

FMR NOVEMBER 2, 2019

Its all systems go now, but I have to admit I sometimes feel a bit wintery first thing in the morning!

Like many who spend time outdoors I don't know whether I need a T shirt and shorts or my jacket.

No matter, it still turns out to be a summer's day!!

Everything seems to be going right for our gardens this season.

We know we cannot take the environment for granted and need to change and adapt on an on-going basis.

Many of us have been disciplined with water shortages in the past and realize that we must use less water, improve our soils, use more organic material and initiate recycling and re-use of resources.

I suppose oil is next, but no one is heeding the warning signs and we carry on pumping away.

Of course, its all about selfishness and greed!!!

If we don't become part of a natural and sustainable process, we will not make it to the finishing line and sadly our gardens won't either!!

Well, enough of this ... We are here to chat "gardening" and if we aren't doing it in the garden we can just do it somewhere else.

We are constantly reminded that wind is always with us, we cannot live without wind so let's work with it? We have had our fair share!

Plants that grow naturally on the South Western and Southern Cape Coast are generally more exposed to harsh wind.

Plants that naturally grow in these areas such as Milkwoods, Dune Crowberry, Wild Camphor, Pelargoniums, Buchu, Passerina and many others should be our first choice.

Right now there is still a lot flowering out in the wild, bulbs, Pelargoniums, Erica's, Pincushions and many members of the daisy family. Keep a look out for the Bloukeur or Fountain Bush ...*Psoralea pinnata* ... many are still flowering in the damp areas and it always fascinates me how this type of plant copes with damp to bone dry later in summer. A good waterwise example!

A stunning shrub or small tree, it fits in well alongside a pond, or as a small stand-alone tree.

October was a special month for Bougainvillea and roses of all kinds.

Coming through Elgin a few days ago I was impressed with the show that the heritage roses gave....stacked up against farm fences.

Most of these roses are hardy and waterwise to a point. Its your last chance to visit the Elgin open gardens this weekend so get out there or wait another year.

As always you will see a lot and learn a lot from the outstanding gardens

Get details from their website [www.elginopengardens.co.za](http://www.elginopengardens.co.za) and take a pleasant drive out there.

The major 'pop up' problem at the moment seems to be weeds in the lawn. Don't fret!

You can use selective broadleaf herbicides that won't harm the lawn, maybe a little discolouring at most, or you might prefer to get down on hands and knees and do it the hard way!

Remember though, the more you disturb the soil the greater the short term weed problem becomes.

Regular cutting will also help control future flower and seed production.

Vinegar can be sprayed on weeds that pop up in the paving.

It has worked well for me but needs a bit of follow up.

There is always a bit confusion about what fertilizer is best for the lawn.

Organic or chemical/Liquid-granular/Standard or slow release?

And yes, you might get 10 different answers from 10 different people!

Well, to be honest, they all have their place and all give good results but I think the answer is not to overdo it.

Don't think that by doubling up the application rate it grows faster and greener...It doesn't!! Remember the less you use the less water is needed to get it into the soil.

Today there is a comprehensive range of organic fertilizers which don't only supply nutrients but improve the soil as well.

Our gardens are a lot more important than we think, and a lot more than what we see.

We need to make them, once again, important contributors to a better environment.

It's not a short term pleasure thing, it's a long term commitment with responsibilities and of course...many long term benefits.

In case you are still deciding what to do today...best option is a tour of the Arderne Gardens. It covers all...ecological, historical and botanical facts for both the laymen and professional!!

Meet at the main gate on Main Road Claremont at 10am this morning

The cost is R40 and worth every cent.

The Cape Horticultural society's monthly meeting is this Monday eve 8pm at the Athenaeum next door to Newlands cricket stadium.

Anthony Hitchcock will be presenting part 2 of Exploring the Gardens and Wild Flowers of Italy, not to be missed. Enjoy and Good Bye!!