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**FRONT COVER**

Chicks peep out from under their mother's "skirts" ... there's nothing better for a baby than maternal protection!

# COMMENT, by Pete Bower

## Kleptocratic land bill



While elderly and infirm South Africans have been distracted of late by the worrying prospect that they may not receive their social grant payments in April (it now looks like they will), or the politically-aware are fretting about how much the Zuptas have stolen from taxpayers this month (probably lots), or people with an international focus have been worrying about the consequences of Brexit (probably none, for the rest of us), the French banning the burkini on their beaches (trust the French to latch on to an issue of TRULY international importance), or whether men who have undergone sex-changes should be allowed to wee in female toilets, or whether North Korea's Kim Jong-Un will lose what remains of his adolescent marbles and blow us all to bits in a nuclear holocaust (quite likely), a little piece of proposed legislation named the Regulation of Agricultural Land Holdings Bill was published in the *Government Gazette*. South Africans have until April 17 to comment upon it and thereafter it will join other bills in its passage through Parliament and thereafter into law. Or, hopefully, not. For if it becomes law it has the potential to destroy South African agriculture more completely than farm murders, drought, the Fall Armyworm, dumped imports and low commodity prices combined.

By now we all know that the ANC wants to speed up "land reform" particularly as it attempts to transfer white-owned land to black ownership thus far, based on the "willing buyer, willing seller" approach, have been slower than desired.

We also know now of Mr Zuma's hair-brained idea ~ and a complete departure from published ANC policy ~ of turning land reform on its head based on the results of a totally-unworkable non-starter that he calls a "pre-colonial land audit" (just think about that, for a moment) and, of course, of Julius Malema's oft-stated view that the way to land reform is through "expropriation without compensation".

Now, in this bill, are the seeds of these very policies. The first little stepping stones along the path to a wholesale revision of the land transformation policy that could see South Africa headed, ultimately, for a Zimbabwean-style land grab.

For the bill contains a number of proposals. Key among them is that any foreign landowner wishing to sell his farm must first offer it to the Minister of Rural Development & Land Reform, who has 90 days to decide whether he wants to buy the property or not. Only thereafter may the foreigner offer the land on the open market. Practically-speaking, that's a helluva simple way for the government (and therefore its corruptedly-connected cronies) to acquire, for example, some of the best wine farms in the world. For many very, very expensive Western Cape farms are now in the hands of very wealthy foreign owners. When it comes time for them to shuffle off their mortal coils and the executors of their deceased estates offer the farms for sale? Hey presto! That's land-reform, Zuma-style!

The bill also contains the stipulation that no foreigner (and also no local) may own more than 12 000ha of agricultural land. Now a farm of 12 000ha in a productive region like the Western Cape or Natal Midlands is a large farm, indeed. But 12 000ha of the Karoo? Hell, you can have pet names for them all, so small is the flock of sheep you can sustain on a Karoo farm that size.

The point that the government seems to be missing here is the effect this bill will have on potential foreign investment ~ something its economic ministerial cluster keeps bleating about at international symposia and the annual Davos shindig.

A foreigner with money will only invest if he feels secure in two things. Will he make a good return on his money? And can he, when he wants to, get his money out again?

Investment in South African agriculture is precarious enough as it is, given poor security, dry conditions and low commodity prices and the question whether any returns-driven foreigner would want to invest in anything other than a local wine farm is moot. Now, to add stipulations that will, effectively, mean that one cannot freely liquidate one's land assets, will simply mean that Africa-bound investors will look elsewhere on the continent for land, for example in Botswana, the Congo, Angola or Mozambique.

Far more critically than discouraging people from investing in agriculture by passing this restrictive, disruptive bill into law, the government should concentrate its efforts on supporting farmers large and small, not by restrictions on the one hand and handouts on the other, but by putting in place policies and programmes that ensure and enhance family, regional and national food security.

Entrenching your kleptocracy in this way, Mr Zuma, is not going to pave the road to the golden future for all, that you and your party espouse with your populist speeches.

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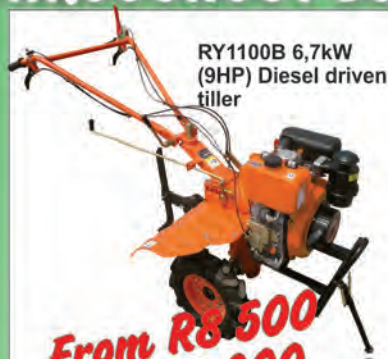
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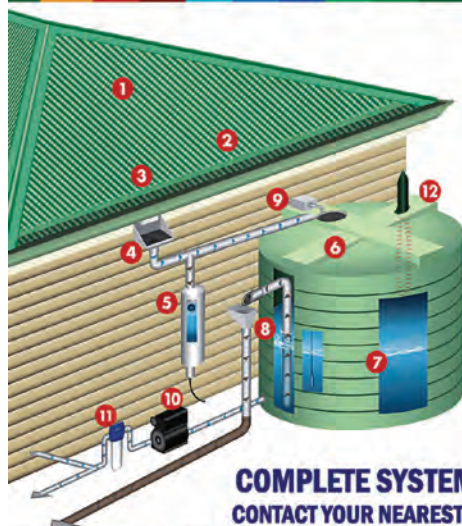
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**S**ir ~ I would like to suggest that there is a solution to the posed problem (in your comment The elephant in the room, February 2017) that would lift all participants out of poverty and benefit South Africa as a country enormously. We usually look to the "big" (business, conglomerate farming, multi nationals and government) to help the small. Each of these big entities is made up of small individuals that it relies on to make it big.

Every individual needs a few basic things to live and give input to the "big". The most important is food, so to start with the provision of food is a good place to begin. If man has more food than he needs and can barter/sell the extra he is out of the pov-

erty/dependency syndrome. Poverty is in essence a dependency problem and not a positional status. If you depend on a "big" to give you a job, or a multinational to give you food aid, you are their slave, and not free – in short you are controlled by them, which equals poverty. If you can provide your basic need without the "big" in your life you are out of poverty and climbing the ladder to wealth. If one household of father, mother and two children

have one hectare of land they can grow enough food for their needs and have surplus to sell for other things like clothes.

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material is on the web for free download, at [www.farming-gods-way.org](http://www.farming-gods-way.org) and I do training at Plot 82, Nooitgedacht, Muldersdrift. There is a DVD that can be purchased from the web site or from me.

The basic process is using compost made on site, and soil improvement through natural farming methods, all implemented by man, without the need for costly machines.

Continued on page 8

The Editor welcomes your letters, comments and opinions, but reserves the right to edit and shorten as necessary. Senders' names and addresses must be included.

Afrikaans letters will be translated.

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Indeed, during each of the four months from November 2016 to February, we recorded more than 200mm, and historically we still receive meaningful rainfall in March

and April, so, overall we can expect the year's total to surpass 1 100mm at least. These figures do no more, of course, than flesh out in numbers the reality Gautengers have come to see around them, with all of the area's water supply dams now full after a worrying period of drought through the past dry

season.

What does this do, in effect, for Gauteng's smallholders? Firstly, consistently good rains will mean an increase in moisture levels in the soil, in turn in time feeding ground water supplies, which should mean that water tables will rise somewhat, making weak boreholes more efficient.

Good rains have also meant good crops, particularly of dryland plantings, and fodder, and these extend way beyond Gauteng to most of the summer rainfall region of the highveld. As a result, we can expect maize prices to drop, as a result of better harvests, although it must be added that the current crop could have been much bigger had many farmers not refrained from over-committing themselves to planting while the memories of the last two dry seasons remained with them. Many others were simply unable to maximise their plantings because of the financial constraints brought about by the past drought. Lower maize prices should

Continued on page 10

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From page 7

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## NEWS It's SHOWTIME! Show season kicks off in Walkerville this month

Autumn and early winter has become the preferred season for country shows around Gauteng. First up this month is the **Walkerville Agricultural Show** on 8 and 9 April at the Walkerville Agricultural Society's showgrounds just north of the village of Walkerville itself. One of the oldest shows in Gauteng, this year's event will be the society's 55th, and is one of the last traditional old-style farmers' shows in the region. In recent years it has been growing steadily in both exhibitor numbers and attendance. Apart from stands from many commercial suppliers to the agri-industry, such as power equipment, tractors, solar energy, security, feeds and seeds, etc, there are also a large number of well-supported bric-a-brac, craft, hobby and plant stalls. Plus, there is a good livestock section, featuring sheep and goats, cattle, rabbits and poultry etc, and showing smallholders what they can achieve on their plots.

One of the highlights of the show is the imaginative stand featuring not only the wildlife of the area but also some of the problems faced by conservation-minded landowners, put together by the local conservancy association and staffed by knowledgeable and approachable personnel. Children are not left out, either with a fun play area and kids' entertainment specially laid on, including camel and pony rides and for those who are thirsty and hungry there are ample stalls serving a variety of cuisine and drink, which can be enjoyed in a large seated area under shady trees and awnings.

This year the show will feature a giant pumpkin competition sponsored by heirloom seedsmen, Livingseeds.

The grounds also features a well-established sand arena in which equestrian events are planned. Hopefully these will be better attended this year than last.

Continued on page 11

## RAINFALL

From page 8

have a knock-on effect on animal feed costs and this, by extension, should have a stabilising effect on the price of meat and poultry in the supermarkets.

For horse owners and those who must rely on bought-in fodder, the price of hay should remain reasonable through the next season because cuttings are back at bountiful levels in many areas, with both good quality grass and plentiful baling being the order of the day on

many farms.

For landowners, however, the good rains result in a hazard as we approach the dry months of winter and the fire season. While cutting and baling will be taking place in all of those viable areas of growth, verges, small patches and difficult corners of growth will have also grown with the bountiful rain and, as these dry out, constitute a fire hazard which needs to be taken care of if fast-spreading fires are to be prevented in the coming months.

# NEWS

From page 10

Entrance to the show is R40 per car, regardless of the number of occupants and all proceeds from the show will go towards the establishment and maintenance of the society's ambitious Walkerville Agricultural Community Centre.

In May the action moves out of Gauteng to Bothaville in the Free State for the **Nampo Harvest Day** from 16 to 19 May, a four-day show that has become a must-do for anybody involved in agriculture in southern Africa. While accommodation in the area is at a premium at this time of year it is quite possible to do a day trip to Nampo from Gauteng by car if one leaves early enough, and if one has one's own aircraft or helicopter the showgrounds has its own airfield, complete with air traffic control for the duration of the show.

