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FRONT COVER

Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens' 40th exhibit at the Chelsea Flower show will be re-created at Garden World in Muldersdrift from this month. See page 10.

COMMENT, by Pete Bower

Guns kill, duh



The tragic shooting of nine black churchgoers by a 21-year-old white racist misfit in South Carolina must, surely, focus Americans' minds on the question of gun control.

For this little waste of skin had allegedly been given a gun by his father for his 21st birthday. Not only that, but an uncle of his was reported, after the fact, to have said he spent a worrying amount of time "by himself". And friends are reported to have said that he'd speculated about whether to attack a college rather than a church, and decided against it because he thought gaining access to a college would have been more difficult than gaining access to a church. How right he was: Apparently he sat with his victims in a bible class for an hour before annihilating them.

Barack Obama, who with his wife Michelle knew one of the victims, was rightly tight-lipped about the incident saying ~ rather mildly, it seems to me ~ that the incident should focus Americans' minds on the question of the wholesale and largely unregulated ownership of guns.

Frankly, Americans, along with any other nation who believe that gun ownership is a God-given or constitutionally-enshrined right, need to catch a wake-up.

For, here's the thing: If you believe that owning or carrying a gun is a measure of self-defence, you're deluding yourself. Guns kill. They kill people, and they kill animals.

That's what they were designed for: To kill. That's why you see soldiers carrying guns. A soldier's job is to go out and attack, and kill, his enemy, hopefully in larger numbers than his enemy kills him and his comrades. And the side that kills the most is usually declared the winner. And for this killing soldiers use their guns (and other nasty devices). That's hardly self-defence.

Similarly, when you point a loaded gun at somebody the outcome is decided by nothing more than a twitch of your forefinger. For waving a gun around in the hope that you're going to scare off an attacker (presumably your justification as "self-defence") is something one only sees in the movies. Hell, if that were the case one would see more hold-ups accomplished using water pistols. And should the firearm discharge following the twitch of your forefinger, how can you possibly justify blowing a hole in somebody (whether it kills him or not) as an act of self-defence? It's the most brutal, violent thing you could possibly do, short of hacking his head off, IS-style, with a machete.

Defending yourself by killing somebody else? That's illogical.

Furthermore, by allowing society to be awash with firearms, as we are in South Africa for reasons of crime, poor policing and our violent past, and as Americans are because of their ridiculous, historical reliance on their interpretation of their constitution where they argue that it grants them the right, in perpetuity, to carry a gun, you are putting guns into the hands of fanatics, murderers, extremists and loonies of all stripes. Let alone the fact that such individuals, mentally unhinged as they probably are, are unlikely to undergo any psychometric testing or training in safety or other procedures before venturing forth with their weapons. To whit the 21-year-old in South Carolina. So this publication fully supports any moves by the authorities, both here and elsewhere, to remove guns from the hands of the general public, and to severely curtail their availability, through stringent testing and licensing requirements, to only those who absolutely need them, for very specific and predefined reasons. Gun-free is, we believe, the way society should strive to be (and we realise fully that, both in South Africa and in America, our view is pie-in-the-sky, to say the least).

But there's another feature of the South Carolina massacre which warrants society's attention (as much here, again, as in America), and that's the question of how frankly unstable, poorly integrated loners become radicalised to the extent that they believe voices in their heads urging them to commit extreme acts of depravity, whether that involves killing churchgoers or schoolchildren in their own societies or joining radical groups such as IS or Boko Haram.

Obviously, unfettered access to radicalising internet sites and literature is one factor. Another is the effect on the individual mind of too much "me time" and not enough integration into family, school, church, sport, work and hobby groups. Too much time to think, and not enough time interacting with others and doing things, can play havoc with the brain: ask anybody who's been subjected to solitary confinement.

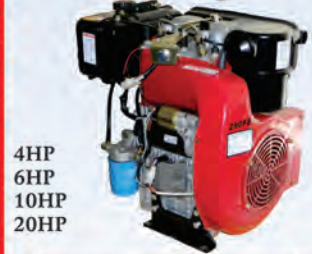
But there's also the role played by those around the perpetrator: the friends who listened to the South Carolina youth's racist rants. The role of his family.

This case and many others like it clearly raise questions that we, as society in general, need to answer very carefully. For our own survival.

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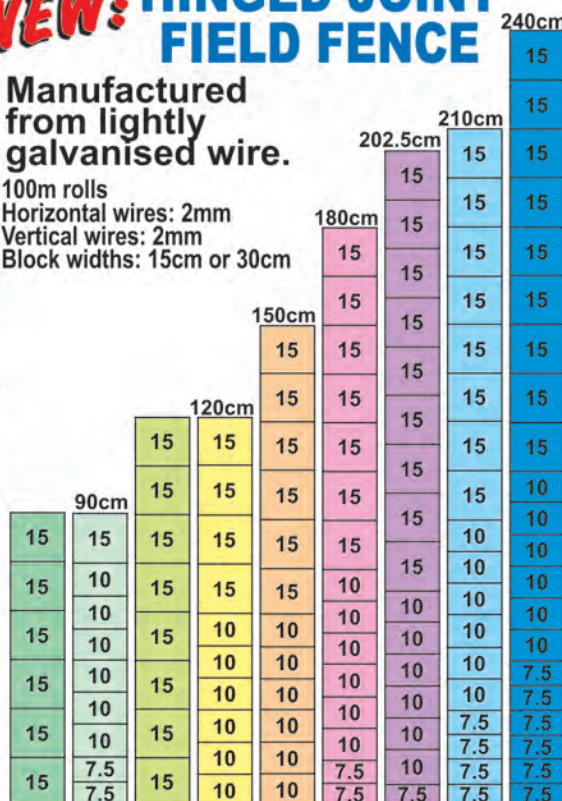
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Moles: is this the solution?

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Grrrr.... mole heap in the carrot patch

able to grow some vegetables in winter.

We constructed permanent beds lined on the outside with

bricks, where we replaced the heavy clay soil with a mix of river sand, compost and soil. So we should be able to have carrots all year round, despite the harsh frost. However, we are thwarted by moles - more

precisely mole-rats - that enjoy the succulent roots just as much as we do.

And, like all good gardeners we have tried everything to deter them, from lining the bottoms of the beds with broken bottles to whirling cooldrink bottles atop cane stakes to attempts at fumigating them with a hosepipe attached to a car exhaust, to flooding them out. So we dug out a bed again



Bed bottom lined with weldmesh

and lined it with fine weld mesh. Then we refilled it with a new mix of soil, compost and sand and planted more carrot seeds. Let's hope that this will be enough of a deterrent.

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Afrikaans letters will be translated.

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Farmers' academy graduation

Around 100 aspirant farmers, both men and women, young and old, graduated from the Buhle Farmers' Academy near Delmas last month, part of the 500 students that Buhle trains each year. Started in 2000, Buhle offers a range of courses in various agricultural pursuits, the core

of which are four covering crop production, livestock production, poultry, and vegetable growing. The academy is based on a working farm close to the town so students gain hands-on experience in their chosen field, as well as theoretical knowledge. In addition, each course includes an environ-

mental management section, as well as basic business skills. The idea is that a Buhle graduate will have the necessary technical and practical knowledge to make a success of a small farming venture after completing his or her training. To this end an important additional component of Buhle's activities is to offer follow-up support to graduates once they establish their businesses. In the pipeline, too, is a smartphone app that will keep graduates in touch with the academy and one another, and will be used to quickly offer support in the case of problems with crops, pests, disease etc. It is also expected to provide graduate farmers with electronic access to marketing information etc.



Buhle director Neil de Smidt addresses the graduation ceremony

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Continued on page 8

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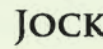


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NEWS

Unesco declares 8th SA bio reserve

After nearly a decade of lobbying and sustained efforts by a small committee of dedicated environmentalists, the Magaliesberg mountain range has been declared a World Biosphere Reserve. South Africa now has eight biosphere reserves and besides the

Magaliesburg, the Gouritz Cluster was also declared a Biosphere Reserve by Unesco last month.

The announcement was made last month in Paris by Unesco's International Coordinating Council of the Programme on Man & the Biosphere (MAB).

Continued on page 9

BUHLE

From page 6

All Buhle's courses are Saqa-accredited.

Course fees are heavily subsidised. For example, the actual cost of the 2015 crop production course to Buhle is R51 526. The academy, however, subsidises R47 526 of this amount, meaning that the cost to the student, for nine months' accommodation and tuition, is only R4 000.

An impressive list of agri-industry companies support Buhle each year and the academy hopes that a recent tie-in with Absa Bank will provide immediate benefits to graduates in terms of business support.

A third of Buhle's income is generated in-house, much of it through the sale of produce and livestock grown on the farm, and the plan is to increase this to 50% in three years.

That the academy's training is fit-for-purpose is attested to by the fact that, in 2009, a study revealed that 64% of Buhle's graduates were making a success of their farming ventures, with many being able to re-invest surplus cash generated into expansion of their activities.

□ Buhle's training ties in well with the government's target of developing 80 000 new smallholder farmers country-wide by 2019, which in turn ties in with the long-term plan of creating a million additional jobs in the agricultural sector by 2030.

Details of Buhle's four core courses for the remainder of 2015 are to be found in the Diary section of this publication.

For more information: Buhle Farmers Academy, Tel 087 803-0563

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NEWS

From page 8

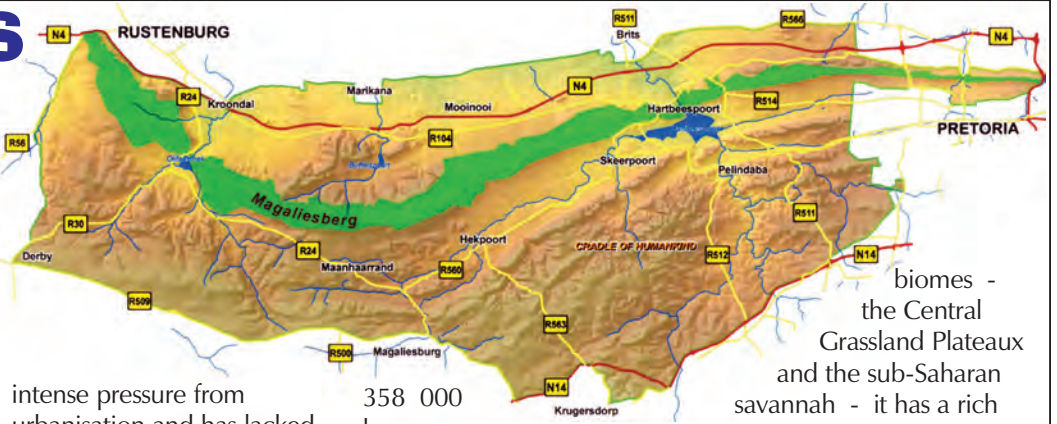
This programme aims to build a supportive and sustainable relationship between people and their environments through a specific focus on safeguarding natural ecosystems through innovative approaches to economic development.

