



Southern African Bulb Group

www.sabg.tk

SABG Newsletter no. 44 June 2021

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News

- ★ Terry Smale 1944 – 2021
- ★ A list of Terry's SA bulbs is available
- ★ The 2021 Bulb & Seed Exchange is announced
- ★ A revised SABG Constitution is appended

Dates for your diary

- ★ 24 June 2021: Terry Smale bulb request deadline
- ★ 14 August 2021: Bulb & Seed Exchange submission deadline
- ★ 29 August 2021: Bulb & Seed Exchange request deadline
- ★ 3 October 2021: SABG meeting, Winchester

From the Editor

I am very sorry to have to record the untimely death of one of our founder members, Terry Smale. He was rushed into hospital in the evening of Sunday 14 February 2021 and underwent an emergency operation, but unfortunately passed away on 16 February, aged 76. His wife Jennifer was with him.

An obituary appears below, and another is published in the "BCSS News" section of the June issue of the BCSS magazine "CactusWorld".

Jon is distributing some of Terry Smale's South African bulbs, before the annual SABG Bulb & Seed Exchange for 2021. Details of both of these activities are given later in this Newsletter. If you would like to participate in either scheme, please note the deadlines shown in the 'Dates for your diary' section above. These are the last

dates for Jon to receive submissions (or firm promises) and requests, so please try to send them well before these dates to make his job easier.

Terry Smale 1944 - 2021

Terry was a major force in the founding of the Southern African Bulb Group, serving on the first Committee, and the Group was inaugurated at its first meeting of twenty-two people in Terry and Jennifer Smale's garden on 4th April, 2004.

His life-long interest was in South African plants, with the succulent genus *Conophytum* being his big favourite, followed closely by *Haworthia* and *Gasteria*. Among the bulbs, he had a penchant for *Lachenalia*, the *Massonia* group, *Haemanthus* and *Strumaria*. Some of the information below about Terry's plant enthusiasms and activities comes from his own excellent web site¹ (last updated 19 July 2020), which covers conophytums as well as bulbs from South Africa. Jon Evans provided information on his influential role in the AGS, and Jill Otway on his activities in the RHS.

Terry was born in 1944 and grew up in Plymouth. He first developed an interest in succulent plants as a child when his mother grew a small range on a windowsill in their house. As a student, he went to Imperial College, London where he studied Chemistry in the 1960s, and had a few succulent plants bought from a florist shop in the Brompton Road on his windowsill to brighten up his lodgings. His interest in plants took off from that small beginning and he joined the National Cactus and Succulent Society (now the British Cactus and Succulent Society) in 1964. His father Len had a small greenhouse and Terry started putting plants in that, ousting the pelargoniums and fuchsias. Len had to look after Terry's plants during term time. After obtaining a Doctorate Terry went to work at Beecham Group plc (which in 2000 became part of the British multinational pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline).

In 1972 he married Jennifer and they bought the house that they lived in for nearly fifty years. An Alton cedar greenhouse was erected in the garden and succulent plants were brought from his father's greenhouse.

Len had actually got quite fond of cacti by then and Terry had to leave half of the collection with him. Terry's collection expanded to fill the new greenhouse and it was a major occupation for him until the end of his life. As with many succulent enthusiasts, his main interest at first was cacti with just a few other succulent plants including mesembs. Terry and Jennifer started to visit many countries, including South Africa, to see succulents and bulbs in their wild state. His focus on conophytums started in the 1980s due to a combination

of factors: seeing them in the wild in South Africa, seed becoming available from Mesa Garden and developing friendships with Suzanne Mace and Steven Hammer. Terry grew nearly all of the *Conophytum* taxa and for some of them had documented plants from many different localities.

When he retired from organic chemistry research in the late 1990s, he erected an aluminium greenhouse which gave him space to grow more South African bulbs and to propagate the plant collection that he had amassed over the years. This led to a business selling plants on a modest scale for distribution by mail order, aided by Jennifer, who had been very supportive of his "weird hobby".