Back in Gauteng, the **Outdoor X Expo** takes place on 27 and 28 May at Malonjeni Guest Farm outside Heidelberg. As the name suggests this growing show features all manner of outdoor pursuits, including hunting, 4x4 vehicles, camping and leisure activities. The first weekend in June features the popular **Mampoerfees** at the Willem Prinsloo Agricultural History Museum outside Rayton, which is an occasion for visitors to sample the many types of home-distilled traditionally-flavoured spirit on offer, as well as to partake in traditional Afrikaans fare and activities.

Finally, ten days later, the **KragDag Expo** takes place from 16 to 18 June near Donkerhoek, Rayton. Now in its ninth iteration, it has grown into the largest exposition of self-sufficiency and renewable technology in South Africa, and is expected to draw a crowd of more than the 13 000 visitors who

attended last year's show. With a lead sponsorship by Afrikaans union Solidarity now in its second year, the KragDag show features more than 500 exhibitors spread over a 3ha exhibition ground that incorporates food stalls and entertainment in a carnival atmosphere.

Originally started in response to the energy crisis of 2007, the show was envisaged to enable visitors to "do their own thing" by living off-grid, using solar energy, growing

their own food and developing a lifestyle that renders them independent and self-supporting. With this in view, the theme of this year's expo is "gone are the days of living at the highest gear" in an attempt to highlight ways and means to live life at a more meaningful, but slower, pace. Although energy solutions and self-sufficiency remain cornerstones of the show, other areas have come to be highlighted including water supply and quality, security,

food security, the economy, education, health, and financial aspects. There is also a focus on entrepreneurship and a sub-exhibition by the Association of Home Educators.

Entrance on the day is R70 for adults, with children under 18 free, but you can enter for free if you register on-line with your own email address at [www.kragdag.co.za](http://www.kragdag.co.za).

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## Help scientists track this pretty little bug

**L**adybird, ladybird fly away home! Your house is on fire and your children all gone. Ladybird, ladybird fly away home... \*

Well, particularly if you are the alien invasive Lady Beetle *Harmonia axyridis* from Central and Eastern Asia. The creature has been declared a Nemba Category 1b invasive, because it negatively impacts pristine grassland and agricultural crops, as it is a voracious generalist. It can occur in large densities and compete against other indigenous insects.

It is a medium-sized, shiny, orange to red beetle of 5-8mm. The pattern of black spots is very variable but the pattern on the neck or pronotum is a black 'M' or 'W' ~ and this is what distinguishes this pest from indigenous lady beetles. The Harlequin ladybird is also predatory and by feeding on native ladybirds, alters or displaces native ladybird species.



Alien Harlequin ladybird, above, with an indigenous ladybird below to show the difference in neck marking you are to look for in tracking the alien species.



### Stellenbosch researchers seek SA gardeners' help in tracking spread of alien ladybird

The females lay yellowish eggs in small clusters on the surface of leaves, branches or tree trunks. Multiple studies have shown that the Harlequin ladybird can have detrimental effects on agricultural crops and on

native ladybird diversity in other regions of the world and it is for this reason that researchers from the Centre for Invasion Biology at Stellenbosch University are asking for help from the public.

To tackle pressing questions surrounding the invasion of the Harlequin ladybird in South Africa, landowners are asked to collect specimens and gather data on the distribution of the Harlequin ladybird throughout the country. Now is a good time to start looking out for it because

Continued on page 15



# DELMAS

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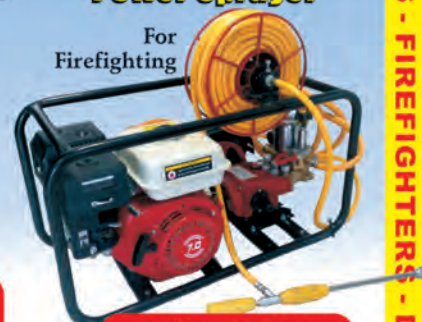


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## Wet summer brings on coleus-like weed

The heavy rains this season have resulted in a greater-than-usual outbreak of an alien weed that is part of the mint family, and related to the colourfully-leaved coleus plants one often has in one's garden and home. It is *Plectranthus comosus*, commonly known

as Abyssinian coleus, or woolly plectranthus. There are about 350 members of the Mint family (*Lamiaceae*), occurring world-wide ranging throughout Africa, India, Australia and even Japan. Of the 53 species in South Africa and Namibia it is those

from the Eastern Cape and KZN that are most suitable as garden subjects. Plectranthus is not only very easy to grow, the plants also tolerate a wide range of conditions, from full shade through to full sun and from damp to dry. Unfortunately *Plectranthus comosus*, from North Africa -

hence its common name Abyssinian coleus - has become a problem in some areas of South Africa, and is particularly evident this year in Gauteng.

Woolly Plectranthus is a Category 3 weed. It grows without any effort, is hardy and can make an eye-catching display when in flower, all of which contributes to making it a low-maintenance favourite with gardeners. To its discredit is the fact that it readily outcompetes indigenous plants and is therefore detrimental to natural vegetation. Woolly plectranthus is a robust erect shrub up to 3m tall with a woody base. The stems and leaves are densely woolly. Leaves are large, sometimes more than 100mm

From page 13

during autumn and winter Harlequin ladybirds typically gather in large numbers around urban developments. When disturbed, adults exude a fluid with an unpleasant smell that can also stain fabrics.

If you encounter a site with high abundance of Harlequin ladybirds (eg. more than 20 beetles) or a large aggregation such as those typically found

around households in window frames and doors, you can contribute to the project by collecting ten to 30 ladybirds per site. All that is needed is that you place these ladybirds in a small, clean container or ziplock bag, note the date and site of collection, and freeze them in your home freezer. Once you have collected them, you can email researcher Dr Minette Karsten at [minettek@sun.ac.za](mailto:minettek@sun.ac.za) and

## LADYBIRD

she will contact you with information on how to send your sample.

The specimens that you collect will be highly valuable to answer key questions of the invasion biology and will be used in a genetic study to uncover the origins, route of invasion and spread of the Harlequin ladybird in South Africa.

\*Traditional English nursery

Continued on page 17

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## ALIENS

From page 15

long and 47mm wide (but smaller in the wild), light green above and grey-green below. The flowers, borne in a terminal spike-like raceme between 200-300mm long - appear between March and September and are deep blue or mauve. The individual flowers are up to 20mm long. Old unattended specimens tend to look untidy and scrawny.



Member of the coleus family ... woolly plectranthus has been abundant this summer

Exercise great care when removing the plant as pieces of stem left behind will take root and grow. There is no herbicide registered for the control of Woolly plectranthus. Cutting back promotes coppicing, so the cut stump has to be dealt

with. Either remove it entirely or treat the stump in some other way. If possible all parts of the plant should be burnt if incineration of garden refuse is permitted in your area. Shredding is another option.

If the plant is in your garden, any local plectranthus species (*Plectranthus ecklonii*, - pink and mauve and *Plectranthus fruticosus* - white) will make a worthwhile replacement and there are several more exceptionally beautiful varieties ranging from those suitable for pots and flower boxes (*P. saccatus*) to small and medium shrubs (*P. ciliatus*) and ground covers (*P. madagascariensis*, or *P. verticillatus*).

In pastures and fields the plant should be removed as it is unpalatable and is not grazed by livestock and will supplant natural species and grasses.

References: *Alien Weeds & Invasive Plants* by Lesley Henderson, Agricultural Research Council, and *The Southern African Plectranthus* by Ernst van Jaarsveld, 2006.



Small purple flowers on Abyssinian coleus or woolly plectranthus

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## BEEKEEPING

# Plan the work, then work the plan

Here we are sitting around our garden table in the shade of our magnificent Eucalyptus melliodora tree. New buds are developing for the October honey flow, which over the years has never failed us. Pen and paper in hand, we are planning the seasons ahead, from catch boxes to new swarms to the final three supers on each hive, 40 kg of honey per hive from 50 hives by end of March 2018, ie,

### How an organised beekeeper tracks his swarms, catch boxes, hives and apiaries, and keeps in touch with farmers and landowners, by the Eastern Highveld Beekeepers Association

two tons of honey. Our target is to replace the 50 hives lost over the past year due to failing queens, vandalism, fires and poor swarms that just did not develop from the previous year's catching. This manoeuvre will bring our complement of working swarms back to 300 in the field.

All catch boxes must be ready for placing by mid-April. They must have been cleaned out of possible wax moth infestation, spider webs, old dry combs, and each frame, of the 500 involved, to have been cleaned and scraped, the wires tensioned where required, and a 20mm strip of

foundation wax fitted into the groove of the top bars of the frames.

Damaged boxes must have been repaired, lost boxes due to fires replaced, and all leaky holes repaired and closed up to facilitate the eventual moving of the catch boxes to their apiary sites.

By the end of April the siting of the catch boxes must be completed. The area targeted for our plan is the Magaliesberg, Brits, Mooiooi, Broederstroom and Pelindaba areas, 150 km from home base. We will have visited farmers, institutions and mapplotters to scatter our catch boxes over as wide an area as possible, say eight

sites of six boxes per site.

By May 1 we must have placed all boxes and clearly have recorded each site, the owner's details, and a brief sketch of the access to the boxes.

The next step is to research the areas for our bees to have access to aloes, citrus, eucalyptus, mangoes, avocados and natural bush, and the flowering times of each.

We will rendezvous the caught swarms into five apiaries of ten hives in the areas that we had selected best for our target.

We may have to move the apiaries to suit the flows in order that we obtain eucalyptus honey to conclude the season by the end of November in these areas.

The December dearth period

Continued on page 19

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**They might not be Health & Safety-approved, but here are some tips to starting even the most recalcitrant two-stroke engine**

pointers and tips to getting even the most work-shy two-stroke engine fired up. For this, however, you will need a compressor, or an electric

drill. And note, however, that these bush-mechanic solutions will probably invalidate any warranty or manufacturer's guarantee that

may exist on your machine. If your machine has worked hard in the previous season and has not been serviced, a good clean up may be enough to free up its airflow to enable it to draw in fresh air. This, of course, refers to its

Continued on page 21

## BEEKEEPING

From page 18

will allow us to crop off most of the honey, hopefully an average of 26kg per hive, and to move the bees back to the Eastern Highveld to the cosmos and soya bean fields around Delmas and surrounding areas, where we have also had to visit farmers for permission to place our bees. It is to these areas that we expect an average of 14kg of honey per hive, to top up our planned target of 40kg per

hive for the season.

Our remaining 250 hives will be on permanent sites of eucalyptus, soya beans, cosmos and blackjacks, some on apiaries in and bordering urban areas. We will have contracted some hives for pollination of kidney beans, sunflowers, pumpkins, water melons, and a range of berry growers who come to us. We have some hives on a lavender farm to obtain that special lavender honey.

