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FRONT COVER

One of Husqvarna's range of tillers and cultivators. This one has an 80cm working width, and is fitted with plant protectors at either end of the tilling bar.

COMMENT, by Pete Bower A sensible analysis



It is very easy, when entering the fray about the climate crisis, to become embroiled in a veritable barrel of environmental red herrings, as activists, politicians and scientists punt their own agendas.

If the polar ice-caps melt will the world's seas rise and drown low-lying cities? Will global warming cause current arable land to be turned into deserts? Can we develop drought-resistant and heat-resistant crops fast enough to ensure adequate food for a growing world population? Will there be enough water to go round? And so on.

The fact is, nobody knows, at least not for sure, how this crisis is going to play out. Moreover, the issues are so complex and interrelated, and the whole thing so huge, that what will happen ~ and is happening ~ here in South Africa, and what will happen in any other part of the world, could be very different.

Thus, there are very few "one size fits all" elements to the crisis.

In other words, what we know about how this will all play out in our lifetimes and beyond amounts to a helluva lot less than what we don't know.

Because taking the myriad studies, reports and predictive models developed by eminent scientists elsewhere provides scant guidance for us South Africans.

Thus, it was heartening last month to see a report commissioned by the *Daily Maverick* and compiled by the Global Change Institute of the University of the Witwatersrand, entitled *The Climate Risks We Face in the 21st Century*. You can read more about the report in this edition on page 11, and download it from our website for further study (the link is at the end of our article).

While it is not well-edited, the report is a soberly-compiled and carefully curated analysis of what we face in the next ten to 30 years, based on the current trajectories of changing climate, carbon dioxide emissions and the like.

In particular, it seeks to highlight the five most prominent likely effects we face as a nation, giving reasons for their inclusion, as well as an assessment of their possible effects.

Chief among them will be two issues around food security, on the basis that, firstly, households will become less food-secure, because of rising prices and shortages, and, secondly, farmers will face increasing challenges leading to bankruptcies and an exodus from the agricultural sector.

Hunger, clearly, will become a major issue, and one may wonder whether we are not already staring this crisis in the face, thanks to job losses etc hastened by the Covid lockdown.

Among the other risks identified by the study, shortages of potable water will become an issue and, again, one wonders if we are not already staring this squarely in the face, given the appalling way South African municipalities, and national government, handle sewage treatment, rubbish removal and water wastage.

The potential for violence, and even civil (or national) war, should not be underestimated if we as a society neglect to address the very real developing issues around hunger and thirst. For, there can be few more desperate situations of hopelessness than to be unable to access the very basics of human life, ie, a belly-full of food and water with which to slake one's thirst.

One doesn't need to be a genius to know that we could ~ and should ~ all be doing a lot more to save ourselves; as individuals, local authorities and national governments, and the records of many ~ if not most ~ governments has been appalling. Donald Trump's America, Bolsonaro's Brazil, and our own ANC government's approach have all been criminally poor, the consequences of which we will come to regret, sooner rather than later, and the report highlights one particular aspect in the lackadaisical approach of the government to the implementation of renewable energy strategies.

As smallholders we have, at least, some ability to mitigate the hunger issue for ourselves and our families, simply by becoming proficient and productive in growing and harvesting food, and conserving our water resources, recycling waste etc.

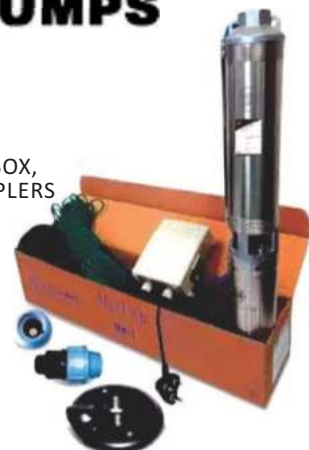
But food production aside, perhaps most importantly the report gives each and every citizen and local authority five risks on which to focus. Five simple points on which we can start to develop strategies of mitigation, in the hope that we will at least survive as a species until mid-century.

Because the fifth point on which the report focusses is the question of species loss in the face of changing climates and diminished habitats.

The report is sobering, to say the least, and perhaps, frankly, it's all too late to save us.



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Govt to hand over (not so) vacant land to farmers

With some fanfare ~ followed by rumblings from the commentariat ~ agriculture minister Thoko Didiza last month announced the “release” of more than 700 000ha of “underutilised or vacant State land”, comprising 896 farms, to be used as the next step in the government's

land reform programme. Seven of the nine provinces are involved, with by far the biggest chunks of land being in Limpopo and North West, together aggregating more than 421 000ha of the total. No land will be used in the current handover from Gauteng or the Western Cape.

The fact that so much of the earmarked land is in Limpopo and North West is significant, and highlights a point rather glossed over by Didiza in her announcement. For the land in question is largely parcels that were acquired by the apartheid state for incorporation into the former homelands, but

which never happened. Moreover, it is far from vacant, having been settled for many years by households which occupy it ~ and have occupied it ~ under a variety of arrangements, including loose verbal or written agreements, leases, and tribal dispensations, etc.

Continued on next page

MAILBAG

Home bottling just became expensive

Sir ~ I have been bottling jam, fruit and pickles in Consol jars for many years. In the old days these had sturdy glass tops, with the airtight seal being provided by a rubber washer.

More recently, however, the lid is made of metal with a built-in seal, the metal being emblazoned with the words “USE LID ONCE ONLY”.

This year I needed to replenish my stock of lids. I

was horrified to find some, at a local plastic home goods store, for R60 for a packet of five! R12 a lid!!

