

# The South African Bulb Group

## Newsletter No. 17 -- Christmas, 2010



### **“Grow Bulbs” by Graham Duncan**

I am sure that you will all be pleased to hear that Graham Duncan’s new edition of “Grow Bulbs” is now available and I thought that you would all be interested to see the comments on the book made by Cameron McMaster on the Pacific Bulb Society discussion list:

“In my post today I received my complimentary copy of Graham Duncan’s new book – the second edition of “Grow Bulbs” and I was very greatly impressed, to the extent that I phoned him immediately to thank him and congratulate him on a magnificent addition to bulb flora literature. Its full title is “Grow Bulbs – a Guide to the cultivation and propagation of the bulbs of South Africa and neighbouring countries”. It is a substantial tome of nearly 400 pages, illustrated by hundreds of high quality pictures, nearly all taken by Graham himself. It is the latest edition to the Kirstenbosch gardening series, published by SANBI.

In a fine gesture the book is dedicated to the memory of Margaret Lilian Thomas (1917-2006) who was an inspiration to Graham and also founder of the Indigenous bulb Growers Association (IBSA). It is prefaced with a chapter describing briefly the 13 families to which bulbous plants belong.

This is a wonderful book with beautiful pictures – a must for all of us who are involved in growing bulbs.”

One or two of our Members have already obtained a copy, so I asked one of them, Audrey Cain, to write a short review from an experienced British bulb grower’s perspective. She writes:

“This compact, (15 x 21 cm) 382 page book will be a great reference asset to those of us who are trying to grow Southern African bulbs. It is set out very clearly giving essential information about cultivation and maintenance of a bulb

collection, temperature and hardiness, propagation by several methods, care of plants, including feeding, pests and diseases and much more.

Graham has set out the families of the plants, and separated them into winter growing, summer growing and evergreen species. Within each section he lists recommended bulbs in alphabetical order, with an overview of each genus at the start. Each species he then mentions has a key to its preferred growing conditions, size and temperature, and a brief note describing the plant and its distribution. The whole book is lavishly illustrated, which is a great help with identification.

At the end of the book there are lists of plants recommended for specific locations, such as seasonally wet, permanently wet, semi shade, deep shade, fynbos, fully hardy and frost hardy areas etc.

Doubtless this book will not spend much time on the library shelf. It will most likely be a constant "hands on" companion to the South African bulb grower.

Thoroughly recommended!"

The question that arises is how to get a copy. I obtained mine from the Botanical Society Bookshop's web site which is at: <http://www.sanbi.org/> who airmailed it. Alternatively, I believe it is available from Rachel Saunders at Silverhill seeds.

Barry Ward of the Nerine and Amaryllid Society is looking into the possibility of making a bulk purchase which would be available to our Members as well as their own. If you would be interested in this method, please contact Barry on 01257 480072 by 31st December so he can place the order.

Just in case you need it, the ISBN is: 978-1-919684-56-7

### **IBSA Seminar 2011**

As reported in the last newsletter, IBSA are holding a Bulb Symposium at Goudini Spa, near Worcester, from 28th August to 2nd September 2011. I've recently heard that some outstanding speakers have been persuaded to take part in the Symposium including:

John Manning on the taxonomy of Freesia

Dee Snijman on the bulbs of the Little Karoo

Alan Horstmann on Amaryllids

Rod Saunders on the Iridaceae

Following the two days of presentations and discussions, three days will be dedicated to field trips in the surrounding areas to see many of these wonderful plants in their natural habitat.

There is an all-up price for attendance at the whole event, which includes both formal days and excursions, as well as accommodation and meals. An "Early Bird" scheme costs \$775 for registrations before 30th April, 2011, with a deposit of \$400 being payable by that date. For registrations after that date the total payable increases to \$825. Payments can be made in US Dollars, Sterling or Euros. IBSA will repay 80% for cancellations more than 30 days before the Symposium starts. The Symposium is an open event and non-Members may attend on the same basis.

I understand that payment can be made via Rachel at Silverhill seeds, who can accept credit card or PayPal payments. She then uses the exchange rate for that day and pays the money into the IBSA account.

Those of us that have attended previous events of this type will vouch for the enormous amount we have gained from them. The opportunity to meet and discuss our favourite plants with others from around the world and to see the plants in habitat is not an experience to be missed.

Many people who go take the opportunity to travel more widely in the Cape whilst there; after our first, Pat and I spent some days at Hermannus whale watching and, last time, a group of us spent some time on a round trip via Nieuwoudtville and Vanrhynsdorp. If you are thinking of going and would like to find some travel companions, please let me know and I will keep others informed.

#### **Notices:**

Could anyone who has a 35mm slide projector and is willing to bring it to future meetings please let Audrey Cain know at [audrey@cain.net](mailto:audrey@cain.net). Many thanks in advance for your help on this.

One of our German Members, Hans Joschko, saw a picture of *Massonia pustulata* ex Loeriesfontain on the Wisley bulblog and is now searching for material of it. If you can help, please contact him at: "[J. Joschko](mailto:J.Joschko@gmx.de)" <[J.Joschko@gmx.de](mailto:J.Joschko@gmx.de)>

#### **From the Editor**

In case you are wondering, we don't normally publish a newsletter at this time of the year. However, these matters had come up which I thought would interest you, so I decided to circulate a short one now, rather than wait until the Spring.

In closing, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and offer you our best wishes for a highly successful bulb-growing year in 2011.

David Victor

