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FRONT COVER

Piglets: Something that should be a rarity on most Gauteng smallholdings. Find out why on Page 29.

COMMENT, by Pete Bower

Achieving our aim



It had to happen, of course. Having stirred up the climate emergency debate to great effect worldwide, young Greta Thunberg and her views faced something of a conservative backlash when she started agitating across the length and breadth of North America. And, needless to say, one of the meanest little put-downs she had to endure came from that well-known p**sy-grabber, golf cheat, millionaire slumlord and leader of the free world, Donald Trump. To be fair to Thunberg, who was seen on television to be looking a little po-faced when it happened, she quickly put it behind her (she probably expected something like that anyway) and went on to make a remarkably coherent and impassioned speech to members of the United Nations. Remarkable on two scores: Firstly, she delivered it in impeccable, and only slightly accented, English which says something for the quality of the Swedish education system, and secondly, the fire in her belly was clearly evident as she warmed to her topic, a remarkably spunky achievement for a 16-year-old before such a dauntingly eminent audience.

For those who believe that widespread and vigorous climate activism is a very necessary and urgent thing, Thunberg's efforts have been a godsend. With her at the vanguard a worldwide groundswell has developed, which has morphed, for example, into the Extinction Rebellion, a worldwide protest movement of predominantly young people which has taken the debate around climate change from merely listening to strident politicians talking about setting "ceilings" for greenhouse gas emission levels to a more practical and even disruptive level. Marches have taken place in cities all over the globe. Some were peaceful, such as those in Johannesburg, Cape Town and elsewhere, while others degenerated into running battles with police and interest groups opposed to the reduction of use of fossil fuels etc.

More latterly the marches evolved into sit-ins and occupations, blockades and other disruptions, with angry homebound London commuters even resorting to manhandling protesters off the roof of a tube train in order to allow it to run.

Whether this kind of mayhem actually advances the cause of the movement is open to debate because, of course, there are naysayers. Some say Thunberg's activism is no more than teenage naughtiness and her parents are wrong to allow her to encourage misbehaviour among other young people.

We believe they're not quite right there. Thunberg's efforts are achieving a lot. It's not every miscreant 16-year-old who gets invited to address the UN. It's not every miscreant 16-year-old of whom an elder of the entertainment world and a long-time activist and protester in her own right, 82-year-old Jane Fonda, when commenting on her arrest in a protest-turned-riot says "I want to be as brave as Greta."

Some say the avowed editorial stance on the climate emergency by various media outlets (of which this organ is a proud exponent, let me add) amounts to unhealthy bias and an erosion of editorial integrity.

And some, unbelievably, who haven't yet seemed to notice the changing, heating, drier, stormier world around them, still can't make a connection between 150 years of rampant fossil fuel burning, a greatly increased world population, ocean pollution and degradation on an unimaginable scale, and the climate emergency we now find ourselves in, citing outdated and discredited "science" to "prove" that the current situation is a normal cyclical part of the planet's heating and cooling rhythm.

To such Luddites we say "Wake up! Smell the roses" (if you can still find roses to smell amid the smog and fumes).

To those intellectuals who fret about the editorial integrity of media that have taken a view on the climate emergency and use their (our) columns to raise awareness and shape perceptions we say we believe we would be failing in our duty to improve the lot of mankind if we did not. If you thought that fighting the dangers of fascism, Nazis and Japanese imperialism in World War 2 was a big issue let's be clear: this issue is far, far bigger and more dangerous.

And to those who say the youth and their Extinction Rebellion will achieve nothing we say think back to the French Revolution and ask Madame Defarge if she believes the peasants of France achieved their aim as she sat knitting and watching the heads of the aristocracy drop into bloodstained baskets alongside the guillotine.

She might hold the view that a little bloodshed was well-spent, in the same way that the activists of today might hold the view that a few cracked skulls and a little gore is a small price to pay for saving mankind from extinction, or at least a horrible future.

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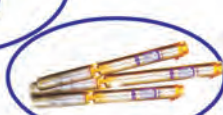
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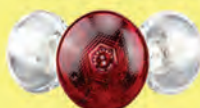
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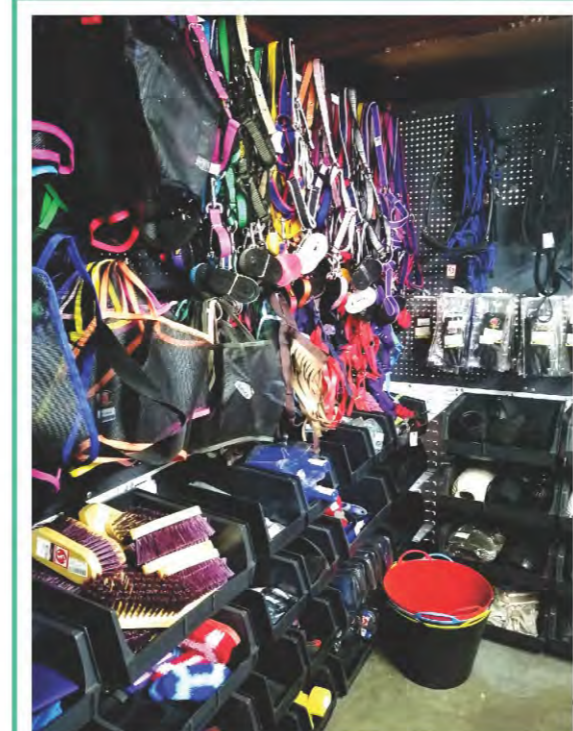
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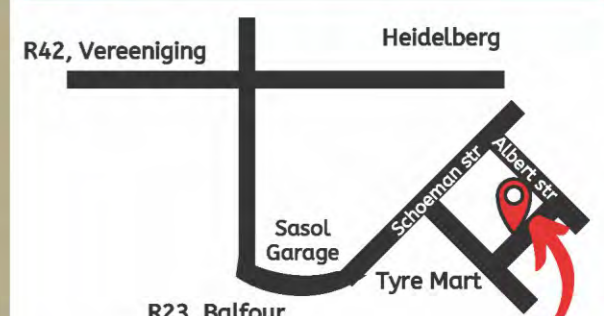
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Lions & pugs are farm animals (...yep...)

Lions, cheetahs, and rhinos, as well as rottweilers and bulldogs, are among the 33 species declared to be farm animals in May this year, when parliament approved an amendment to the Animal Improvement Act (AIA) which governs livestock breeding, as reported by Don Pinnock on Daily Maverick in mid-October.

The act permits "improvement" of animals to "increase production or performance" by licensed animal breeders. Some species added to the act include mountain zebras, lions, giraffe, white and black rhinos, cheetahs, a large number of plains game, as well as ankole cattle, water buffaloes, Tankwa and veld goats, bulldogs, keeshonds, pugs and rottweilers.

The legislation allows artificial insemination, the collection of genetic material as well as the transfer of embryos and "genetic material" which can be collected, processed, packed and sold. "Due to changing farming systems in SA, game animals are included as these are already part of farm animal production systems in the country," says the Dept of

Environment, Forestry & Fisheries (Deff). In a written reply to the DA in parliament, the Deff said that no public participation was needed for this kind of amendment and that it followed a 2017 request "from the industry" to facilitate game farming production.

The Deff maintains that these animals will still be protected under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Nemba). However, while Nemba forbids the hybridisation

Continued on page 10

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remain, African White-backed Vultures have declined by 96% over the last ten years. Members of the public who come across a fledgling or grounded or injured vulture are encouraged to call VulPro on 082 808 5113 or 086 505 6470. For more information, visit www.vulpro.com.

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NEWS

NSPCA to sue govt over live sheep shipment

Charges of animal cruelty are being laid by the NSPCA against various government departments and officials following the departure from East London last month of an ageing livestock carrier, the 25 088 dwt *Al Shuwaikh*, laden with 60 000 South African sheep and destined for halaal slaughter upon landing in Kuwait.

Upon hearing of the intended

voyage various animal rights organisations and the NSPCA lobbied vigorously for interventions by port, Customs and agriculture department officials to prohibit the loading and sailing. However, these efforts proved fruitless and the voyage went ahead, government inspectors having declared themselves "satisfied" with conditions aboard the ship.

With their efforts to stop the voyage having failed, the NSPCA has turned to the courts, using the Animal Protection Act, through which it hopes to prevent a recurrence at a later stage.

□ The *Al Shuwaikh*, among

the world's largest livestock carriers, is one of a number of old cargo ships worldwide that have been converted to carry animals by the installation of multiple decks in what were the ship's holds, as well

Continued on page 11

FARM ANIMALS

From page 7

between species and states that permits to keep or utilise animals would be revoked if treatment is detrimental, it does not clarify what counts as detrimental. It also does not provide for the welfare of individual animals.

So why the change? The answer might be in permit restrictions within Nemba which requires strict control over conveying, moving or translocating specimens of a threatened or protected species, as well as selling, trading, donating or in any way acquiring or disposing of a threatened or protected species. The AIA has none of these restrictions.

The SA Hunters & Game Conservation Association has spoken out against the act, worried that genetic manipu-

lation and cross-breeding of wildlife conflicts with existing biodiversity laws.

