

FMR August 21 2021

This is certainly the time of the year when our awareness of things beautiful becomes focused on plants.

Although we enjoy them all year round, somehow spring makes them all unique.

The sun is getting higher and we are seeing the rewards from our winter rain and all that went into the natural process of mulching and composting.

We can talk about all the wonders we see but maybe lets highlight a few plants you should have in your garden.

*Metalasia muricata*-The Blombos is one of several species common on our local mountains but strangely not widely used in our gardens.

Their silvery white flowers can be seen through the winter and spring.

They belongs to the Daisy family, the backbone of many gardens, and are very useful plants in the environment as their honey scented flowers attract many insects.

They come in various natural forms and are usually available in the nursery.

Another special plant is *Aloe commixta*, now renamed as *Aloiampelos commixta* but better known as the Peninsula Rambling Aloe.

Like many aloes they are easily propagated by cuttings and seed.

It is endemic to the peninsula and sadly as with many other of our local plants , is under threat and is classified as vulnerable.

We can do something about this by planting them in our gardens and create a comeback!

Its yellow flowers have been out for a while and its perfect for sprawling over rocks.

It is recommended for coastal gardens and well drained slopes around the peninsula.

Many of us in the older suburbs with established gardens don't have space for more trees but there are a lot of new homeowners with a bare garden and what might seem a daunting task ahead!

For this reason I like to mention a tree in our chat which might be beneficial to those in need.

The White Pear- *Apodytes dimidiata* (no resemblance to the eating variety) is a beautiful evergreen that will probably only reach about 5 or 6m in the garden so is ideal for small to medium spaces.

In its natural forest habitat it can of course get a lot bigger!

The little white flowers are scented and the fruit is relished by many birds including, bulbuls, Rameron pigeon's, starlings, barbets and others with insects joining the party!

A few good reasons to have it in your small garden is that their roots are generally not over powering when it comes to paving and pools but keep in mind that that bigger the tree the bigger the roots to hold it steady.

Another advantage especially for those who worry about messy fruit is that the fruit is quite hard and does not get all squishy!!

Its attractive glossy light green foliage is quite distinctive and I have seen it grown as a really handsome hedge, although they are better when left free to run.

Many of you have olive trees and the question is often asked...When do I prune my olive tree?

The best time is when it warms up just before flowering.

They might not flower so don't worry as they do have on and off seasons.

Olives require little pruning and then only to open them up and remove water shoots and excess growth usually towards the centre of the tree.

This allows for good light penetration, air circulation and a well balanced vase like structure which most fruit trees prefer.

They don't like to be overfed but a few light applications of 3:1:5 should help with healthy fruit development. The same goes for citrus trees.

Sun is very important and you will be wasting time should your citrus tree be in shade.

Regular light feeding is also recommended, but importantly, citrus in the main must never be overwatered and make sure the area is well drained.

All your pruning clippings and leaves are perfect for the compost heap so pile them on!

Its good news time! The Arderne Garden are open 7 days a week from 8am to 6pm with 24hr security.

They are looking quite amazing now so why not join the monthly walkabout on the first Saturday of every month.

The tours are led by knowledgeable guides who will take you around this magical and historic garden!

The next tour is on Sat 4 September. Meet at the entrance on Main Road Claremont at 10am.

The cost is R50 and the duration is one hour with a great opportunity afterwards to enjoy a tea break with friends in the garden.

Friends of the Arderne Gardens (FOTAG) is an active group that put a lot into the gardens.

If you are keen to find out more about the Sat tours or joining up please email Joy

[secretary@ardernegardens.org.za](mailto:secretary@ardernegardens.org.za)

With that good news its Goodbye until next week.