



District 410A

"Green Living"

January & February 2015



World Wetlands Day—2 February

ISIMANGALISO [means miracle & wonder]... late Nelson Mandela called it "the only place in the world where the oldest land mammal (rhino) and the biggest terrestrial mammal (elephant) share a home with the oldest fish (coelacanth) and the biggest marine mammal (whale)." This amazing wetland is SA's first World Heritage Site and it is one massive ecosystem stretching across 332,000ha from Mapelane (Cape St Lucia) to Kosi Bay and is made up of 3 major lakes, 200km of beach, coral reefs, ancient coastal dunes and forests. www.isimangaliso.com



What is a wetland? A link between land & water that is flooded for part of the year & dry for the rest.

What does it do? It soaks up, filters and purifies water, then releases it to the surrounding land. It's a natural habitat for countless birds, creatures and plants.

What's the problem? 50% of SA's wetlands have been lost due to housing development. This threatens our water supplies and increases flood risk.

What can we do? Join the Wetlands Society of SA or find out more about the Mondi Wetland Programme on www.wetland.org.za

Garden tasks

As February is the month for romance, plant dreamy fragrant flowers to add to the charm of your garden.

Traditionally the first sowing of sweet peas is done on St Valentine's Day.

Harvest the seeds of dill, fennel, coriander, caraway & anise.

Sow in trays or seedbeds—cauliflower, cabbage, celery, broccoli, onions & leeks.

Succession sowing—beetroot, carrots, lettuce, spinach, sweet basil, rocket, turnips, radishes & flat-leaf parsley.

Take cuttings of perlagoniums, hydrangeas, lavenders, rosemary, carnations & begonias— dip in the ends in rooting hormone and plant in a mix of compost and coarse river sand.

Place the cuttings in a shaded spot and keep the soil moist.



Winning weeds!

Dandelion—this pretty weed produces pompoms, the kind we used to blow as children. It is a dynamic accumulator [a plant that gathers nutrients or minerals from the soil & stores them in its leaves] and transports calcium, potassium, vitamins and minerals up to the soil surface. The root channels make travel for earthworms much easier and the green leaves added to a salad will provide excellent nutrition & an interesting taste!

Purslane (pigweed) - this wonderful weeds grows low on the ground with tiny yellow flowers and fleshy leaves, so let it grow and dig it back into the soil before it produces seeds. The leaves can be added to a salad but it's advisable to use the young, tiny ones—their taste is quite sharp but it adds another dimension to your food.



Cracking good eggs

The clever casing of a shell gives baby reptiles a safe start in life.

How do reptile babies get out of their shells? Both crocodiles and turtles have an 'egg tooth', a hard knob on the end of their snouts. This helps them crack the egg when it's time to break out.

The long sleek python can produce around 50 eggs at a time.

Just like crocodiles, baby turtles become male or female depending on how warm it is in the nest.

The water monitor mother breaks open an active termite mound to lay her eggs inside. She knows that the hard-working termites will repair the hole and at the same time seal her offspring safely inside. When it's time to get out, the baby monitors will wait for rain to soften the mound. Or mom will return to help them!



De Liz