The NSPCA has concerns about practices that the AIA permits, including the withdrawing of young shortly after birth to encourage females to come into oestrus sooner. "Wildlife welfare falls through the cracks and is not adequately protected with ongoing mandate issues between departments," says NSPCA director Karen Trendler. "The NSPCA has the legal mandate for all animal welfare, but we have been excluded from many of the processes around utilisation of wildlife and its welfare. We should be at the table. But we think wildlife should be in the wild so the industry and government excludes us from having a say," she adds.

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From page 10

as above deck. The decks are fitted with pens, and access runs, to allow for the loading and discharging of the animals, and their confinement into manageable groups while at sea. The deck surfaces themselves are usually constructed of expanded metal to allow droppings and urine to fall through into channels which can be periodically flushed out using sea water pumped through powerful hoses. Feed and water is provided in troughs, the bigger and more "modern" ships being fitted with semi-automatic feed conveyors.

The *Al Shuwaikh* is typical of this class of vessel. She was built in 1986 as a small geared containership named Colombo. During her lifetime she changed names ten times, and was converted from a containership to a livestock carrier at Rostock, Germany,



Ageing rust-bucket: the 33-year-old sheep carrier *Al Shuwaikh*

in 1999.

□ Animal rights activists describe the practice of live sheep transportation by sea as barbaric and inhumane, while shipping experts cite this sector of the maritime industry as being at the very bottom grubby, gutter-level, in terms of the vessels themselves, the competence and commitment of their crews, their lack of basic animal welfare standards, and the inefficiency of the trade itself. Ventilation, particularly in the holds, is a major problem for although air is fan-forced into

the spaces, ammonia build-up in the atmosphere can turn the air toxic. The decks above the main deck are better in this regard, but have the disadvantage of being exposed to the elements, which can include drenching with seawater or rain in the event of heavy weather at sea. It is common aboard these ships that animal mortality is high ~ up to 20% of total numbers have been cited in certain extreme cases. Where possible the carcasses are removed from the pens and fed into oversized mincing

machines fitted over the stern of the ship. The results of this process fall into the ship's wake and become food for carrion-eating fish and seabirds.

Where the carcasses cannot be removed they are simply left in place, to be flushed out after the cargo has been discharged.

Shipping experts with a knowledge of refrigerated meat trades say that it is much more efficient and productive to slaughter the animals at source, when they are still in peak condition, than to subject them to a 14

Continued on page 13

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Gauteng's driest spring in more than 20 years

Unless it starts to rain in earnest in the last ten days of October (which weather forecasts at the time of writing don't seem to suggest) this early summer season is turning out to be the driest recorded in more than 20 years in Bredell on the East Rand, with only 3mm of rain having been measured since May, compared to the next-driest period with more than 14mm measured through the

Lack of rain would suggest early introduction of water restrictions would seem sensible

dry season to the end of October 2010. One of the features of early-summer precipitation in Eastern Gauteng is how variable the numbers can be. Thus, from 3mm this year, the highest we have recorded in 21 years was 223mm in 2013. Nevertheless, with an average rainfall for the first

two months of the season being 89.76mm over 19 measured years in the past two decades, this year's 3mm so far is dismally little. Another feature of annual rainfall patterns we have noticed over the years is how the dry season rainfall has petered out. While Gauteng residents

never expect much rain through winter, a few showers would inevitably occur over the dry months which, if nothing else, would settle the dust and help maintain a modicum of subsoil moisture through the winter. In recent years these showers have become fewer and further apart with, this year, nothing having been measured from May to August, and only 3mm in September. What does the rest of summer hold in store for

Continued on page 17

LIVESTOCK SHIPMENTS

From page 11

to 21 day sea voyage, during which many will die due to stress, disease and inadequate hygiene, food and water, and during which the rest will lose up to 20% of condition.

□ The live sheep transportation industry is centred on supplying animals for Islamic

halaal slaughter to the Middle East (and other Islamic countries). As a result, the major sheep-growing countries close to the region have been at the forefront of supply, notably Australia and New Zealand (and now, also, South Africa).

While Australia still allows

livestock transportation by sea for slaughter, these are now more carefully monitored and controlled. New Zealand, however, has not seen a shipment of livestock depart for slaughter since 2003, the only livestock being shipped being for breeding purposes.



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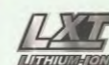
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NEWS LAERSKOOL WITPOORT

Laerskool Witpoort's pupils were winners at an indoor shooting competition held in Johannesburg. The winning pupils are:
Front: Christelle Heunis, Elani Roets, Karla Roets and Annika Becker, standing: Nadia Roets, Dawid Heunis, AJ Willemse and Neels Cloete.
The school is near Welbekend to the east of Pretoria.



Laerskool Witpoort Grade 6 pupils enjoying a bit of co-ordination work at Camp Discovery. The school, near Welbekend, sends its Gr 6 pupils on an annual Veld School camp to learn useful skills and have fun in the outdoors.

RAINFALL

From page 13

summer hold in store for Gauteng? Pacific oceanographers measuring sea surface and subsurface temperatures in the Central Pacific reported in mid-October that the temperature variations off the mean amounted to less than a degree that would have triggered the possibility of an El Nino or La Nina event. An El Nino event is declared when Pacific sea temperatures rise more than 0,5% above the mean, ie resulting in higher-than average sea temperatures. This, in turn, has been observed to result in higher-than-usual rainfall over the northern hemisphere and lower-than-usual rainfall in the southern hemispheres.

A La Nina event is just the opposite, ie, lower-than-average sea surface temperatures which result in drier than normal conditions in the

northern hemisphere and wetter than normal conditions in the southern hemisphere. With such a small temperature variance from average this year the science is pointing to an "ENSO-neutral" season in the early part, ie up to the New Year, and a 55% probability that the same conditions prevail through late summer in our region. It would seem to make sense, therefore, that farmers, smallholders and urban residents plan their plantings, gardens and water usage generally on the conservative side, as conditions would suggest that there is unlikely to be sufficient water about to use lavishly, and we may well be faced in the latter part of the season with a water crisis similar to that faced by Capetonians a couple of years ago.

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SA's own GMO set to save Aussie farmers

The development of a new cultivar of a hardy South African shrub will be of huge benefit to farmers in sandy, infertile farmland in Australia, as well as in South Africa.

Lebeckia isanti (which means sand in isiXhosa) is the result of a decade of research and experimentation by scientists at the Murdoch University's Centre for Rhizobium Studies, who were searching for legume plants capable of surviving Western Australia's harsh, dry summers and sandy soils.

The genus *Lebeckia* is a group of species that occurs in the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape Provinces.

All the species have attractive yellow flowers and distinct needle-shaped leaves.

The plant is compared to lucerne, a popular perennial

SA's ARC does deal with Australian scientists over drought-resistant grazing species well suited to acid soils

pasture with good drought tolerance used by sheep producers for grazing. However, *Lebeckia* can survive particularly arid conditions where lucerne would not thrive.

The Australians were assisted in their research by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and in September an agreement was signed whereby a royalty on seed sales will be paid to the ARC. The new species will also be made available to South African farmers and smallholders, meaning farmers in both Australia and Africa will have access to the benefits of this research.

The research project was funded by Murdoch University, with support from

the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. The first seed will be available for sale next year. According to ARC CEO Dr Shadrack Moephuli, the growing of *Lebeckia* has economic benefits to farmers, especially those with sandy and acid soils.

"*Lebeckia* is an acid tolerant legume that has been developed by the Agricultural Research Council and Murdoch University from genetic material collected on the acidic soils derived from sandstone in the Western Cape," Dr Moephuli said.

"As cultivation and alien invasion reduce the soil pH, this species can be grown in soils affected by acidification.

"This is another milestone and innovation by the two institutions to assist the farmers to produce food for the growing population." *Lebeckia* could be a game changer for sheep farmers, providing an alternative feed source for livestock during periods of lower rainfall and in dry years. It has the potential to support the welfare of grazing animals, and its nitrogen-fixing qualities could massively boost the productivity of currently wasted soils.

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WORM FARMS

A worm farm could set you free of fertilizers

Smallholders may never need to buy fertilizer again by using vermicompost to produce faster growing crops and a higher yield. So says Gina Shoemaker, managing

director of Green Earth Concepts of Mulbarton, south of Johannesburg, who is hoping to use earthworms and vermicompost to help smallholders save – and

potentially make – money.

The company sells three sizes of worm farm, and purchase of one includes installation, red wiggler worms and education around the maintenance of the farms and worms. The largest can produce up to ten tons of organic fertilizer a year and can recycle between six to eight tons of organic waste a month.

The worm farms comprise a large metal

bin, into which organic waste and the worms are put. Beneath these bins is a pond into which the liquid fertilizer – vermitea or 'worm tea' – drains. This can be used directly on crops or diluted into irrigation systems and acts as a fertilizer. The systems are fitted with a submersible pump and pond oxygenator. After a period of time, over which water is regularly poured or pumped on to the worm farm, the contents of the bin can be sifted (using the bin's own lid as a sieve). What is sieved out is vermicast – a highly nutritious compost substance, comprising worm excrement. The remaining undigested matter, comprising compost and worms is put back into the bin and more organic waste is added.