The ultimate success of beekeeping, be it a small hobbyist operation or full time commercial undertaking is to keep proper records of each apiary site and continually plan ahead to avoid mistakes and shortcomings which result in improvements, seasonally, monthly, weekly and daily.

Our planning includes winter management, spring cleaning and summer management, and cropping of the honey at

the correct times.

One must keep the plans simple in order that one can achieve their ultimate objectives, so that at the end of the day one enjoys the fruits of success.

For more information on beekeeping contact Peter Clark, author of *Tales of an African Beekeeper* and chairman of the Eastern Highveld Beekeepers Association, tel 011 362-2904

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## MACHINERY

From page 19

air filter. Before removing the filter to clean it, however, blow away any external dust or caked oil and dust, lest when you remove the filter and spark plug some of this gunk enters either the carburettor or cylinder. With the outside of the engine clean, remove the air filter and clean it well. If it is a foam filter wash the foam in warm soapy water and let it dry before impregnating it with light oil according to the engine manufacturer's instructions. Don't over-saturate the element or you will restrict its ability to allow air to flow through. If it is a filter incorporating a micro-membrane wash it well and blow it dry with a light jet of air from your compressor. Next, remove the spark plug and clean it. If you have been pulling and pulling on the starter cord the chances are that the end of the plug will be wet with fuel and oil mix, and this is the key to both your problem and its solution. With a small piece of fine sandpaper brighten up the two tips of the plug and, using a small screwdriver or piece of wire scrape away any carbon that has built up in the recess of the plug. Blow it clean with your compressor. If the plug is heavily carbonated and black, or the points are worn,

replace it.

All of this maintenance work presupposes, of course, that you are using a fresh batch of fuel mix. Counter-intuitively (because it is oil-derived), petrol is hygroscopic, ie it absorbs moisture from the air over time. As a result, last season's fuel mix will have lost much of its "vooma", even if stored in a sealed container and this alone could be the source of your problem. Replace old fuel with a fresh mix.

Before replacing either the spark plug or the air filter, blow air into the air intake with your compressor while simultaneously pulling on the starter cord. Depending on how long you spent pulling the starter cord attempting to start the machine, this should result in a fine mist of fuel and oil being emitted from both the spark plug hole and the exhaust ~ evidence that you'd well and truly flooded the engine.

Replace the spark plug, ensuring it is properly connected electrically, and the air filter.

Engage the choke and attempt to start the machine. Give it no more than two or three pulls. Did it at least kick over? Yes? Disengage the choke and pull again on full throttle. It should start after one or two

Continued on page 22

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## WATER AFFAIRS

# Repair leaky dams without emptying

If you suspect your dam or earth pond is losing more daily than it should through evaporation there is a quick do-it-yourself solution that you can apply that does not require you to empty the contents, and will not harm fish, frogs or other wildlife in or around the dam. And, if your dam water is cloudy and muddy following the recent rains this com-

pound has the advantage of agglomerating the suspended inorganic solids (eg clay fines) in the water and clearing the water as a result.

The compound, imported and marketed in South Africa by Aqua Plastech, is a super absorbent polymer, technically a polymer acrylamide, not unlike the material contained in babies' disposable nappies that mops up

the wetness.

Supplied in a rough small granular form, it is spread upon the surface of the water using nothing more sophisticated than a fertilizer or seed spreader. Upon contact with the water the material expands greatly and spreads itself evenly over the area treated, before gently sinking to the bottom as a slimy goo. There, it is sucked into

fissures and cracks in the base of the dam by the "hydraulic forces" created by the water that has already leaked into the soil dispersing further and deeper into the ground. And having agglomerated the suspended inorganic particles in the water, these aid in forming a durable, long-lasting layer of impermeable material that is drawn into the

Continued on page 24



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## MACHINERY

From page 21

pulls. No? Here's where we become bush-mechanics. Remove the air filter, open the throttle fully but do not engage the choke, and direct a constant jet of air into the air intake from your compressor while having an assistant pull the starter cord vigorously. The added oxygen thus being forced into the cylinder will,

surely, make a wonderfully-combustible mixture and even the most recalcitrant engine will kick over, firing up, and then roaring lustily, often in a cloud of smoke.

Let it settle down to a smooth idle as you replace the air filter. As you do so you will notice that the engine slows and its sound deepens. That's because the air filter, while it

cleans the air entering the chamber, also restricts the airflow: there's a trade-off between its ability to micro-filter the air and allow sufficient into the engine to ensure a lean, combustible air-fuel mixture.

That's how you can get a brushcutter or chainsaw started. Much the same

Continued on page 24



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# WATER AFFAIRS

From page 23

top layers of the dam's bottom, creating an effective seal.

Although it is usual to treat the entire surface of a leaking dam, if you know more or less the actual spot at which your dam is leaking it is possible to treat this exclusively, simply by applying the granules directly above where you know the leak to be. Naturally this (and all dam sealing activities, for that matter) should be done on a calm, wind-free day to ensure that the granules expand and sink in the right spot, and aren't blown away.

Most leaking dams and ponds can be treated with Aqua Plastech. Exceptions are dams



Small granules of compound are spread upon the water



In addition to sealing the dam, Aqua Plastech clarifies the water by agglomerating fine suspended solids in the water and using them to bind the base of the dam

with very steep sides (the material can't attach itself effectively to a vertical side but will rather sink to a flatter bottom), or lined dams where

the lining has been severely punctured, for example by a cow or a horse, and it will need very heavy dosing with Aqua Plastech to seal a dam

which is dug in very sandy soil.

Those exceptions apart, users have reported improvements

Continued on page 25

# MACHINERY

From page 23

applies to a recalcitrant pull-start lawnmower insofar as spark plug, air filter and fuel mixture are concerned.

But with a mower you can additionally turn it into an "electric start" machine, thereby entirely doing away with the need to yank on its starter cord.

Simply remove the starter mechanism at the top of the

engine. This is usually secured as a separate mechanism with a set of small bolts and, once removed, should reveal a substantial nut securing a flywheel on the top of the main (vertical) drive shaft. From your socket spanners choose a socket to fit the nut and, using an extension shaft, attach this to your electric drill. Open the throttle fully, put the socket over the nut and, holding the drill firmly ~ yes, firmly, because it will want to spin around against the resistance of the engine ~ start the drill. The engine will spin. And spin. And, all else having been checked and cleaned, it WILL fire. Quickly lift the drill off the nut. You will soon become adept at

doing this without unnecessarily running the drill in place and wearing down the nut.

This method of starting a lawnmower engine does not comply with Health & Safety regulations and can result in the socket coming loose and flying off the drill. As a result it is best not performed in front of an audience.

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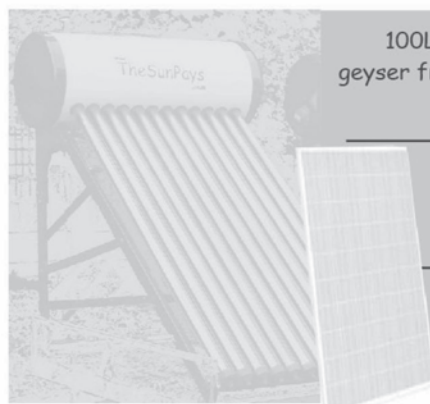
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# HORSES

## Horse sense & sensibility

### Make working with horses more rewarding by understanding their senses

Nobody who has spent any time riding or working with horses will deny that they are among the most intelligent and sensitive quadrupeds one can encounter, and the senses are an important part of what makes horses behaviourally different from other livestock. We do not completely understand the horse senses, but what we have learned has greatly added to our knowledge of horses. When we work with horses, it is beneficial to try to understand their sense of the environment.

☐ **Sight.** The horse has one

of the largest eyes of any modern animal and has keen visual perception. It has a special light intensifying device which reflects light back on to the retina, making vision in poor light very good (which is why it's perfectly safe to go riding at night: your mount can see in the dark much better than you can). In the wild horses are very active at dawn and dusk. However, the eye structure allows the horse to see the slightest movement, which is why horses can be "spooked" by something on the periphery or edge of their vision.

Continued on page 28

## DAM SEALER

From page 24

almost overnight after using the compound, both in terms of the clarity of their water and in terms of water loss, especially if they have followed the correct dosage, which is recommended at 60-75 grams of dry granules per m<sup>2</sup> of water area.

The material can also be used retrospectively on a dam that has been properly constructed with a layer of bentonite initially compacted into the bottom before filling. And, the sealant can be applied without removing vegetation growing in the dam. It simply settles around the stems of aquatic growth effectively sealing the soil. To get the dosage right Aqua Plastech recommends dividing the dam's surface

visually using a grid of some sort, and then applying the material to each section of the grid using a hand spreader to ensure an even layer. Besides choosing a calm, wind-free day on which to do it, and maybe using a boat or canoe to reach the middle of the water if necessary, no further special equipment or techniques are necessary.

The material, which is highly hygroscopic (it absorbs moisture readily from the atmosphere), is supplied in sealed plastic buckets of 2kg, 4kg and 8kg.

Aqua Plastech is Randburg-based, and is seeking dealers and agents countrywide. For full technical information visit [www.aquaplastech.co.za](http://www.aquaplastech.co.za) or call Andre on 072 378-1257

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**Many farmers, foresters and fire agencies use the STIHL BR 700 blower for fire management. Here, STIHL's technical team discusses the use and limitations of blowers in fire management.**

The STIHL BR 700 backpack blower is a very powerful tool in fire management, ideal for tackling basic tasks such as clearing flammable debris and accumulated leaf litter from fire lines. However, it is by no means a complete solution and can never replace the use of water at the scene of a fire.

The STIHL BR 700 can be used to quickly and effectively pre-clear fire lines or for controlling fire breaks, where it is primarily used to speed up the burn or to extinguish the fire break completely. It is a cost-effective means of clearing dry earth mineral firebreaks and managing cold fires, and can replace beaters on a fire line. Its light weight means that the BR 700 is easy to handle and carry around, and it is particularly comfortable for extended use with a high power-to-weight ratio, low vibrations and ergonomically designed harness.

### What is the best method for using blowers?

Despite their many uses in fire management, blowers are by no means a complete fire-fighting solution. It is not recommended that backpack blowers be used in grass taller than knee height or on very hot fires, as this becomes dangerous for the operator. Blowers should only be used where beaters would otherwise have been used, and can never replace water out in the field. It is also important to assess the terrain - walking through thick bush or climbing through fences with a backpack blower could be challenging. Fires should never be tackled head on, but rather from the sides and the back of the blaze while waiting for the fire-tender to arrive.



