoothie is not sweet enough for you.

## Rhubarb smoothie

### Ingredients

- 1 cup rhubarb stalks
- 1 whole medium pineapple
- 1 cup mixed berries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 litre water

### Instructions

1. Clean the rhubarb stalks. (And throw the leaves on the compost heap!)
2. Peel and dice the pineapple. You can include the core or discard it, depending on the power of your blender.
3. Pop all the ingredients into your blender and blend until smooth.

### Alternatives

Another great combination that makes use of your rhubarb is rhubarb, watermelon, celery, cucumber, lime, pear, kiwi and frozen strawberries. This is just the ticket for hot summer days!

For a tropical flavour combine rhubarb, strawberries, coconut water, mangoes and fresh ginger. Add a touch of raw honey to taste, if necessary.

### IMPORTANT

Don't be tempted to add the rhubarb leaves into your smoothie – they're toxic! It's the stalks that are good for you, containing all sorts of vitamins and minerals.



## Going green

The more adventurous, health conscious of you might want to try a 'green smoothie', which is based on leafy greens.

### Ingredients

- 2 cups chopped spinach (or kale, beetroot leaves, Asian greens, or whatever else you've got growing)
- 1 large granny smith apple (or any apple variety)
- 2 kiwi fruits
- 1 lemon
- 2 cups water
- A few stalks of celery
- Raw honey, to taste

1. Peel the kiwi fruits, peel and seed the lemon, and remove the seeds from the apple (or cut the flesh away from the core).
2. Add all the ingredients to the blender and blend until smooth.



# Phyto-Force

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## A smoothie for your garden

Blend together banana skins, used filter coffee grounds, eggshells and some water. The banana skins contain potassium, the coffee is high in minerals, while the eggshells are high in calcium. Now pour or spoon this mixture around the base of that special plant or even pot plant, as an environmentally friendly (and cheap!) natural fertiliser. 🍷





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# The edible balcony

A little bit of space can go a long way, even if the only 'outdoor' space at your disposal for growing veggies is a balcony.





## Veggies for the balcony

**Start with herbs:** They are easy to grow, and if bought in a large enough pot can be used immediately without transplanting. Make sure they get enough sun. Rosemary prefers drier soil and fewer nutrients, while basil needs more fertiliser and watering. Grow spring onions and chives as cut-and-come-again crops.

## Location, location, location

Most vegetables need at least six hours of sun a day. East and north-facing balconies generally receive the best light. West-facing balconies can be very hot in summer but are better in winter. South-facing balconies receive the least light but there are veggies that can cope with good indirect light.

**Go green:** Leafy greens and salad leaves can be grown throughout the season. Compared to other veggies, they need less light to grow. Sow seed into pots or fast-track your harvest with the ready-to-use **'Simply Salad'** range that has six different mixes. Plants can be harvested every three weeks by cutting back to 5cm, after which the plants will regrow. The leafy mixes include red and green lettuce, rocket, endive, radicchio, Asian greens and kale. Microgreens are a good option too, quick to germinate and harvest while taking up very little space.

**Be choosy with tomatoes:** There are many tomato varieties, but for pots the best are dwarf varieties that are determinate, which means they grow to a certain size and bear all their fruit in a few weeks. Cherry tomatoes produce very sweet, small fruit and are a good for balconies because their fruit

doesn't become heavy and require extensive staking. For hanging baskets, choose indeterminate varieties like **'Tumbling Tom'** and **'Tumbler'**.

**Mini vines:** Pumpkins and other rambling squashes are too vigorous, but the **'Simply Delicious'** patio range for contained spaces includes a mini vine cucumber (**'Patio Snacker'**), **'Honeynut'** butternut, and Zucchini **'Easy Pick'**. Other suitable vining veggies are runner beans and climbing garden peas.



**Hot and sweet:** Chillies and sweet peppers often do better in pots, mainly because it is easier to look after them and control the amount of water, light and food they receive. Grow from seed or look out for the patio range that includes the mini sweet pepper (**'Cute Stuff'** gold or red), and the dwarf jalapeño, **'La Bomba'**.