The Homeowner's Worm Farm is the smallest unit available, suitable for a family of four. It can recycle up to a 100kg of food and other organic waste per month, says Shoemaker. The medium-sized worm farm can recycle up to two tons of waste per month.

The farms are fitted with lids that open outwards and turn into a mesh sieve, making the sieving out of vermicast simpler.

Continued on page 23



A handful of vermicast ready for use. Above is the compost and worms from which it was sieved and below a section of the sieve.

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that comes with the purchase of the trap, the flies are lured into the trap through rectangular holes between the bait and the drying chamber. With the bait chamber protected by a separation mesh, the flies are unable to access the bait, but

instead are drawn upwards towards the light, trapping themselves in the drying chamber. There, without access to food or water, they dehydrate and die. Intellishift director Dylan Visser explains that in traditional fluid-filled fly

catchers the insects may continue to breed. When a smallholder empties the trap on to his compost heap, he is emptying out all the eggs the flies have laid and thus perpetuating the flies' life-cycle. With the iCatchi, Visser says, the flies are sterilized by the dehydration and are unable to breed.

Because the flies never touch the bait, once dead they can be repurposed as food for chickens, fish or reptiles. The bait itself is organic and safe

Continued on page 25

WORM FARMS



Mlungisi Khumalo gathers 'worm tea' from the pond beneath a worm farm.

From page 21
The units range in price from R18 000 to R30 000 – depending on the location of the buyer – and includes set-up, worms and education on the product. Shoemaker says benefits for smallholders include the ability to germinate one's own seedlings quickly and organically, rather than spending money each season on seedlings. "Seeds sown in vermicast germinate in half

the time," she says. Additionally, she has seen some of her clients set up a roaring trade with neighbours and peers, selling sought-after vermicompost for profit. Green Earth Concepts has seen huge success in the installation of worm farms in townships and community projects. Creating work for local citizens, the worm farms mean farming of crops for domestic and commercial use

Continued on page 25

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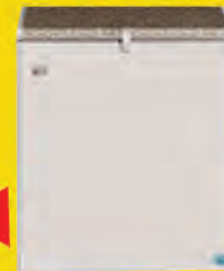


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FLY SEASON

From page 23

to use around animals and children. In contrast to the unpleasant odours of fluid-



filled traps, the iCatchi produces little odour detectable by humans, making it easier to use close to domestic activity. The iCatchi comes with four sachets of bait and a mixing bottle. One sachet mixed with one litre of warm water in the bottle is enough for four replenishments, which are done at weekly or less frequent intervals.

One bait purchase will give users 16 replenishments, enough to last through most of summer. The bait activates to its full efficacy in two to three days. The bait remaining in the bottle will continue to decompose so when topping up the trap on the bottle's second or third use, the bait is much stronger and will be immediately effective. Traps left in full sun are most effective, ideal for smallholders with horses, livestock, crops and orchards. The trap can be hung from trees or beams. It also comes with a stake so it can be mounted in the ground. The

locally-produced product is made from durable, UV-protected plastic. The trap has been on the market just more than a year, with Visser saying they have had excellent response. The trap is available from outdoor shops around Gauteng for around R200 including bait and mixing bottle. For more information: Mr Lawnmower & Pool, Springs tel 011 811 5067. For trade enquiries: Dinamark tel 011 392 5066.

WORM FARMS

From page 23

has increased the productivity of these communities and created employment. "Organic waste ends up in landfills and creates methane gas – one of the key contributors to greenhouse gases.

By diverting the organic waste to be recycled into compost, we are minimizing the production of methane gas," says Shoemaker. Contact Shoemaker at Green Earth Concepts on 084 868 7953.

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Going natural in 2020

Organic and natural products will be the centre of attention in 2020 with the first

Organic & Natural Products Expo to be held at The Deck at Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg from 8-10 May next year.

The event will showcase local and international manufacturers, suppliers, importers and experts of organic products.

The expo will include categories ranging from organic foods and beverages, ingredients and raw materials, health foods and dietary

supplements, cosmetics and hygiene products, beauty and personal care products, household products and organic gardening. The expo will also host activities to educate visitors including demonstrations, presentations and a new product arena.

The event is supported by the SA Organic Sector Organisation, Organic Assurance Organisation PGS,

the Cosmetic Export Promotion Council of SA, the South African National Halaal Authority and the South African chapter of Slow Food. Stands are available for exhibitors in various options, suitable for SMEs with limited resources. Stand locations will include floor space across two halls, outdoor space and undercover pavilion space.

Stand prices start at R600 ex VAT, up to R16 080 ex VAT for the largest package.

The expo will be open from 10h00 to 17h00, with a special Mother's Day programme planned for the 10th. An entry fee will apply for visitors. For more information email johnt@satp.co.za.



Walkerville Agri Show set for March

The Walkerville Agricultural Society and Walkerville Chamber of Commerce are set to host the 58th annual Walkerville Agricultural Show on 14 and 15 March next year.

Stalls are available for hire, starting at R500 for both days for a 3x3m stand, R900 for 6x3m and R1500 for 6x6m stalls. Stalls can be taken by smallholders selling products or services such as homebakes, fresh produce, ceramics, leather work, antiques, animal feeds, home improvements, farming equipment, veterinary equipment, plants/nursery equipment and livestock.

Contact show@walkerville.co.za for more information.



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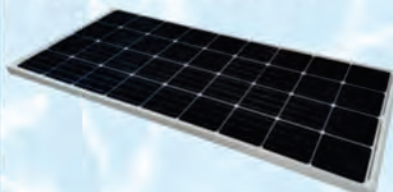
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What's allowed, and what's not, on your plot

The *Smallholder* is frequently asked about how many chickens or heads of livestock can be kept on a plot, or if it is legal to keep pigs on a smallholding, or what can be done about the shebeen next door, etc, all of which relate to the municipal by-laws in place in the particular area.

A by-law is a set of rules or legislation passed by the council of a municipality to regulate matters it is authorised to administer

within its area of jurisdiction. The by-laws in the different areas of Gauteng are pretty similar to each other.

Most municipalities have by-laws regarding keeping of livestock, rabbits, bees and poultry and these are usually, though not always, found in the health legislation. There is usually a statement of general provisions relating to the keeping of animals and then the requirements for premises and the duties of keeper for each kind of animal.



If the by-laws are adhered to, you shouldn't see many pigs on Gauteng smallholdings.

Requirements for premises will include reference to the walls, floor area, roof, sanitation, water supply, lighting and ventilation, as well as where the building may be situated.

This latter point illustrates, for example, why it is impossible to legally keep pigs on most (smaller) Gauteng plots: "the pigsty may not be situated within 100m of –

- (i) the boundary of the premises;
- (ii) any dwelling, building or structure used for human habitation;

- (iii) any place where food-stuffs are stored or prepared for human consumption; or
- (iv) any water resource intended for domestic consumption".

There are not many smallholdings in Gauteng that will legally comply with this requirement.

If the by-laws relating to the area in which you live are not listed, you will probably be safe if you comply with the bylaws of a neighbouring municipality.

There are also references to

Continued on page 32



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BY-LAWS

From page 29

the control and the keeping of animals in the various municipal Police Services By-Laws.

Sometimes smallholders complain of noisy neighbours. Examples such as people living next door to a tavern or where a neighbour is conducting a business which involves the use of very loud machinery at all hours of the day or night will be governed by the Gauteng Noise Control Regulations, as well as the section about disturbance of the peace in the municipal Police Services By-Laws. This

Continued on page 33

Livestock By-laws in various Gauteng Municipalities

☐ In **Ekurhuleni** the by-laws regarding the keeping of animals are to be found in the Public Health Bylaws dated 23 September 2009. (www.ekurhuleni.gov.za/council/by-laws-policies/by-laws/ekurhuleni-by-laws-1/47-public-health-by-law/file.html)

☐ The **West Rand District Municipality** is made up of Merafong City, Mogale City and Rand West City (formerly Randfontein and Westonaria). The individual municipalities do not appear to have bylaws on the keeping of livestock. On the West Rand you will need West Rand District Municipality: Municipal Health Services By-laws.

☐ In the **City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality**: Standard By-Laws relating to The Keeping Of Animals, Birds And Poultry And To Businesses Involving The Keeping Of Animals, Birds, Poultry And Pets 2004.

(www.tshwane.gov.za/AboutTshwane/CityManagement-/CityDepartments/CorporateandSharedServices/legalservices/By-LawListing/PromulgatedBylaws/ByLawKeeping-Animals-BirdsPoultry.pdf)

☐ For the **City of Johannesburg** the by-laws can be found at www.joburg.org.za/documents/_Documents/By-Laws/promhealthby-lawsasamended200720082011.pdf

☐ The **Sedibeng District Municipality** is made up of: Emfuleni, Lesedi and Midvaal. Animal health bylaws for Sedibeng or the individual municipalities do not appear to be available online.