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Petrol Blower  
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Max air throughput 1860 m³/h



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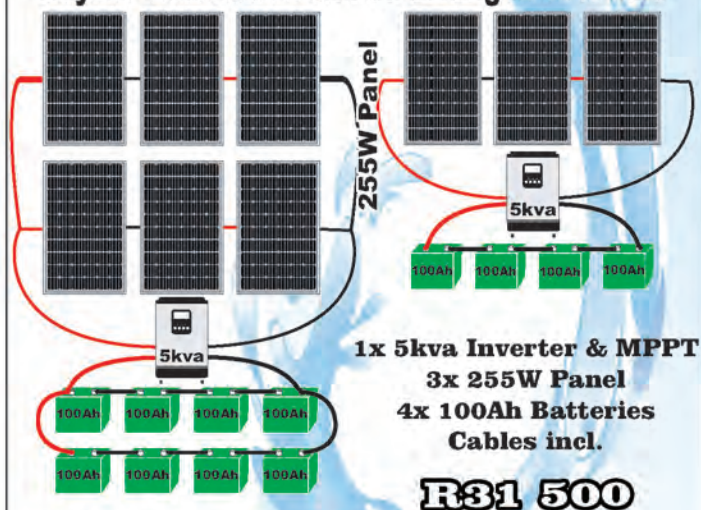
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## HORSES

From page 25

No one knows for sure how far horses can see, mainly because such tests are impossible to do accurately. Horses see primarily by monocular vision, meaning that they see different things out of each eye. Horses have a wide monocular (panoramic) view of the horizon and can see about 340-360° around it.

Binocular vision (seeing the same out of both eyes) is used on a limited basis and primarily when the horse is looking straight ahead. Having binocular vision in front of 60-70° means the horse

needs to move the head to see where it is going. It can only focus fully for a short distance ahead - about 2m. This is a problem in jumping - it focuses then must remember and trust its memory of the object.

As the eyes are on the sides of its head, the horse does not normally see objects in depth. It sees them like we do with one eye closed. It sees them with less detail than humans but is more sensitive to movement.

Blinkers, therefore considerably dull a horse's visual sense and limit its ability greatly.

Eyes are perfectly placed for cropping pasture, which it does for half its life, so the horse's visual area is more towards the ground than the sky.

The horse can raise its head quickly and focus on objects at various distances away

from it.

A horse's vision is its primary detector of danger. Colour vision is still debated. Some work shows the horse can see colour starting from yellow, green, blue and red in that order. Nevertheless, the bright colours used to paint showjumping obstacles are more likely to startle the



Horses' ears rotate, and flatten, to attenuate their hearing

rider than the horse, which will see less of the colour and more of the light-and-dark contrast between the colours used.

A horse needs time to adjust its vision between light and dark, which becomes a consideration when expecting a horse to enter a dark horsebox on a bright, sunny day. (Hint: Never paint the inside walls of your box in a dark colour or obscure the windows, and turn the box so that the sun is behind the open box when loading to maximise the light flooding the interior.)

The horse has a blind spot behind its head which increases when the head is lifted. So it is important to allow the horse to move its head to see objects in its way.

Horses are generally reluctant to enter dark enclosures but quieten down when in there

and feel safe looking out into the light.

Horses are often blindfolded to quieten them.

Don't look a strange horse in the eye. It's a threatening pose.

A horse will habitu-



Horses have a well-developed sense of smell.

Continued on page 29

From page 28

ally go in the direction it is looking so point it correctly.

**Hearing.** Horses have a broader range of hearing than humans and can hear up to 25 000 cps; they also have acute hearing in the high and low frequencies.

Horses have 16 muscles that control the ears, which they can swivel 180 degrees. When ears are laid fully back this cuts their hearing severely. Horses can protect their ears from very loud noise by laying their ears flat in order to close down the ear canal.

So a horse laying its ears back in response to a loud noise may not be scared, but simply trying to protect itself. Similarly, a horse may lay its ears back when you yell at it. Or, it will lay its ears flat when angered in an effort to focus its senses on sight and smell. Horses are alert at all times except in deep sleep which

they do in very short spells.

Horses can respond to a training command given at a very low volume. We don't need to shout to be heard. Also, horses are very sensitive to the tone of voice. Use a confident tone and avoid overly emotional tones such as shrill, high pitches.

**Smell** is well developed in the horse. Wild horses are difficult to stalk except upwind.

Horses also use smell as part of their complicated social structure. Horses meet nose to nose and smell each other. They are sensitive to smells in their environment ~ dung, dirty troughs, musty feed, bad water and certain plants. Smell is very important in feed selection.

Horses can identify medicine in feed even when we attempt to mask it in tasty treats. Your horse may have a seemingly irrational fear of some smells, such as strong

odours associated with pigs. The horse has a vomeronasal organ (VNO) and the flehmen response is very obvious in stallions sniffing mares in heat.

**Touch.** The equine sense of touch is an important element to the horse, although it is often overlooked. Although many people think that horses have a tough hide, they really don't. Their skin is tougher than human epidermis, but it is still rich with nerve endings. They can sense a fly landing on any part of their body through their coat to flick it off.

If you sit on a pasture fence



For such a large and powerful beast, a horse is very tactile in its senses.

and watch a herd of horses for a few hours, you'll see plenty of evidence of how horses use touch to communicate with each other. Mothers reassure their babies with a brush of the muzzle; comrades scratch each other's itches with their teeth. Whenever a message needs to be sent from one horse to another, visual cues and touch are nearly always used. Humans can also use touch to convey messages to the horse. Riders use touch to

Continued on page 31

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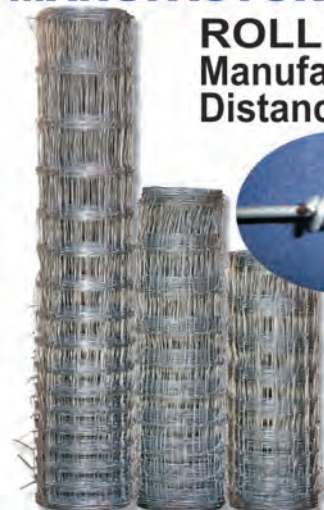
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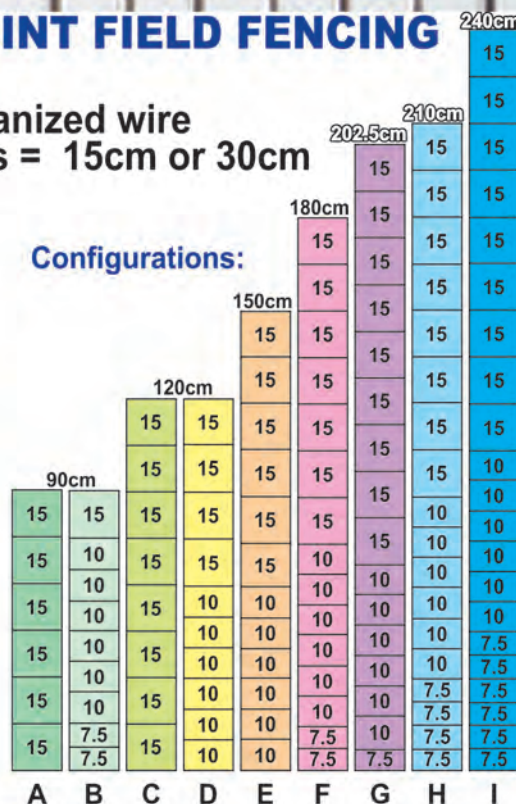
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C	120	9
D	120	11
E	150	13
F	180	16
G	202.5	17
H	210	19
I	240	22

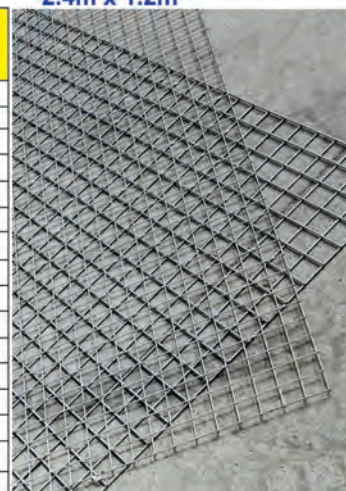
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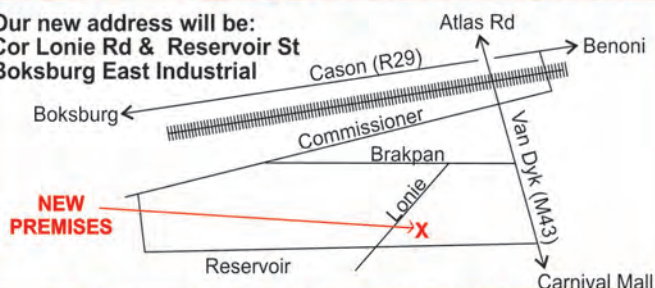
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	5
100 x 20	3.15
	4
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## Plant to beat poor quality fodder problems

Winter presents a livestock owner with particular challenges and our response

### HORSES

From page 29

signal intentions to the horse. A gentle rub down, a pat on the shoulder, a vigorous massage in just the right place — these are all ways of saying, “I’m your friend” to a horse. Sometimes, if you’re lucky, you’ll get a similar tactile message in return. Horses are “inter-pressure”. They respond to pressure so when you move into the horse, with your shoulder to its flank, for example, you will get reverse response. Horses respond to touch all over the body but especially around the head. Ears and eyes are especially sensitive areas. They don’t like their ears pulled. The upper lip and muzzle are very sensitive to tactile stimulus, and are equivalent to our fingers. The whiskers that grow from the muzzle and around the eyes are like an insect’s antennae. They are especially useful in low light conditions when the horse is nosing around. You should not cut them off! Horses have a “point of balance” behind shoulder and in centre of head like cattle.

☐ **Taste.** Horses are attracted by sweetness, so sugar, molasses, water melon rind, peaches and even beer are relished. You can use molasses to entice horses to eat crushed medicine. After a period of time, however, don’t be surprised if they wise up and refuse that medicine treat. We also use molasses to enhance the flavour and nutritional value of dry, poor quality hay. They (especially foals) reject salty, sour and bitter tastes at about the same level of acceptance as humans.

should not be haphazard. Addressing the special nutritional, environmental and health needs of livestock in the winter will help ensure optimal animal welfare and performance. Preventing problems is more economical than is treating them so the concept of prevention will never grow cold. Our animals’ nutritional requirements increase significantly during cold

weather.