He joined and then helped to organise the North Surrey Branch of the British Cactus and Succulent Society and its activities, taking on many roles over the years, including Chairman. He was on the Finance and General Purpose Committee of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Great Britain before it merged with the BCSS, and organised its seed distribution for a number of years. Then Terry and Jennifer started the seed distribution for the Mesemb Study Group that is still going strong after around 25 years.

Terry was also an active member of the Alpine Garden Society. He exhibited at AGS National Shows from 1994 to 2006, winning his Gold Medal, and many other awards. He was one of the first to exhibit South African bulbs at AGS Shows, winning Certificates of Merit with memorable pots of *Massonia heterandra* and *Strumaria watermeyeri* at the Sussex Show in Horsham in the early 2000s. These exhibits inspired many of our members to start growing South African bulbs. He was also a stalwart member of his local group in Epsom, and spent many years as chairman of the AGS Hendry Committee, responsible for assessing proposals for funding from the Hendry Fund.

His research background resulted in his membership of the research grant-awarding committees of two other societies, the Mesemb Study Group and the BCSS. Since retirement, he had time to do voluntary work for the Royal Horticultural Society and made a significant contribution as a member of the RHS Tender Ornamental Plant Committee since 1997, and was a Vice Chair 2013 – 2019, responsible for updating the committee's list of Award of Garden Merit plants (AGMs). Here he organised the various subgroups responsible for the main groups of plants within the committee's remit, including cacti and succulents, and devised a rolling schedule for assessing the remaining genera on an annual basis. His contribution to the RHS was also made through his membership of a variety of trials assessment forums, and he was for many years an RHS Floral Judge at the major RHS flower shows such

1 <https://www.smale-conophytum.co.uk>

as Chelsea and Hampton Court. He also maintained contacts with RHS horticulturists at Wisley to provide advice on succulent plants and African bulbs as required.

Over the years, he gave many talks and wrote over 100 articles on all sorts of succulent and bulb related topics for publications ranging from local newspapers to the RHS magazine "The Garden", but mainly for specialist periodicals. The most important scientifically are the descriptions of new conophytums and he was the author or co-author for several taxa: *Conophytum minusculum* subsp. *aestiflorens*, *C. pellucidum* subsp. *saueri*, *C. roodiae* subsp. *corrugatum* and *C. subterraneum*. He also had one named after himself by Chris Rogerson and Andy Young ("Cactus World" vol. 31 pp. 197-201, 2013); Chris said in a post on the BCSS Forum: "It was a great pleasure for us to name *Conophytum smaleorum* for Terry and Jen and both myself and Andy Young thought it well deserved."

His *Lithops* and *Conophytum* collection was filmed for the BBC "Gardeners' World" television programme. They managed to visit just at the peak flowering time for the conos so there was plenty for the film crew to photograph. This material was included as a 6-minute section in Gardener's World Episode 24 on BBC2 on Friday 28th August, 2020, which at least UK viewers can see online².

The moment I remember best from that programme was Terry showing how to pollinate Conophytums: he pulled out one of his own hairs, complete with the sticky root or follicle, which was ideal to transfer pollen, as the flowers have the stamens and stigma in a narrow tube. His last sentence in the programme was to say that he was sure he would have Conophytums with him for the rest of his life. This turned out to be true, but sadly for only a few months.

Other Committee members shared personal recollections: "Terry was a founder member of the group and a deep fount of knowledge, and he will be sorely missed by many of the members. The plants he exhibited at AGS Shows over 20 years ago were key to inspiring my own interest." "Terry was a mentor, encouraging and helping me when I first started getting interested in SA bulbs. He freely shared his passion, knowledge, and plant spares. He was a kind, generous and simply very nice man, always a delight to talk to. I have lots of plants whose labels say on the back 'from Terry Smale' and I shall remember him each time I look at them." "He was a great help to me when I first joined the SABG and it was always a pleasure to see and speak to him at the meetings."