Now any home preserver knows that so long as one can

make a good seal with an unbent, unpunctured and unscratched lid one can use empty mayonnaise jars and all manner of glass bottles for one's produce and it strikes

me that Consol is shooting itself in the foot by allowing its “one-time” lids to retail at such a ludicrous price. I wonder if Consol is seeing disappointing sales of its lids as a result. I, for one, will be using my “one time” lids again and again, because R12 a lid is often more than the value of the contents of the jar.

Fred Stenhouse
Hillrise AH

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Prep now for giant pumpkin competition

Smallholders who want to try their hand at growing award-winning giant pumpkins should start their preparations now. The annual Goliath van Kat Pumpkin Festival will take place in March 2021.

Organisers TLU SA recommend that growers start their soil preparation and buy their seeds now.

"The seeds are available at TLU SA's head office in Silverton as usual, but can also be delivered throughout South Africa," says Henri Combrink, the organiser.

Entrants stand a chance to win the grand prize of R15 000 for the biggest pumpkin, with other cash prizes going to second and third. Participants can also enter their pumpkins into the prettiest and ugliest pumpkin categories. Kids also have a chance in the under 16 category. In 2020, Sonja and Peet Joubert took home first prize with a winning pumpkin of 420kg. In March 2020, the Joubert's 2019 record of 613kg was broken by Western Cape's Piet Lotz who grew an 860kg pumpkin.

Internationally, this year, Ian and Stuart

Paton, 59-year-old twins from Lymington in Hampshire, grew the UK's heaviest-ever pumpkin, which weighed in at 1 176,5kg, and which is getting very close to the current world record of 1 190kg, held by Mathias Willemijns of Belgium since 2016.

Contact Henri at 082 552 9428 or culliboer@gmail.com.



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Register on City of Joburg's stakeholder list

The City of Johannesburg is compiling an up-to-date list of all its stakeholders. With public/private collaboration becoming more necessary for good city-wide

governance, the city is encouraging those interested to register as an interested stakeholder. Businesses, communities and citizens are encouraged to participate. The city currently has a number of

important review processes underway, including the Growth & Development Strategy and the Spatial Development Framework, all of which would benefit from stakeholder participation to ensure

that their issues and ideas are taken into account. To register, go to https://share.hsforms.com/1R1-CSfB9TV2EYqTZJSeI_w469tl.

GOVT LAND

From previous page

Thus, before the land can be handed over to recipients under the current land reform programme, these "settlers" will need to be either removed from the land, or incorporated into the programme. These stumbling blocks notwithstanding, since February this year Didiza's department has released a total 135 117 ha of land countrywide to 275 farmers, including 929 ha in Gauteng. The beneficiaries of the government's largesse in this instance were 160 women, 114 "youth" and one person with disabilities.

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Climate Change Risk Report makes for gloomy reading

If you still think that the climate crisis is a myth, here, in a nutshell, are the five most likely risks to life and health in southern Africa in the short and medium term. They have been identified and ranked by The Global Change Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand which was asked to list and describe the top climate change-related risks faced by South Africa and the southern African region in the first half of the 21st Century. The results, background data and contextual information and explanations of how risk is evaluated, are to be found in a document compiled by the institute that was commissioned by the *Daily Maverick*. The study is entitled *The Climate Risks We Face*. The list was scored by twelve experts from various disci-

plines in terms of the likelihood that they would materialise, and the consequences if they did occur. Here they are.

❑ Risk 1: Food insecurity and the viability of the agricultural sector. The likelihood of food insecurity in southern Africa is expected, and the consequences thereof will be severe to catastrophic. Coupled with food insecurity, however, are failures in the agricultural sector, the likelihood of which are frequent to expected, with severe consequences. The institute explains these are two interrelated risks. The first is of inadequate household and community nutrition due to local, regional or global failures in crop and livestock production, or inability to access enough food. The second is of non-viability of regionally-important agricul-

ture-based activities, both subsistence and commercial. While these two risks are playing out, shockingly, a third of South Africa's produce ends up in a landfill or is wasted in some other way, says the institute.

❑ Risk 2: Shortages of clean water. The likelihood of water shortages is expected, and the consequences thereof will be substantial to severe. This risk relates to the inadequate supply of water of suitable quality for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes, either on average or during crisis periods. The risk

is not mitigated in any way by wastage through leaks and broken infrastructure, and pollution of groundwater, rivers and dams.

❑ Risk 3: A badly-handled transition to low-carbon energy. While a little progress was announced by President Ramaphosa in this regard after the study was published, energy minister Gwede Mantashe's lackadaisical approach towards sanctioning renewables is well-known. The consequences, says the study, will be substantial to severe.

❑ Risk 4: Heat stress is a killer. The likelihood of heat stress, in the face of warming temperatures is expected, and the consequence will be substantial.

The institute explains: "For many of us, an exclamation like this is a way of giving



A third of South Africa's produce ends up in a landfill

Continued on next page

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Colony Collapse Disorder: Another climate change effect

Is it too late for bees or are the bees too late? Well, both. Bees are certainly dying in droves, in part due to climate change, says a new study commissioned by the Daily Maverick and published by the Institute of Climate Change at Wits University. But, a lesser known threat is just as worrying, says the study: changing temperatures in southern Africa are causing plants, including food crops, to flower at different times,

which throws bees off their regular pollinating schedule. "What is often missed is the sheer scale of the industry of pollinators, and just how much they contribute to our well-being." Every third bite of food was produced by the activities of pollinators. Out of 115 food



crops studied in a global assessment, 87 depend to some degree upon animal pollination and 13 are entirely reliant upon animal pollinators. Estimates suggest that pollination by insects underpins US\$361 billion in crop production worldwide. The deciduous fruit industry

in the Western Cape alone is worth R9 800 million per year and is heavily reliant on pollination services from managed honeybees. Pollinators have been found to be declining globally. Bee colonies undergo Colony Collapse Disorder, when the majority of worker bees in a bee colony disappear. The causes can be multiple, and include habitat change, pesticides, climate change

Continued on next page

CLIMATE

From previous page

vent to our annoyance at the inconveniences of the hottest days of the year.