For most smallholder livestock, the predominant energy source during the winter months is veld grass. However, just when the animals’ energy needs are increasing, the quality of the grass is decreasing. Grass quality is considered low when the crude protein content drops below 7%. As grass matures, the fibre content increases, while the

leaves and protein content decrease. Grass also becomes unpalatable and at the same time, forage intake and subsequently total energy intake declines.

During autumn and early winter months the protein content of veld and some summer grass pastures is nearly always inadequate to sustain healthy animal production. So one should

Continued on page 32



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From page 31

plan forms of supplementation.

Organised smallholders will already have planted winter crops as forage for their animals.

Lucerne, winter ryegrass and oats are popular and can be planted as late as March.

Lucerne is semi-permanent but annual varieties are also available. It is strongly recommended that it be grown amongst grasses. One of the reasons for this is that nitrogen levels build up to unhealthy levels in pure legume pastures. This way the grasses benefit as well. Smuts Finger (*Digitaria eriantha*) combines well with lucerne, because it is nitrogen hungry. It provides better autumn grazing and early winter forage.

Another crop that should be considered as a winter feed crop is oats.

This crop has quite a few

## Lucerne, oats, stooling rye, plantain & sainfoin ... all are options for winter fodder

advantages: it is suitable for almost all regions of South Africa, it also has a depressing effect on soil-borne diseases such as take-all and it is a significant contributor to sustainable agriculture as it can be used as a natural herbicide, fertilizer, mulch and biomass, groundcover and to control erosion.

Witteberg oats and Overberg oats are used for fodder crops. Other varieties are more suited to milling.

The crop is widely adapted to most soil conditions. The planting time for oats is January to April in warmer areas.

It is recognised that your pasture will be more successful if it is multi-specie.

Stooling rye is a valuable fodder (for pasture, hay or

silage) and has the added advantage of being a cover crop during winter. During late autumn, livestock can graze stooling rye forage once it has reached a height of 15 ~ 20 cm but the animals should be removed when the grass height is reduced to 5 ~ 7 cm, to avoid the danger of strangles and other problems. But there are other forage crops that you might not have considered.

Plantain provides an improved supply of some trace elements to animals (Cu, Zn, Se), which has a positive impact on animal performance. It is also extremely palatable to stock. The autumn planting is March to April.

Sainfoin is a perennial legume that has much to

offer Highveld smallholders. It is a non-bloating, highly digestible and nutritious pasture. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of Sainfoin is its excellent frost tolerance. Managed correctly, it can provide green pasture in the middle of winter.

Triticale has also been planted successfully in warmer regions of Gauteng. It can be used for grazing, hay, silage as well as a grain feed. Planting months are April – May.

Remember that your fields form the foundation of your enterprise, providing the bulk of the forage.

Controlled selective grazing (CSG) has for many years been recommended as the most suitable veld management system for the sweet grass veld areas in South Africa. Seasonal resting of veld leads to a dramatic increase in production of

Continued on page 32

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# LIVESTOCK

From page 32

palatable grasses during the following season. You need to divide your camps so that there is sufficient rest time allowed.

If your grass and other forage sources are inadequate (and that's the case on most smallholdings) you will have to buy in hay, as the animals must have sufficient roughage throughout the year.

Another source of winter feed is crop residues.

Although almost any crop residue can be fed to

livestock, the residues of maize and vegetables are usually involved in animal feeding in Gauteng.

Maize crop residues have been used for feeding livestock, both cattle and sheep, for many generations and remains one of the cheapest and best ways for winter feeding. Because of the cost involved in collecting the residues or baling it, the usual practice is to graze the residues in situ.

Some animal feed scientists actually recommend whole

maize as an excellent proposition as winter grazing, particularly for sheep. Maize fills the winter gap effectively in a fodder flow from autumn until the first spring rains and can be used on its own or in combination with other winter pastures or crop residues or even saved for bridging the difficult August-September period. It is a low-risk, high-potential winter pasture produced with summer rain and kept until winter as forage. Good supervision, especially during

the first two to three weeks of grazing is very important to quickly identify and treat sick animals in a bid to prevent diseases.

Acidosis due to the high energy content of grazing maize is a real danger, but correct adaptation prior to grazing will help.

No matter how well you manage forage and veld, you will still need to supplement with concentrates in the form of pellets, cubes or meal.

Concentrates provide the essential extra energy, minerals, vitamins and protein animals need on top of forages. Concentrates must be carefully selected to balance the specific nutrients provided by the forages available.

Lick blocks are also an important form of supplementation. There are different types of licks to meet varying needs of different species of livestock, including protein licks and trace mineral licks. You can buy early winter licks and late winter licks.

Another form of feed is green feed in the form of mats of sprouted barley. As barley grass has the highest nutritional value of all green grasses, the general health improvement of livestock on this feed will be noticed, as well as higher energy and vitality levels, stimulation of immune systems and great antioxidant levels. There is a surprising amount of moisture in this feed as well.

Finally, you need to make sure that the animals have access to sufficient fresh clean water. Water troughs should be monitored in very cold weather, when they will freeze.

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6.4mm x 6.4mm	0.7mm	✓	✓	-----
9.6mm x 9.6mm	0.9mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 13mm	1.0mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 13mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.0mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.25mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.5mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	1.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	1.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	3.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	1.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓



## Mesh: Galvanised Before Welding Sold in 30m rolls or p/m

Block Size	Wire dia.	915mm	1220mm	1830mm
25mm x 25mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	3.0mm	-----	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	3.0mm	-----	✓	✓
50m x 100mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 100mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
100mm x 100mm	2.0mm	-----	✓	✓
100mm x 100mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓

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Hole Size	Wire dia.	915mm	1220mm	1830mm
13mm hole	0.7mm	✓	✓	✓
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75mm hole	1.8mm	✓	✓	✓
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- ☐ Ducks are hardy birds that may live for up to seven years.
- ☐ They lay eggs that are larger than chicken eggs, creamy and delicious.
- ☐ They provide meat.
- ☐ They are easy to contain.
- ☐ They aren't as prone to infectious diseases as chickens.
- ☐ They eat slugs, worms and other garden pests.
- ☐ And of course it's nice to have them waddling around making happy quacks.
- ☐ Finally, their basic requirements are simple. They need little more than water, food

**They are easy to keep, hardy, good at keeping pests at bay ~ and they're great to eat as well**

and a safe place to spend the night.

Before you acquire them however be sure that the facilities are in place. Ducks need water, space and infrastructure. Fences, additional food, housing and facilities for breeders and young are essential.

Ducks need water to swallow and a water depth of at least 10cm to clear their nostrils and keep their beaks clean. A natural pond, lined with something impermeable, is ideal and preferable. If you can't manage that, ducks can be provided with a child's wading pool. Water for swimming is not strictly necessary as long as they have tubs of water for drinking,

and the water is clean.

Clean drinking water must be provided separately. The ducks must not be able to climb into drinking water containers, but they must be deep enough and big enough for both adults and young to immerse their heads. This keeps their eyes clean and free from bacteria.

The drinking water should be changed daily as the birds habitually mix food in it. It is best to have the drinkers outside the duck house because ducks are very good at splashing it all over the place, and if it is just outside the house and their food is inside, they won't have to travel far to drink and clean their beaks.

Generally a diet of household scraps is not sufficient for good health, good growth and good egg production.

Free-range ducks can be fed a grain-based diet just like chickens.

There are feeds made for duck, although they are not always available. Ideally, table ducks should be fed poultry growing meal, and laying ducks should be fed laying mix.

To prevent a digestive upset, any change of feed should be gradual over a period of weeks, with the new feed slowly being substituted for the old.

Ducks must have a supply of enough green feed. This can include kikuyu, lucerne, oats, barley sprouts or any other vegetation suitable for them. Provide them with additional

Continued on page 37

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# WATERFOWL

From page 35

feed on a daily basis, to increase the protein levels required for breeding and growing birds. Young birds will start on starter mash. For adult birds, to keep costs down you can feed them a mixture of wheaten bran, lucerne meal and poultry mash, in the proportions 1:1:3. Unless you are fattening them up for the table don't use growing mash or pellets for too long, as the protein is high for them. Rather, for pets and laying birds, use laying mash or pellets.

There is controversy whether feed should be fed wet or dry. In both cases drinking water should be available to help the bird to swallow the feed. Increase the ration in winter when green feed is not regularly available.

Keep the feed in metal containers to prevent spoilage and for ease of cleaning.

When it comes to housing, ducks are pretty hardy, but generally they should have some kind of covered shelter available to them at all times.

The duck house can be bedded with wood shavings or sawdust. Fresh litter can be added as necessary and the deep litter cleaned out in summer each year, or it can be cleaned out more frequently, perhaps weekly. Remember too that ducks need shade in summer. If there is no natural shade, it is important to rig up some sort of sunshade to prevent them over-heating.

It is best if you supply a small three-sided shed, or an open hutch/pen. They must have an area that is dry and free of drafts. Nesting boxes should be available to females at least two months before the breeding season starts.

Provide each housing area or paddock with nests. Some ducks will make their nests in the shavings on the floor or under bushes while others prefer nesting boxes. Nests

must be accessible to pasture, pond and housing. When the birds are breeding, ensure that they are safe during the night.

You can acquire ducklings or adult birds. If you are buying from a professional breeder, check out the conditions in which the birds are kept. The cages should be clean, the water fresh, and the smell shouldn't be too overpowering. The animals should look relatively clean, healthy and alert.

If you buy ducklings make sure they are more than four weeks old and preferably even older and fully feathered.

Ducks don't need any particular vaccinations to help keep them disease free, but worming once or twice a year will help ensure they stay healthy.

Duck eggs are delicious, with a slightly stronger flavour than chicken's eggs. However, they

Continued on page 39



Welsh Harlequin female with ducklings

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# WATERFOWL

From page 37

are not as popular as hens' eggs because they don't keep so well. The shells are more porous than chickens' egg shells, and more likely to become contaminated by bacteria. If they are collected soon after lay, kept clean and stored in a cool place they will keep for seven to ten days. Compare this with chickens eggs that may be stored chilled for three weeks.

Egg laying begins at about 16 to 18 weeks of age. Most eggs are laid at night, so it is best to collect the eggs between 0900 and 1000 if you can. This is also important because ducks lay their eggs randomly, often in (none too clean) mud. Collecting them early, and washing them well, minimises the chances of harmful bacteria seeping through the relatively porous shells and contaminating the contents.

A female duck may be left to



Pekins enjoying a splash in a baby's bath

sit on her eggs to raise ducklings. Several ducks may lay eggs in one nest, but it is best to confine sitting ducks separately, otherwise there may be squabbles about whose eggs and ducklings they are.

