

August 7 2021

Taking off from last week I hope you have booked your accommodation in flower land or if it's a one day trip then get to that picnic site early.

You certainly don't have to travel all the way to Namaqualand to experience the joy of spring flowers

Just pack a picnic, hop in the car and enjoy a memorable day in the Posberg Flower reserve situated in the West Coast National Park or in and around the Clanwilliam area.

On the other hand, your garden might be flower wonderland and there is nothing quite like a picnic in your own garden!

In the meantime, what can you do on a lazy day?

You could start a veggie garden in one of those tired old pots that have been standing around for years looking for a purpose!!.

We all have them lying around and just don't seem to find the energy or creativity to do get them going again.

They are probably very compacted with poor drainage and in the wrong position anyway so why not tip them upside down , check the drainage holes, put in a new layer of drainage stone, fill them up with fresh potting soil and create a mini veg garden in a sunny spot.

Pots with a diameter greater than 50cm can be planted with spinach, parsley, lettuce, rocket bush beans, basil or tomato.

Smaller pots can be used for herbs but remember they do dry out quicker

It's a good time to think of Chillies in pots as they can be fed and tendered to produce an ongoing supply in summer.

The selection of chillies is amazing and they do not require much except a sunny position, regular water and a dash of food now and again.

If the weather is still a bit on the cold side, give them some protection until it warms up!!

At the same time rejuvenate those indoor plants which are looking weary and have been trapped in the same pot with washed out soil for the last 5 years.

As far as ornamentals go there is just no end to the selection, simply because everything and anything will grow in a pot.

Proof of this can be seen in any nursery where everything is containerized.

If it's the more structured architectural look you're after, then consider Restios, aloes and large succulents such as some of the Euphorbia species.

Flowering plants like Hibiscus, Bougainvillea, Roses, Camellias, Azaleas and many herbaceous perennials are further options for large pots.

A favourite for me is the Silver Sweet pea Bush *Podalyria sericea*.

Compact to about a metre with its small silver leaves and pink flowers, it's a winner no matter where you plant it.

The Buchu family also do exceptionally well in pots and there are many to choose from but my favourite from a flowering point of view is *Agathosma ovata* with varieties like, Glentana, Kluitjieskraal and Outeniqua .

If its a heavenly scent you're after, then the Honeybell Bush-Freylinia lanceolata with its pale yellow flowers can be used as a large shrub or small tree.

The genuine South African Wild Jasmine- Jasminum multipartitum with its heady scent can be used as a container climber or shrub and is happy in full sun to semi shade.

The scented white flowers start off as pink buds before opening and the white flowers make a really good show against a backdrop of dark green leathery leaves.

In times gone by it was used as a love charm so get innovative and move on from here.

It makes a wonderful pot specimen and I have seen them trained into formal shapes.

You could also get a lot more adventurous with Pelargoniums in pots as there are over a hundred species to choose from.

A great local specimen that does well in a reasonable size pot is Halleria elliptica, the Rock Fuchsia.

It will get up to a metre or more in height, has orange red Fuchsia like flowers and does well in the semi shade.

It's an understatement to say its a highly recommended plant in the garden.

Pots are a fantastic way of getting to know plants on a one to one basis but also a method of starting off plants that are difficult to grow.

Once you have become pals it can be relocated to the garden and another special or threatened plant can replace it in the pot.

Just remember before rushing out and planting up those pots, look at their position and make sure they are getting the required sun or shade, but most importantly, that they are well drained.

Spring is nearly here so it time to think-seed sowing, mulch, compost, delayed pruning, lawn treatment, mower servicing, and how you are going to enjoy the warmer weather.

No matter what we do to make this summer special, lets make sure there is plenty of it.

See you soon!!