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which the Magaliesberg now joins, counts 631 biosphere reserves in 119 countries.

"We are delighted with this final acknowledgement of the unique nature of the Magaliesberg and the powerful contribution it is making to our country, to the ecosystem services in Gauteng and the North West and the communities it nurtures over an extensive area," says Paul Fatti, chairman of the Magaliesberg Biosphere Initiative Group (MBIG) that has been lobbying authorities since 2007 to support the establishment of the biosphere.

According to Vincent Carruthers, past chairman of MBIG and renowned author of "The Magaliesberg", the most authoritative study of the mountain range, the Magaliesberg is almost 100 times older than Mount Everest and half the age of the earth, a unique treasure that has witnessed the whole span of life, from its very origins.

The Magaliesberg Biosphere will be formally registered by Unesco and the Dept of Environmental Affairs in October but before that happens a Board of Management for the Biosphere must be appointed, comprising representatives of 16 interest groups who are involved one way or another in the Magaliesberg. These include bodies involved in conservation, education, tourism, cultural or historical activities, business and religion. The Magaliesberg is under



intense pressure from urbanisation and has lacked the support of a strong regulatory framework to back its status as a protected area. The Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve covers almost

358 000 ha - 58 000 making up the core area, 110 000 ha the buffer area and 190 000 ha the transition area. Besides the range's unique

biomes - the Central Grassland Plateaux and the sub-Saharan savannah - it has a rich biodiversity. The *Aloe peglerae* and *Frithia pulchra* are unique to the area which has 443 bird species, almost half the total bird species of Southern Africa.



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Spring starts this month at Garden World

South Africa's spring flowers in all their abundance will be the stars of this year's Spring Festival at Garden World from July 25 to August 30. 'Nature's Bounty' is this year's theme, as the 17 designer gardens showcase the wealth of indigenous plants and flowers, tying in with this year's Kirstenbosch South Africa Chelsea Exhibit entitled, 'South Africa in Bloom; 40 years at the

Chelsea Flower Show'. The Chelsea exhibit will include a display of 'Plants South Africa Gave the World' and a named flower specimen display. Not far away from Garden World, the Walter Sisulu Botanical Garden will be creating a show garden (not just a display) highlighting original ways to use indige-

nous plants in city gardens. A festival highlight will be a herb morning on August 22 on 'Teas for Health and Vitality' presented by herb authority Margaret Roberts and her daughter Sandy, who have just published a book together on the subject. They will focus on teas that build health, provide herb teas to taste and partner them

with eats that aid memory, weight, arthritis, gout, digestion and many more common ailments. The new *Herb Tea Book* will be on sale. Other annual attractions at the festival are the school gardens, children's box gardens, floral exhibits of the Gauteng Flora Union and

Continued on page 11

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This year's Chelsea entry commemorated all SA's award-winning stands over the past 40 years.



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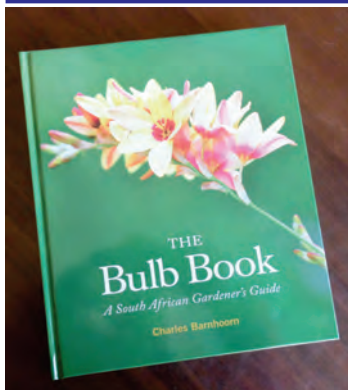
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Prize: *The Bulb Book* by Charles Barnhoorn

From page 10

Gauteng Flora Union and Interflora and educational exhibits by Rand Water's 'Water Wise', North West University and Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo.

In addition, Garden World and Hadeco have teamed up with the *Smallholder* to offer a magnificent competition prize worth more than R500, comprising a copy of Charles Barnhoorn's encyclopaedic book on South African bulbs entitled *The Bulb Book: A South African Gardener's Guide*, as well as a hamper of bulbs for your garden. Running to 208 pages, the book is a must for anybody wishing to grow bulbs. Contents include how to grow bulbs, cutting flowers from bulbs and, most comprehensively, a description of each genus of bulb found in South Africa.

Nemba changes are published for comment

A series of amendments to the list of alien and invasive species of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, No 10 of 2004, were published for comment in the *Government Gazette* recently. They covered amendments to the permit requirements for a couple of species of plant, trees, birds, snakes and fish. Details are to be found in Government Notice 493 (*Government Gazette* 38833 of May 29).

Win SA's top encyclopaedia on bulbs and a hamper for your garden in our Hadeco-Garden World prize draw

It is lavishly illustrated. To be eligible to win the prize you need to answer a simple question relating to the Chelsea Flower Show. See page 13 for details. Garden World is on Beyers Naudé Drive in Muldersdrift. Details of the full programme of the festival can be found in the Diary section of this magazine and on our website, www.sasmallholder.co.za.

For information on the designer gardens and booking for the talks, workshops and

music contact Magriet or Corné on 011 957 2545 /011 956 3003 or 083 997 6142. For more information on the festival visit www.gardenworld.co.za

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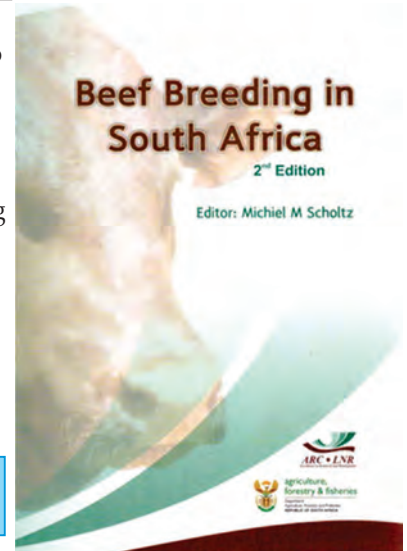
CATTLE

Definitive guide to SA beef production

A comprehensive record of beef breeding in South Africa, equipping the reader with information on understanding beef breeding, advances in breeding technologies and practical applications is available from the ARC-Animal Production Institute entitled *Beef Breeding in South Africa*. The book includes information on all beef and dual purpose breeds recognized in South Africa, including the performance recording

results of these breeds. The book begins with an overview of what every successful stud and commercial breeder should know about breeding, selection, effective crossbreeding and what recording is all about. The book will also give decision makers more insight on the latest and future genetic selection tools and the application of DNA technology, in addition to the discussion on principles of economic selection indices.

The information on the various breeds is valuable to beef farmers who want to start farming and are struggling to make breed choice, and even existing farmers who are considering crossbreeding. The book can be ordered from Una-Lou Lecuona at ULecuona@arc.agric.za or tel 012 672-9391. The cost is R200 with extra for postage.



Choose a breed that suits your purpose & plot

With all the factors in place on your smallholding for keeping cattle, such as adequate grazing, sturdy fences, housing etc, the question arises as to what breed will best suit your plans. There are so many breeds and crosses of cattle today that it's hard to know which ones to choose when selecting cattle for a plot or small farm. There

are dozens of beef breeds, some dual purpose breeds and a half dozen major dairy breeds.

Animals can usually adapt to a new environment, but this can be a lengthy process. Buying animals from an area with similar climatic conditions, preferably close afield, is generally a good idea. Your choice also depends on the size of your land, your

resources and your ability to look after cattle. It will largely depend on what you want to do with them. You may want to raise animals that are bred either for beef or for dairy, or you might want a dual purpose type of cow that provides milk for your family and also a good beef-type calf to butcher. The size of the cattle might influence your choice.

Dexters have long been put forward as one of the better breeds to keep on a smallholding. Of all the small breeds, the Dexter is the only breed that is small by genetics and not through human manipulation. Gentle, versatile and economical, Dexters efficiently turn pasture into rich milk and lean meat. They are hardy,

Continued on page 13



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From page 12

with excellent foraging ability and are able to adapt to a wide variety of climatic conditions.

Nguni cows are also smaller, cope with drought and excessive heat and are not prone to tick-borne diseases. If you are going to keep cows for milk, there are different breeds of dairy cattle that are farmed with in South Africa. All cattle breeds, and some goat breeds, have the ability to supply milk surplus to the needs of their young. If you are keeping just one or two cows for purely household purposes then it is not essential to keep dairy cows, since even beef cows can be milked. However, for commercial milk production, consistently high yields are essential if a dairy enterprise is to retain its viability. The most popular dairy breeds are the Holstein-Friesland, the Jersey, and the Ayrshire, but there are other



Holstein-Friesland breeds such as the Guernsey, Milk Shorthorn, SA Dairy Swiss, Dexter, and the Simmentaler.

The most popular is well-known black and white Holstein-Friesland. This breed originated in the northern parts of what is today the Netherlands. Over the years a number of distinctive strains have evolved within the breed, and some authorities maintain that it is possible to discern a "South African Friesian". The Holstein-Friesland is a large-framed animal, the mature cow mass varying from 550 to 650 kg.

Bulls often exceed 1 000 kg. But the outstanding characteristic of the Holstein-Friesland

is its milking ability. High yields of milk with a relatively low butterfat content may be expected. Ease of milking and a good temperament make this breed a favourite.

Of the four better-known breeds of dairy cattle, the Jersey is the smallest, making it a better choice for a smallholder. Mature cows weigh between 380 and 450 kg. The outstanding characteristic of the Jersey is its

Continued on page 14



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CATTLE

From page 14

"yellow" milk which has a very high butterfat content. Jersey cows are famous for their good temperament, but the bulls have been known to be aggressive.

