

April 17

Good morning

It has been an exciting week in the wild garden, not only mine but the one beyond the garden gate.

The sunbirds have been busy with *Lycium oxycarpum*- locally called Wolwedoring, which probably comes from the fact that there were many Jackhals around years ago. Fortunately, there are still a few about who dodge farm activity and make it safely across the many roads crisscrossing the land. The Wolwedoring has small dainty tubular lilac flowers which are hardly visible but the sunbirds find them and stock up.

There are also a few *Cotyledon orbiculata* flowers about, so lots of nectar there as well.

Right now there is still a lot to do, most importantly the feeding of citrus, the benefits of which you will see in a few months time.

This will probably be the last application before it gets too cold but if you have been feeding every three months then you can look forward to juicy fruit.

Recommended fertilizers should be high in Nitrogen and Potassium and here you have a choice of organic or chemical fertilizers.

You can alternate them as well.

Organic 3;1;5 is perfect, but keep mind it takes a bit longer to become available so if the tree has not been fed regularly and is rather poorly then it might be more conducive to use a highly soluble quick acting chemical like 3;1;6, which will be available immediately.

Citrus in general are gross feeders so it is important to give them a regular balanced diet.

There's still time to get vegetable seedlings in, so don't hold back on that.

Bulbs can still be planted and please don't forget to get some Chinkerinchees in this year, the perfect pop up in spring.

A reminder again before the temperatures drop and the soil cools down is to get all those amazing perennials into the ground.

They give months of colour and interest in the garden very often when not much else is in flower!

They need to develop their root system now before winter.

The amazing herbaceous shrubby plant *Chironia baccifera* is perfect to plant now as well!

If you want that huge ball of pink flowers in early summer followed by bright red berries in December, so just do it...now!!

Another good shrubby perennial you can plant now is *Salvia muiirii*, known as Blue sage but more aptly called White eye as the blue flowers have a distinct white splash on the lower lip.

This is what I term a 'knockout' plant as it normally flowers from about mid-summer into early Autumn so you might see quite a few in flower now.

Many traditional gardeners had their sweet peas in around Easter which will pop up soon and give flowers and scent in spring.

I would also recommend that you go to the wild side and consider what is known as the Cape Sweetpea.

This is the perfect perennial climber for both sunny and semi shady positions in our gardens.

Its proper name is *Dipogon lignosus* but the most descriptive name is the Afrikaans version, Bosklimop!

Very apt, as in nature it scrambles and climbs up and over everything. If this plant could speak then it would say... here I am!!

Although a perennial it is treated as an annual by many as it can be grown quite easily from seed.

Its highly fragrant pink and magenta flowers are profuse in spring and early summer and as you've guessed, are ideal cut flowers bringing their heavenly scent indoors.

They are very worthwhile garden subjects needing minimal water and attention, plus something to climb up!

Like most peas they don't like to be disturbed, so don't dig around their roots, rather a layer of mulch which requires a lot less effort for success.

In very cold areas they can become deciduous and bounce back again in spring but I don't think that is a problem here on the Peninsula.

Last, but not least, they enrich the soil through nitrogen fixing bacteria in their root nodules, which is an important characteristic of the pea family.

Alternatively, you could just plant Lucerne wherever you can and become a city farmer!!

Before I go an important reminder...do not start tilling, loosening or turning the soil now before the rain.

Besides the fact that it has a negative effect on soil micro-organisms, the result will be a river of top soil going down the drain.

Well, that's it for this week, garden right until we chat again...Goodbye