Notices and Requests

Terry Smale bulb distribution

Jon Evans has taken on the task of distributing some of Terry's South African bulbs, in return for donations to cover the cost of packing and postage. He has prepared a list of the material available and instructions for submitting requests, which will accompany this Newsletter (as a PDF or on paper).

Some of Terry's material, particularly *Nerine*, is currently in growth and Jon hopes to make it available in the regular Bulb & Seed Exchange (below) or at the planned SABG meeting on Sunday 3rd October.

SABG Bulb and Seed Exchange 2021

The Southern African Bulb Group will be running its Annual Bulb and Seed Exchange again this year. We are hoping to run the exchange on the same timing as last season, so material is sent out in early September, and can be planted and started into growth in a timely fashion. I know this caused problems for a few of you, but generally it worked very well.

This Exchange is now a key part of our activities, so we are hoping for at least as many of you as before, if not more, to provide your spare bulb or seed material for the benefit of other members! It has been a difficult spring, but I am hoping that many of you will have had more time to spend in your garden collecting seeds, and will have a chance to get the summer re-potting done nice and early.

Please note that although we call it an exchange, if you don't yourself have material to offer, you will still be able to request seeds or bulbs from the list in exchange for a suitable donation to cover at least the cost of postage and packing.

Overseas Members

I would like to clarify our policy regarding sending items to overseas members. We are only able to send material to overseas members in ways complying with their government's regulations (i.e. no mis-labelling of contents etc.), and only when conforming with those regulations is neither too onerous, nor expensive (e.g. we cannot issue phytosanitary certificates etc.) We expect the relevant member to be able to guide us in following their government's requirements. Although we'll do our best to comply with the regulations where possible, we cannot be held responsible for any bulbs or seeds which are confiscated.

All **donations from all overseas members** must now, sadly, be accompanied by a Phytosanitary Certificate. We recognise that this makes it difficult or impossible for these members to donate to the exchange. This

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08qn68n>

requirement has been deferred for EU members until 1st January 2022, so EU members can still donate material this year if they wish to, and we will be delighted if you do.

However, because the UK is no longer part of the EU, any packages sent to EU members would need to be accompanied by a Phytosanitary certificate. This would be a difficult and expensive administrative burden, and we regret that as a result **we are unable to send bulbs or seeds to EU members at this time**. We are still able to send seeds to some countries outside Europe, provided that the members receiving them are conversant with their own regulations.

We are participating in endeavours with other UK gardening societies to lobby the UK government to change the regulations to facilitate international seed exchange, but the import requirements set by the EU are outside the control of the UK government, and are unlikely to be affected by any changes.

The timetable this year is as follows:

14th August

– If you have bulbs or seeds available, please post them to Jon Evans, 46 Upper Way, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8RF, UK, to arrive by Saturday 14th August. Please try to clean the donations as well as you can – if you don't, I have to. Please store them in paper bags if possible (last year some items stored in plastic bags sweated and rotted). And please seal them carefully – Newsletter 36³ contained instructions for making seed envelopes out of sheets of blank paper. Please include a list of your donations, if possible containing the following information. If you can send the list by email that would be brilliant.

- Genus
- Species (including subspecies / cultivar name where relevant)
- Source (when the item is derived from wild collected material it is useful to know a location for the collection)
- Notes (any other information about the item you feel is useful)
- Seed or Bulb
- South African or 'Other'
- Approximate quantity (for bulbs and large seeds)

– If you expect to have them available later, by the end of August, please send me a list of your intended donations, with any supporting information, by email or post, to arrive by Saturday 14th August. My email address is jonevans46.uw@btinternet.com Please

3 [https://www.sabg.tk/ media/newsletter:sabgnews36.pdf](https://www.sabg.tk/media/newsletter:sabgnews36.pdf)

send any such donations to me by Saturday 21st August at the latest.