Ducks are not often good mothers. They may sit on 20 eggs but hatch only half, with

only half of the hatched ducklings eventually surviving. To compensate, some people put the duck eggs under a broody hen who usually does a good job of it ~ even if she does become anxious when her 'chicks' eventually take to the water, leaving her fretting on the bank of the pond.

Or, duck eggs can be successfully incubated artificially, and the ducklings raised in a brooder.

Remember that very young ducklings with down are not waterproof and can drown easily.

The table duck can be almost half grown by about four weeks of age, and it can have reached its table weight of 3kg by about nine weeks of age, but generally free range ducks take a few weeks more to reach this weight.

Like chickens, ducks are divided into bantam, light and heavy breeds, with the heavy breeds being better suited to the table and the light breeds providing the high egg layers. Probably the most common breeds in South Africa are Welsh Harlequins and Pekins.

**Welsh Harlequins:** These are utility ducks, providing good meat and eggs. They are very attractive. The male

Continued on page 40

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## IN THE GARDEN

# Planting ideas to beat the autumn blues

If you're not careful, autumn on a smallholding can get you down.

With the arrival of cooler weather and shorter days, the super-energetic have a tendency to think that life as they know it has come to an end and won't return until next spring (and that's months away).

Slackers, on the other hand, depressed that their dreamed-of garden never got off the ground, tell themselves they've failed (again).

But there is another way of

## The cooler months need not mean an end to fresh, home-grown veg

looking at this situation: see autumn as a challenge. Yes, there is still time to sow seed, and get that veggie plot up and running, even in the coolest spots. In fact, with some crafty choices, the hitherto gardenless will even

be able to impress family and neighbours.

Radishes are the most rewarding vegetable to grow, because they come up so quickly.

Apart from the fact that they impart a fresh reminder of

summer to your salads, radishes are a great species with which to introduce young kids to the joy of gardening, because the seed germinates in no more than a couple of days and they grow quickly.

Now is a good time to plant them because they prefer cool weather. You can grow

Continued on page 41

## WATERFOWL

From page 39

has a glossy bottle-green head and white collar which demarcates the head from the purple-tinged brown breast, grey brown wings, and a pale grey belly. The rear of the male is black, with the dark tail having white borders. The female is predominantly mottled with each individual feather showing sharp contrast from buff to very

dark brown. The bill of the male is a yellowish orange tipped with black while that of the female is generally darker ranging from black to mottled orange.

The drake reaches a weight of 2,5 to 2,7 kg, while the duck weighs 2,25 to 2,5 kg.

☐ **Pekin:** They are characterised by a yellow bill and creamy white plumage, with orange shanks and toes. The

ducks have an upright carriage and a peculiarly upturned rump. When young it is difficult to determine the gender of the duck; when older the male ducks acquire a curled tail feather. Ducklings have bright yellow plumage.

The drake reaches a weight of about 4 kg and the duck 3,6 kg.

Continued on page 41



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# IN THE GARDEN

From page 40

them in almost any soil, but (like all plants) they thrive in soil that has been improved with organic material. You plant the seeds directly (no need for seed trays and transplanting). Prepare the bed to a fine tilth, breaking up all clods. Plant the seeds in a shallow trench and cover with 1 to 1,5cm of fine soil, leaving 12 to 15 cm between rows. To ensure continuity don't plant them all at once, rather plant a few every two to three weeks.

Because they are so easy to grow, it's worth experimenting with different cultivars of radishes, including those of



Daikon radish

different shapes and colours. From the same family, consider growing Daikon or Japanese radish. This is a long white radish, milder in flavour than the small round or oval radishes. They should be planted in similar conditions

to the ordinary radishes, but they grow well in deep soil and must be watered regularly. The best flavour is to be enjoyed when they are about the size of a carrot and they can be stored in the refrigerator for a

couple of weeks if washed and dried and the leaves cut off. The leaves, by the way will be a treat for poultry or livestock.

Daikon radish can be eaten simmered, stir fried, grated, pickled or baked. Its leaves

are also edible and its seeds make sprouts to eat in salads or in sandwiches.

Now is also the time to plant broad beans, especially in frost-free areas. The seeds are sown singly 15 to 20 cm apart in holes 5cm deep. Double rows should be 25 to 30 cm apart, giving you room to work in between. Double or triple rows are less prone to damage by heavy wind and the closeness also encourages a moist micro-climate. Daily watering is most important.

These beans are of upright habit and can grow to a height of 1m, so they will need support.

Another cool-weather crop is beetroot, whose leaf will provide lovely colour in your garden. It prefers friable, rich soils with well-decomposed organic matter. Plant the seeds directly in the bed 5 to

Continued on page 43

## WATERFOWL

From page 40

**□ Muscovies.** If you are looking for poultry that is easy to care for, resists disease, and controls flies at the same time, then Muscovy ducks have a number of advantages over other poultry. The ducks are resistant to most diseases, including Newcastle disease, they are hardy, they forage well for their own food and reproduce easily. Muscovy meat is tasty and low in fat. They are a large duck, with the males measuring about 76 cm in length, and reaching a live mass of 4,8 kg in 12 weeks. Females are considerably smaller, and only grow to a couple of kilograms, roughly half the males' size. The bird

is predominantly black and white, with the back feathers being iridescent and glossy in males, while the females are drabber. The amount of white on the neck and head is variable, as well as the bill, which can be yellow, pink, black, or any mixture of these. They may have white patches or bars on the wings, which become more noticeable during flight. Both sexes have pink or red wattles around the bill.

The great advantage to Muscovys is that they don't need a pond nearby ~ just make sure they have clean water to drink.

If you want to keep the 16 indigenous species such as

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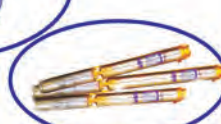
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# IN THE GARDEN

From page 41

6cm apart in shallow holes and covered with about 2cm of soil. Weed control is essential during the early stages. Beets can be pulled from the time they are 5cm in diameter, which should be eight or nine weeks after sowing. You can also cut some of the young leaves to use in salads. Keep a watch for cutworms.

Swiss Chard will give you a fine green display to lift your spirits. It can be grown in a wide variety of soil but it is a heavy feeder so prepare your soil beforehand. Manure or compost must be broken down before being applied in liberal quantities. Rake the soil to a fine tilth and plant the seed clusters 6 to 7,5cm apart. The seeds germinate in five to eight days and will then need to be thinned out. There are also herbs that are hardy enough to handle the Highveld autumn and winter.



Combined planting of broad beans and radish

Thyme is hardy and unfussy, it tastes good and is beneficial to other plants. It makes a small, bushy plant and the more the leaves are picked the better it does. It doesn't like rich soil and also does well in pots.

Sage needs a little more nurturing than thyme and its growth tends to slow down and the leaves get smaller in winter. Plant it in well-drained soil in full sun.

Parsley needs full sun and fertile soil, which should be kept moist. To harvest, snip leaves off several plants rather

than one. New growth comes from the middle of the plant, so harvest the outside leaves.

Less common is chervil, a hardy annual that actually prefers cooler weather and not full sun conditions. Its delicate, fern like leaves make it a very attractive container plant.

Oreganum easily withstands winter frost but likes full sun. The more you harvest the better it grows – in fact you'll have to keep cutting it back. You can also have a look in your local nursery for vegetable seedlings such as

cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts to add further variety to your beds. No matter what you plant though, try not to get carried away – all of us maplotterers are guilty of planting too many vegetables at the same time, finishing up with a glut and a family wailing "not beans again!" Think about how many vegetables you need per serving and how many of that particular vegetable you will get per seed, and plant accordingly. You can always plant more after a couple of weeks, to ensure a constant supply. Some vegetables also lend themselves to preserving through freezing, drying or including in sauces or chutneys, if you have the time or inclination to lay in supplies.



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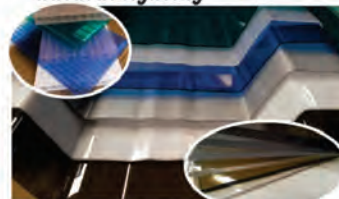
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## BOOKSHELF

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Two new books about insects have recently been launched to fill the gaps on your bookshelves.

□ *Ants of Southern Africa* by Peter Slingsby is said to be the first field guide on ants in our region.

The book is lavishly illustrated with Philip Herbst's macrophotographs, and the best of some 50 more observers from 'iSpot'. Contents include the biology of ants and how to identify them. There are descriptions and illustrations of 225 local

species, with notes on a further 400+ species. The descriptions contain a "how common" ranking, the actual size, the major habitats and the distribution of each specie. There is also a comprehensive index and bibliography.

Although passionate about his

subject, Peter Slingsby writes with humour, making the book easy to read.

Find out about the commonest ant species that are everywhere around you, in your home, your garden and the veld near you using this clear, concise and beautifully illustrated guide.

The book has been welcomed as a useful addition to the books on the natural history of southern Africa and it is hoped that it will open eyes and minds to these intriguing and important insects.

To order go to <http://www.slingsbymaps.com>. You can buy the book on its own for R295 or you can get a package of the book plus a 60x mini-microscope for R332.

□ If you want to know

about the secret world of southern African insects, *Insectopedia* is the book for you. It uncovers the fascinating and infinitely varied world of insects. It explores their intriguing behaviour and biology - from mating and breeding, metamorphosis and movement to sight, smell, hearing and their adaptations to heat and cold. A chapter on superorganisms probes the curious phenomenon of social communities among insects; another covers the critical role that these creatures play in maintaining the fragile balance of life on our planet. The book concludes with a 60-page illustrated field guide, describing most insect orders and their main families. Previously published as *Insectopedia of Southern*

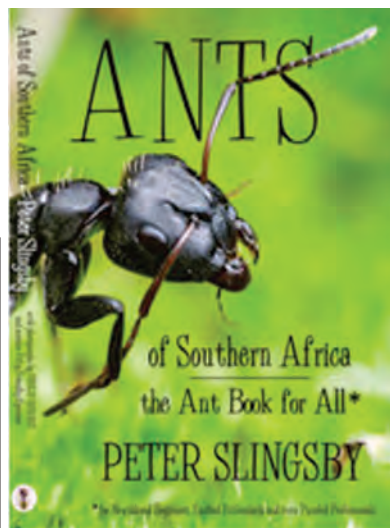
Continued on page 45

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From page 44

*Africa*, this fully revised and redesigned edition includes up-to-date information throughout, an expanded ID section, and several hundred new photographs. Recommended price is R300 and it is available online and in bookstores.