For millions of workers in hot places across the world, it is a sign of distress.

"For many workers in southern Africa this is a looming threat to their productivity.

Outdoor workers involved in physical activity, such as agricultural and construction workers, waste collectors, repair workers, miners and even athletes, are unproductive in the heat, and may

harm their health or even die. "Death rates spike when the temperature rises above 35°C for several days in a row. Physical labour capacity halves for every 2°C rise in temperature," the study calculates.

Risk 5: Disrupted ecosystems and loss of biodiversity, the likelihood of which is frequent, with severe consequences.

This risk relates to "nature" in southern Africa, not just for its own sake, but also because we depend on it, says the study.

"South Africa is one of about ten "megadiverse" countries in the world, with a number of species quite disproportionate to our land area.

This is a treasured benefit and source of pride and income, but also a global responsibility. Plants and animals have

survived enormous climate changes in the distant past, but human-caused climate change over the past two centuries, and especially as projected for this century, is just too rapid for them to adapt.

This is especially true when we block their movements and subject them to all sorts of other threats, like

overharvesting, pollution and the invasion of organisms from other parts of the world."

The study can be downloaded in full from our website. Go to gautengsmallholder.co.za/useful-resources.



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Eggs and their possible irregularities

People who do not keep hens and buy their eggs in a supermarket will presume that all eggs are perfect. However there is a

reason why those of us who keep our own chooks will probably take the precaution of breaking our eggs into a cup, because you never know

when one of them might hold an unpleasant surprise. How eggs are formed is interesting. They are formed in layers starting from the

inside, with the yolk forming in the hen's ovary. When the yolk reaches the right size, it is released into the funnel

Continued on next page

BEEKEEPING

From previous page
and pathogens ~ and very likely, the interactions among them, says the study. "Pollinators also play a critical role in natural ecosystems.

By moving from one flower to the next in search of nectar and pollen, they fertilize subsequent generations of plants and keep the gene pool healthy."

Worldwide there are many kinds of bees and they form part of a veritable army of mainly insect pollinators that are active across the globe. The study believes part of the solution may lie in citizen science, where members of the public collect scientifically useful data.

"Some of the best evidence we have that pollinators are thrown off their regular pollination timing comes from records collected by amateur

enthusiasts, measuring when plants flower and when butterflies start flying, each season over the years.

Citizens can monitor the

extent of the issue, as scientists simply do not have the capacity to do so comprehensively." 🌱

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POULTRY

From previous page

(infundibulum) where, if live sperm are present, it will be fertilized. Then it is released into the oviduct, where the rest of the egg will form. In its journey through the oviduct, the next layer to be added is the egg white (albumen). This layer takes about three hours to be formed. The next layer to be added in the oviduct is the shell membrane. This takes

about 1,25 hours. It is a very thin layer between the egg white and the shell, and it almost looks like tissue paper. The egg then reaches the hen's uterus, also known as the shell gland. This is where the shell is added to the egg. The shell is also formed in layers over the course of some 19 hours, where pigment is also added. All egg shells begin as white. Once this process is complete, the egg passes through the vagina

and is laid by the hen. This final process takes less than a minute. Irregularities of the shell are plain to see. You might find thin, soft or incomplete shells, wrinkled or corrugated surfaces, mottled or irregular pigmentation, calcium deposits, flat sided eggs, blood smeared or shells with fine cracks or holes. Problems with the albumen (whites) or yolks will only be revealed when you crack



Corrugated/rough eggshells.

the egg open ~ hopefully not into your cake mixture or omelette.

The whites might be thin and watery, cloudy, pale pink, yellow or green, spotted with blood or meat spots.

Yolks may be pale, mottled, blue-green or have other discolouration.

Occasionally there might be an egg with no yolk or with one egg within another. Causes of egg irregularities are often inadequate or unbalanced nutrition. Ensure that the feed has the correct amount of calcium, to prevent soft or thin shells or eggs with no shell. Until about 20 years ago one could buy shell-grit, which is made from coarsely ground or broken seashells. Shell-grit is no longer sold, because of the depredations its collection was doing to our beaches.

Continued on next page



Calcium deposit on shell.



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IN THE GARDEN

Planning your summer vegetable garden

Planning your vegetable garden is key to ensuring a constant and steady supply, hopefully year round, of the fresh vegetables

the family enjoys, without facing an excess during peak seasons and shortages out of season.

On a smallholding, with

plenty of space available, it is easy to over-plant and be faced with a mound of perfect cabbages, all ready at the same time, or baskets of

ripe tomatoes far beyond the capacity of any normal family to consume.

There are ways to get rid of

Continued on next page

POULTRY

From previous page

However, it is easy to make your own if you have oyster lovers in your family. Ask them to bring home the shells for you, allow the shells to dry fully in the sun, then grind them up and either let the chickens peck at them as a

supplementary "scratch" or add a little to their feed each day. An excess of one of the vitamins can affect the egg, eg, too much riboflavin (Vitamin B2) shows in a greenish albumin. Too much Vitamin D3 makes brown shells go pale. Not enough Vitamin E or B12 gives a shell-less egg. Uneven pigmentation is caused by insufficient minerals such as zinc, copper and manganese, but particularly magnesium. Excess calcium can show in calcium deposits on the shell.

A heavy infestation of internal parasites can have an adverse effect on egg quality and may cause pale shells.

Watery whites can be an indicator of a viral disease condition like infectious

bronchitis or Newcastle disease. It can also cause pale shells, deformed shells, and shell-less eggs, but not necessarily physical symptoms in a hen. Medication or vaccinations sometimes bring about changes to the egg.