The Guernsey is similar in many ways to the Jersey, with ease of calving and milk with

a high butterfat content. The Guernsey is, however, a larger animal than the Jersey. Mature cows average 450 kgs. Owing to the low numbers of this breed, the availability of bulls is limited.

The speckled red to brown and white Ayrshire is a medium-sized dairy breed, mature cows weighing 450 to 500 kg and good cows are known for their sound udder conformation.

The availability of both cows and bulls is an important consideration when you make

your choice. Jerseys are far more heat resistant than Holstein-Frieslands and are also better foragers. Ayrshires are also said to be good foragers but they are more sensitive to bad stockmanship than are Holstein-Frieslands or Jerseys.

Beef breeds are stockier and more muscled than dairy breeds. Gauteng smallholders will be looking for a hardy breed with the ability to fight parasites and diseases, hardiness, with good mothering abilities, good fertility

under marginal conditions, and long life spans.

There are three main types of beef production systems:

☐ Cow-calf production - mainly produces calves for sale.

☐ Purebred breeding - produce bulls for the cow-calf operation

☐ Slaughter cattle production - cattle from the cow-calf system are fattened for slaughter.

With 39 suitable beef breeds in South Africa to choose

Continued on page 16

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DAIRY

Dairy Day planned for Aug in Bapsfontein

Gauteng's dairy farmers and producers of dairy products such

as cheese, yoghurt etc have another opportunity to learn what's new in the industry, and to hear lectures by experts in the field, at this year's Gauteng Dairy Day, to be held at Belnori Boutique Cheesery in Nest Park, Bapsfontein on August 13. According to

organiser Rina Belcher, the purpose of the day is to offer dairy producers and processors an opportunity to hear experts speak on a variety of topics, visit the exhibits and see the goods and services available to the industry and of course, to network with their peers. At past Dairy Days there have been up to 35 exhibitors of great variety covering the banking sector, label

machines, feed and fodder, milking machines, cheese making requisites, cheese moulds, yoghurt preparations, cleaning chemicals, veterinary supplies, estate

Continued on page 17



Exhibitors at last year's Dairy Day

CATTLE

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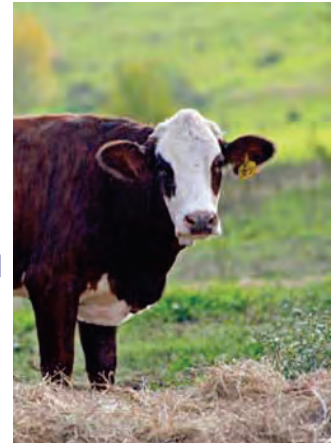


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From page 14

from most smallholders will need to look at their veld. Where the pasture is sparse, of poor quality or highly variable, medium- to small-frame cattle are more suitable. The Bonsmara is a popular beef breed that was devel-

oped through cross breeding Afrikaner, Hereford and Shorthorn. (The name comes from the name of the professor who bred them, Bonsma, and Mara, which is the name of the station where the breeding took place.) However, this breed is rather large for most smallholdings.



Bovelder cow

The Hugenoot breed was also developed in South Africa and being more of medium size, might be

Continued on page 17

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DAIRY



Attentive audience at the lectures during last year's Dairy Day.

From page 16

agents, vacuum pack machines, and scales etc.

The speakers secured for this year will cover topics such as the primary product, milk, raising calves, lambs and kids, stress in small stock and the correct handling of these animals.

And, a specialist from Cape Town will discuss practical business aspects of running a small dairy operation.

Belcher says smallholders

interested in dairy operations are welcome. Many who have attended past dairy days realised the possibilities of extra income from a dairy on their smallholdings.

Participation in the Dairy Day is free but booking is essential. Coffee or tea and rusks will be available to welcome visitors on arrival and lunch will be on sale later in the day.

To book your attendance call Rina Belcher 082 377-5698

CATTLE

From page 16

better for a smallholding. Another medium sized breed that is indigenous to South Africa is the Drakensberger and was developed over a period of several centuries. Gauteng even has its own breed, namely the Bovelder, developed on the Northern and Southern sewage farms of Joburg Water.

The Nguni is well known for its ability to thrive under veld conditions and they are also not as large as some of the popular commercial breeds. Other popular beef breeds are Beefmaster, Angus, Hereford, Pinzgauer, Charolais and Beef Shorthorn.



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It is absolutely possible, with no special electrical knowledge, to take one's house off the Eskom grid and go solar. That's the word from a *Smallholder* reader named Stephen, from Randfontein, who prefers to remain anonymous.

Pointing out that he is neither an electrician nor an electrical

specialist Stephen says "my wife and I decided to go totally off the electrical grid system when we moved to a plot south of Randfontein after Eskom informed us, two days before we moved in, 'that they don't have the capacity to supply us with electricity, and that we would have to wait another two

months.'"

Says Stephen: "I did a lot of research, and heard a lot of horror stories. For example, exploding batteries and incorrect systems, and I got a lot of quotes and advice from so-called experts who wanted to sell me systems costing up to R100 000 per kW.

"Then I had a colleague in Fochville who spent more than R360 000 on the incorrect systems, wrong batteries, small solar panels, burnt out inverters, and an 'expert' who would come around every day or two with scribbled notes to set the inverter, etc. I learned a lot from her mistakes.

"All the 'experts' told me to get 3kW of capacity but I wanted a 10kW system that I hoped would last about two and a half days in overcast conditions, with the capability

to add a backup generator, etc. The system described works for me and your needs might be different, but at the end of the day it's about keeping the wife happy and not adding constraints regarding power usage.

As a guideline, Louis Smit of Sonkrag Solar in Pretoria East says a 3kW inverter can run all the appliances in a home, but not all at the same time. A commonly-available 5kW unit costs R22 600 while a 10kW can be had for R43 800.

Smit also points out that that batteries will explode only if one does not use a controller to regulate the charging process.

Stephen purchased all the equipment necessary for his system for less than R170 000, including the final

Continued on page 20

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ENERGY

From page 18

connecting of the system, from a dealer specialising in large off grid farm and housing systems.

It is a 48V system, with locally manufactured components, except for panels (although panels are also now manufactured in South Africa), comprising the following:

❑ 12 x 250W polycrystalline solar panels (which give $12 \times 250 = 3\text{kW}$), in four clusters of three panels (750W) connected in series, with each cluster's cabling going to

A bank of 24 locomotive batteries delivers 48V DC to an inverter which converts the current to 220V AC in the house

the maximum power point tracking charge controller (MPPT).

❑ A 60A MPPT charge controller, (which Smit believes is a bit small for the system, pointing out that a 3kW system, on 48, will give one 62,5A.

❑ Storage is by 24 x 2V mil-19, 650 Ah Benoni-made locomotive batteries, joined in series for 48 volts.

❑ These in turn feed a 10kW pure sinewave inverter.

Apart from the imported panels, the fact that these items are locally manufactured, Stephen hopes that service levels will be high, commenting, "You don't get the same service on cheaper imported Chinese products that have to be replaced."

The 2V cells cost Stephen

about R3 000 each, compared to a solar 12V 105Ah cell at R1 500 to R2 800 each.

The lifetime of the 2V cells is expected to be ten to 15 years with that of a 12V cell only two to three years. The downside, says Stephen, "is that the whole battery pack has to be replaced at the end of its lifetime, so one should budget for it."

As a rule, says Stephen, "if the batteries are 100Ah you need a solar panel larger than 100W. Given that the 2V cells are 650Ah units, using three solar panels in series gives 750W."

"And, the good news is that solar systems are covered under my building insurance policy."

In retrospect, Stephen

believes he should have forked out an additional R10 000 on a 3-phase inverter, especially if he wishes to run heavy equipment in his workshop, or a three-phase pump, for example.

And, in future he would like to purchase an extra bank of batteries which will allow for more optimal use at night. Smit points out that an extra bank of batteries will expand the life of batteries. "It does not give you more total power ... all it means is that your back-up is bigger. Your total panel output is what you have available. If you use more than this, your batteries will be depleted".

For the system installed by Stephen is capable of handling the extra set of batteries without changes, or even two sets for that matter, the theory being that the

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ENERGY

From page 20
more you have in back-up (and assuming they are fully-charged), the more is available to you without having to use a generator in bad weather. Stephen built a stand on which the panels are mounted, installed the panels, pulled through all the wiring from the panels to the charge controller and from the inverter to the existing

The solar panels are angled at the optimal degree to catch winter sun

distribution board panel in the house.

The panels are not roof mounted due to the structural integrity and age of the roof trusses.

"This is where I saved a lot of money by doing the work myself. The stands have to face north (not magnetic

north) and the angle at which the solar panels are tilted is your latitude (in my case 26°) plus 10°, thus 36° for Randfontein. It gives you the optimal angle for winter sunshine for a static system. Stephen says the biggest obstacle to overcome was a mind-shift of when to use the power optimally without discharging the batteries to 80% for although they could actually be discharged to a much lower percentage, this will significantly reduce battery life.

In winter, at night the batteries will start at 52,6 V and drop to about 48,5 V the next morning.

Stephen says he can run the system down to 44 V, not less. To top up the batteries if necessary he plugs the inverter into the generator and runs it for two hours, or

for a proper charging cycle, which as those of us with load-shedding back-up generators will attest, can be an expensive exercise. On his system, Stephen has an electric fence, alarm system, security lights and refrigerator that run constantly. There is also a computer, decoder, projector (he doesn't have a TV), sound system and he runs one to two loads of washing in the washing machine, in the evening.

He swapped all his lights for 220V LED tube lights, or 1 or 3 watt LED downlights in the house and outdoors for security.

During the day and over weekends he claims he can use up to 10kW/hour between 08:00 and 15:00 if the sun shines, although by Smit's calculation (12 panels of 250W producing 3kW per hour times five hours in

Continued on page 23

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Orchid grower turns hobby to business

After retiring from the freight industry Andy and Carol Pearce turned a hobby growing cymbidium orchids into a full scale operation on a 5 acre plot in Sunda. Pearce conducted significant research into local demand for

cymbidiums and found that local, ie East Rand, flower production focused on bulk crops such as carnations, roses, chrysanthemums etc. The current major supplier of cymbidiums and other orchids is Duckitts of the Western Cape, who are focussed on

the export market. Pearce adds that the Johannesburg wholesale flower market is an excellent end point for a farm wishing to deal with wholesale markets, being a sophisticated seven day a week, six day auction that provides weekly

cash income into the business. "Retail end points are great for extra profit," he adds. Since stock sold at the market is paid for weekly, the running costs of the business are easy to manage and do not require complicated accounting.