☐ The **National Dept of Agriculture** also has generic regulations entitled Guidelines for Urban and Peri-Urban Animal Agriculture which can be found at www.nda.agric.za/docs-/AAPS/Urban_animal_Agri.pdf (Generic regulations for keeping of animals in urban and peri-urban areas)

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From page 32

refers to the discharging of firearms and airguns, discharging of fireworks without a fireworks permit, playing music loudly and disturbing the public peace through shouting and fighting or by "riotous, violent or immoral behaviour".

If you do decide to take steps against your neighbour, you should begin by making a written complaint to your municipality.

Download the Noise Control Regulations (cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Noise-control-regulations.pdf) in order to be sure that an offence is taking place with regard to "disturbing noise" or "noise nuisance". Many local authorities have Noise Control Units whose officials are empowered to take steps if they find that a problem exists. They could serve an instruction to reduce the

noise, issue a fine, or even ~ in extreme cases ~ confiscate equipment.

If you intend to erect a building or make additions to an existing building, most municipalities have building by-laws which are supplementary to the National Building Regulations.

Land is zoned as agricultural by provinces, but municipalities have environmental resources departments, which is where you would start to report non-agricultural activities on agricultural land. Companies running factories, scrap yards and trucking services, for example, will be placing strain on the semi-rural infrastructure and environment in an area that is not equipped for such activities.

The same municipal departments should be enforcing the National Environmental Management:

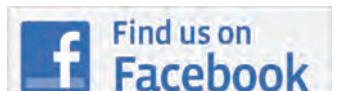
Biodiversity Act (Nemba) and the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Cara), with

a view to promoting the conservation of soil, water sources and vegetation (including wetlands) and aiming to combat and control weeds, as well as the elimination of invader plant species.

Municipal water and sanitation departments will enforce the National Water Act, along with their own water management by-laws. In terms of the National Water Act, any smallholder

who abstracts (uses) more than 10 kilolitres per property on any given day is required to register this water use through the local municipality.

Other uses which must be registered include diversion of rivers and streams; discharge of waste and water containing waste; storage of certain quantities of water and all tree planting for commercial purposes.



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How apiarists stress, and lose, their bees

Old-time beekeepers who started their craft in the late 1970s and early 80s are sometimes driven to ask, "What has happened to our bees? We used to obtain an average of 30kg of honey annually per hive, and now only receive ten to 14kg. Those swarms were strong and very aggressive, but not our swarms of today." Throughout the country where beekeepers operate there are reports of the decline of bee populations. Farmers have insufficient swarms just to pollinate their crops and beekeepers must replace 20% of their swarms annually to maintain their numbers. And this problem is not confined to South Africa. Elsewhere, fruit, nut and seed producing farmers in America, Japan and other

Another in our regular series on bees and beekeeping by veteran apiarist Peter Clark

countries are having to hand-pollinate their trees to obtain crops.

So how do we take care of the bees we still have?

A question we should ask is, "Do all insecticide sprays contain an ingredient that penetrates the systemic structure of plants?" Moths and butterflies lay eggs on plants, worms hatch, and the larva feed on the plants. Bees gather the poisoned pollen which they feed to their young. This all results in no more bees, moths and butterflies. Secondly, there is an ingredient in the insecticide composition that causes the bees to become disoriented and not able to return

to their hives. This is called Colony Collapse Disorder or CCD. Of course the insecticide manufacturers deny this possibility and say CCD is due to the mishandling of the bees by the beekeepers.

Which leads one to ask, does the fault lie with the beekeeper? Indeed, there are some ways beekeepers can be at fault.

For example, the beekeeper catches a feral swarm in a tree that has found a desirable place to set up home, places the swarm in a beehive brood chamber, confines the queen so that she is not able to fly out and places the unit in a nice warm sunny position. These bees are stressed, the box is too small and too hot. The queen starts laying eggs and once there is brood the beekeeper removes the restriction on the queen. This swarm will not develop to any sizable

producing swarm and will recede in numbers.

Or, a beekeeper has a beautiful strong swarm in a hive loaded with 20kgs of honey. To his absolute delight, he crops off all the honey and the swarm dies of starvation because he has not left enough honey for the bees to continue.

Then there is the beekeeper who overstocks his apiary with 20 swarms when the carrying capacity of the area is only sufficient for eight. The swarms die of starvation or swarm off to find better hunting grounds.

Or there is the greedy beekeeper who continually moves his swarms to follow

Continued on page 35

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BEEKEEPING

From page 34

the next flowering crop. He does not rest his queens, who eventually stop laying and the swarms recede and die out. Next, wax moth takes over the hive and the beekeeper blames the wax moth invasion. Queens need at least 14 weeks rest a year. Or there is the beekeeper who moves his hives at night without closing down the entrances. During the travel to the new site, the confused swarms, shaken up on the thumping truck, move out of the hive brood chamber. He off-loads, thumps the hives down in the new and strange location. When daylight sets in, the queens are confused and they move away leaving most of the swarm behind to die.

A common fault among newcomers to beekeeping is to open their hives frequently to see how things are getting on. But each time he does so he breaks the seals the bees

have made to control the inner temperatures of the hive, perhaps exposing the bees to a sudden cold snap before they can reseal the draughty gaps.

Or there is the keeper who says he loves his bees. He places them in a well sheltered corner of his plot, provides shade from the hot sun, and covers them with a blanket for the cold winter nights. One day the bees ~ unaware of the cold south wind ~ fly out and are struck down in the cold, never to return.

As urban areas develop, more households are seeing the presence of swarming bees on their properties and report their problems to their local council. Unconcerned and unaware of the bee crisis, the councils just destroy the swarms. One council reported that they kill up to 80 swarms a month during the three months of the swarming seasons.

Or, concerned homeowners are stunned when told that the fee of a registered beecatcher to remove a swarm will be upwards of R1 000. "But why so much?" they ask, and are nonplussed when told the cost of a hive with all the trimmings. "But you get all the honey," they wail, before reaching for a can of Doom.

However all is not total despair. There are many folk who love and cherish the presence of bees on their premises and who welcome, and often request, the beekeeper to place hives on their farms and plots.

□ There are three beekeepers associations in Gauteng. All three associations welcome new beekeepers to their regular meetings and have active Facebook pages to keep members abreast of developments.

The Northern Beekeepers Association (known as

"Northerns") meets as a rule around Pretoria and caters for beekeepers around Pretoria. For details call Riekie on 082 972 1889. The Southern Beekeepers Association ("Southerns") covers beekeepers in the Johannesburg, West Rand and southern Gauteng. Email Lantz at info@bee-keepers.co.za for details. The Eastern Highveld Beekeepers Association ("Easterns") caters for beekeepers on the East Rand, as well as members in Mpumalanga. Call Mike on 083 430-8707 for details. 🍀

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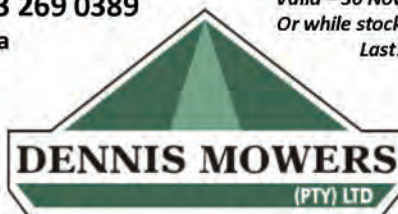
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You bought a tractor? Now park the plough

There is an alternative, if you have just bought a tractor for your plot (see October, "So you've just bought a tractor") to breaking ground for planting with a series of implements including a plough, disc harrow and rake. This is easier, quicker and cheaper and which many say is better for the soil, the environment and the crop itself.

There's an alternative to traditional ground-prep that is quicker, cheaper and better for the environment

It's no-till agriculture, which is exactly that. Rather than ripping up the soil mechanically, all one does is drill a hole for a seed and drop it in, adding a bit of fertilizer if one wishes.

The soil itself contains all the

microbes, earthworms etc that it had before, undisturbed, as well as any residual moisture and the stems and roots of previous crops. The surface of the soil itself is covered by the residue of the previous season's crop, which provides organic matter for the soil as it slowly decomposes and is eaten by worms and other insects, and which provides a cooling and moisture-retaining layer of mulch before it does so.

The advantages of no-till are therefore obvious:

□ Your savings in terms of time, fuel and wear and tear are great. Instead of multiple passes over the field with different implements to create

a weed-free, workable seed bed you have only one pass, with a no-till seeder.

□ Environmental benefits include, therefore, less air pollution from your exhaust fumes, and a number of soil-related benefits.

Because the soil is undisturbed, the microbial activity within is not disrupted by

Continued on page 39



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CULTIVATION

From page 37

tillage, and earthworms, likewise, are left unharmed. The roots and stems remaining from previous harvests allow for moisture to enter the soil to crop root depth, and prevent soil compaction. Because the soil is not broken up there is less chance of light, soft material being eroded by heavy water flows, or blown away by wind.

Because the soil is not turned over, loosened and exposed, less residual moisture is lost. ☐ Lower fertilizer costs are achieved because more nutrients are available to the growing plants through the decomposition of the previous season's residue.

☐ Lower water costs can usually be achieved because the surface layer of crop residue insulates the soil from heat and evaporation. Experts point out, however,

that achieving good results with no-till techniques may take some time ~ a process, if you will, rather than an instant solution. And there's no one-size-fits-all method to no-till.

A key to efficient no-till is to start the previous season, by spreading your crop residue ~ or at least part of it ~ evenly over the ground at the time of harvesting. This even layer of dry organic matter will inhibit weed growth, help retain moisture and eventually provide food for the insects and microbes in your soil below.