The white of an egg will also turn runny as the egg ages.

Environmental conditions such as overcrowding or stress will affect the egg quality.

About 2% of eggs will show irregularities. 🌱

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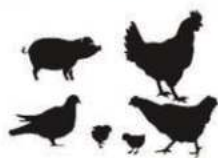
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IN THE GARDEN

From previous page

the extra without wastage: one can give the stuff away to townie friends (who may come to dread a summertime visit from you with yet another prize cabbage in hand). Or one can give the extra to staff as part of their remuneration package. If there is a children's home or a shelter for the destitute nearby, donations will be appreciated. Or one can take it to the local farmer's market on a Saturday and, hopefully, sell it.

But the goal is to grow just enough for your household's use, which could include your

immediate family and staff. The most sensible approach is to try to match one's production with consumption, and here is an interesting point ~ many pundits will tell one that it is possible to grow most of the vegetable needs of a small family in an area no larger than a standard doorframe. As you gaze out over your extensive vegetable garden this may seem unlikely but it is common among green-fingered dwellers of informal settlements, where space is at a premium to grow at least



Spinach can be harvested throughout the season, leaving the plant growing, just cutting the leaves.

part of their regular requirements using this method. Without the constraints of space, however, such a fact is not of much value to a smallholder. But how, then, do we match our needs in the kitchen with our output in the garden?

Try this: Move beyond the kitchen to the dinner table and examine what it is, actually, that is on each plate. For the purposes of this illustration let's assume you are a four-person family (eg, two parents and two teenage children), and that you sit down to a daily meal, be it lunch or dinner, of protein (meat or fish), a starch and

two veg, and a plate of mixed salad.

Let's also assume that each member eats much the same quantity and eats everything on the plate, ie, nothing left for "Mr Manners".

So in total, this meal could require the following, as an example:

Protein: Two chicken breasts plus two drumsticks and thighs, or most of a small chicken, leaving a bit over for cold chicken salad or sandwiches, or eight slices of meat.

Starch: Four medium potatoes.

Vegetables: Four gems plus

Continued on page 23

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IN THE GARDEN

From page 19

eight spoons of carrots, or four tomatoes plus eight spoons of spinach, or eight spoons of peas plus eight slices of aubergine.

Salad: Eight lettuce leaves, eight slices of pickled beetroot, 16 cocktail tomatoes or two medium tomatoes sliced, twelve slices of cucumber, four radishes, one or two slices of a medium onion, broken into rings.

If you are cooking without waste, therefore, that is what you will need to prepare for one meal.

And if you are growing without waste, that it what

you will need to provide the cook from your vegetable garden.

Looked at from the perspective of dinnertime consumption, it's not a lot, is it?

The key to a successful veg garden is careful planning, which should include:

□ The likes and dislikes of the family. It is absolutely pointless growing something that nobody enjoys eating, however healthy and nutritious it may be on paper. Certain plants are rewarding to grow (turnips, for example) because they grow quickly and easily, but if no one eats them, what's the point? It seems obvious, but even the most experienced of us have fallen into the trap of planting because you know it grows, and not actually because anyone will eat it.

□ The nature of growth of the species, is it a one-picking type such as a carrot or a cabbage, or is it a multi-

picking type such as a tomato plant, pepper or spinach?

□ The size of the plant, both in its area requirements and its height. You can cram quite a few radishes, for example, into the space that is required by one cabbage. By the same token, if you plant different species in one bed it is unproductive to plant tall species such as tomatoes or runner beans in front, and small stuff behind, because you won't be able to reach the stuff at the back to harvest



Planting too many plants all at once will result in too many vegetables ripening at the same time.

it. And, depending on the way your beds face the taller stuff may block out the sun from the smaller stuff behind.

□ The frequency with which you will harvest it, and the use to which it will be put. For example, one head of cabbage will last in the kitchen for probably two or three meals, whereas to add radishes to your salads will require one or two plant to be picked per person per meal. Generally, you will be doing the cook in the household a favour by planting species that

Continued on next page

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IN THE GARDEN

From previous page

are used frequently, such as herbs, close to the kitchen. Having to walk to your back field every time the meal requires a sprig of parsley will not do much for family morale.

❑ The ability to dry, freeze, pickle or otherwise preserve the harvest. Some species are easy and delicious to preserve, others not so much. You can cut down on the drudgery of preserving by picking a few extra fruits every few days for preserving, rather than doing a mass preserving marathon of many hours at the end of the season. For example, spend a few hours one evening every

few weeks bottling a pot-full of beetroot, rather than an entire weekend in January attempting to deal with a garden's

worth of vegetables. Given that, in high summer, quick maturing vegetables such as beans can go from perfect and delicious to dry and stringy in a matter of days, careful discussion needs to take place to ensure that the family has the time, the bags and bottles etc, to prepare and preserve for



Companion planting.

winter when the crop is at its best.

❑ Bought seed packets contain an awful lot more seed than one is likely to use at one planting.

This alone is the cause of most over-planting. A simple rule: you do not have to plant the entire packet in one season.

Even seedling trays, of six or eight plants, are overkill in many cases in a small family garden.

❑ The length of time the plant needs to grow to

produce a usable harvest.

Radishes, for example, need only a few weeks to grow to maturity, and then quickly become too big to be tasty. Onions, garlic and leeks, take some months to mature, and can last a season if properly treated.

❑ The best time of year to plant. While it is true that most vegetables grow best in the warmer, wetter summer months, some species prefer colder weather, for example onions and garlic, and cauliflower. This will help keep you supplied during the colder months. If one lives in an area of very cold winters, some method of artificial climate control, such as a small greenhouse, will prove very helpful for continuous supply of the hardy species.