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ENERGY

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winter delivers, 15kW per day) 10kW per hour is not possible for nine hours. Over weekends Stephen's wife operates a 13kg washing machine, a 2 000W tumble dryer, and a dish washer simultaneously, while he uses a welding machine, wood-work lathe and drill, during the same period without any problems although, again, Smit points out that while the

10kW inverter will be capable in handling this load indefinitely, his system will not, adding that he only has 15kW available per day, although he can add a few from the generator. Stephen adds, however that at 15:00 all power hungry systems are shut down to give the panels' time to top up the system for the night. When it is overcast or rains for a long period, the household

just uses the essentials. He also has a 200 litre solar geyser mounted on a stand that supplies hot water, and a small portable gas geyser for emergencies. Cooking is done on an Elba 828 gas stove and oven. As advice to anybody thinking of going off grid, Stephen has these pointers:
☐ Don't go for a smaller 3kW system with the option to upgrade or add on another

3kW. Rather buy the system to suit what you will ultimately need in one go.
☐ Don't change to a 12V lighting system. Unless you really can't afford an inverter, financially it's not worth it, particularly if it means running an extra set of wiring and switches, and 220V wiring can accommodate 12V anyway.

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FLOWERS

From page 24

Why choose flowers over chickens or sheep ~ more traditional plot industries?

- ☐ The barriers to entry for cymbidium flower farming are often high due to set up infrastructure costs, so one needs to have a five-year plan as the flowers take on average four to five years to start producing cut flowers of the quality required at market.
- ☐ Competition is low due to the higher start up costs.

☐ Cymbidium orchids are seasonal, only flowering in the winter months, so essentially it is a five to six month crop.

☐ Staff requirements are low due to the seasonality of the crop. One can cope with two staff for general plant management year round and bring in temporary staff during the cutting season.

☐ Stock theft is virtually nonexistent, and the average person would not necessarily know the value of a five year old cymbidium orchid.

☐ Once the stock has reached the production age of four to five years, it will keep on producing year after year and the shoots from each increase per plant each year as well.

☐ Splitting existing stock also keeps the overall crop increasing at a lower input cost since the split plant will produce a flower sooner than one grown from an immature plant.

Cymbidiums are grown in temperature controlled environments which require monitoring seven days a week. If the temperature spikes too high, this will affect the viability of the flower crop. As a result the electricity supply to the farm needs to be consistent and a good backup generator is a must.

Weather conditions are key factors in the viability of the crop since the cymbidium flowers in winter. This is brought on by the significant



Flower spike of a cymbidium orchid.

daytime and night time temperatures. A difference of

Continued on page 25

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FLOWERS

From page 24

8 -10°C overnight from high to low is essential to cause the plant to produce a flower spike, with each spike producing ten to 20 blooms. Tunnel design is important to get the best from the environment and each area in South Africa will require a different specification.

Vegtec and Greenhouse Technologies provided support and service in tunnel design and specification, and they supplied all the maintenance material for the management of the tunnels. A Netafim automated irrigation, fertiliser and temperature management system also helps to alleviate the physical monitoring, since one can manage the tunnels remotely via cell phone or PC.

Cymbidiums are sold as either cut-flowers for the export market, wholesale, or direct to flower shops, wedding planners for bouquets etc, or

as potted flowers for the home.

The flower spikes are sold on auction at the market auction per bloom, ie, a spike may have 15 blooms and on auction they may fetch R3 per bloom, thus R45 for the spike. Rietkol Orchids imported the start up stock from Australia, since the Cymbidium orchid is highly specialised and comes in many variations of colour and size.

Threats to orchid production are generally weather related or supply and demand issues. The supply and demand mechanisms are more easily addressed since the demand often outstrips supply, keeping the prices at market healthy.

The export market is also an excellent opportunity for cymbidiums as demand is year round internationally. Traditionally Japan, Western Europe and North America were both major producers

and consumers. The major consumer markets are Germany, the US, France, the UK, the Netherlands, Japan, Italy and Switzerland.

Experts now believe that the production focus has shifted from traditional northern hemisphere to countries where the climates are better and production and labour costs are lower. The Netherlands, for example, has already shifted attention from

flower production to flower trading. New centres of production are typically developing countries such as South Africa, due to its position in the Southern Hemisphere; and Gauteng in



Young orchid plants

particular has an advantage in flower export capability being close to OR Tambo International Airport.

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BEEKEEPING

The queen is king of the castle

What came first: the chicken or the egg? Much the same question could be asked of a beehive: where does the queen bee come from? Well, from an egg fertilized by a male bee, the drone. So who is more important, the drone or the queen? Well, if it were not for the queen, there would be no drone. It's as simple as that.

The queen is the great mother of the hive. She goes about her day laying eggs, every day, all day. Maybe she rests at night, but her rest period really comes with the cold weather when flowers are few and little pollen and nectar are being brought into the hive. The brood nest recedes in the winter as the queen reduces her egg laying programme and this can be

Another in our regular series on aspects of beekeeping, supplied by Peter Clark of the Eastern Highveld Beekeepers' Association

looked upon as her rest period of at least 14 weeks. Migrating beekeepers that move their hives to follow the crops throughout the year do not rest their queens and such

queens only survive for one year. Such a beekeeper must have in place a requeening programme to replace failing queens as part of his management skills.



A queen, surrounded by her entourage, lays eggs. The pink dot has been added by the beekeeper to aid in identifying her.

The queen has an entourage of young bees that form a circle around her who continually preen her and feed her. Young bees secrete a good supply of royal jelly that is her main diet.

Beekeepers are not sure how she is fed water and perhaps a little honey and pollen to vary her diet as well.

There are house bees that go ahead of her cleaning and polishing cells for her to lay her eggs. Her entourage ushers her about the combs to these polished cells into which she lowers her abdomen and out pops an egg about two millimeters long, and standing on end should one look down into the cell. After three days the egg turns into a horizontal

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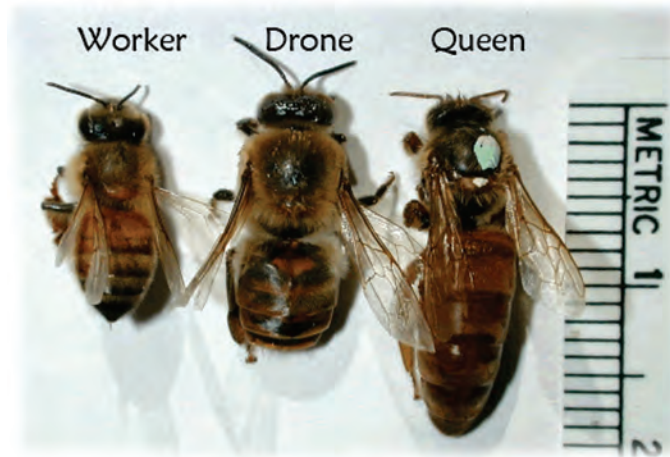


BEEKEEPING

From page 28

position to which is added a small bath of royal jelly. The tiny egg hatches on the third day into a small white grub. After a further three days this little grub is now known as bee larva and is fed a mixture of pollen and nectar.

After eight days enough food store is packed into the cell with the larva and the cell is capped with a thin layer of wax. During the next 15 days the larva develops into a pupa and 23 days after the egg was laid a young worker bee chews her way around the capping of her cell and out she crawls, a young worker



Relative sizes of the three inhabitants of a beehive bee.

During the summer season the queen can lay two thousand eggs a day, more than her own body weight, which impresses upon one the nutrient power of the royal jelly that she is continually fed during the day and night.

The entourage of young bees that feed the queen only secrete royal jelly for about three days after which they become house cleaner bees,

then guard bees and then worker flyers, bringing in nectar and pollen. They are thus continually being replaced to feed the queen. In her third year, the queen begins to fail. She loses her pheromone odour, egg laying starts to diminish, she starts missing polished cells and the bees sense this situation and start to build new queen cells to replace the mother queen. The queen becomes fully aware of the desire to replace

her. The bees construct a batch of drone cells, about two hundred in total, slightly larger than worker cells, and she lays eggs that will produce drones because the new queen will require drones to mate with her.

These drone cells are also an indication to the beekeeper that the queen intends to swarm off because new young rival queens will destroy her. She sends out scout bees to find a new abode, nurse bees stop feeding her so that she can lose weight to enable her to fly swiftly and easily with her faithful followers to their new home.

Meanwhile, back home the queen cells, perhaps six to eight at a time, are prepared as incubators for the new queens. Into each cell the nurse bees deposit a small drop of royal jelly and transfer a three day old egg, or a one day old grub laid by their old

Continued on page 31



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The role of bats in your ecosystem

Chances are that you have seen bats flitting about your plot at dusk, but how much do you know about them?

There are at least 19 species of bat in Gauteng, with 56 in

total throughout South Africa. Of the 75 species found in the sub region of southern Africa, 20 species of insectivorous bats and 2 species of fruit-eating bats are listed as threatened in the IUCN Red

List of threatened Animals. Bats have many important roles to play in support of biodiversity. They are the major predators of night-flying insects, including mosquitoes and many crop pests, so

smallholders and farmers should be encouraging them. Many bats spread seeds for new plants and trees. Many plants bloom at night, using unique odours and special flower shapes to attract bats. Bats also bring about pollination, particularly the fruit and nectar eating bats. There are four species of fruit-eating bats that typically occur in South Africa but only two of these species occur in Gauteng, namely the African straw-coloured fruit bat and

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BEEKEEPING

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mother queen. This larva receives royal jelly for eight days before the cell is capped. Enough royal jelly is packed into the cell for the larva to develop into a pupa and later into a new queen. After a further five days the new queen chews her way out.

So powerful is the nutrient value of royal jelly that a strong queen can develop after 13 days from laying of the egg from which she developed. First to hatch of the six or eight cells devel-

oped, she sets about eating a hole into the remaining cells to destroy the unhatched rival queens. At first a light lemon colour, as she starts laying her colour turns to orange and as she ages her colour turns to light brown. Into her third year, and quite dark by now, beekeepers list her as a beetle.