17th August

– I will then prepare the Bulb and Seed Exchange list of available material which I will email out to Members by 17th August. Should you require a paper list to be sent to you by post, please send me before this date a self-addressed envelope suitable for five to ten folded sheets of A4 paper (with the correct postage attached if you live in the UK).

29th August

– After you have received the Bulb and Seed Exchange list of available material, please send your wishlist to me, to arrive by 29th August. I will then start the despatch process.

– Then it's up to you to grow the plants and enjoy them!

I hope you find this exercise valuable and perhaps obtain some new plants. Of course, its success depends on the generous efforts of the donors, so please check whether you have some spares you can donate.

Jon Evans

SABG Constitution

We have slightly revised the proposed Constitution which was included in Newsletter 42 in the light of feedback and further discussion by the Committee. The slightly revised version appears at the end of this Newsletter. As before, it has to be formally agreed by the members of the SABG. If you have any comments, please respond to me or any other member of the Committee within one month, that is by 15th July 2021. Members who do not reply will be treated as approving. After that date the Constitution will be adopted, or revised and reissued if necessary.

SABG meetings

Report on the Spring 2021 SABG meeting

On Sunday 28th March 2021 we arranged a virtual meeting at 2pm using the Zoom online video-conferencing software, to allow anyone with an Internet connection and a suitable device to participate; in the event about 60 people "tuned in". **Jon Evans** presented the second part of his talk on "**Plants seen at AGS shows**". He gave us the first part of his talk at our last physical meeting on 6 October 2019 in Winchester. There was some discussion at the end on the use of cat-litter and similar products, which prompted the contributions on pages 5 – 6 below.

The next SABG meeting

The Autumn meeting will be on **Sunday 3rd October 2021** (not 10 October as originally planned). We have re-booked **Chris Burchall** to do the talk that he was to have given in October 2019 before we had to cancel, **“Rhodohypoxis - Growing, Showing and Natural Environs”**. Directions are shown on our web-site at <https://sabg.tk/meetings:next:start>. The doors will open at 10.00, and the meeting will close at about 14.30.

The meeting hall is presently being used as a Covid vaccination centre, but if that is still the case in October we are told that the hall manager has an alternative contingency plan!

As in previous meetings, and subject to any Government requirements or guidelines in place at the time, there will be a display table for any plants that you bring along for others to see. We will have time for some informal discussion during the afternoon, so that members can point out their plants and answer any questions. If you have any slides or computer images that you would like to show, please bring them along.

There will also be a sales table where you can offer material for sale on the usual 80:20 basis, i.e. the Group takes a 20% commission to help cover the hall hire costs etc. Please include a second label in each pot, showing the price and your initials, so that we can settle up easily at the end of the day.

There will be a lunch break from approximately 12.00 until 13.00. For those of you that have not come before, it’s worth adding that many Members bring their own food so that they can stay in the hall and have the opportunity to chat to others and pore over the display and sales plants. Alternatively, the Sainsbury’s supermarket is based on the same site.

The charge for the meeting will be £3.00 per person, payable on entry. There is no charge for parking, provided that you remember to add your car registration number to the list, usually in the main entrance hall and on the table just inside the entrance to our meeting room, to avoid any fine for over-staying.

Clay granules suitable as a growing medium

Granules made from moler clay⁴ (often incorrectly spelt as molar) can be used as a growing medium, either on its own or as part of a potting compost mix. The original type that was manufactured specifically for plant growing was called Seramis. This is now available only from a few places, mainly online Hydroponic

4 A mixture of diatom shells and clay, found in Denmark: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fur_Formation

suppliers and tends to be very expensive. Cheaper and more available alternatives however do exist.

