

8 January 2022

We might not know what the future holds but I am convinced that we are moving forward with our gardens by having a better understanding of how they fit into the big picture.

I believe that many have embraced this and changed their way of gardening for the better.

In the end we know that we don't grow anything, we might facilitate the process with water and good natural practice but nature does the job and nothing on earth is going to change that.

Do we own our gardens, and do we have the right to do what pleases us no matter the consequences? A definite No!!!

We have a responsibility to use plant material that has a positive and productive impact and at the same time we need to carry out good practices that conserve soil, water and all other natural resources.

The attitude that comes with owning brings about a bad relationship with nature and fellow beings.

This was well illustrated last week when I enquired why someone was removing a mature, valuable tree in their garden which was situated on the slopes of Table Mt.

The answer was, that it was not included in the new landscape plan and besides that it was too big, too messy, created too much shade, blocked the view and certainly was none of my business.

The tree, a Wild Peach, *Kiggelaria africana*, was a natural and integral part of the local environment.

It was there long before any houses were built in the area and was truly a great specimen in the landscape.

How on earth could that be misunderstood?

The owners had been advised that it would be replaced with something very special. Maybe another one of those costly instant specimens that probably didn't belong there anyway!!

What could be more special than a 50 year old tree in its natural home?

A lot more thought and emotion needs to go into our relationship with the natural environment...we must become guardians, not owners.

The past year was very busy and I thank all who contacted me with their queries and problems which I hope we managed to sort out.

The big question is, what lies in stall for us this year?

All I ask is that we treat our gardens as a natural entity and not a misguided and selfish human creation.

If we can't see our garden's and wild spaces as something greater than us then there is no hope for their future.

The more we believe that we are the creator of all things wonderful, the less we will understand the true value and role of nature.

Make sure that every plant has a use and need factor over and above our pleasures, like attracting insects plus feeding and giving shelter to all other creatures.

Maybe it's a rare plant, under threat because of habitat destruction, and by planting it in your garden you give it a chance of survival. So whatever the reason for planting something, its not just about pretty flowers.

Keep in mind that many plants are still with us today due to a wide variety of pollinators which includes birds, beetles, many bee species, ants and rodents out there in the wild

Sadly, many of these creatures are killed every day through the misuse and abuse of insecticides and other compounds.

Certain plant groups like succulents, still carry a negative label!

Why? I don't know, because they are extremely beautiful and useful.

Not only the Crassula, Euphorbia and the Aloe family which are plants for all seasons but many other families and come as groundcover, shrubs and large form plants.

Many are local but some from further a field do well here on the Peninsula.

I think their shunning is more about the fact that they are associated with a barren environment, seemingly leafless and lifeless, not lush and colourful.

They need a lot more understanding!

Every January we go through the process of declaring our New year resolutions which always revolve around ourselves. What we are going to do about our lives, our bodies and our bank accounts.

What about including your garden in your vision this year and contribute something to our constantly hammered environment.

It could land up been wild, maintenance free, colourful and waterwise.

What more can you possibly ask for?

Give it a go and while you're at it have a wonderful 2022.

Lets all take the leap and make a difference

Wishing you all the best from all of us