

July 31

After all the talk of pruning I gather many of you are itching to go for it sooner than later.

Here are a few important side issues to keep in mind.

Most fruit trees and roses are grafted and not propagated from seed or cuttings.

As with many hybrids they can only be cloned by vegetative means.

Before your first cut have a look and see if there is any growth coming from below the graft.

These suckers come from the rootstock below the graft and not the cultivar itself, so must be removed.

If you allow them to establish themselves they will, due to their vigorous growth habit, overpower the plant and you will not get what you want.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the difference in the foliage but when you see a sucker you'll know.

Its easier to see the difference with rose suckers as they have more leaflets, are softer and a lot more vigorous.

It is always good practice to check up on young trees during the growing months and remove suckers early.

A final tip- don't prune back too harshly! If you remove more than 50%, the new growth will be very weak and will not stand up to the early summer heat and lack of water.

Well from now on I shall leave it up to you to do a good job.

Today is the last day in July and for certain plants the time has come to start pushing harder!

On my trip through the Kogelberg last weekend there were a lot of flowers, mainly in the Protea family but my special were the flowers of *Leucospermum cordifolium* – the Common Pincushion.

I don't know why we don't use them a lot more in our garden as they are relatively easy to grow and attract birds such as the Cape Sugarbird and a number of Sunbirds.

Many small insects are also attracted to the flowers followed by numerous insectivorous birds who don't waste time finding them.

Both birds and insect are important for pollination!

I also saw a lot of Sugarbush in flower, that's *Protea repens*.

We should all be gardening for wildlife and the Sugarbush is one of those essentials in the garden that makes it happen!

Their flowers vary in colour from white to pink to nearly crimson and are used worldwide as a cutflower.

August is the month to plan your flower trip so start your enquiries and bookings soon.

Whether its up to Namaqualand, Clanwilliam, Biedouw Valley or more local to Posberg Flower reserve and Darling, I suggest you get moving on it because its going to be a bumper season.

Our good rainfall has helped but I think the cold conditions might delay things a bit.

I think we all need to pack up and go on a trip.

We need to open ourselves up after the past 18 months and experience the wonders of the wild!!

Of course, planning is necessary when it comes to timing, routes and accommodation.

Day trips to Posberg definitely need planning as it can get very busy on weekends.

What better than a picnic in Posberg!

An added bonus is that the kids don't get bored as nature keeps them busy.

Always advisable to contact the West Coast National Park and get some up to date information. Their no is 022 7722144/5

Did you know that gardening was once the biggest pastime worldwide.

I remember being at a conference in England about 20 yrs ago when I learnt that more people gardened in one way or another than any other hobby.

I'm afraid to say it has now dropped to about 10th but it has made a surge during Covid and hopefully after the next census it would have climbed up a few places alongside cooking, reading, traveling and crafting.

Sorry to say but TV, computer games and chilling are still up front.

This brings me back to the big question- Do our gardens have a future?

Can they survive without us? Are they productive in nature?

Do they have a negative or positive impact on nature?

Nature means many things to different people but in the end our gardens have to be more in fitting with nature if we wish them to thrive and survive.

Yes, we are part of nature but not everything we do is good for nature.

So my answer to the question is - Our gardens do have a future and can play a positive role.

Benjamin Vogt in his book 'A new garden ethic' (which I highly recommend) says in his final sentence...' It is time for a garden revolution' It is time for daily wildness to be our calling. It is time for defiant compassion.

I shall leave you to think about that.

From me, its Happy Gardening until we meet next week. Goodbye