The new virgin queen takes a number of short orientation flights to familiarise herself with the surrounding terrain, before she sets off for her mating flight, when she is mated by about 40 drones

while in flight. There is great excitement among the bees for the new queen in welcoming flights and light melodious humming. She soon thereafter starts her life of nothing but egg laying for the next two to three years, and life among the bees goes on again.

Article by Peter Clark, author of his book *Tales of an African Beekeeper* at 011 362-2904, and member of Eastern Highveld Beekeeper's Association, Secretary Mike Alter at 011 965-6040.

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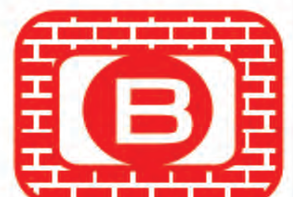
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Wahlberg's epauletted fruit bat.

From page 31

more recently Wahlberg's epauletted fruit bat. Studies of bats have contributed to the development of navigational aids for the blind, birth control and artificial insemination techniques, vaccine production and drug testing, as well as to a better understanding of low-temperature surgical procedures.

So why is it that bat populations are decreasing nation-

wide? Ignorance and superstition are bats' greatest enemies. Many people misunderstand bats, fear them and consider

them dangerous, so will not hesitate to kill one if they find it in their homes.

Human encroachment has led to loss of habitat. Bats also die in large numbers where chemicals are used on the insects and plants that they eat.

Entry by people into bat hibernation caves during winter causes bats to awaken and lose valuable energy reserves.

Smallholders have an important role to play in conserving bats. Armed with information about the importance of bats to biodiversity, smallholders can inform members of the family, friends and workers. By planting indigenous trees we are providing food and shelter for bats or we can put up bat houses for them. If you have to move bats out of your house, provide a bat house as an alternative place to roost. Roof-roosting bats can sometimes become a noisy or smelly nuisance, but installing a bat house away from your home will draw them away. Do not use a pest control company that will fumigate them,

as this is fatal and also illegal. Bat houses are also provided by some farmers to attract bats to an area, so that they can help in keeping down the pest population.

The Gauteng Bat Interest Group will help with bat-related queries or problems: www.batsgauteng.org.za. For bat houses call Nigel Fernsby on 071 609-8230 or EcoSolutions on 072 365-9777.



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— INVASIVE ALIEN

Invasive species training offered

The SA Green Industries Council (Sagic) is running a series of invasive species training days. These courses are aimed at knowledgeable plant people in horticultural societies, garden clubs and conservancies. Invasive species are now regarded as a liability to landowners and smallholders will be aware that, according to the Nemba Alien & Invasive Species Regulation, all sellers of land must complete an Invasive Species Declaration Form, which must be given to the buyer of the property - and lodged with the Dept of Environmental Affairs. This document lists all the occurrences of listed species on the land in question.

Moreover, country estate agents will need access to a

knowledgeable invasive species expert to check for invasive species on properties about to be sold.

The Sagic thus offers invasive species identification training to knowledgeable flora experts - landscapers, horticulturists, conservancy members and experienced gardeners, who would like to become Sagic Invasive Species Consultant in their region.

The workshops take place on 9 July in Pretoria, and on 23 July in Potchefstroom.

Training will start at 09h00 and run to 15h00, with registration from 08h30. It is essential to pre-book.

A fillable pdf form that includes all the Sagic training dates is available for download from the Sagic website, listed

Continued on page 34

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For, make no mistake, while a septic tank system is a great improvement on more basic sewage management

techniques such as long-drop toilets, all a traditional septic system achieves is the removal and digestion by

microbes of solids. The resultant fluid, free of solids though it may be, remains

Continued on page 36

EWT to assess bullfrog sites

Do you know of patches of land where bullfrogs lurk? And especially areas that are threatened by development?

A national assessment of bullfrogs is planned for the near future and the urban conservation project co-ordinator of the Endangered Wildlife Trust has been asked to compile a list of known bullfrog sites currently under threat from development, including the area, date, proposed development,

environmental impact assessment recommendations and progress to date etc. The EWT hopes that this assessment will ultimately lead to stricter EIA conditions. If you know of such sites contact Emily Taylor of the EWT, tel 011 372-3600 Ext 63 cell 084 555-1266 or Email emilyt@ewt.org.za

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NEMBA

From page 35 below.

It should be returned to Sagic's Margie Vonk (email on form), who will issue an invoice. No admittance to the training will be allowed without EFT pre-payment.

To download the form, go to <http://www.invasives.org.za/resources/downloadable-resources/finish/111-invasive-species-training/1085-invasive-species-certification-training-course.html>

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SEWERAGE

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toxic, full of pathogens and capable of contaminating any water source it comes into contact with. It is in fact the soil through which it passes out of the soakaway that renders it harmless.

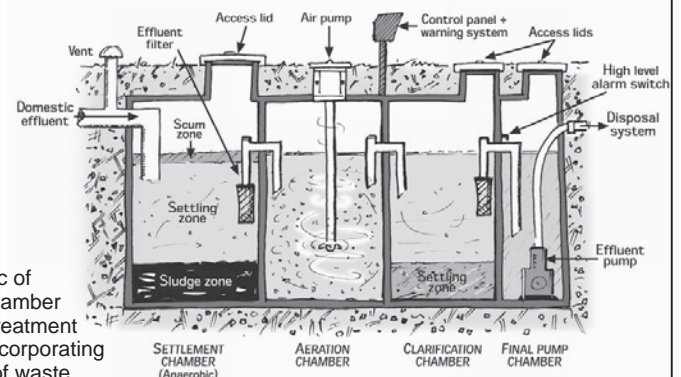
But for many smallholdings, and certainly for those that have existing traditional septic tank/soakaway systems such

an installation may be beyond the budget.

What, then, can one do to, firstly, minimise one's water usage and, secondly, re-use as much as one can of one's waste in a safe and sustainable way?

One needs to start by separating the household grey water (bath, shower and kitchen waste)

Schematic of a multi-chamber sewage treatment system incorporating aeration of waste



from the black (toilet) water so that only the latter flows

into the septic system. Apart from providing one with many hundreds of

litres of eminently re-usable, or easily treatable, water, a major benefit will be

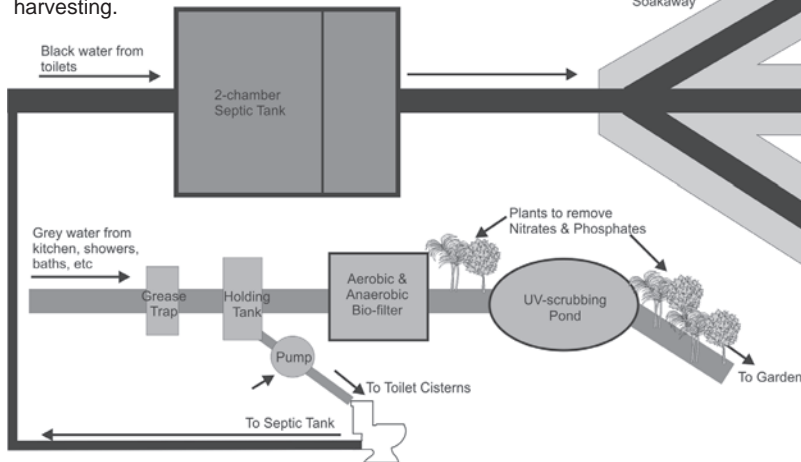
that it will mean much longer intervals between septic tank pumpings ~ a particular benefit in households where the septic system is, for whatever reason, on the small side.

What can one use grey water for? For a start, one can use it to flush toilets, thus saving eight to ten litres of clean drinking water with each flush.

Secondly, after a simple filtering process one can use it as fertilizer-rich irrigation water in the garden, because the dissolved soaps and

Continued on page 37

Dual-pipe sewage system incorporating conventional 2-chamber septic tank and grey-water utilisation and harvesting.



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SEWERAGE

From page 36

and detergents in the water are made up largely of phosphates and nitrates which constitute a major part of chemical fertilizers.

Or, thirdly, one can use it to feed a marshy wetland which will attract insects and bird life to one's garden.

One can't, of course, use it as drinking water for livestock, and one can't (legally, at least) discharge it in any way that it will run into an existing watercourse or river.

To make use of grey water requires a bit of ingenious re-plumbing of the house. First, one will need a vessel into which to store the grey water, typically an underground tank fitted with a sump pump.

While shower and bath water can be discharged directly into the holding tank, kitchen waste water should pass through a grease trap first.

To use the grey water in one's toilets will require a booster pump fitted with either a conventional bladder and pressure switch or one of the newer electronic controllers. This should be fitted between the holding tank and the toilet cisterns and the float switch on the sump pump in the

holding tank should be adjusted to ensure that there is always sufficient water in the tank to allow for full toilet cisterns.

The excess water from the holding tank should be pumped out by the sump pump into a simple gravel, sand and anaerobic filter which, while it will not remove the phosphates and nitrates, will remove any remaining fats, oils and greases, and other solids such as hair, skin and small food particles etc that will have escaped collection in the grease trap. For it is these small solids that, as they rot and putrefy, make the water smelly.

If you store the resultant water in a dam or pond it will quickly turn bright green as the phosphates and nitrates it contains provide nutrients for algae to thrive.

This fluid can be used, not so much as irrigation water for the garden, as for liquid fertilizer, bearing in mind its nutrient load and the fact that it will, with repeated use, have an effect on the pH of the soil being treated (because it is alkaline).