Smallholders who use their land to grow crops will want to invest in *Insects of Cultivated Plants and Natural Pastures in Southern Africa*, edited by G L Prinsloo & V M Uys. The book deals with

plant-feeding insects that damage field crops, deciduous, subtropical and other fruits, vegetables, plantation trees and ornamental plants, in addition to natural pastures. In all, 75 cultivated plants, or groups of related plants, are dealt with. To make the information about the insects and their host plants more accessible to readers, the arrangement of the text is plant-commodity based; each pest is dealt with according to the plants with which it is associated.

There are full accounts of 416 most important pests, with an additional 277 species of lesser importance being listed, showing the parts of the plant on which they feed or damage.

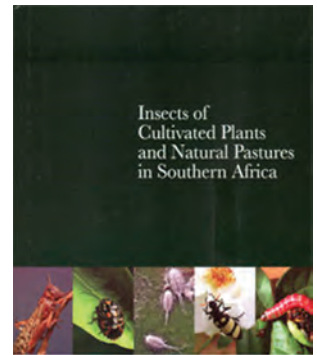
Each pest species account includes information on its scientific and common names, origin and distribution, identification, host plant range, damage, natural

enemies and management, while key references to the literature are also provided. There are 860 high quality full-colour images, depicting adults and immature stages of the pests and their damage symptoms.

An extensive glossary of entomological terms is provided to facilitate the use of the book.

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is a rather hefty R 755.



Editors  
Gerhard L. Prinsloo - Vivienne M. Uys



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4. No Commercial ads accepted as classifieds (see display ad tariff - p 1).
5. Placement maximum of 3 months

## SUPERSMALLS

Entries in this yellow-shaded section cost R120 VAT included for 25 words, plus R1/word thereafter.

### WANTED

Gesoeek: Stukkende tweede-handse brei masjiene benodig vir parte. Vir skool vir mense met geleerdheids probleme. Rosa 082 684-9534

### FOR SALE

### BUSINESS

Canine stud breeding business for sale. Jack Russells and Toy Poodles. All dogs are pedigreed and registered. Large client base. Owner wishes to retire. Walkerville. Contact Nick 083 629-8605 or nick@vbusiness.co.za

### LIVESTOCK

4 Black head Dorper ewes. Good to breed again, or for slaughter, 4 young Dorper ewes, weighing 50 kg. Ideal for breeding, a

shame to slaughter. Phone Chris Watcham 083 453-3877. We are in Blue Hills, Midrand, Off Summit Rd (R562) to Diepsloot, Twoham Farm.

Female goats x 50 for sale in excellent condition, a productive herd. Crossbreed Boer/Indigenous, brilliant for the traditional market. Reasonable offers considered: 072 222-5166

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### MISCELLANEOUS

Stop thieves: Outdoor wireless alarms for houses, cottages, outbuildings. 4 outdoor wireless sensors, Main control panel, 2 remote controls, siren, battery, etc. R2 800 installed in JHB or DIY. Also cut fence alarm, www.stopthieves.co.za or contact Colin 079 180-2853.

Stainless steel farm donkey. 210 litre, fire-heated. Constant hot water. From R3 730 incl VAT. Contact 011 762-1212, 082 456-0973 or stainlessspecial@absamail.co.za.

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Adorable fluffy yellow day-old ducklings R14 each, collected from farm. 074 550-4315 Magaliesberg.

Chickens: Layers R110, point of lays R90, roosters R80, ducks R80, Muscovies R50. Contact Botha 083 304-3060, Mari 072 295-0139 or apbventer@gmail.com

Ducks: Indian runners. Males. R 50 each. Need to thin out number of males due to

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Indigenous trees. 40 varieties available. Aloes also in stock. Contact 082 801-9555.

### FOR SALE

Entries in this section are FREE OF CHARGE, but are for use items, private property sales/rentals and employment offered/wanted only.

### FARMING REQUISITES

Poultry equipment for sale to equip a

poultry house complete. 12 automatic drinkers with tubes to connect to water pipe (R250 each), 18 feeders (R150 each), 15 crates (to transport 10 birds each) (R200 each), 1 x 1 000l tank (R1 500), 20m pipe with fittings for the drinkers, connections to the tank, (R1 000), brand new, still in the box gas brooder for 1 000 chicks. (R3 500), high pressure water sprayer (R2 500), 4 curtains for sides of the poultry house 1,8m x 9,20m each (R1 000 together). R18 200 for the lot. Call Tina Midrand 082 604-5388

Block of 8 wooden stables, each stable measures 3m c 3m, roof in excellent condition. R20 000. Contact Beth 083 447-6058

About 150 treated 1,8m paddock fencing posts, used but good condition, (retail about R48ea new). R20 onco. each. Call 083 515-8547 or email nusia@hotmail.co.za

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# DIARY

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

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

Every Sunday  
Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast, Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Cullinan. Call Rudan on 082 410-3180  
horses@diamondxrancho.co.za,  
www.diamondx.co.za., R500 per person.

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

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

Every Monday  
Alcoholics Anonymous. 'Courage to Change' Group meeting, 19:30, Benoni Agricultural Holdings, Marcus 082 042-7730. Warren 082 335-0049. Glen 072 239-3024., If you want to drink - that's your problem! If you want to stop - that's our

problem! No fees; no dues; just concerned fellowship.

2017

April

8: Snake Awareness First Aid For Snakebite and Venomous Snake Handling - Cradle Moon Lakeside Lodge, Gauteng. Email Ashley - admin@-africansnakebiteinstitute.com  
8-9: 55th Walkerville Agricultural Show, Walkerville Showgrounds. Old Vereeniging Road, Walkerville. 08h00 till late  
9: Advanced Snake Handling - Cradle Moon Lakeside Lodge, Gauteng. Email Ashley - admin@-africansnakebiteinstitute.com

11: Full moon  
14: Good Friday  
15: Easter Saturday  
15: Easter Crafts in the Park Food & Craft Market, Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09:00 to 14:30. Free entrance. Up to 80 craft and food stalls, live music, Easter egg hunt for the first 100 children starts 10:30. Call 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za  
.16: Easter Sunday  
17: Family Day  
24-26: Artificial Insemination of Cattle



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Wendy house for sale. Tel 078 378-8020

Security light fittings. Large commercial lights, old metal halide type etc, 8 in total. R500 the lot. Pete 072 587-9137

Large office desk, dark varnished wood, drawers both sides (one side for hanging files). R500 collected Bredell. Pete 072 587-9137

Steel garage roll-up doors, x 2, complete. Price - R900 onco. Whatsapp or SMS only please. 083 481-7960

Large 4 drawer desk - r400. Desk + set drawers + credenza (office set) - R500. Lounge suite, solid oak with loose cushions (2 x 2 seater settees, 2 x armchairs) - R5 000. PC stand - R250. Contact Daphne 082 741-4669

Charcoal and briquettes R25. Contact Botha 083 304-3060, Mari 072 295-0139 or apbventer@gmail.com

### PROPERTY FOR SALE/TO LET

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# DIARY

Course (3 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273  
 26: New moon  
 27: Freedom Day  
 End April, dates to be confirmed:  
 Summer/Autumn Purebred Dexter Show.  
 For details contact Kobus van der Linde  
 082 783-9605

## May

1: Workers' Day  
 6: Corporate Shooting Day organised by Hinterland/Afri Town & Country Delmas, Bluegum Shooting Range, Bapsfontein. Registration 0800-0900. Entry R1 000 per team of four shottists. Bookings close 21 April. Contact Deon Strydom 013 665-2343 or 082 888-1075 for details. Fundraiser for Farm Security.  
 6: Crafts in the Park Food & Craft Market, Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09:00 to 14:30. Free entrance. Up to 80 craft and food stalls, live music. Call 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za  
 8-12: Introductory Course in Poultry Production (5 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273  
 10: Full moon  
 13: Elementary course in beekeeping at Highveld Honey Farm, 186 Uys Street,

Rynfield Benoni A.H, commencing 9.00 to 12.30pm. Cost R300 including refreshments. Call convenor Peter Clark 011 362-2904  
 16-19: Nampo Harvest Day Agricultural Show, Nampo Park, R30 between Klerksdorp and Bothaville.  
 20: Snake Awareness First Aid For Snakebite and Venomous Snake Handling — Cradle Moon Lakeside Lodge, Gauteng. Email Ashley - admin@africansnakebiteinstitute.com  
 22- 26: Veld management course offered by Africa Land-Use Training, Pretoria. For more information, such as venue and full programme, or the reservation form, email courses@alut.co.za.  
 25: New moon  
 27 & 28: Outdoor X Expo at Malonjeni Guest Farm, Heidelberg. Tel 016 423-4073 or emailinfo@outdoorx.co.za. www.outdoorx.co.za  
 29-2 Jun: Introductory Course to Small Stock Management (5 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273  
 29-2 Jun: Meat Processing Course (4 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273  
 June  
 3: Chelsea Lane Home for Seniors Morning Market, 13 James Road, Fairleads, Benoni.

A variety of stalls, a tea garden, live music & entertainment for the kids. Entrance Fee of R30 includes a bacon & egg roll. Plenty of free parking & security. Call Wendy or Bridget 072 696-8367  
 3: Mampoerfees at Willem Prinsloo Agricultural Museum, old Pretoria/Bronkhorstspuit road, Rayton. Food stalls, a fleamarket, demonstrations and house tours, pap en kailings, oswagon rides. Gates open 08h00 for the public and close around 17h00 .  
 3: Crafts in the Park Food & Craft Market, Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09:00 to 14:30. Free entrance. Up to 80 craft and food stalls, live music. Call 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za



6-9: 7-10: Introductory Course in Pig Production (4 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. R2 680. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273  
 9: Full moon  
 15-17: Kragdag Expo, Diamantvallei Landgoed near Rayton. Afrikaans-focused alternative living exhibition with food, entertainment etc

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**R210**

**for 12 editions**

# Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

NOTE: This is a listing ONLY of markets held to a regular weekly or monthly schedule. Markets held less frequently are listed in the DIARY section of the magazine and we urge readers to check each month for dates and events of interest. We would like this list of food markets to be as comprehensive as possible. If you know of farmers' food markets that are not listed here, please email us the contact details of the organisers, and details of the market. Only FOOD markets are included. Similarly, if you know of markets in this list that have CLOSED please inform us so that we can delete incorrect or outdated information. We invite you to tell us of your experiences when visiting these markets so that we can better inform our readers. Were they as advertised? Was the produce on sale plentiful, well-priced, well-presented and fresh? Email your comments to [editor@gautengsmallholder.co.za](mailto:editor@gautengsmallholder.co.za)