**Eggfruit** need large containers, like tomatoes. They take up space, so one or two plants should be sufficient. The dwarf eggplant **'Patio Baby'** is a fast grower that produces early, continuous high yields.

## Weigh-less

Weight is an issue for balcony gardens. Terracotta pots look great, but they do get very heavy! Plastic pots are lighter, especially as tomatoes, eggplants and cucumbers need bigger pots (with a minimum of 30cm diameter). Because soil dries out faster in containers, the larger the container the longer it stays moist.

**Baby carrots** can be grown in a 20cm-deep window box. Make sure the potting mix drains well. The heirloom variety carrot **'Parisian'** is sweet, small and round, making it ideal for containers. They grow faster than the elongated varieties.



## Quality matters

Start with a quality potting soil (a mix of organics), add a sustained-release organic fertiliser, like Vita Grow (2:3:2) or Vita Fruit and Flowers (3:1:5) that is not salt based and will not dehydrate plants in hot, dry conditions.

## Space-savers

Part of the fun is being creative with minimal space. Use window-boxes, hanging baskets, old wooden ladders, converted gutters, and wall-mounted trellises for vining veggies.

**Watering** is the biggest challenge because excess water must go somewhere!

- Put saucers under the pots to catch the water that drains through. Regulate the amount of water given so that the excess in the saucers evaporates or is drawn up by the plant during the day.
- Alternatively, fill the saucer with stones and stand the pot on the stones. This improves humidity and the pot won't get waterlogged.
- With smaller pots it is easier to empty them out after they have drained through.

### Watering tip

The soil should be moist but never waterlogged or dry. A rule of thumb is to water every day during the hottest months and every second to third day as it cools down. If in doubt, push your finger into the soil and feel it.

### Feeding

Incorporate a sustained-release fertiliser when potting and supplement with an application of liquid fertiliser once a month to replace nutrients that are taken up by the plants or leached out in the watering.

### Pests

On very hot balconies watch out for pests like white fly, aphids or red spider, and use an organic insecticide.

### Move it

The angle of the sun changes as summer moves towards winter. Place a wheeled pot trolley (available in garden centres) under a large pot and move it to follow the sun.

### Recycle

Make space for a wormery that can be fed with household scraps and newspaper. Vermicompost is high in nutrients and a little goes a long way, especially if used to make a liquid soil drench.





## GARDEN TASKS FOR FEBRUARY

This is usually the hottest month of the year. Reduce the stress on veggies by watering regularly, mulching, controlling pests and removing weeds that compete for water.



### General garden tasks

- Water daily if it is hot and dry, especially salad and green leafy crops.
- Don't let seedlings dry out – water twice a day if necessary.
- Fertilise long-fruiting crops with a potassium-rich fertiliser.
- Pick fast-maturing vegetables like beans at least twice a week.
- Renew mulch around the larger veggies.
- If necessary, protect vegetables from harsh sun with 30% shade cloth.
- Keep white fly and aphids under control with an organic pesticide.
- Protect fruiting crops from caterpillars by spraying with a bird-friendly biological caterpillar insecticide in the early evening when the caterpillars are feeding.



### 5 minutes to spare

Spread dry oats around new plants or around the border of a bed to deter snails. Snails and slugs can't resist it and if they eat too much they bloat and die.

### 10 minutes to spare

Sow your winter crops in seed trays for planting out when the weather cools.



### DON'T PANIC

if large-leaved veggies wilt in the heat. This is how they conserve water and energy. They will revive in the evening. If they are still wilted by the next morning, then water. 🚿



## FEBRUARY SOWING GUIDE

REGION	VEGETABLE
<b>Highveld and KwaZulu-Natal Midlands</b>	Beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, radishes, spinach and Swiss chard, turnips
<b>Middleveld (Pretoria and other less frosty areas)</b>	Bush beans, beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, radishes, spinach and Swiss chard, turnips
<b>Eastern Cape and Little Karoo</b>	Beetroot, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, parsnips, radishes, Swiss chard, turnips
<b>Western Cape (and Southern Coast)</b>	Bush beans, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, carrots, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, kohlrabi, lettuce
<b>Northern Cape and Great Karoo</b>	Beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, parsnips, radishes, spinach and Swiss chard, turnips
<b>Lowveld and KwaZulu-Natal Coast</b>	Artichokes (globe), bush beans, runner beans, beetroot, brinjals, cabbage, capsicums (sweet peppers and chillies), carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, onions, radishes, pumpkins and Hubbard squashes, radishes, spinach and Swiss chard, bush and trailing squashes, tomatoes, turnips