❑ Companion planting and soil requirements. If you plant different species together in one bed you should be aware that some species don't like to

Continued on next page



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IN THE GARDEN

From previous page
be close to each other. And while vegetables generally prefer a good quality, loamy soil with plenty of well-matured organic matter incorporated, some species, such as carrots, prefer a lighter, sandy soil and will not perform optimally in heavy soil or in soil which incorporates too much nutrient. The acidity (pH) of the soil is also important, as is the need to be careful about what was last planted in the bed. Thus, if you had an acid-loving plant growing well in a bed last season, you may well find that a plant that likes a more alkaline soil will not thrive unless you take serious remedial steps to alter the pH.

Potatoes and tomatoes, too, are prone to fungal disease if successive crops are grown in the same patch.

□ Succession planting. It is helpful in the kitchen for some quick-maturing species, especially those that are used frequently such as carrots, or radish, to be available at the perfect point of ripeness over a long period. Planting them all at once means they will reach maturity at the same time, giving you too many vegetables for your household to consume before they go off. To avoid this, plant small batches every few weeks, rather than one massive planting at once. But here's a thing: How much time can you, realistically, devote to your vegetable patch over the next few months?

Christmas is coming up, and the New Year, as well as ~

lockdown restrictions notwithstanding ~ kids' school functions, office parties and family functions.

It's a busy time of year, and if your social life isn't enough there's also other stuff to do around the garden, such as mowing, fixing leaky roofs in the rainy season, attending to broken water pipes etc, etc. It is worth trying to be a bit reasonable here and limit the number of succession plantings you will do to, say,

two or three over the season. In other words, don't overdo it and be frustrated because you ran out of time and were disappointed by the result.

□ Once you have planned your garden, and begun to enjoy its 'fruits', menu planning will also play a role, particularly when using vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower and pumpkin where one cannot consume the whole plant at one sitting. The question of nutrition

should always be paramount, with the realisation that the most nutrition (and the best taste) is to be had from something that has been freshly picked.

Next edition we will include a list of common vegetables you might grow, giving a comparative analysis of the number of plants, their size, time to maturity and size of their harvest, to help you plan the perfect garden for your family needs. 🌱



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The benefits of humus in your soil

The key to productive agriculture is to build healthy, fertile soil. According to the Regenerative Agriculture Association of South Africa (RegenAG SA), "Worldwide the production of food under our current systems erodes our soils, damages the environment and is responsible for 24% of greenhouse gas emissions.

The combination of ploughs, chemicals and fertilisers applied by farmers for the past 75 years has depleted our soils to where they now produce nutrient poor food. These depleted soils and chemicals impact human health."

Many of us overwork our soil by excessive tilling, using chemical fertilisers and pesticides, monoculture, continuous grazing and

indiscriminate burning of our grass and crop residues. Yet it is possible to regenerate soil through the application of organic matter, cover cropping, mulch, stimulation of soil micro-biology, no or minimal tilling and crop rotations to suit the particular soil.

One should aim for humus in the soil. Humus is organic matter that has been broken down by multiple organisms

to the point where it won't get broken down much more ~ a brown-black coloured material that is found in compost and soils. It is vital to soil because it is colloidal in

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ROR25/50MM	50 cm	X 25mm MxM	R 67,81	R 77,98
ROR25/25MF	25 cm	X 25mm MxF	R 34,88	R 40,11
ROR25/35MF	35 cm	X 25mm MxF	R 48,44	R 55,70
ROR25/50MF	50 cm	X 25mm MxF	R 67,81	R 77,98

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SOIL HEALTH

From previous page nature, ie, it holds water ~ up to ten times its own weight; it is sticky and glue like ~ it aggregates other soil components (eg, sand and clay) creating tilth; it is resistant to biological decomposition ~ lasting typically 10 -100 years but often much longer.

Humus is important in creating soil aggregate stability: the ability of a soil to regulate the movement and storage of air and water throughout the soil profile, and the profile is determined by the soil make up of sand, silt and clay particles. The more stable the soil's aggregates, the more productive the soil.



Mulch.

Humus formation is carried out in two steps. First, the organic substances and minerals in the soil disintegrate. Next, totally new combinations of these broken-down products develop. This leads to the initial stages of humus.

Soil that is rich in humus also has capacity to hold water and to hold it where plants need it. It is a remarkable water management tool. A 1% increase in soil organic matter means that a single hectare of land can hold an addition 170 000 litres of water, according to RegenAG SA.

Humus is not compost.

Compost contains small amounts of colloidal humus, 1-5%. The remaining >95% is partially degraded organic matter that is typically 0.5 -10mm bits.

Soil experts refer to soil organic matter (SOM), which is the total organic (ie, dead or decaying) plant material in the soil, excluding any surface leaf litter. It is usually split into two fractions: decaying (bits of compost), and the fraction that will no longer decay, which is humus. SOM ranges from 1-5% of the total soil volume. Humus is valuable for retaining nutrients in the soil. Furthermore, by building up the organic matter content in

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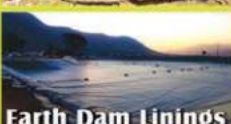
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OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Marketing your at-home business

Marketing: (according to the New York Times, anyway):

"The art of telling stories so enthralling that people lose track of their wallets."

In the October edition we addressed some of the factors that you need to consider when starting a business on your smallholding.

Now you need to tell your potential customers what you are offering, in order to convince them to buy your goods or services. Marketing needs a plan of action designed to promote and sell your wares.

Why do you need to market

yourself and your goods? If your business consists of agricultural products, many of these are perishable, so a failure to sell on time results in wasted harvest. You will still have had the cost of land,

water, labour, storage ~ but no income to show for it. Agricultural prices can be variable, impacted by changes in weather and harvests, so your marketing strategy must ensure that consumers

become aware of your products at just the right time. Marketing materials will include business cards, paper-based and digital flyers and brochures, as well as your website.