DAY	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	WHO TO CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT
<b>Thursday</b>					
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston.	Konrad or Glenda 011 706-3671 or <a href="mailto:glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za">glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za</a>	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
<b>Friday</b>					
1st Friday	The Shed Night Market	18:00 to 22:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
<b>Saturday</b>					
Every Saturday	Tuinhekkie Farmers Market	08:00 - 14:00	cor Lazar Ave & Merwe Road Bootha Plots, Randfontein	Amanda Hefer 073 565-8905	Handmade products, numerous food stalls, flowers live entertainment most Saturdays, farmyard for the kids
Every Saturday	Verster Park Tuin Mark	09:00 - 15:00	Plot 21, Lang St, Verster Park Bronkhorstspuit	Maggie van Rheede 061 887-4149	Hand crafted goods, art, naturally-grown produce Community market to promote local business
Every Saturday	Wholefood Country Market	09:00 - 14:00	Sawasdee Exotic Nursery, cor Main & Zinnia Roads, Kyalami	Robyn 083 311-4768 <a href="mailto:wholefoodmarket@gmail.com">wholefoodmarket@gmail.com</a>	Variety of organic & homemade foods
Every Saturday	The Shed Food & Craft Market	08:00 to 15:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
Every Saturday	Pretoria Boeremark	05:30 to 09:30	Pioneer Open Air Museum, Silverton.	012 804-8031 or 082 416-3900 <a href="mailto:blinsga@lantic.net">blinsga@lantic.net</a>	Fresh produce and traditional bazaar treats like jaffles, kailings with pap and boerewors rolls.
Every Saturday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston	Konrad or Glenda on 011 706-3671 <a href="mailto:glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za">glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za</a>	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
Every Saturday	The Hazel Food Market	08:00 to 14:00	Greenlyn Village Centre, cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie Sts, Menlo Park, Pta	Rietha 083 554-5636. <a href="http://www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za">www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za</a>	Fresh produce straight from the producer. Coffee, eats on sale
Every Saturday	Walkerville Farmers Market	09:00 to 15:00	R112 Main Road, Walkerville	079 076-7680 <a href="mailto:info@wfmarket.co.za">info@wfmarket.co.za</a>	Fresh produce, arts & crafts, food court and kids play area
Every Saturday	Walkerville Agricultural Market	09:00 to 15:00	K154 T-junction with R82	082 573-2780 <a href="mailto:market@walkervillesa.co.za">market@walkervillesa.co.za</a>	Organic produce and Crafter's Market. <a href="http://www.walkervillesa.co.za">www.walkervillesa.co.za</a>
Every Saturday	Bosheuvel Fresh Produce	09:00 to 15:00	54 Glory Road, Muldersdrift	Milch 082 553-2846	Meats and vegetables, delicacies, honey, cheese, brewery, crafter's market and children's entertainment.
Every Saturday	Market @84	09:00 to 14:00	84 On Main, Walkerville	Ariel 078 223-9238	Fresh organically grown produce and crafters market
1st Saturday	Jozi Real Food VEGAN Market	09:00 to 15:00	Pirates Sports Club, Braeside Avenue, Greenside	083 532 2992 <a href="mailto:whitespace@mweb.co.za">whitespace@mweb.co.za</a>	Arts & crafts, live music, vegan cuisine, organic vegetables & coffee
1st Saturday	The Green Market	09:00 to 12:00	Pretoria Botanical Gardens 2 Cussonia Avenue, Brummeria, Pretoria	Melissa 083 562-5249	Products ranging from solar equipment to organic food
1st Saturday	Victus Christi Arts & Crafts Market	08:00 to 14:00	24b Miles Sharp Street, Rynfield, Benoni (north side of Bunny Park)	Schalk 082 561-9409 <a href="mailto:info@victuschristi.org.za">info@victuschristi.org.za</a>	Arts & crafts, fine art, food, fresh meat & produce and home industry
2nd Saturday	Brakpan Boeremark	09:00 to 14:00	cnr van der Walt and Dirk van der Hoff Brakpan	Marius 011 744-2322 082 904-8852	Over 50 stalls. Food, arts, crafts, etc.
Last Saturday	Fresh2U Farmers Market	08:00 to 14:00	Corner Main Street and High Street Modderfontein (behind 33 High Street)	Jane 083 376 5567 Chantelle 082 338 7818 <a href="mailto:wardek@iafrica.com">wardek@iafrica.com</a>	Over 50 stalls. Fresh produce, home made goods, plants, food and more.
Last Saturday	Fresh Produce Market	08:00 to 13:00	Lakeside Mall Boathouse	Alma 079 940-0201 <a href="mailto:realfood4realpeople@gmail.com">realfood4realpeople@gmail.com</a>	Local fresh produce direct to the public
Last Saturday	Windpomp Market	08:00 to 14:00	Broodblik & Koffiepit on the R51 between Petit & Bapsfontein	<a href="mailto:adelekoffiepit@gmail.com">adelekoffiepit@gmail.com</a> 083 445-1608	Homemade crafts & food stalls bakery & coffee shop and entertainment
<b>Sunday</b>					
Every Sunday	Fourways Farmers Market	10:00 to 15:00	Corner Montecasino Boulevard and William Nicol Drive, Fourways	011 465 0827 <a href="http://www.ffmarket.co.za">www.ffmarket.co.za</a>	Get your groceries...In the garden!
Every Sunday	Jozi Real Food Market	09:00 to 14:00	Northcliff Country Club, Fir Avenue, Northcliff	083 532 2992 <a href="mailto:whitespace@mweb.co.za">whitespace@mweb.co.za</a>	Arts & crafts, music & entertainment, inspired cuisine organic vegetables & coffee, pet products
Last Sunday	Aloe Valley Food, Arts & Craft Market	10:00 to 14:00	48, R511 Doornrandjies	012 669-3043 <a href="mailto:info@serendipitycafe.co.za">info@serendipitycafe.co.za</a> <a href="http://www.serendipitycafe.co.za">www.serendipitycafe.co.za</a>	Community market to promote local business

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BY HAND: 370 da Costa Dr, Bredell, Kempton Park

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9. It is the Advertiser's responsibility to ensure we have received the advert.

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# Take your own line

A few weeks ago there appeared in a British newspaper an article entitled "Is this the UK's most pot-holed stretch of road?" above which was a picture of some 500m of suburban road in some Midland town with six ~ SIX ~ potholes visible. When I saw it I laughed and laughed. Now I've said it before, but it's worth observing again: the problems which exercise the minds of citizens of First World countries like Great Britain are very different to those that we contend with daily.

Nowadays, of course, the Brits are obsessed ~ quite rightly ~ with Brexit. But there's also hearty debate about multi-culturalism, the state of the National Health Service, whether grammar schools are classist, and transgenderism.

And in rural England Brits deal with much the same problems that we do in terms of infrastructure. Their telephones sometimes don't work. Low-lying parts are subject to occasional flooding. Power failures are not unheard of. And their rural roads, many of which are centuries old and have been tarred for more than 100 years, aren't as smooth as one might like. (I have a rural-English friend who, annoyed by a pothole on a country road on which he travels frequently, stopped his Landrover one day beside it, whipped out a can of yellow spray paint and painted a large, bright circle around the hole. As if the hole had been invisible before, within 24 hours, he was pleased to find that a county road crew had repaired the hole. He now travels nowhere without a can of paint in his car.)

One wonders what one would have to do to attract the attention of South African road repair crews so that they attended to a pothole within 24 hours. I doubt that a daubing of the perimeter with gaudy paint would help. Maybe if one erected a colonial flag in the centre of the hole?

In South Africa, we tend to think that we have taken potholed roads to a new level of destruction. We haven't of course, as anybody who has travelled in Africa will attest. North of the Limpopo one finds potholes that are, literally, years old and will quite comfortably accommodate and totally conceal a small car, its passengers and a couple of wild animals together.

But what happens north of our borders should not be a yardstick for what happens here and we should all be railing on to our municipal and provincial authorities to be more diligent in their road repair operations.

But having said that, getting angry about little things like the state of our roads is not going to make our lives more pleasant.

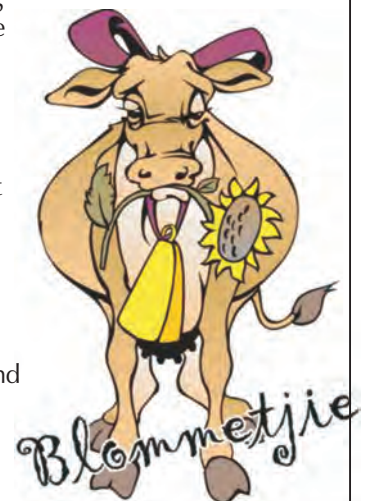
One just needs to learn to cope.

And here's where a background as a showjumper is useful. As a child I much enjoyed a jumping competition named "take-your-own-line." In this event, a number of jumps would be erected seemingly at random in an arena, and a start and finish line added. The riders themselves would decide in which order to jump the obstacles, aiming for the fastest possible time, and without knocking down any poles. It was no-holds-barred riding, the only stipulations being that you had to enter through the starting poles, jump all the obstacles and exit through the finish poles.

Apart from any other skills learnt (like how to ride like hell without killing oneself or one's pony) a take-your-own-line class taught one memory skills, because the jumps were not numbered (in a normal showjumping class one goes from No1 to No2 to No3 and so on) and thus one needed to remember when to turn left and right, made all the more difficult that one had chosen one's own route around the obstacles, making watching the route of competitors who went before one just more confusing.

Driving on a potholed road is much like a take-your-own-line competition if you're to have any hope of keeping your tyres intact and your false teeth in place. You have to remember where the holes are, and whether to dodge left or right, sometimes mounting the verge, other times crossing over to the opposite side of the road.

But there's added fun in the road-version of take-your-own-line. First, there are randomly added obstacles. After every rainfall new potholes emerge and one's previously-memorised route must then be extemporaneously altered on the fly to avoid a bone-jarring jolt. And then of course there's the possibility of on-coming cars. It's like take your-own-line with jumps being added as one rides the course, and with another rider or two riding the course backwards as one completes one's round. It's all fun under the African sun!



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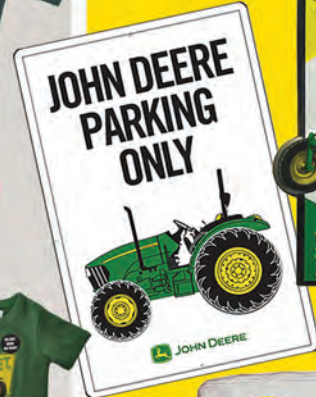
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