In certain cases it may be advisable to plant an off-season cover crop, for example a nitrogen-fixing legume, or Japanese radish, which will add nutrient to the soil as it grows, but which will be left in the field as cover when the new crop is planted.

Another key to successful no-till is to know beforehand what it is you wish to plant and when.

This means working a season or more ahead, to enable you to work out plant spacing etc, and to ensure you have a no-till planter suitable to your

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GMO ~ score one for Nature, but...

While agriculture minister Thoko Didiza recently made a final positive ruling against the appeal lodged by Monsanto SA against the decision taken by the Executive Council established in terms of the Genetically Modified Organisms Act regarding the general release application of a genetically modified maize event MON87460 x MON89034 x NK603, there are fears that applications to allow the planting of three further genetically modified maize species pose far greater risks to the health of workers, consumers and the environment.

In the case of the Monsanto species, it had been found in trials that the so-called drought resistant GMO maize had not performed better than conventional maize in water-limited conditions and that the insect resistance data presented was insufficient. However, the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is concerned about impending approvals by the Executive Council in regard to three new genetically modified (GM) maize varieties designed to withstand the extremely toxic herbicide, 2,4-D.

2,4-D is one of the active ingredients of the infamous war chemical Agent Orange. The ACB has engaged with regulators over several years, submitting evidence that these GM maize varieties present biosafety and health risks to farmers, farm workers, consumers and the environment. The risky GM maize varieties are owned by Corteva.

If approved, the GM maize will be sold with the herbicide.

According to the ACB, the chemical has been linked to

... an Agent Orange ingredient could soon be licensed for use

an increase in birth abnormalities, male reproductive problems and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Some of these GM maize varieties are also genetically modified to survive applications of the

controversial and toxic chemical glyphosate, as well as glufosinate ammonium. In their fact sheet concerning glyphosate (the key ingredient in the herbicide Roundup), the Cancer Association of SA

(Cansa) accepts the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classification of glyphosate as probably carcinogenic to humans (a Group 2A Carcinogen). Cansa also accepts the finding of a positive association between glyphosate exposure and

Continued on page 43



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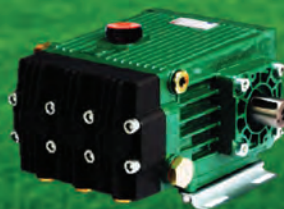
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From page 41

non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Cansa further accepts research results that indicate that glyphosate could be responsible (among others) for:

- ☐ Endocrine disruption;
- ☐ Increasing risk of breast and other cancers, including non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma;
- ☐ Cytotoxic changes (toxic changes to living cells);
- ☐ Genotoxic changes (ability to cause damage to the genetic information within a cell causing mutations, which may lead to cancer);
- ☐ Teratogenic changes (capable of forming or tending to form tumours);
- ☐ Pulmonary oedema (excess fluid in the lungs) in exposed individuals.

Cansa further points out that glyphosate in formulation has been detected in maize and soybean products in South Africa, and that there is sufficient evidence that



glyphosate in formulation at low levels are found in tissue of humans and animals. Commercial release of these Corteva seeds is expected to dramatically increase pesticide application and thus human and environmental exposure. Increased pesticide exposure will serve to increase pesticide drift and crop damage, as well as weed resistance, providing, at best, a short-term solution for

weed management, while increasing damage and thus crop loss in neighbouring fields.

ACB is concerned that socio-economic impacts have not been assessed, and claims of benefits associated with improved yields were not confirmed in field trials which showed worse yields than non-GM counterparts.

☐ How does the sanctioning of GMOs work? Within the

Dept of Agriculture & Land Reform there is a directorate devoted to genetic resources and biosafety. The aim of this directorate is to manage a bio-safety regulatory system, focused on minimizing potential risks associated with the impact of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) on the environment, human and animal health.

Anyone wishing to develop, import, export, produce, distribute or sell GMOs must apply to an advisory committee for a permit. The committee considers all the

Continued on page 45

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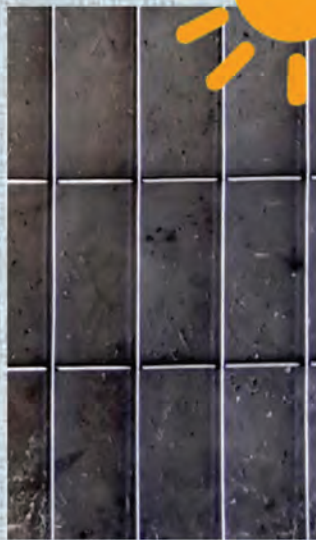
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POULTRY

These plants can kill your chickens

There are a number of plants that hens should not eat, some of them rather surprising. You may think that your chooks are quite sensible and will not eat anything that is not good for them. However you can't leave it to chance and will need to take measures to ensure that the chickens do not have access to them, as well as making sure that they are not given these plants to eat.

Raw or dried beans are bad news for chickens. Kidney beans are the worst culprit but any bean which has not

been properly cooked is potentially lethal for your chickens. They contain a toxin called phytohaemagglutinin which is fatal to chickens. Illness will occur after eating as few as three or four beans and will progress very rapidly, killing in as short a time as an hour. Once eaten, there's nothing to be done to save the bird. So if you are growing beans, make very sure that the hens will not be able to access them.

Any beans you want to give your hens should be thor-

Continued on page 46

BIOSECURITY

From page 43

possible risks and advantages of the application.

Once the committee is satisfied that the GMO will pose no harm to the environment or lead to a health risk, a recommendation letter, accompanied by the final recommendation document, must be submitted to the Registrar. The Registrar submits the application with the committee's recommendations to the Executive Council for final consideration and decision.

According to the Genetically Modified Organisms Act, the Executive Council is a decision-making body which comprises officials from six government departments responsible for matters relating to agriculture, health, the environment, labour, trade and industry and science and technology, as well as the chairperson of the advisory

committee.

If the Executive Council is satisfied that a certain activity with a GMO may be conducted, the Registrar is authorised by the council to issue the necessary permit. South Africa is one of few countries in the world which has allowed the main staple of its diet, maize, to be GM.

Around 77% of maize production in South Africa is GM. Elsewhere in the world GM maize is grown primarily to feed livestock.

Research and trials carried out by ACB reveal that alternative agro-ecological systems such as push-pull climate adapted technologies are proven, low-cost methods that not only improve farmer yields and livelihoods, but also biodiversity and soil fertility ~ factors that are all necessary to preserve long-term food security. 🌱



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POULTRY



Dried beans should be well cooked.

From page 45

oughly cooked. Soaking alone is not enough, nor is cooking in a crockpot or slow cooker. They don't reach high enough temperatures to de-activate the phytohaemagglutinin. To make them safe for both humans and chickens, beans should be soaked in cold

water for at least five hours ~ preferably longer. Then, discard the water, rinse the beans thoroughly and boil rapidly in fresh water for at least ten minutes - 15 to be on the safe side.

Chickens should not eat anything mouldy. Some moulds produce toxins and it is not possible to judge which moulds are good and which are toxic, so don't give them any. It is equally important to make sure your flock's feed does not become damp, which is one of the mediums

in which moulds and their toxins flourish. Most birds should not be given avocado. The skin and pip contain persin which causes heart and breathing difficulties. The bark and leaves of the tree also contain persin, if you are lucky enough to have one. Chickens should not eat green potatoes or green tomatoes because of the toxins called solanin and chaconine. Solanin is not altered by cooking, so don't think it will be fine if you boil some green potatoes for your flock. It won't be. It will cause drowsiness, paralysis and, eventually, death. The plants of the nightshade family should not be eaten by the chickens

either.

Fed in large quantities onions can cause anaemia or jaundice, and sometimes it can be fatal. This is because it contains thiosulphate which destroys red blood cells.

Chickens should not eat chocolate, but surely nobody in their right minds would give it to them.

Many fruits are safe for chickens, but the leaves and pits of an apricot contain cyanogenic glycosides that

Continued on page 47



Green potatoes can kill.

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The best times to pick your vegetables

There are a couple of factors that should influence when you harvest your vegetables. You need to know when they are ready to be picked and you

also need to know the best time of day to do it. For maximum flavour and best texture, most vegetables are harvested just before full maturity. Here are some

guidelines for individual vegetables.

☐ Aubergine: Eggplant has the best flavour when it is still slightly immature. The fruits should be firm and shiny. Cut

rather than pulling from the plant.

☐ Beans: Pick before you can see the seeds bulging. They should snap easily into

Continued on page 49

POULTRY

From page 46

are highly toxic, triggering symptoms such as seizures, breathing problems and low blood pressure.

Rhubarb leaves contain oxalic acid or oxalates that are toxic to chickens, causing jaundice, tremors and increased salivation. Rhubarb leaves are

toxic to humans, too.

The other fruit to be cautious of is apple, but only the seeds, which contain cyanide which can kill your chickens. Any other part of the apple is fine, so when giving them apple ensure they are seed-free.

Oak leaves and acorns

contain tannic acid, which can cause lack of appetite, frequent urination, excessive

thirst and diarrhoea.