# Pots of fresh flavour

A selection of herbs planted in pots near the kitchen or the braai is a great way to add fresh flavour to your cooking. We put together some of our favourite combinations for you to try for yourself.

## What you need

Galvanised buckets  
Stones  
Potting soil  
Coconut palm peat  
Organic fertiliser pellets  
Bonemeal or superphosphate  
A selection of herbs

## What you do

1. The buckets need to have drainage holes in the bottom. Make them by placing a piece of wood beneath the pot and drilling holes into the bottom of the bucket. The wood will prevent the metal from buckling.
2. Add a layer of stones to the bottom of the bucket to help with drainage.
3. Make a soil mix by combining 2 cups of coconut palm peat (reconstituted in water) with 1 cup of potting soil and adding a handful of bonemeal and a handful of organic fertiliser pellets. Mix this all together and fill the bucket  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.
4. Position the plants and fill in with the soil mix. Press down and water well.
5. Hang the buckets using galvanised chain or place them on the ground where they can be used often. Water daily – a dose of liquid plant food mixed with water to the manufacturers' directions every two weeks will keep the plants in tiptop shape.



POT 1

Use on pizza or chop a few fresh chillies on a perfectly braaied steak.

### Sweet basil

The king of herbs is regularly used in a variety of dishes, like pasta and pizza. It needs regular watering and doesn't do well in the cold, so grow in spring and summer. Harvest before the cold sets in and preserve by freezing in water or making pesto.

### Chilli 'Tabasco'

An upright chilli plant that produces yellow and green fruit that turns bright scarlet when ripe, it is used for the famous chilli sauce we all love. It's a very hot pepper, so use with caution.

### *Origanum vulgare* 'Compactum'

A low-growing, dense groundcover with small aromatic leaves, it's particularly pretty when cascading down the sides of pots. Sunshine and well-draining soil are its only requirements. It will die back in winter.



POT 2

Great for braais, for flavouring butters and for fish and chicken.

### Rosemary 'Tuscan Blue'

A fragrant herb that attracts butterflies and birds, 'Tuscan Blue' needs minimal watering and plenty of sun. It makes a great hedge and container plant.

### *Origanum vulgare* 'Variegata'

A pretty tricolour-leaved plant that can be grown in full sun and partial shade, it needs little water and is a great insect repellent, especially for ants.

### *Thymus x citriodorus* 'Silver Queen'

This thyme has rich, lemon-scented leaves and is easy to grow. Cut back stems regularly to keep shape and limit woody stem growth. 🌿

TIP: Deadhead the basil after flowering to keep the leaves bushy.

DIY



# Heart-to-heart

For Valentine's Day this year, why not design your own heart gift for the love of your life?

## What you need

- Masonite board (5mm) – we used an offcut, but it needs to be about 30cm square to fit the heart base
- Pine dowels – 2 of each of 5 sizes (19mm x 180mm, 16mm x 180mm, 12mm x 180mm, 10 mm x 180mm, 8mm x 180mm)
- Plastic pot (75mm)
- Potting soil
- A selection of small succulents

**Tools needed:** Glue gun and glue sticks, jigsaw, pencil, saw



## What to do

1. Draw out half a heart (about 14cm wide) on a piece of paper and cut it out. Trace the shape onto the masonite then flip it, to create a whole heart. Cut it out with a jigsaw.
2. Cut all the dowels into 68 – 72mm lengths. The idea is to make them all slightly different to get a textured look at the end, rather than a perfectly flat surface.
3. Plant up the pot with succulents and water well. Let it dry out before assembling the heart.
4. Place the pot on the heart and glue lengths of dowel around the pot, alternating between the sizes. Glue on the bottom and along the length so that you fix the dowels to the base and to each other.
5. Fill in the rest of the dowels starting from the outside inwards so that you have a neat edge.
6. Fix a hook to the back of the board to hang it up or use a plate stand to display. Remove the pot of succulents to water. 🪴



This is the tenth in our Working with Wood series presented by Greg de Villiers. Throughout the series we will introduce you to some amazing new tools on the market that take the 'work' out of woodwork.

