

FMR NOVEMBER 9, 2019

It seems we're into summer phase two and have a lift off..

The bulk of our extended spring blossoms have passed and with it the amazing display of bulbs.

It was certainly a good year for Frezias, Sparaxis, daffodils and the Ranunculus family.

Once the leaves have dried a bit, lift them, divide them and store them in a cool dry spot until March/ April when they can be planted out again.

The Clivia's also gave a great show (some still are) and they can be divided up after flowering or after the seed has been harvested. That is if you want to try your hand at seed propagation.

It's now the turn of Agapanthus, not only those big flowering varieties we see on everyone's pavement but the dwarf varieties that I think make an impact and are most suitable for small spaces.

Agies are the all-purpose plants that do so well in just about every position including their use in containers.

What I like about them is that they give a lot of flowers that last long and they work as a hardy groundcover in both sun and semi-shade.

Here on the Peninsula November spells summer!

Don't make the mistakes you made last year and wait until it gets too hot to plant, do it now and get them established as soon as possible.

Direct your energy where it is needed and forget about what everyone else is doing.

Try and steer away from the traditional design practices, go natural and get some new ideas which will improve your relationship with the environment beyond the garden walls.

It's time for change and I assure you, you will not be bored!!

The world of gardening has entered another era and we are not going back. Its fun, its easy, its natural and its more user friendly!

Last summer, as usual I planted a few trays of sage around the garden. Just the common herb you chop up and use in the chicken stuffing and other dishes.

They thrived in the winter, started flowering early and are still going strong. All I can say is their deep lavender blue flowers are spectacular and they fit into any wild garden theme.

If you've been on the mountains lately you would have noticed a special plant beginning to form its spear-like buds.

*Aristea capitata*, commonly known as the Blue Sceptre, is a reminder for many that another year has gone by and Christmas is looming.

The tall iridescent blue flower spikes are eye catching and sculptural.

There are other smaller species as well like *Aristea africana* which only gets to about 15-20cm in height and although not common they are usually available in the nursery.

The *Aristea*'s like many of the Iris family are hardy, waterwise, easy to grow and recommended for peninsula gardens.

If you can find the rather scarce pink strain lurking somewhere then you've hit the jackpot.

I am sure you have also seen the displays of the Wild Malva-*Pelargonium cucullatum* creating that pink hue on the mountain slopes.

They are a stunning reminder that our local *Pelargonium* species although very ornamental are hardy and water wise and add a lot of flower power to the garden.

Thankfully many are commercially available so there is no excuse not to have a selection of these very hardy ornamentals in the garden.

I gather from my garden informants that snails are on the move and still seem to be the flavour of the month.

They will get less as the weather gets dry and hot but I think the big controlling factor is moisture.

Too much and you are in for trouble with snails and the other associated pests that come with over watering.

Lastly, keep going with the mixed plantings we will all reap the benefits in the long term

This time of the year you are probably a bit concerned about fruit fly on all those wonderful peaches, apricots, apples and pears.

There are a number of simple things you can do to keep them at bay.

Firstly, once the small fruit has formed, blast the tree with water every few days when out watering the garden.

That will knock them to the ground or chase them nextdoor.

Another simple method is to hang covered fly traps with bait in the trees.

This works well and many have success with sticky fly pads, but keep in mind that all control methods are only implemented after flowering when the pollinators have done their job.

Actually there is no harm in sharing our fruit and veg with the wildlife so no need to fight the little critters all the time.

Simple and practical is the way to go.