Daffodils, iris, narcissus, tulips and other bulbs are among the first signs of spring in the garden and might tempt chickens with their fresh green leaves and flowers. However, many bulb varieties contain alkaloids that can cause low blood pressure, tremors and diarrhoea. Some other plants that are problematic for hens are ferns, oleanders, arum lilies and azaleas.

Chickens can suffer from salt poisoning, as they don't naturally ingest a lot of salt, so

bear that in mind when feeding them leftovers.



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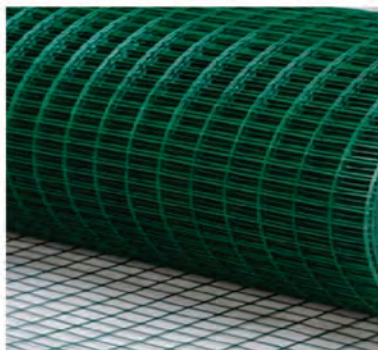
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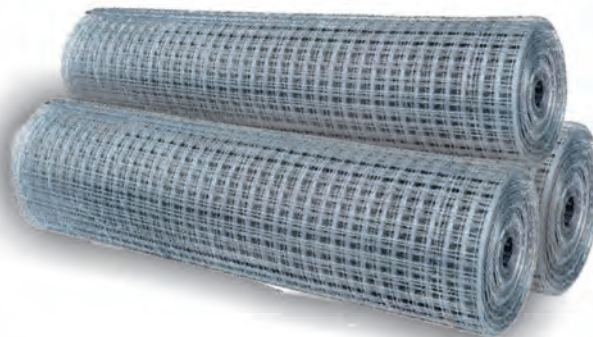
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IN THE GARDEN



A good picking of fresh veg, plucked at its peak.

From page 47

Check daily; it doesn't take long for beans to go from tender to tough.

☐ Beetroot: You can harvest and eat the green tops when you thin out the rows. Beets are really a matter of personal preference when it comes to the right size for harvesting. They are ready any time after you see the beet shoulders protruding at the soil line. Old beets tend to become woody.

☐ Broccoli: You'll be eating the unopened flower buds of the broccoli so check frequently, especially as the weather warms up, to ensure you don't let the flower heads bloom. Harvest when the individual buds are about the size of a match head. After the first harvest, smaller side shoots should continue to form.

☐ Brussel sprouts: The sprouts will mature from the bottom of the plant up. You can begin harvesting once the sprouts are at least 2cm in diameter. Harvest by twisting off or cutting the sprout from the stem.

☐ Butternut: Butternut's growing period is normally between twelve and 15 weeks from planting of the seed to the first butternuts being ready to harvest.

☐ Cabbage: The cabbage head will feel solid when gently squeezed. Cabbage needs to be harvested when it reaches maturity or it will continue to grow and split

open.

☐ Carrots: Carrots can be hard to judge. The tops of the carrot might show at the soil line and you can gauge when the diameter looks right for your variety. If the diameter looks good, chances are the length is fine too, but you will need to pull one to be certain and even then it's a bit hit or miss. Carrots can be left in the ground once mature, but will become woody if left too long. Some say that a light frost can improve and sweeten the carrot's flavour.

☐ Cauliflower: Harvest when the head looks full and while the curds of the head are still smooth. Leaving them for too long will result in brown spots and a mealy texture.

☐ Mealies: About three weeks after the silks form, they will turn dry and brown. That's when you should start testing the ears by nicking a kernel with your fingernail. The kernel will exude a milky substance when it's ready to harvest.

☐ Cucumber: Cucumbers race to the harvest. Check daily and harvest young. Timing and length will vary with variety. The fruits should be firm and smooth. Overripe cucumbers can be very bitter or pithy, even before they start to turn yellow.

☐ Garlic: The garlic tops will fall over and begin to brown when the bulbs are ready.

Continued on page 50

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IN THE GARDEN

From page 49

Dig, don't pull, and allow the bulbs to dry before storing. It's best to simply brush off the soil, rather than washing.

❑ **Gem Squash:** Gem squash takes between ten and twelve weeks to the first fruit being ready for harvest. Baby gems can be harvested from as early as six weeks from planting.

❑ **Kale:** Kale leaves can be picked throughout the season. You can cut an entire plant, but you will get a longer harvest if you harvest in the cut-and-come-again method. The leaves should be deep green with a firm, sturdy texture. Kale flavour is best in cooler weather.

❑ **Leeks:** You can start harvesting leeks when they are about 2.5cms in diameter. Leeks can be left in the ground over the winter, in most areas, and harvested as needed.

❑ **Lettuce:** If you are picking ticeberg lettuce, harvest once the head feels full. Hot weather will cause it to bolt or go to seed, rather than filling out. For loose-leaf lettuce, you don't need to

pull the whole plant. Pick individual leaves from the outside ~ you can harvest the leaves once the plant has reached about 10cms in height. Allow the younger, inner leaves to grow. Leafy lettuce can be harvested in this fashion for most of the summer.

❑ **Onions:** Onions can be dug once the tops have fallen over. Allow the onions to dry in the sun before storing.

❑ **Peas:** The pea pods should look and feel full. Peas are sweeter if harvested before fully plumped. Peas really need to be tasted to determine if they are sweet enough.

❑ **Peppers:** Peppers are mature and ready to eat when full-sized but still green. If left on the vine longer, they will change colour to red, orange, yellow or brown, depending on the variety, and will deepen in flavour and become less crisp in texture.

❑ **Chillies:** Left to change colour will get hotter. So whether you pick at the green stage or later will depend on the variety and what you plan to use the



Marrows.

chilli for.

❑ **Potatoes:** "New" potatoes can be harvested when the tops of the plants start to flower. Carefully dig at the outer edges of the row. For full-size potatoes, wait until the tops of the potato plants dry and turn brown. Start digging from the outside perimeter and move in cautiously to avoid slicing into potatoes.

❑ **Pumpkins:** Once the pumpkins have turned the expected colour and the vines are starting to decline, check to make sure the skin has hardened enough by poking it with your fingernail. You should not be able to poke through the skin. It also loses its shine. Don't leave them out if a hard frost is expected.

❑ **Radishes:** Radishes mature quickly. You will see the shoulders of the bulbs popping out of the soil line.

Harvest regularly. If left too long, they will become tough and eventually go to seed. Rather than planting a large crop all at once, plant your radishes in succession.

❑ **Swiss Chard:** As with leaf lettuce and kale, cut the outer leaves and allow the centre to continue growing, in the cut-and-come-again fashion.

❑ **Spinach:** You can harvest individual young leaves once the plant is about 15cms tall. Spinach goes to seed quickly. As the plants mature, harvest by cutting stems at the soil

Continued on page 51

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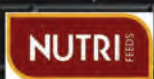
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IN THE GARDEN

From page 50

line before you see a flower stalk beginning to shoot up.

☐ Tomatoes: Harvest tomatoes when they are fully coloured and slightly soft to the touch. They should also give off that distinctive tomato scent and pull easily from the vine when given a gentle twist. You can, of course, eat green tomatoes but they need to be cooked, preferably fried.

When vegetables in the home garden reach their peak, picking at the right time of day ensures you get all of the fresh flavour you worked for.

The time of day you pick your vegetables also affects keeping quality of the crop. Vegetables harvested in the morning generally are sweeter, crisper and juicier than those picked at other times. As they rest in the garden overnight, vegetables replenish the moisture lost during the day. Sweeter

The only types of garden products whose picking you'd rather postpone might be herbs and any other things that you intend to dry.

vegetables use the night time hours to make sugars from the starches they produced during the day. Right after the sun rises and during the early morning, it's likely that you'll see the garden covered in dew ~ especially throughout the colder seasons ~ a natural layer of coolness that won't take long to fade away as the day grows hotter. If you only decide in the afternoon what you are going to cook for the evening meal you can pick in the very late afternoon if you water the plants at that time. This cools them down, for you allowed the plant to drink up for a while and rehydrate its leaves, fruits or inflorescences, depending on which part

of the plant you intend to have for dinner.

If you choose to put the vegetables in the fridge when you bring them inside, it might affect the flavour, but it will slow down the process of maturation.

If you do not store them in the fridge, try to ensure that there is adequate ventilation. Some vegetables ~ and fruit such as bananas ~ produce ethylene gas, which encourages the vegetables on the same shelf to ripen faster. With ventilation, the passage of air will not only blow the ethylene away and slow down the process of maturation, but also allow for the veggies to dry out, preventing unnecessary rot or mere softening of the edible tissues.

The only types of garden products whose picking you'd rather postpone might be herbs and any other plants that you intend to dry and keep stored for longer than immediate consumption. You may harvest these at midday or sometime during the afternoon, once their skin, roots or leaves are completely dry, lessening the chances of them rotting on your shelf. In being methodical in the post-harvest phase, you can better control how the produce responds to the passage of time and the environment you're storing it in.

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ENVIRONMENT



A waste picker pulls his trolley down a rural road

Help-don't hinder-those 'pickers

They're doing a valuable environmental service, under difficult conditions, says an expert

With waste-pickers having become a common sight in smallholding areas as well as in the suburbs, here are some useful guidelines on how to make their lives easier and encourage ~ rather than discourage ~ their very useful efforts at reducing landfill volumes and increasing recycling as a nationally-imperative initiative.