# Hangings with the flock



This lovely bird feeder will be a feature in any beautiful tree.



## WHAT YOU NEED

### Cutting list

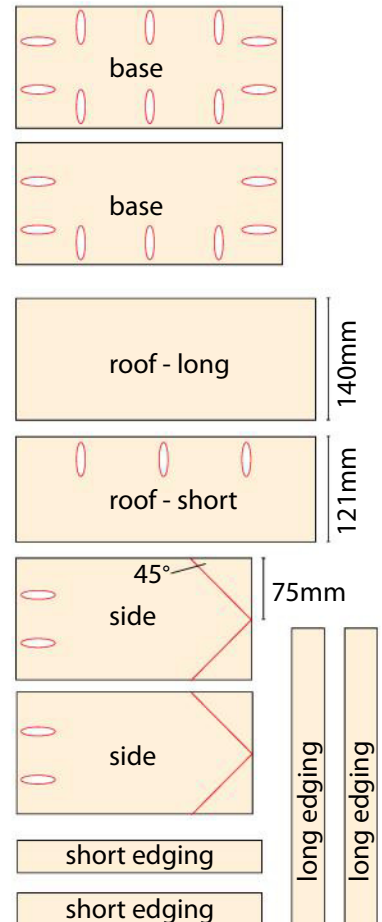
- 2 x 140mm x 305mm x 19mm (base)
- 2 x 140mm x 270mm x 19mm (sides)
- 1 x 140mm x 343mm x 19mm (roof – long)
- 1 x 140mm x 324mm x 19mm (roof – short)
- 2 x 38mm x 280mm x 19mm (short edge)
- 2 x 38mm x 343mm x 19mm (long edge)

2 x 140mm x 270mm perspex

- 32mm pocket hole screws
- Wood glue
- Cord

### Tools

Festool track saw, Triton drill and driver, Festool jigsaw, Kreg clamps, pencil, square, tape measure





## What you do



1

Cut all the timber and perspex according to the cutting list, using a track saw for the wood and a jigsaw for the perspex.



2



Prepare the two base pieces, two sides and the short roof side by drilling the pocket holes as per the diagram.



3

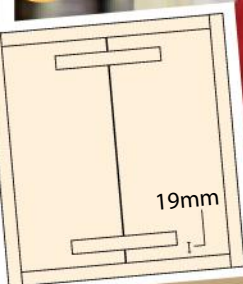
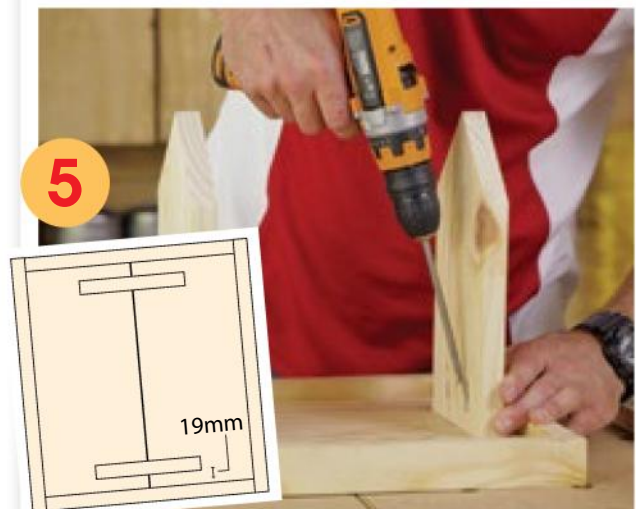
Join the two base pieces together using pocket hole screws.



4

Attach the edging flush with the bottom of the base, again using pocket hole screws.

5



Attach the two sides to the base using pocket hole screws, leaving a 19mm gap between each side and the edging.