Technology has replaced many things, but the business card is still relevant and an important way of making a good first impression. They are a valuable networking tool and still the quickest way to trade contact information.

A flyer or leaflet is usually a single sheet of paper, usually A5 and sometimes only printed on one side. A flyer

Continued on next page



A flyer or brochure.

SOIL HEALTH

From previous page

the soil with mulch and compost, we will use less



Adding humus to clay soil.

fertilizer.

The Smallholder has written before about the importance of spreading mulch across all your soil surfaces. Mulch will reduce the amount of water that evaporates from your soil, greatly reducing your need to water your plants. By breaking up clay and

allowing better water and air movement through the soil, mulch provides nutrients to sandy soil and improves its ability to hold water. It also

helps to suppress weeds.

Materials for mulching include straw, hay, grass clippings, shredded bark, leaves and chipped twigs. 🌿

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OPEN FOR BUSINESS

From previous page

gives the information that the reader needs here and now: what are you offering, why does anyone need it, how much does it cost, a special offer if relevant, and where is it available. A brochure may be more detailed, an A4 sheet folded or more than one sheet stapled to form a booklet.

Of all sales efforts, direct door-to-door or telephone selling is the most effective when used correctly.

However, it is also the most expensive and the deals you make are limited to a proportion of the number of sales calls your staff or you can make.

Advertising is part of marketing and you should try to make your expenditure as effective as possible. Keep your message straightforward and simple. Often good intentions become lost when the designer of your ad becomes too creative. Avoid humour, because one man's joke might be another man's insult. Bad advertising will not sell a product, however good the product is. Don't be dishonest in your claims or exaggerate what your product or service can do for the customer.

Highlight the benefits of your product, rather than the features. Rather than state that your compost is weed-free, mention that because it is weed-free the customer will not waste time having to weed the bed.

Advertising will only work if

the message reaches the target audience. Consider where your potential market is and how you can reach them.

For the purposes of a small plot-based business, advertising options include erecting billboards or other static signage, vehicle signage, print advertising in targeted magazines and regional newspapers, radio adverts on regional stations, and digital advertising on social media sites, websites etc. Television advertising falls outside the scope of a small business because of its high cost.

In print advertising, size, frequency and the use of colour do count, but have to be balanced with your budget. Frequency of flighting is also important on radio advertising, and in the digital sphere.

Your website needs to be simple, clear, informative and fast to use. And, if it includes prices and product offerings, up to date.

Online ordering options are becoming increasingly popular and will help you gain traction in the market if you do not have a bricks-and-mortar store.

Social media is important for constant reminders of your product. A regular blog can be challenging to maintain, but it does not have to be more than about 300 words and is worth the effort if it brings customers to your website. If you don't have help, it is probably better to decide on a couple of other platforms and stick to them. Choose from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Reddit. Each of these platforms use algorithms that help target your message to put it in front of people interested in similar products, sectors or industries.

Stickers and decals on your vehicles help to establish your brand. Some entrepreneurs use guerrilla marketing by placing their stickers on the windows of empty shops or

Continued on next page



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The Syringa tree: Category Three alien

Forget pompom weed or Mexican poppy. Or even bugweed or the jacaranda. In spring, when the species is in full bloom, it's easy to see that the syringa tree (*Melia azedarach* or Chinaberry) is well into the top species on the list of undesirable aliens growing in gardens and forests throughout Gauteng.

MARKETING

From previous page on lampposts and electricity substations. However you run the risk of annoying possible clients with this habit, and of falling foul of municipal by-laws.

Take every opportunity to build up a database of potential and existing clients. A regular newsletter gives you reason to contact by email. Readers often enjoy an infographic, which is a collection of imagery, charts and minimal text that gives an easy-to-understand overview of a topic. You might experiment with free software which enables you to create your own infographic. When you can afford it, you can offer prizes in competitions, host an event or run workshops.

Most marketing is about creating awareness of your business, but once you have people's attention, focus on building relationships of trust and loyalty.

The National Agricultural Marketing Council offers information and research documents that might be of use to you. 🌱

And it's easy to distinguish from the jacaranda, by the fact that its flowers are smaller, and more mauve than

purple, than the much-beloved jacaranda.

The problem is, however, that the syringa is an undesirable



A syringa in bloom on a Gauteng plot.

alien, despite the fact that it has been present in South African gardens for generations. The syringa is a native of Asia. A deciduous

tree growing to a height of 15 to 20m it is often used in gardens for shade in summer. However, this use can only occur after it has shed its

petals, which happens in October and November in Gauteng, whereafter a rich canopy of leaves develops, along with a profusion of slowly ripening seeds.

The seeds, once ripe turn from green to yellow, and are toxic to humans and livestock.

A small hard kernel is surrounded by a soft flesh that is eaten by certain bird species, notably loeries, who drop the kernels after flying

Continued on next page



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A simple guide to building a fence

At some time or another every smallholder will be called upon to string, or repair, a wire fence on the plot. For, whether it is a barbed wire fence, or a plain or electric fence, the wires will eventually corrode and

become brittle, and then break, particularly if livestock bumps up against the fence, or seeks to poke heads through to graze on the other side, or if passersby climb on, over or through the fence, pulling wires hither and thither in the process.

In some cases, repairing a fence may become a whole reconstruction, particularly if the corner posts were not correctly set and braced to begin with, and have thus partially pulled out so that they are no longer vertical. Apart from the wire on a stranded fence, which can be either plain or barbed, the

other components are the corner posts, sometimes of CCA treated timber, but more usually of steel pipe fitted with a foot and a cap, and diagonal stays which are attached to the corner posts to prevent them from lifting out of the ground. You will need one stay per corner post for each direction that

Continued on next page

ALIEN SPECIES

From previous page
off, often resulting in a syringa sapling emerging after the rains.