This report was compiled by Mandy DG Barrett who writes: "I attended a life changing talk by Dr Melanie Samson of Wits and African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) hosted by the Randpark Ridge Village Association. Many people gripe about these reclaimers so I have put together this summary to help enlighten and inform our community on the invaluable job they are doing for us."

☐ Who are the waste reclaimers (also called waste pickers)?

Independent people (total number estimates vary between a minimum of 60 000 and a maximum of 215 000 reclaimers country-wide) who are currently without jobs and who are making an honest living so that they can feed, clothe and school their families.

They typically travel many kilometres a day collecting waste, expending enormous energy in the process – their fully laden carts can weigh 200kg or more.

It takes 23 two-litre PET bottles to make up 1kg, which can be sold for around R3/kg.

This is also intellectual work as reclaimers need to quickly identify those materials which are lucrative to sell, and they need to work quickly in such a way that they do not upset residents and get evicted.

Their work is also dangerous and time consuming. Many

Continued on page 54

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ENVIRONMENT

From page 53

reclaimers are hit by cars. Pulling a trolley along a suburban road is slow and time consuming and the buy-back centres sometimes make them stand in long queues for hours. Do not delude yourselves that these people have an easy time earning money! Many of these people come from SADC countries. Dr Samson made the point that many came to South Africa to work in the mining

industry. With the closing of so many mines they now find themselves unemployed.

ARO is an organisation which is collaborating with government and reclaimers in order to get the already functioning informal waste reclaiming sector aligned. They currently receive no financial support from government.

☐ What value do they add? Informal waste reclaimers extract discarded items that would normally end up in landfills and the environment,



Hard graft ... it's backbreaking work pulling a laden trolley

and sell these to buy-back centres for recycling. Their work saves municipali-

ties R780 million in landfill airspace alone – and that saving does not include the savings in waste removal trucking and fuel.

Due to their efforts in the recycling industry South Africa is now on par in the recycling arena with European countries – 80 to 90 % of all material recycled in South Africa is entirely due to the efforts of these green champions.

☐ What DO they collect? The reclaimers only collect what has economic value at the buy-back centre such as clear PET bottles (eg, cooldrink bottles), plastic milk containers, Kreepy Krawly pipes, plastic plant pots, large yoghurt containers, aluminium cold drink tins, aluminium pie plates, electronic waste, cardboard and paper.

☐ What do they NOT collect?

The reclaimers do not take anything that the buy-back centres will not pay for including:

- Bottle tops (these are recyclable but the buy-back centres will not currently pay any money for them),
- Transparent fruit containers (eg, strawberry packaging – these are recyclable PET but the buy-back centres will not pay out for them),
- Green and brown PET bottles such as Appletiser/ Grapetiser/Mountain Dew and Stoney Ginger Beer bottles. Dr Samson recommends that one boycott



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Continued on page 55

From page 54

buying such products and notify the manufacturers accordingly that they need to make their packaging in colours acceptable for the recycling buy-back centres.

- Expanded polystyrene foam that much of supermarket meat and vegetables are packaged in.

❑ Are they criminals and will helping them contribute to the beggar or squatter problem?

- Most reclaimers are good people doing their best to eke out an honest living. They are generally not beggars and are prepared to work very hard for long hours (day and night) for very modest returns.

- Most reclaimers work a number of different suburbs, going through rubbish trash bins on the night prior to, and on the day of, garbage collections. Most live in very modest accommodation outside of our suburbs.

When their carts are full, they may sometimes lie down in a park for an hour or two of sleep next to their carts rather than go home because most buy-back centres only function during business hours, and abandoning their precious trolleys and cargo would likely result in its theft.

❑ How can residents assist them?

- Separate waste at source and place only what has value to the reclaimers in boxes or clear packets on the pavements on collection day. The easier residents make it for the reclaimers the less time they will need to spend in the suburbs.

- Respect the fact that digging through waste is a disgusting job for anybody. Imagine yourself having to do this job!

- Rinse out ALL soiled containers so that they are clean for collection.

- Remove bottle tops and labels as these are not taken and are often discarded around the suburbs, or outside the buy-back centres.
- Get to know the person who frequents your street – build a relationship with that person

and find out what they will and won't take.

- Show kindness to your local reclaimers – offer bottles of water on hot days or a cup of tea on freezing winter mornings. A little kindness goes a long way.

- Be mindful of the reclaimers who risk their lives on our roads and give them a wide berth while driving.

- Encourage reclaimers to join ARO and become 'registered' reclaimers in your suburb.

- Supply reflective vests and reflectors to your resident reclaimers.

- Work with ARO as a community so that residents learn how best to work with the reclaimers for the benefit of all.

And, above all, refrain from referring to them using demeaning and derogatory titles such as "scavengers", "vultures" or "bin-scratchers".

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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 59. Only markets that are held infrequently are now listed in this calendar section.

Every Sunday

SA Lipizzaners weekly display at 10h30. SA Lipizzaner Centre, Dahlia Rd, Kyalami. Go to www.lipizzaners.co.za/ call Lizelle on 079 716 4792 for details of special shows.

Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast, Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Rayton. Call Rudan on 082 410 3180 / visit www.diamondxrancho.co.za, R500 per person.

Mnandi Methodist Church, 09:00, Mnandi Centre, cnr Tulip and Short Streets, Jen 083 709 3235 or 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, NG Kerk, 8 Canadair Ave, Impala Park, Boksburg, call Warren 082 335 0049 or Tony 082 443 4425. 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.

2019

November

2: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

2: Bokkie Park Food & Craft Market at the

Bokkie Park, Southvale Rd, Parkdene, Boksburg, 09h00 - 14h30. Crafts and food stalls, live entertainment, tea garden, pony and camel rides. Contact Janine 072 713 3332

9: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

10: Tree Owl Community Market at Brandmuller's Garden Pavilion, 5 Dave Nourse St, Unitas Park, Vereeniging. GPS: -26.627823, 27.927976. 09h00 - 14h30.

Stalls with hand-crafted goods, home-bakes, olives, honey, food stalls, cash bar, tea garden, Tony Knight to perform from 12h00. The market supports the feeding scheme at Laerskool Unitas, members of the public are asked to donate canned food towards this project. Follow us on Facebook: Acorns Coffee Shoppe. Enquiries: Michele 083 378 0715

12: Full Moon

16: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

18-22: Introductory Course for Pig Production. ARC Irene Campus. R3 000. Contact Ms Mpho Makhanya, makhanyam@arc.agric.za / 012 672 9153

18-22: Introductory Course for Small Stock management. ARC Irene Campus. R3 200. Contact Ms Mpho Makhanya, makhanyam@arc.agric.za / 012 672 9153

20-21: Dairy Processing Course: Yoghurt & Maas, ARC Irene Campus. R3 500. Contact Ms Mpho Makhanya, makhanyam@arc.agric.za / 012 672 9153

23: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

23: Herb growing and cooking class, 10.00, Good Thyme Living, cor Third and Sixth Rds, Bredell Square. R399 including plants, drinks & a meal. Contact 082 574 8514 or info@goodthyme.co.za

26: New Moon

29: Friday night Christmas Market at Tree Owl Community Market at Brandmuller's Garden Pavilion, 5 Dave Nourse St, Unitas Park, Vereeniging. GPS: -26.627823, 27.927976. 16h00 - 21h00. Stalls with hand-crafted goods, home-bakes, olives, honey, food stalls, cash bar, tea garden.

The market supports the feeding scheme at Laerskool Unitas, members of the public are asked to donate canned food towards

this project. Follow us on Facebook: Acorns Coffee Shoppe. Enquiries: Michele 083 378 0715

30: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

30: Bokkie Park Food & Craft Night Market at the Bokkie Park, Southvale Rd, Parkdene, Boksburg, 09h00 - 14h30.

Crafts and food stalls, live entertainment, tea garden, pony and camel rides. Contact Janine 072 713 3332

30: BirdLife South Africa's 35th Birding Big Day (BBD). To register or find out more go to www.birdlife.org.za/support-us/events/-birding-big-day-2019/

December

2-6: Introductory Course on Poultry Production. ARC Irene Campus. R3 200. Contact Ms Mpho Makhanya, makhanyam@arc.agric.za / 012 672 9153

7: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

7: Bokkie Park Food & Craft Market at the Bokkie Park, Southvale Rd, Parkdene, Boksburg, 09h00 - 14h30. Crafts and food stalls, live entertainment, tea garden, pony and camel rides. Contact Janine 072 713 3332

8: Tree Owl Community Market at Brandmuller's Garden Pavilion, 5 Dave Nourse St, Unitas Park, Vereeniging. GPS: -26.627823, 27.927976. 09h00 - 14h30.