6

Drill 6mm holes in the corners of the perspex, being careful not to crack it. Screw the perspex to the sides, leaving a 19mm gap at the bottom.



7



Join the short and long roof sides to form the roof and then drill a hole 50mm from either side in the apex of the roof.



8

Put a screw on the inside of each side piece near the peak, thread some cord through the holes you drilled in the roof and tie the ends to the screws. The roof is not attached to the bird feeder, but is kept in place by the cord. Seal with an exterior wood sealant and hand in a tree for the birds to enjoy. 🪵



# WIN with Working with Wood

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To enter the competition and stand a chance to win this great prize, please go to our Facebook pages and like and share the competition post, and tag @VermontSales, @triton\_za, @kreg\_za, @festool\_za and @torkcraft\_za on Instagram. Competition ends 22 January 2018. Terms and conditions apply.



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## CHECKLIST



### ROMANCING THE PATIO AND BALCONY

It's love month, but why settle for one short-lived, long-stemmed red rose (at a dear price!) when you could rather go for intense gardening pleasure in a small space filled with potted roses, at a nominal cost? Miniature rose varieties, collectively known as 'patio roses', are freely available in summer. They flower profusely if kept in a sunny spot for a few hours a day and are protected at root level with a layer of organic mulch to keep their roots cool and moist.

### 4 LOVE YOUR LAWN

**Follow these water-wise tips to keep your lawn healthy under the hot sun:**

- Raise the height of your mower blades to about 5cm. Longer grass helps to shade the soil and keep the roots cool.
- Water early in the mornings and you won't lose precious drops to evaporation or wind.
- Water deeply (about 15 minutes per sprinkler setting) twice a week rather than watering for shorter periods more frequently. Deep watering encourages the development of deep, healthy roots.



### 2 FEED THESE

Feed and regularly water helleborus, camellias and azaleas (to prevent bud drop), and mulch afterwards with pine needles. Also feed deciduous fruit trees like apples, apricots, cherries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums and quinces with a general fertiliser, and water well.

*It's prime planting time for bougainvilleas and variegated foliage plants like all the pretty abelias!*



### 3 ANNUAL COLOUR GIVES FAST RESULTS!

Annuals that can be planted for late summer and autumn colour include petunias, begonias, marigolds, vincas, verbenas, portulacas and especially celosias, which will brighten up any area with their flame-like, feathery flowers in shades of red, orange, pink and yellow. Put them in the ground now to freshen up your flowerbeds!

# February in your garden

This quick checklist is to remind you what to do in the garden in February.





# 5 LAYER MORE ON

As February is the hottest month of the year, remember to keep your garden mulched. Mulch can be anything from bark chips or macadamia shells to compost or pebbles. The advantage of mulch is that it keeps the soil and plants roots cool, thereby decreasing evaporation.

**Remember:** A 5cm layer of organic mulch such as compost is adequate – any thicker and it can become a matted layer that rain can't penetrate, and the soil beneath it becomes bone dry.



# 8

## BUG WATCH – RED SPIDER MITE

Look out for red spider mites, which are problematic in periods of drought and very hot weather – use the correct insecticides for shrubs, but destroy annuals like tomatoes if too heavily infested.



# 6

## FEED YOUR GARDEN WITH HEALTHY TIDBITS

You should now be using slow-release soil and plant conditioners that contain composted seaweed, fishmeal, humic acid and poultry manure – all natural minerals and growth stimulants to maximise and sustain summer growth, but which will also increase the water-holding capacity of the soil. Feed and compost shrubs and climbers like spiraeas, banksia roses and jasmines as they will start flowering in late winter. Feed dahlias with bulb food and remove faded flowers. Perennial salvias thrive in the heat and will soon make a spectacular autumn display. Make sure they are fed to give their best.



# 9

## NATURAL PROTECTION WITH HERBS

Bunches of herbs can be used as insect repellents in your home. Mints deter insects, including ants. Basil, rosemary and lavender keep flies at bay. Lemon-scented herbs such as lemon balm, lemon grass and scented geraniums are great for keeping mosquitoes away. Tansy is good as a flea repellent.