The ripe seeds uneaten by birds tend to fall in late winter before the next flush of blooms.

In the wild Syringa has been declared a Category 1b invader in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act regulations. This applies to invasive species requiring compulsory control as part of an invasive species control programme.

The regulations require a remove and destroy policy. These plants are deemed to have such a high invasive potential that infestations can



Syringa blossoms and berries.

qualify to be placed under a government sponsored invasive species management programme. No permits for their growth will be issued. However, in urban settings syringas are classified as Category 3. These are invasive species regulated by activity.

An individual plant permit is required to undertake any of the following restricted activities: import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift, involving a Category 3 species.

No permits will be issued for Category 3 plants to exist in riparian zones. 🌿

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FENCING

From previous page

strained wire is attached to the post. In other words, on a right-angled corner there will be two stays, attached to the post at right angles. In a very long straight fence where a post is fitted every 30m or so there will also be two stays, at 180° to each other, on either side of the post.

The height up the post, at which the stay attaches is important, as is the angle of the stay to the ground, which should be as close to 45° as you can get it. There is thus a ratio between the length of the post, and the length of the stay, for which you can use Pythagoras' Theorem ("the length of the diagonal of

a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the two adjacent sides"), which you should have learnt at school.

But, while the angle of the stay is important (45°), more important is the height of wires above the point where it attaches to the post. If it attaches too low in relation to the wires above it, the strain on the wires will have the fulcrum effect of pulling the post out of the ground and up and over the stay. End of strong fence.

While posts can simply be dug into holes drilled in the ground, there is no doubt that the best way to set a post and stay is to pour concrete into

the holes of both and allow it to set properly before adding the wires.

The other components of the stranded wire fence are

standards and droppers.

In South Africa two common profiles of standard are found, namely the (older) Iscor profile, which resembles a miniature railway track, and the newer "Y-standard," pre-drilled or punched with holes through which wires can pass, and with the two branches of the Y notched to hold the horizontal wires in place. Like the posts the bottoms of the standards are underground (they can usually be hit into the ground) and they should be spaced no more than 5m apart along the length of the fence.

Droppers are shorter lengths of rigid material, usually steel but nowadays also of plastic, that are not attached to the ground, but which are merely there to keep the wires of the fence apart and the fence vertical.

Because their bottom ends are not buried, the droppers one uses can be as long as the fence is high, ie, if your fence is 1,8m high you can use a dropper of 1,8m in length. You will battle to erect a decent fence without some simple specialist tools. First among these is a good pair



Y-standard.

(or two) of fencing pliers ~ big heavy pliers capable of cutting wire with ease.

Next you will need a wire strainer.

The most commonly available in South Africa is the Donald's strainer (or Bobbejaan), which attaches to the strand using two clamps held in place by friction and drawn together by a lever hooking on to their chains.

A newer, Australian, design clamps the wire ends using pressure and draws them together by simply pushing two levers together.

Finally, a wire twister, which you can make yourself using a short piece of flat bar drilled with a few 3mm or 4mm holes, is vital for neat, fast binding work. 🌿



Donald's wire strainer, AKA Bobbejaan.

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DIARY



SPECIAL NOTE: THESE DATES ARE VALID AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. DUE TO THE REGULATIONS RELATED TO THE ONGOING COVID-19 CRISIS, SOME OF THESE DATES MAY CHANGE AND SOME VENUES MAY HAVE RESTRICTIONS ON THE NUMBER OF VISITORS ALLOWED. WE SUGGEST YOU CONTACT THE ORGANISERS BEFORE THE EVENT.

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

Every Sunday

SA Lipizzaners weekly display at 11h00. SA Lipizzaner Centre, Dahlia Rd, Kyalami. Go to www.lipizzaners.co.za / email stallion@lipizzaners.co.za to book.

Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast, Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Rayton. Call Rudan on 082 410 3180 / visit <http://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.

2020

November

2-6: Introductory Course in Pig Production at ARC, Irene Campus. R3 000,00 excl transport and accommodation. Contact Mpho Makhanya, makhanyam@arc.agric.za or 012 672 9153.

7: Country Market, Larsen's Road, Muldersdrift. 08h00 – 14h00. Local sellers bringing you the freshest crops,

food and crafts. Contact Heidi for more info on 071 566 5940.

7: Mnandi Market, Die Windpomp Lapa, 86 Boundary Road, Mnandi. Fresh produce, artisanal breads, hand made and homegrown goods, plants, herbs, succulents and more.

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

9-13: Introductory Course in Small Stock Management at ARC, Irene Campus. R3 200,00 excl transport and accommodation. Contact Mpho Makhanya, makhanyam@arc.agric.za or 012 672 9153.

15: New moon

23-27: Introductory Course in Beef Cattle Management at ARC, Irene Campus. R3 200,00 excl transport and accommodation. Contact Mpho Makhanya, makhanyam@arc.agric.za or 012 672 9153.

30: Full moon

December
3-5: Sakeliga KragDag Ekspo 2020. Besoekers: + 21 000. Uitstallers: + 450. Aangebied te Diamantvallei Landgoed, 20km Oos van Pretoria. Grootste

alternatiewe energie en selfstandigheidskso in Suid-Afrika. Vanaf 2019 ook met 'n eie landbou afdeling. Kontak Sone 087 231 1644 of sone@kragdag.co.za.

5: Country Market, Larsen's Road, Muldersdrift. 08h00 – 14h00. Local sellers bringing you the freshest crops, food and crafts. Contact Heidi for more info on 071 566 5940.