However, allowing this water to trickle away slowly through a bed of sand planted with reeds and suitable water-loving plants will result in most of the phosphates and nitrates being removed by the plants, rendering the water that emerges at the end of the filter as clean as, or even cleaner

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SEWERAGE

How to size, and build, a septic tank

As often as not, septic tank problems arise not because of abuse and misuse but simply because the system is too small for the household. This happens when the size of a household grows, for example with the addition of

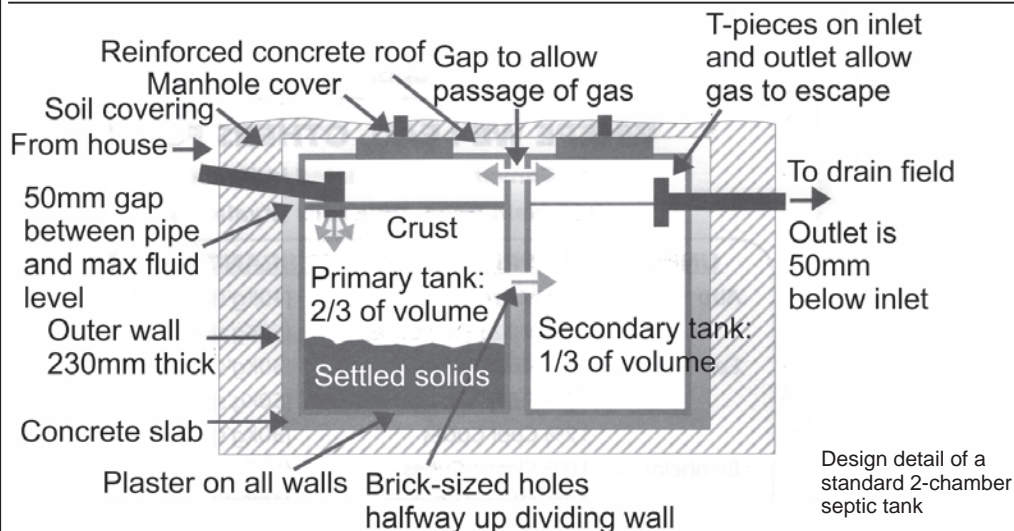
It's common for septic tanks to be built too small, or to become too small as the household expands

children or grandparents, but also because the system was built too small to begin with. Believe it or not, it's a common problem: A newly-

built home may be clad in the most expensive of finishes, but the last component for which any money is left is the septic tank and as a result the

builders scrimp on the size of the hole.

And, believe it or not, very few commercial plumbers know enough about septic tanks and drain fields to advise their clients correctly. The daily volume of effluent emptying into the tank depends, to a large extent, on the size of the household and individual members' habits. Baths use more water than showers, for example, and household members who stay at home during the day use the loo more than those who go to work. Party-animals will also use more than the average by way of loo flushes. The minimum size of a two compartment septic tank system, where the primary and secondary tanks are



Continued on page 40

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From page 38

If building one's own tank from brick the walls should be at least 230mm thick, and

The primary and secondary tanks need not be adjoining but can be some distance apart and joined by pipe, depending on the topography and soil conditions, as long as the above criteria are fulfilled. The end of the inflow pipe from the house should be 50mm higher than the outflow pipe to the soakaway

In their most basic form, these are merely “dig and drop” containers divided into

These systems are more complex. They are divided into five or more chambers, including two which function as primary and secondary septic tanks, another which is filled with plastic media and an air pump and functions in much the same way as a municipal sewage aeration system, and yet another tank from which reactivated sewage sludge, containing a concentration of beneficial microbes, is pumped back hydraulically into the septic chamber as a "booster".

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Next: how to dig a septic soakaway

The drain field of a standard septic system is also called a leach field or soak away and is incorrectly called a French drain, if you wish to be pedantic.

There are many designs of drain field, the most common being a large pit filled with broken brick, rocks or even old tyres, and covered with old corrugated iron and a

layer of soil. There are a number of reasons why this is neither the most efficient design, nor the safest.

A proper drain field comprises a long and narrow trench, the key being not the size of the hole but the surface area of the walls and floor of the trench.

The drain field should comprise trenches about 500mm wide by 1m deep

below the bottom of the inlet pipe. Total depth must allow for a fall of the pipe of about 1:40 from the septic tank (therefore the further away from the septic tank you lay your drain field the deeper you will have to dig the trenches).

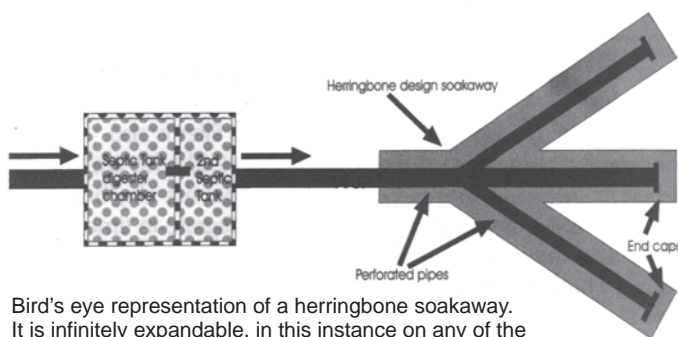
Trenches can be straight, curved or herring bone shaped to take into consideration contours and space and the total length will also be affected by the type of soil in which you are working.

You'll need more trenches in unabsorbing soil such as clay or ouklop, and possibly more but shallower trench in rocky ground but for normal household systems a total of 18 to 24m is usual.

The trench is filled to the level of the inlet pipe with hard material of between 20

and 50mm, such as rock, crushed stone or well-fired broken brick. The filling should be free of sand and "fines" which will clog the gaps which will be ample as the hard material forms a honeycomb in the trench. And, unlike old tyres and

Continued on page 42



Bird's eye representation of a herringbone soakaway. It is infinitely expandable, in this instance on any of the three arms, so long as sufficient fall is maintained.

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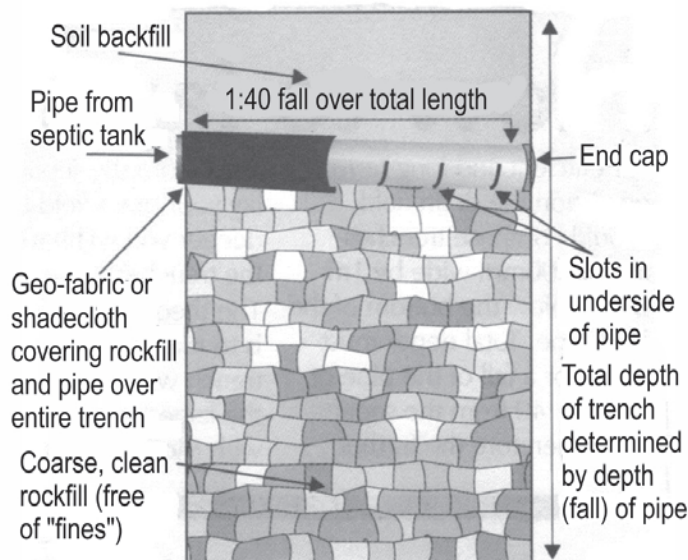
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SEWERAGE

From page 41

metal scrap, such material won't cave in over time. Atop this medium, in the centre of the trench, is laid 50 to 63mm rigid drain pipe, cut half through with slots on the underside every 10cm or so, taking into consideration the necessary fall of 1:40 over the entire length. If the trenches are herringboned proper joins are installed and the ends are blanked off with blanking pieces.

Over the entire length and width of the pipe geo-fabric (Bidem) or shade cloth is laid, which will not rot, and which prevents soil particles and sand from filtering into the hard matter (and preventing roots from growing into the trenches), while still allowing rainwater to filter downwards. Another method is to lay the shadecloth under the pipe and to bed the pipe in river sand before filling the remainder of the trench with



Side-view of a herringbone trench soakaway

soil. This is an unnecessary additional cost, however, and still allows roots to penetrate to the pipe where they block the slots.

The trench is then back-filled with soil to surface level and planted with grass. The

beauty of this system is that it is extendable: should the slots in any section of the pipe become blocked the fluid will simply flow further down the pipe. Furthermore, should the entire system become clogged, one of the blanking pieces at the end of the pipe is simply cut off and further extensions dug and laid.

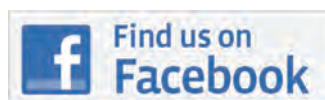
What is put into the trench as filler is important. Old tyres are not good, neither are old clay bricks (they disintegrate in time). The media in the trench not only prevents it from collapsing but also provides surface area on which microorganisms attach themselves. The larger the surface area, the more accommodation for micro-organisms, and the cleaner

the liquid which finally enters the soil.

The gaps provide for the liquid and air to flow. The micro-organisms are aerobic, ie they need air (oxygen) to live (unlike the micro-organisms in the septic tank itself, which are anaerobic). After passing in contact with the media and their attendant organisms the liquid then seeps from the trench out into the soil. Here it is filtered and receives further treatment by the soil bacteria and plants. It is, however, still not "pure" or harmless.

Pollution of ground water by septic systems is of particular concern in smallholding areas where septic systems and boreholes are found in relative profusion. Siting of boreholes and septic systems is crucial in ensuring that borehole water remains clean and, while you may be able to ensure that your septic system is built far away from your borehole on your own plot, can you be sure that your neighbour's system is not close to your borehole?

For this reason, if your borehole water is used for animal or human drinking it should be subjected to regular testing for pathogens and harmful chemicals.



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And finally, why it sometimes goes stinky

Two factors will result in your septic system malfunctioning and backing up: Either it is too small for the job it is expected to do and is simply unable to cope with the volume of effluent it receives daily. Or you are putting into it substances that are harmful to the microbes that make it function.

Households often outgrow their septic systems, by the addition of members of the family, staff and guests, or by the addition of granny flats, etc.

Moreover, ignorant builders often simply miscalculate the size tank required for a household when building the dwelling in the first place.

Assuming your tank is the correct size and is not overloaded, malfunction is most likely the result of killer substances being poured down the drain.

Just as they clog drainpipes, fats, oils and greases are also killers in the septic system, particularly if they get into the drain-field.

In the tank they take an inordinately long time to be destroyed by the bacteria in the septic tank and if the system overflows and allows the oil layer into the drain field it coats the media (the rock, old tyres or brick that fills the soakaway) surfaces and stops the bacteria in the drain-field working.

A smell around the drain-field indicates that the media is becoming blocked.

Next, the fats and oils will then coat the trench soil surfaces, preventing the fluid from soaking away into the soil. As the liquid cannot escape it rises to the surface or backs up into the septic tank.

Apart from the fact that there are health reasons why one should limit the amounts of

fat and grease one eats, one should also limit the amount that gets into the drain by disposing of used cooking oil in other ways, wiping greasy pans with newspaper before washing and, most important, installing a grease trap on one's kitchen waste line.