# 7 DOUBLE THE FLOWER POWER

Double up on the patio or balcony romance by adding pots and tubs filled with dreamy hibiscus plants with flower colours so bright that it will feel like you have been carried off to some far away tropical island paradise! The latest range of hibiscuses, sold under the trademark of 'HibisQs', include compact and very floriferous plants especially bred for container growing (although they will do well in the garden too!). They like full sun but also do well in semi-shade and can even be kept indoors as flowering houseplants for short periods.



# 10 SOW TO SNIP OFF

Mix some quick-germinating herb and vegetable seed like carrots, beetroots, radishes, chives and lettuces together and sow in trays to keep on your windowsill for snipping off to use as healthy microgreens in summer salads. 🥕



# Gardening 101

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Tuesdays 21:00



# LUNAR Gardening Guide

During the first two weeks of the month, general garden maintenance with pest control and bed-weeding suits the waning moon phase and long hot summer days. "Harvest" days in this phase are ideal for picking produce with a lasting quality and a reduced risk of spoilage. When onions are lifted during the last quarter phase, they stay dry and store well. After the New Moon, deadhead or lightly prune perennials, follow-up with liquid fertilizer on "irrigate" days and be rewarded with a second flush of flowers before autumn. **By Ilona Thorndike**

## BEST DAYS FOR FEBRUARY

THU 1	☉	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	SAT 17	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱
FRI 2	☉	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	SUN 18	☾	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱	🌿
SAT 3	☉	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	MON 19	☾	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱	🌿
SUN 4	☉	🌸	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	TUE 20	☾	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱	🌿
MON 5	☉	🌸	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	WED 21	☾	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱	🌿
TUE 6	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	THU 22	☾	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱	🌿
WED 7	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	FRI 23	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱
THU 8	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	SAT 24	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱
FRI 9	☾	🌱	✖	🌙	🍷		SUN 25	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱
SAT 10	☾	🌱	✖	🌙	🍷		MON 26	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱
SUN 11	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	TUE 27	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱
MON 12	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	WED 28	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖	🌱
TUE 13	☾	🍷	✖	🌙	🍷		<p> <span style="color: green;">■</span> Fertile    <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Semi-fertile    <span style="color: brown;">■</span> Very barren    <span style="color: grey;">■</span> Indicates change  <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Barren         </p>							
WED 14	☾	🍷	✖	🌙	🍷		<p>For more information on gardening by the moon, by phase and by sign please visit <a href="http://www.moontime.co.za">www.moontime.co.za</a>.</p>							
THU 15	☾	🍷	✖	🌙	🍷		<p>Moonlight Calendar 2018, the annual poster calendar, is also available on the order page.</p>							
FRI 16	☾	🍷	🌱	🌿	🌙	✖								

- Sow/plant FRUIT
- Sow/plant LEAVES
- Sow/plant ROOTS
- Sow/plant VINE VEG
- Sow/plant GRAINS
- Sow/plant HOT VEG
- Sow/plant FLOWERS / SHRUBS
- REPOT / TRANSPLANT
- WATERING / FERTILISING
- PEST control
- WEEDING
- Mow LAWN to increase growth
- Mow LAWN to decrease growth
- SOIL PREPARATION
- HARVESTING
- TRIM plants to increase growth
- TRIM plants to decrease growth
- COMPOST and MULCHING
- CUTTINGS
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# Come home... Please?



By  
Anna  
Celliers

I looked deep into your green eyes and saw your lenses slowly focusing. You kept blinking and I thought for a minute that you had forgotten me, since we had been separated for so long.

You started smiling, opened your arms, and I had to stop myself from jumping onto your bed to get closer to you. I touched your cheeks and they were as soft as always. You smelled nice, and then I remembered the familiar aromas of your home too – a mixture of coffee, Marmite, bacon, oxtail, pumpkin pie, boerewors, red wine, cigar smoke, clean linen and perfume.

When we used to have heated political debates (and we had many!) you called me a 'bloody boer', and I called you a 'blêrrie rooinek'. We sometimes took our arguments as far back as the arrival of the 1820 Settlers and Majuba, but you seem to have softened. You didn't even want to look at the newspapers so that we could pick out a topic to fight about.