13: 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

14: New moon

16: Day of Reconciliation

21: Summer Solstice

25: Christmas Day

26: Day of Goodwill (Boxing Day)

30: Full moon



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Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

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.
 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.
 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
SPECIAL NOTE: Due to regulations related to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, some of these markets may have restrictions on numbers of visitors.

DAY	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT
Thursday					
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09h00 – 15h00	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	04h30 – 09h30	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	08h00 – 14h00	Greenlyn Village Centre, Cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie St, Menlo Park, Pretoria	078 593 7716	Fresh produce straight from the producer, coffee, eats on sale.
	Waenhuiskrans Plaas / Farmers	08h00 – 13h00	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	08h00 – 12h30	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.
	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09h00 – 15h00	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.
	Niche Community Market	09h00 – 14h00	Walkerville Showgrounds	071 521 6547	Fresh produce, crafter's market, food court, craft beer, play area, pet friendly.
	Midrand Circles Market	09h00 – 14h00	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	08h00 – 14h00	Hillside Golf Club, Rachel de Beer Street, Nina Park.	Githea: 081 304 2070	Baked goods, traditional pap & kaaings, vetkoek, pancakes, jewelry, plants, fresh meat, cheese, woodwork, art, live music.
	Fourways Farmers Market (New venue)	08h00 – 16h00	Taroko Farm, Modderfontein Reserve, Norfolk Lane.	010 534 6622 (Mon-Fri) www.ffmarket.co.za	Farm fresh produce, organic produce, food stalls, baked goods, live music.
Sunday					
Every Sunday	Waterfall Estate Farmers Market (Will open when more than 50 visitors are allowed)	09h00 – 15h00	Waterfall Estate, Midrand	064 759 6154	Fresh produce, pickles, preserves and home industry & craft, food, etc. Enquire about stall prices.
	Fourways Farmers Market (New venue)	08h00 – 16h00	Taroko Farm, Modderfontein Reserve, Norfolk Lane.	010 534 6622 (Mon-Fri) www.ffmarket.co.za	Farm fresh produce, organic produce, food stalls, baked goods, live music.
	Vaalbank Country Market	10h00 – 15h00	Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton	081 271 2300	Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes!

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The routine of a smallholder's life

Even if you don't love it, everybody ~ animals included ~ appreciate a set routine. Some routines are long, like the routine of life: birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death. Others are no more than a day: Awaken at 6, ablute, breakfast, work or school, lunch break, work, commute home, dinner, television, bed. Some are even shorter: in what order do you perform your morning ablutions and get dressed? Do you brush your teeth before, or after, you have shaved? Or don your socks before, or after, your shirt?

And any parent knows, or will soon learn, that one of the skills of raising offspring harmoniously is to provide a set routine based around mealtimes, school time, playtime (or, today, more likely television or computer time, more's the pity) followed by supper time, bath time and bed. For (in case you haven't learned this lesson) the quickest way to raise a crabby, badly-behaved little brat who throws tantrums in supermarkets is to allow it free rein when it comes to a daily routine. Bed time should be at a set time, sufficiently long after a proper meal for the child not to develop indigestion in the night, but sufficiently early to provide the requisite eight or nine hours of sleep, not as and when the kid starts to droop with fatigue following hours of gawping at some mindless drivel on the television.

And who can relate to the annual routine that some Vaalies used to follow in our childhoods? The year would end, or start, with a summer Christmas, complete with splashing in a pool on Christmas Day, often with cousins one might not see otherwise, followed by the dread of going back to boarding school in late January. Then the Easter break of a few days at home, including Easter eggs and lots of churchgoing. And then of course, the bliss of July, when we all trooped off to the Natal South Coast (or, in our case, the Transkei), sometimes just our family, sometimes with cousins and aunts and uncles, for a couple of weeks of frolicking on the sand. Followed, inevitably, by more school and end-of-year exams, all of which, from about Standard Five, led to the inevitable purgatory of Matric.

Pets, of course, reliant as they are on their owners, also require a routine. Lest one risk accidents in the house they need to be let out to pee at a regular time in the morning, and taken out for a late night constitutional before going to bed at night.

And anybody who keeps any form of livestock knows how important it is to maintain a strict daily routine. With poultry it entails feeding and watering and collecting eggs. With sheep it entails checking them for worms and ailments and letting them out to graze. With cows it involves feeding and milking twice

daily, and with horses it involves feeding, grooming and all the other tasks without which the animals lose condition, become crabby and develop potentially serious ailments such as colic.

And these routines are inviolable, day in and day out, week after week, come rain or shine, not only for the health and wellbeing of the animals, but simply because one cannot explain to one's horse or cow, or apologise for, a lapse in routine. "You don't speak horse," I used to frequently tell my kids when they wanted to cry off or delay their chores around their ponies, thinking that the latter would understand.

But for me, after three decades on a smallholding, the most important routine of all is the routine of the seasons. For me the year starts not in January, but at the start of the rainy season, after the weather has warmed up and one is hopefully prepared for the first growth of summer.

For by this time one should have ploughed and fertilized and should be anxiously scanning the sky each day for the build-up of large, dark rain clouds. Every day is a day of hope. Will the rains start today? And when they finally do start begins the frantic, but hopefully well-planned and enthusiastic, cycle of planting. A stage that is followed by scanning the ground daily for signs of life. "Beans are up" or "mealies are up" are often heard self-congratulatory springtime statements in our house when one or other of us spots the first green shoots.

And then comes summer, with its hopefully bounteous harvest of fruit and vegetables, which require bottling, pickling, drying or freezing to see one through the winter to follow.

And then comes late summer, when one is inevitably beset by every weed and pest known to man.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. To my mind spring and early summer are a time of year as good as it gets in Gauteng, rain or shine. The beauty and vividness of the first shoots of green and the way in which plants burst back into life is invigorating, even to the weariest old cynic. Particularly given the promise of the bounty to follow.



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