While the grease trap needs regular cleaning (it will trap not only fats and oils but also residual vegetable peelings, food waste, bones and bacon

rind washed off plates) and cleaning a grease trap is an unpleasant task, it is more unpleasant to face the cost of reconstructing a drain field rendered unusable by clogging with oils and grease. And, anyway, keeping the grease trap clean can be made very much cleaner and simpler by the use of a regular application of a liquid biological enhancer. A small quantity poured into the

kitchen sink with a couple of litres of water and left overnight reduces smell and prevents a build-up of fats, oils and greases, leaving a clean grease trap. The solids will still need to be emptied out of the catch basket. What you are looking for is a blend of natural micro-organisms selected to break down the fats, oils and greases and organic matter

Continued on page 44



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SEWERAGE

From page 43

found in kitchen waste. It is good for the septic tank and helps to break down the crust. Such substances were developed for industrial kitchens and are now available for home use. Another useful strategy to minimize the effects of fats, oils and greases is to install "T" pieces on the inlet pipe in the septic tank and on the outlet into the drain field. In both cases one branch of each T

should be below the surface of the fluid in the tank. This will keep most if not all of the fats, oils and greases out of the drain-field.

If a grease trap has not been installed then the system will need regular doses of a biological treatment to keep the fats, oils and greases under control and the drain field working.

Note that a grease trap is installed on the kitchen waste water line only ~ not, for obvious reasons, on the toilet sewers.

Many believe that, when their tanks malfunction, they can save themselves the cost of a professional emptying by pumping the liquid in the tank out themselves, "skelmpie-skelmpie" into a disused part of the garden. Quite apart from the flies and smell this causes, this won't help in the long run because the liquid is required in the tank for it to operate correctly.

The septic system won't work any better simply because the solids in the tank are now more "concentrated" by the removal of only the liquid.

This liquid also contains many things that are dangerous to humans and animals.

Another old wives tale is that a septic tank can be "kick-started" into action by tossing in a dead chicken, an idea which is as ludicrous as throwing a handful of biltong down the loo as a "starter".

How will you know when your tank ceases to function optimally? The following symptoms indicate that the septic tank system is not working efficiently or maybe not at all:

- ☐ Noticeable smells inside or outside the house.
- ☐ Flies around the tank or drain field.
- ☐ Water or sewage lifting and flowing out of the septic tank manholes.
- ☐ Marshy areas or even

water running from the drain-field, usually accompanied by a strong toilet smell.

☐ Basins, showers or toilets slow to drain.

In such cases the tank may require pumping out to sort out some of these problems, but most will respond to a biological treatment or two to restore the bacteria in the tank to health. This will kick-start or boost the stopped or stalled natural action of the tank and drain field. If the drain-field is badly blocked with fats, oils and greases it may take time and need several doses of liquid biological drain cleaner direct into the drain-field inlet pipe. A monthly maintenance treatment with a biological product will keep the tank and drain-field working and increase the time between pump-outs. It will also keep the fats and oils from blocking the drain field.



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DIARY

ATTENTION CRAFT MARKETS, CLUBS ETC: If you would like details of your events included in the Diary, please fax or email your information to the Editor. For non-commercial enterprises this service is FREE.

NOTE: FARMERS' & CRAFT MARKETS. For a listing of REGULARLY HELD markets and fairs please see the separate section on page 51. Only markets that are held infrequently are now listed in this calendar section.

Every Sunday

Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast, Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Cullinan. Call Rudan on 082 410-3180 horses@diamondxrancho.co.za, www.diamondx.co.za., R360 per person.

Mnandi Methodist Church, 09:00, Mnandi Centre, cnr Tulip and Short Streets, Jen 012 651-5509. Gail 072 477-0708., A small community who worship together. We have a Youth and Children's church.

Premier Mine Presbyterian Church, Lower Oak Ave, Cullinan. Garden of Remembrance (Columbarium), 079 060-9990 or 012 734-1640, Worship and Sunday school. Holy Communion for all on the 1st Sunday of every month.

Every Monday

Alcoholics Anonymous. 'Courage to Change' Group meeting, 19:30, Benoni Agricultural Holdings, Marcus 082 042-7730. Warren 082 335-0049. Glen 072

239-3024., If you want to drink – that's your problem! If you want to stop – that's our problem! No fees; no dues; just concerned fellowship.

2015

July

2: Full Moon

4: Enjoyable Beekeeping 2015: Beekeeping course for beginners, 186 Uys St, Rynfield, Benoni at Highveld Honey Farms. 9:30 to 12:30, and thereafter on the second Saturday monthly through the spring and summer honey season. Cost per session R250 each, spouses, daughters and sons free. Contact Peter Clark 011 362-2904.

6: Aphelion

6-10: Hatchery Management, ARC Dairy Science Centre, contact Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za; Tel 012 672-9153

8: Last Quarter

13-17: Introductory Meat Processing, ARC Irene, contact Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za; Tel 012 672-9153

16: New Moon

18: Veiling: Losgoed, kleinvee en hoenders om 11:00. Wholesome Auctions by Conrad Herbst Kleinvee sentrum, Pretoria. Kom koop en verkoop enige eits. Kontak ons gerus vir meer inligting. Come 076 101-9996 of 087 150-1141 of e-pos cdp@cdpauctioneers.co.za.

19: Astronomy in the Crocodile Nature Reserve. Alan Versfeld talks about the Stars, and the impact of light pollution. Bring and Braai event into the evening. Contact Jenny Cornish,

jcornish@mweb.co.za or 082 997-7880.

19-23: Grassland Society of Southern Africa 50th Annual Congress & Research Skills Workshop, Royal Agricultural Show grounds, Pietermaritzburg. Call 083 256-7202 or 049 842-4335

21-24: Introductory Meat Processing, ARC Irene, contact: Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za; Tel 012 672-9153

24: First Quarter

25: Garden World's Nature's Bounty Spring Festival event at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Experience Chelsea 2015 with David Davidson, 09:30 for 10:00. Cost R80 includes talk, slide show presentation, refreshments, prizes and entrance to the designer gardens. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142.

25: Garden World's Nature's Bounty Spring Festival event at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Grootfm Live Outside Broadcast featuring Garden World's chief horticulturalist, JJ van Rensburg. 09:00-13:00. Cost R60 includes outside broadcast, refreshments and prizes. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142

25: Bee Course, Beeware, 298 Witch Hazel Ave, Eco Square, Unit 20, Centurion. Call 012 771-4288

25: Snake Awareness and Venomous Snake Handling Course, Heia Safari Ranch, Plot 59, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Contact Johan 082 494-2039.

25: Victus Christi Farmers Market at Reformed Church, 24 Miles Sharp St, Rynfield, Benoni. Contact George 081 381-0824 or info@victuschristi.org.za

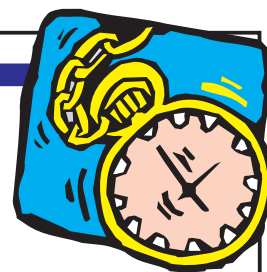
26: Aloe Valley Meander Market, 10:00 – 15:00, Serendipity Art Café, R511, Doornrandjie.

Food and Music, organic and naturally grown fresh produce, arts and crafts, plants, clothes. Contact Debbie 072 617-7517.

28-30: Artificial Insemination for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

31: Full Moon

31: Pregnancy Awareness for Cattle.



Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

August

1: Garden World's Nature's Bounty Spring Festival event at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Jane's Delicious Urban Gardening with Get It Joburg West and Talborne Organics. Lecturer Jane Griffiths. 1030 for 1100. Cost R80 includes talk, demonstration refreshments and prizes. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142

1: Victus Christi Farmers Market at Reformed Church, 24 Miles Sharp St, Rynfield, Benoni. Call George 081 381-0824 or info@victuschristi.org.za

3 – 7: Introductory Meat Processing Course, ARC Irene, contact Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za; Tel 012 672-9153

7: Last Quarter

8: 1: Garden World's Nature's Bounty Spring Festival event at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. RSG's Brekvis met Derrick live outside broadcast with Derrick Gardner featuring Garden World chief horticulturalist JJ van Rensburg. 07:30 for 08:00 till 11:00. Cost R140 includes breakfast a goodie bag and prizes. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142

10-14: Meat Processing Course, ARC Dairy Science Centre, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.

11-13: African Farmers Workshop & Expo, Nasrec, Johannesburg. Call Sarah 011 514-0200

11-20 Nov: Vegetable Production Course, Buhle Farmers Academy, Delmas. Call 087 803-0563

13: Gauteng Dairy Day, Belnori Boutique Cheesery, Bapsfontein. More than 30 exhibitors including banks, label machines, feed & fodder, milking machines, cheese



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pets allowed. In return for your services we offer a small salary and a free one bedroomed cottage (excl electricity). If you are serious and not a chancer you may contact David 082 576-3731 between 08H30 and 16H30.

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DIARY, cont'd

making requisites, cheese moulds, yoghurt preparations, cleaning chemicals, veterinary supplies, specialist estate agents, vacuum pack machines, scales, etc. Lectures and talks will cover topics such as the primary product milk, raising calves, lambs and kids, stress in small stock and the correct handling of animals, and practical business aspects to consider when running a small dairy operation. Refreshments and food available. Entrance is free but booking is essential. Call Rina Belcher 082 377-5698.

14: New Moon
15: Garden World's Nature's Bounty Spring Festival event at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Cooking demonstration with Garden & Home. Lecturer Johan du Preez of Starke Ayres. 10:30 for 11:00. Cost R130 includes talk, demonstration, light lunch a Starke Ayres goodie bag, and prizes. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142

16: Geology Rocks! in the Crocodile Nature Reserve. A regular walk exploring the geological features of the region. Contact Jenny Cornish, jcornish@mweb.co.za or 082 997-7880.

18-21: Beef Cattle Management Course, ARC Dairy Science Centre, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.

22: First Quarter
22: Garden World's Nature's Bounty Spring Festival event at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. All About Teas for Health & Vitality: Lecturers Margaret & Sandy Roberts. 09:30 for 10:00. Cost R130 includes talk, demonstration, refreshments

and prizes. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142

26-29: Jacaranda Agricultural Show. Call Belia Kemp 012 327-1847 or info@tshwanabac.co.za or go to www.jacarandashow.co.za.