We used to play many a card and word game against each other, and got into loud disagreements because you would suddenly (in my opinion) change the rules or forget previous ones, but when we stood together for a cause (which wasn't too often!) it was a united front that required hours of planning.

We saw each other often during the week, even though we have busy lives. I miss you on Monday nights for 'happy hour' on my stoep to have a good gossip. I still cook for you even though you're not here anymore. I miss your phone calls on Wednesday mornings to tell me not to worry about supper, that you will drop off some leftover oxtail stew or bean soup. I miss you on Friday nights when I light the braai fire. I don't go to the food and wine market on Saturday mornings anymore, as I don't seem to attract the interesting people you know and introduced to me over the years. I haven't been tipsy on a Saturday morning for ages in fact! I also seem to have lost my love for rugby. What fun is there in listening to the Afrikaans rugby commentary on RSG while sitting alone on

my stoep? You're the only friend I have who prefers listening to a blaring transistor radio with me, rather than watching a big game on television like everybody else. I know you gave up many other invitations in favour of these special times we spent together!

Remember how we used to travel? I think you must have attended at least ten (if not more!) of my gardening talks over the years as my chaperone and advisor. Because you are such a fantastic sales agent, you sold many of our gardening books and subscriptions for *The Gardener* and *Die Tuinier* on such occasions. You must have been bored to tears listening to the same old jokes, or manning a stand for hours on your own at a show!

One of your irritating traits is that you've always wanted to be in the driving seat, while I never regarded you as a particularly good driver – you really scared me sometimes! Once when I was driving a very bad road, with you in the passenger seat for a change, I threatened to bite off your hand if you changed gears one more time. It happened between Bloemfontein and Bothaville, and again between Plettenberg Bay and Oubos.

I am so sorry about that, but you never listened when I told you that you had too much luggage and were overloading the vehicle, which causes its engine to work too hard. I'm also sorry that I made you sit for at least four hours of travelling through beautiful scenery with your heavy and large suitcase on your lap. It completely blocked your view and must have been sore! But on the other hand, I did warn you that we didn't need so many bananas, paw-paws, boxes of tomatoes or a watermelon coming home with us again. I told you that I needed the boot space for a load of beautiful driftwood that I had spent days collecting, and you didn't listen to me, as usual. One of the images still stuck in my mind about this particular trip is of you falling ungracefully into a thorny bush without losing your sunhat, black cherry cigar, or a drop of your gin and tonic. It was a mission to get you up again!

You had other irritating habits, like tooting when coming to visit me and talking loudly outside the gate before I even got there! This made the dog excited and he would jump up onto you, causing you to stumble very badly, since your hands were always full of leftover food, doggy bags from restaurants, and a suitcase ('papsak') full of wine. Why do you always seem to think we are hungry? I sometimes felt like simply tossing you and your baggage into the aloes along my garden path.

When you were going home after a long night, I would walk you to your car parked on the pavement, and there would be a final little chat, because one of us always had to get in the last word!

Then you would shout "Bye Anna!", accompanied by a toot. I would reply, "Bye lovey". Then you would shout, "Okay, bye now!" and I would reply, "Oraait, ghoe-baai". You would give a last toot. It was then when I always heard my neighbour shouting irritably from his darkened bedroom: "Ag damn it, bye now!"

You know, I'm lonely without you... I miss my 'Minister of Social Affairs'. I even miss the sometimes very dodgy 'doggy bags'. I also miss your thoughtful gifts: the nose hair and upper lip waxing gift vouchers (even though I remember the pain it brought me!), a sleeping tablet when I couldn't sleep, and your old *You* magazines for me to fill in the crossword puzzles. I also miss your 'little black book' containing the contact numbers of anybody in town capable of fixing anything. You often warned me to write all the numbers down and to keep a diary, for when you were no longer around to help me.

Wherever you end up being cared for now, please insist that it's kept close to hand... I will keep on phoning you for the number of the plumber or the pruner. I know it will irritate you no end! 🗑️



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