Stalls with hand-crafted goods, home-bakes, olives, honey, food stalls, cash bar, tea garden, live music from 12h00. The market supports the feeding scheme at Laerskool Unitas, members of the public are asked to donate canned food towards this project. Follow us on Facebook: Acorns Coffee Shoppe. Enquiries: Michele 083 378 0715

12: Full Moon

14: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

16: Day of Reconciliation

16: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

21: Vaalbank Country Market. At Kakiebos



on the R515 near Rayton, from 09h00 - 15h00. Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes. Enquiries: WhatsApp Karen on 081 271 2300.

22: Summer Solstice

25: Christmas Day

26: New Moon

26: Day of Goodwill (Boxing Day)

2020

January

1: New Year's Day

10: Full moon

24: New moon

February

9: Full moon

9: Tree Owl Community Market at Brandmuller's Garden Pavilion, 5 Dave Nourse St, Unitas Park, Vereeniging. GPS: -26.627823, 27.927976. 09h00 - 14h30.

Stalls with hand-crafted goods, home-bakes, olives, honey, food stalls, cash bar, tea garden, live music from 12h00. The market supports the feeding scheme at Laerskool Unitas, members of the public are asked to donate canned food towards this project. Follow us on Facebook: Acorns Coffee Shoppe. Enquiries: Michele 083 378 0715

23: New moon

March

8: Tree Owl Community Market at Brandmuller's Garden Pavilion, 5 Dave Nourse St, Unitas Park, Vereeniging. GPS: -26.627823, 27.927976. 09h00 - 14h30.

Stalls with hand-crafted goods, home-bakes, olives, honey, food stalls, cash bar, tea garden, live music from 12h00. The market supports the feeding scheme at Laerskool Unitas, members of the public are asked to donate canned food towards this project. Follow us on Facebook: Acorns Coffee Shoppe. Enquiries: Michele 083 378 0715

9: Full moon

14-15: 58th annual Walkerville Agricultural Show, Walkerville Showgrounds

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Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

NOTE: This is a listing ONLY of markets held weekly. Markets held less frequently (eg 1st Saturday of each month) 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	CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT
Thursday					
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 – 15:00	40 Culross Road, Bryanston (off Main Road)	011 706 3671 enquiries@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce.
Saturday					
Every Saturday	Pretoria Boeremark	05:30 – 09:30	Moreleta Street entrance, Krige Street ext, Silverton	012 804 8031 or 079 987 1025	Fresh produce, traditional bazaar treats like jaffles, kailings with pap & boerewors rolls.
	The Hazel Food Market	08:00 – 14:00	Greenlyn Village Centre, Cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie St, Menlo Park, Pretoria	078 593 7716 www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za	Fresh produce straight from the producer, coffee, eats on sale.
	Waenhuiskrans Plaas / Farmers	08:00 – 13:00	Cor of Veda & Enkeldoorn Ave Market opposite Montana Traders and next to Kollonade Centre	Marius 084 505 3393 or office 012 567 6076 to book a stall	Stalls: Food, arts and crafts, fresh produce, eggs, chicken, meat, fruit & veg, kiosk, Maders pies, coffee.
	Glenfresh Farmers Market Midrand	08:00 – 12:30	30 Olifantsfontein Rd (opposite RMM Builders), Glen Austin (Cor Allan & Olifantsfontein Rds)	Stefan: 082 829 0185 market@glenfresh.co.za	Local naturally grown produce, hand crafted goods, home baked treats, raw honey, biltong.
	Bapsfontein Farmers Market	09:00 – 14:00	Edith Street, Bapsfontein	Charlene: 082 892 4304 / Paul: 083 296 8006	Fresh produce, livestock sales, flea market, handicrafts, food stalls, great outdoor vibe that is pet and child friendly & live entertainment.
	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 – 15:00	40 Culross Road, Bryanston (off Main Road)	011 706 3671 enquiries@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce.
	Waterfall Estate Farmers Market	09:00 – 15:00	Waterfall Estate, Midrand	Robyn 083 311 4768	Fresh produce, pickles, preserves and home industry & craft, food, etc. Enquire about stall prices.
	Niche Community Market	09:00 – 15:00	Walkerville Country Market Walkerville Showgrounds	Ivan 084 590 2312 market@walkervillesa.co.za	Fresh produce, crafter's market, food court, craft beer, play area, pet friendly.
	Bosheuvel Fresh Produce	08:00 – 14:00	54 Glory Road, Muldersdrift	Mitch 082 553 2846	Outdoor country experience, working farm cattle, sheep and pigs. Free range meat, cheese, eggs, poultry, and craft beer.
	Midrand Circles Market	09:00 - 15:00	118 Allan Road, Glen Austin	Margaret 079 394 5054	Freshly locally grown produce, raw honey, indigenous flowers & trees, food stalls, fresh meat stalls, cheese, eggs, coffee, books, gallery, and paint your own ceramics.
	Pretoria Noord Boeremark	07:00 – 13:00	101 Rooikat Straat, Hestea Park	Githeia 081 304 2070	Baked goods, traditional pap & kaaiings, vetkoek, pancakes, jewelry, plants, fresh meat, cheese, woodwork and art.
Last Saturday	Windpomp Handwerk Mark	08:00 – 14:00	Broodblike & Koffiepit Pretoria Road between Petit and Bapsfontein	Adele 083 445 1608	Pet friendly. Hand crafts, food, music, coffee, kids' play area, preserves, goat's milk products biltong, pap & kailings.
Sunday					
Every Sunday	Waterfall Market	10:00 – 17:00	Waterfall Park, Magwa Cres, Halfway House, Midrand	064 759 6154	Live entertainment, fresh artisanal tastes & flavours, craft beverages, kid's play area & plastic-free zone.
	Fourways Farmers Market	09:00 – 16:00	Cor Montecasino Boulevard & William Nicol Drive, Fourways	011 465 0877 www.ffmarket.co.za	Get your groceries...in the garden!



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(hashtag)I'm staying

In much the same way that schoolboys in a changeroom who look around at the genital magnificence of their peers and are struck with mild to severe cases of penis envy, Saffers who choose to remain in the country are sometimes struck with cases of "the grass is greener" when listening to the boasts of their fellow countrymen who have gapped it across the pond. Emigration is, of course, a vexed issue at the best of times. One's decision to move from one country to another can be driven by any number of factors. A good job offer. Worries about crime. A wish for "better" education for one's kids. The health system. The driving factors are endless.

And the upheaval and expenses are endless, too. The mere physical logistics of the process are daunting. Selling the house, cars, boat etc, flogging off unnecessary furniture and appliances, deciding which clothes to take and which to ditch (plakkies and khaki shorts are probably not attire of choice in Alberta, Canada). And what about the dogs and cats?

Not to mention the undignified and often humiliating experience of applying for visas, residence permits etc.

Finally, with all of this behind one, the time of departure approaches and one must start saying goodbye to friends and loved ones, a process made infinitely harder when those loved ones include ageing parents who, for reasons of their own, choose to remain behind.

And when one lands in one's new country the entire process of starting a new life is just as exhausting and traumatic as that of leaving the old. Finding new schools for the kids, a new doctor and dentist, settling in to new jobs, buying a house, car etc, and adapting to new ways of life. It ain't easy.

But perhaps more importantly than the day-to-day practicalities is the deeper question of whether one assimilates into one's new society, or does one remain a Saffer at heart?

My Swedish maternal grandfather was adamant on the subject. When he moved to England first to study and then to start a business he became more English than the English. His view was simple: If the country of your choice is good enough to give you protection and opportunity (in all that this might mean) the least you can do in return is be loyal to it and supportive (in all that this, in turn, might mean).

This was well-learned by my mother who, when she married my South African father, renounced her British citizenship and became a fully-fledged Saffer. Well, mostly. While she loved the

bush and the wildlife and the countryside and braais and Oude Meester and so on, she never learned Afrikaans or an African language and retained her Knightsbridge accent, twinset and pearls and a G 'n T before lunch until the day she breathed her last.

But while she retained the bearing and mannerisms of the English aristocracy she got stuck in to South Africa politically. She was appalled by Apartheid and saw straight through the absurdity of separate development and the Bantustans and took every opportunity in her position as a journalist to white-ant these daft policies.

Or, in one's new country does one remain a "whenwe", sticking to a small social circle of fellow countrymen emigrés, and attempting every weekend to recreate one's old life with reminiscence sessions around weekend braais, which one now calls "barbies"?

The question, I suppose, is: As an emigré, to what extent does one celebrate the culture and heritage from which one comes versus the extent to which one assimilates into the society in which one now finds oneself?

Take the Greek community, or the Portuguese, as an example. First-generation Greek immigrants remain as Greek (and stick together) as if they were still sitting outside a taverna in a village sipping ouzo and playing with their worry-beads.

And if immigrants didn't retain some links to their home cultures we would be denied the pleasures of Greek, Portuguese, Italian, Indian or Chinese restaurants. And for that alone we would, surely, be the poorer.

But for me the decisions and trauma surrounding emigration will never happen because I'm here "for the duration" as they used to say in wartime Britain. All I need to keep me happy is a bit of sunshine and a drop or two of rain, the occasional African sunset, the moon rising over Golden Gate, a (slow, at my age) walk up the knife-edge of Devil's Peak on a clear, windless winter's day. And a swooping drive down the Stormberg Pass with Juluka pumping from the car stereo.



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