28: Gauteng regional auction of indigenous veld goats, Tshwane Events Centre, Soutter St, Pta West. 150 ewes and 20 rams, stud and commercial quality goats from all four ecotypes. Call Vleissentraal Bosveld 015 491 3141

29: Full Moon

29: Garden World's Nature's Bounty Spring Festival event at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. In Tune with Nature concert featuring Richard Cock and Tanya Visser. 13:00 for 13:30. Cost R90 includes refreshments and prizes. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142

29: Victus Christi Farmers Market at Reformed Church, 24 Miles Sharp Street, Rynfield, Benoni. Call George 081 381-0824 or info@victuschristi.org.za

29: Snake Awareness and Venomous Snake Handling Course, Heia Safari Ranch, Plot 59 Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Contact Johan 082 494-2039.

30: Aloe Valley Meander Market, 10h00 – 15h00, Serendipity Art Café, R511, -Doomrandjie. Contact Debbie 072 617-7517

31 – 4 Sep: Introductory Meat Processing Course, ARC Irene. Contact: Annetjie Loubser aloubser@arc.agric.za; tel 012 672-9153

September

1-7: National Arbor Week

5: Last Quarter

5 Bee Course, Beeware, 298 Witch Hazel Avenue, Eco Square, Unit 20, Centurion. Phone 012 771-4288

7-11: Small Stock Management Course, ARC Dairy Science Centre, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.

7-9: Artificial Insemination for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

7-10: Artificial Insemination for Sheep. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

10: Pregnancy Awareness for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-

7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

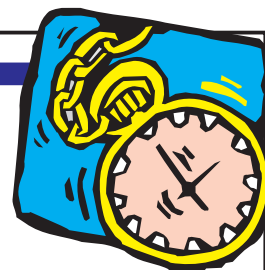
11: Calf Rearing. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

12-13: Clivia Show at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive. Contact Magriet or Corne on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142.

13: New Moon

13: Solar Eclipse

13: Ride the Rhenoster in the Crocodile Nature Reserve. A popular technically challenging annual mountain bike ride with privileged access to general off-limits areas. Contact Jenny Cornish, jcornish@mweb.co.za or 082 997-7880.



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Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

NOTE: This is a listing ONLY of markets held to a regular weekly or monthly schedule. Markets held less frequently are listed in the DIARY section of the magazine and we urge readers to check each month for dates and events of interest.


We would like this list of food markets to be as comprehensive as possible. If you know of farmers' food markets that are not listed here, please email us the contact details of the organisers, and details of the market. Only FOOD markets are included.

Similarly, if you know of markets in this list that have CLOSED please inform us so that we can delete incorrect or outdated information.

We invite you to tell us of your experiences when visiting these markets so that we can better inform our readers. Were they as advertised?

Was the produce on sale plentiful, well-priced, well-presented and fresh? Email your comments to gautengsmallholder@gmail.com

DAY	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	WHO TO CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT
Thursday					
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston.	Konrad or Glenda 011 706-3671 or glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
Friday					
1st Friday	The Shed Night Market	18:00 to 22:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
Saturday					
Every Saturday	Wholefood Country Market	09:00 to 14:00	Sawasdee Exotic Nursery, cnr Main & Zinnia Roads, Kyalami	Robyn 083 311-4768 wholefoodmarket@gmail.com	Variety of organic & homemade foods.
Every Saturday	The Shed Food & Craft Market	08:00 to 15:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
Every Saturday	Pretoria Boeremark	05:30 to 09:30	Pioneer Open Air Museum, Silverton.	012 804-8031 or 082 416-3900 blingsa@lantic.net	Fresh produce and traditional bazaar treats like jaffles, kailings with pap and boerewors rolls.
Every Saturday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston	Konrad or Glenda on 011 706-3671 glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
Every Saturday	The Hazel Food Market	08:00 to 14:00	Greenlyn Village Centre, cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie Sts, Menlo Park, Pta	Rietha 083 554-5636. www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za	Fresh produce straight from the producer. Coffee, eats on sale
Every Saturday	Walkerville Farmers Market	09:00 to 15:00	112 Main Road (R82), Walkerville.	079 076-7680 info@wfmmarket.co.za	Organic produce and Crafter's Market. www.wfmmarket.co.za .
Every Saturday	Bosheuvel Fresh Produce	09:00 to 15:00	54 Glory Road, Muldersdrift	Mitch 082 553-2846	Meats and vegetables, delicacies, honey, cheese, brewery, crafter's market and children's entertainment.
1st Saturday	The Green Market	09:00 to 12:00	Pretoria Botanical Gardens 2 Cussonia Avenue, Brummeria, Pretoria	Melissa 083 562-5249	Products ranging from solar equipment to organic food
Last Saturday	Rynoue Plaas Mark/ Rynoue Country Market	07:00 to 14:00	Cnr Moloto Road (R573) and Protea Road Opposite Roodeplaat Spar	Bruce 083 442-2552 Sue 082 891-7546 waydack@worldonline.co.za	Fresh vegetables, fruit in season, preserves, flower and plants, homemade food and cakes, arts and crafts.
Last Saturday	Fresh2U Farmers Market	08:00 to 14:00	Corner Main Street and High Street Modderfontein (behind 33 High Street)	Jane 083 376 5567 Chantelle 082 338 7818 wardek@iafrica.com	Over 50 stalls. Fresh produce, home made goods, plants, food and more.
Sunday					
Every Sunday	Fourways Farmers Market	10:00 to 15:00	Corner Montecasino Boulevard and William Nicol Drive, Fourways	011 465 0827 www.ffmarket.co.za	Get your groceries...In the garden!



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8. Services do not qualify for SuperSmalls. Please see our business rates on page 1.

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BY EMAIL: gautengsmallholder@gmail.com
BY HAND: 370 da Costa Dr, Bredell, Kempton Park

1 WORD (BLOCK CAPITALS) PER SPACE, PLEASE

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6. No SERVICES will be accepted as free classifieds.
7. Classified advertisements may only be submitted for three consecutive editions.
8. The Publisher reserves the right to edit or omit advertisements at his discretion.
9. It is the Advertiser's responsibility to ensure we have received the advert.

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FOR ENQUIRIES TEL 011 979-5088

Send your Classified advertisements to us:
BY FAX: 086 602-3882
BY SMS: 074 854-0197 ONLY
BY POST: Box 14648, Bredell 1623
BY EMAIL: gautengsmallholder@gmail.com
BY HAND: 370 da Costa Dr, Bredell, Kempton Park

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Agricultural faddism

You wouldn't think that something as staid as agriculture could suffer from fads, would you? But, by golly, it has, and continues to do so.

Think back 30 or more years. Macadamia nuts were going to be the crop that would make farmers into instant millionaires. With stars in their eyes (and presumably their sums done on the back of an old envelope stashed firmly in their pockets) farmers went off and bought at great expense, macadamia saplings, which they planted in serried rows, fertilized and watered. The only problem is that a macadamia tree, while it produces a wonderful nut with all sorts of health-giving properties, takes a good few years before it starts to warrant a harvest. And those good few years proved too much for many farmers, who either lost interest, or lost their shirts, as a result.

And so today, if you drive out to the Lowveld, you will come across fields of macadamia trees, in various stages of overgrown-ness, the leftovers of shattered dreams of wealth.

When this magazine started 16 years ago, giant garlic growing was all the rage. It was billed as ideal for a smallholder owing to the smallness of the plant, the closeness with which it could be planted to its neighbour and, of course, the high value of the result.

Half an acre or so under giant garlic was guaranteed to give you the income to put your son through medical school.

There were two problems, however. First, a small group of sellers controlled the sale of seed and they, to be sure, made excellent profits. Secondly, and more seriously, however, once you had grown the crop (and it required quite a lot of management and infrastructure to get it right), there was no market for it. Who after all, wants to eat endless quantities of what is in effect an over-pungent onion, quite unsuited to the more intense role of traditional garlic, namely flavouring dishes?

Then there's the case of the permaculture movement, originally the brainchild of an Australian lateral thinker named Bill Mollison. His seminal books on the subject, written from an Australian perspective and therefore pretty much directly applicable to South African conditions, sang the praises of a small tree which Australians call tagasaste.

By Mollison's reckoning tagasaste is the answer to many a farmer's prayers. It is hardy, grows fast, makes an excellent windbreak, and best of all makes a nutritious form of stock feed. Not many years ago, you will recall, a shrub named tree lucerne became widely advertised in South Africa as the very apogee of

dryland grazing for cattle, sheep and game alike. It was advertised as hardy, fast-growing and an excellent windbreak. Sellers of the seedlings and seed banded together in a close knit group and held prices of both seedlings and seeds at frankly usurious prices and it took farmers a little while to cotton on to the fact that tree lucerne was none other than Australian tagasaste.

And here's the thing: importing plants (or any other species, for that matter) wholesale from another continent is not a good thing. Look around you:

Blackjack, khakibos, pompom weed, Mexican poppy, cosmos and the potato tree from South America, and wattle from Australia ~ they haven't exactly done our environment much good, have they? Who's to say that tagasaste will either?

Also in the alien plant class is the more recent fad for growing truffles. You buy an oak sapling whose roots have been inoculated with truffle spores. After some years, because oaks are slow

growing, you let loose a specially trained pig near the tree. The pig rootles around with its snout and, hopefully, unearths the valuable little fungus, that resembles in shape, size and colour a lump of horse turd. This is not an investment for you if you're over 50 because by the time the host tree is big enough to have grown a truffle you'll either be senile or dead.

But you don't need to plant an alien to be a faddist. Most recently, there's great enthusiasm for the moringa tree. Proponents of this wondrous, easy-to-grow tree say that every part is edible and each part has its own unique medicinal properties (it's been a while since I enjoyed an invigorating bowl of wood-pulp and bark...)

The moringa may indeed be wonderful, and truffles are certainly valuable but the point is clearly that anybody setting off after the pot of gold at the end of the agricultural rainbow is surely going to learn the hard way that a fool and his money are easily parted.



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