



District 410A

"Green Living"

September 2014



Tasks for a Spring garden

- ◇ Sow now for a summer crop → grow your own vegetables by preparing the soil well by working in compost and bone meal. Sow broccoli, tomatoes, onions and celery in small containers. Allow the seeds to germinate. Peas, beetroot, radishes and spinach can be sown directly into the soil. In late spring you can plant squash, butternut and sweetcorn seedlings.
Keep an eye on the birds because their eyes will be on your harvest!
- ◇ Watch the weeds → they are hardy and rob garden plants of light, water and food plus they give shelter to pests and funguses. A good layer of mulch around plants in beds will deprive weed seeds of light and prevent them from germinating. As an alternative to chemical weed killers, mix regular vinegar with a little dishwashing liquid and spray onto the weeds.



Dates to diarise

- 16/09: Int'l day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 19/09: Recycling day (www.recyclingday-sa.co.za)
- 15-21/09: National Clean-up and Recycle Week
- 22/09: World Rhino Day (www.worldrhinoday.org)
- 16 January: closing date for Lions Environmental Photo Contest (see categories alongside)



Lions Environmental Photo Contest

- Five categories for 2014/15:
- Animal Life
 - Plant Life
 - Urban or Natural Landscape
 - Weather Phenomenon
 - Lions' Pride in our Environment (capture the beauty & grandeur of our natural environment)

How to choose mulch

Mulch is your plant's best friend as it prevents the spread of some diseases, discourages weeds, improves soil fertility, reduces evaporation and keeps root temperatures more stable.

- Rooibos—it's great for keeping snails away;
- Gravel—is attractive and neat but doesn't really contribute to the health of the soil;
- Wood/bark chips—this is slow to decay. Use a thicker layer for wide areas and thinner layer for small areas;
- Crushed peach/apricot pips—looks lovely, lasts for ages and are the enemy of snails;
- Decaying leaves—this is nature's mulch as they enrich the soil, keep it moist and stop weeds;
- Grass clippings—does decay quickly. It benefits the soil but can become slimy if layer is too thick.



Local is lekker...

Celebrate Heritage Day by planting indigenous beauties—there is a wide selection that will add colour to your garden. *Euryops* is a low-maintenance water-wise perennial with grey-green leaves and yellow flowers. These work well with *Strelitzia* 'Mandela's Gold', agapanthus and red-hot poker.

Wild iris (*diets grandiflora*) has a neat growth habit and bears large attractive white flowers with yellow & violet markings and dark green sword-like leaves that grow in a fan shape.

Orchids

They are found throughout the world from the Arctic Circle to the top of South America and from east to west. They grow in a variety of conditions—on trees in tropical jungles, clinging to rocks near the seashore, in grasslands and marshy ground.

In South Africa, we have many both epiphytic (grow non-parasitically on another plant) and terrestrial (grow in the soil). The Star of Africa is found only in Swaziland, Zimbabwe and South Africa and is threatened with extinction. This orchid grows on trees in misty areas and bears a large white flower with a long spur.

The 21st World Orchid Conference takes place from 10-14 September at Sandton Convention Centre with more than 50 international and national speakers and will feature exhibits from overseas countries, orchid societies and growers.



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