1. Cat Litter

Cat litters are made from a variety of different materials, so it is important to get the right type i.e. one that is made from moler clay. In the U.K. “Sanicat Pink” (Picture 1) is suitable and widely available from pet shops and online sellers. This product has recently been re-branded and is now called “Kitty Friend Pink”, (Picture 2) though you may well still find it advertised and sold as “Sanicat Pink” until all the old stock is sold off. Kitty Friend Pink has a similar granule size to Seramis, perhaps slightly larger.



2. Spillage Absorbent Granules

Manufactured for mopping up industrial spillages, these products (like cat litter) can be made of various materials so you need to get the right type – i.e. once again those that are made from moler clay. Two that are the correct type are “All Purpose Absorbent Granules” and “New Safety Tread Industrial Spillage Absorbent” (Picture 3).



“All Purpose Absorbent Granules” are sold by Euro Car Parts, who have branches all over the country and also

sell online⁵. At the time of writing this is sold online at £8.59 for 20 litres. If you go into your local branch and buy over the counter, you may get it cheaper – we were offered it at just £4 per bag. We thought this such a bargain we have bought enough to probably last the rest of our lives!

“New Safety Tread Industrial Spillage Absorbent” is available from several sources but all seem to charge rather a lot of money for it (even though it is exactly the same material as the Euro Car Parts product!); the cheapest we have found is at around £13 per 30 litre bag⁶.

Both these products are a smaller granule size than the Sanicat cat litter or Seramis and as a result hold more water, though still very free-draining. You can see a comparison of the sizes in (Picture 4).



In my experience, when used as a stand-alone growing medium, the smaller granule sized spillage granules work better than the Sanicat product for *most* South African bulbs. I think this is because the larger granules of the cat litter don't hold sufficient water.

Paul Cumbleton

More about clay granules

Further to [the discussion of] the types of cat litter suitable for bulb growing ... Sanicat Pink has been rebranded, at least in the pet store where I buy it, Pets At Home. I am sure it is the same product, and I have had good results using it, especially with plants which need very good drainage. It costs £12.49 per bag in Pets At Home; I haven't found a cheaper source, but this does work out more expensive than the stuff Paul Cumbleton mentioned (which is very likely the same thing, minus the fragrance which is added to the cat litter.)

5 <https://www.eurocarparts.com/p/euro-car-parts-absorbing-granules-20ltr-542770770>

6 <https://www.racking2go.co.uk/safety-tread-granules.html>



The photo shows what the product actually looks like; it is important to stress that you need to get exactly this type of cat litter. I have bought other types and brands, including ones which claim to be “non-clumping” and clay-based, but they just disintegrate into a slurry when wet, so are useless for bulbs. There are several other types in the “Kitty Friend” range - it is the “Pink” one which people need to buy. Apparently it is made from Danish moler clay; I think it is heat treated to produce the hardened granules, which hold water well, but maintain excellent air spaces around them.

Jeremy Spon

Light levels and growing Western Cape bulbs

Everyone who grows bulbs from Mediterranean areas will be aware that light levels in the UK are lower than those in the natural habitats of those bulbs. This is due in part to the difference in latitude, and hence the angle of incidence of the sun (although as one of the charts below shows, it is also due to the degree of clearness or otherwise in the atmosphere because of the amounts of cloud.) The effects of low light levels are also well-known – etiolated growth and, almost certainly, reduced flowering. Until recently, I had not seen any detailed figures for relative light levels in different parts of the world, but a recent post on a Facebook group I belong to pointed me to an excellent source of such data, and I reproduce some of this data here. (For anyone interested, the Facebook group is ‘African Bulbs In Culture’, and with members all over the world it is a very good source of information about, and photographs of, mostly South African bulbs.)

The source of data in question is a website www.gaisma.com (‘gaisma’ is a Latvian word meaning

light, and I assume the creator of the site, Matti Tukiainen, is Latvian. I gratefully acknowledge the website as the source of the specific data given in the tables below.) The site will give you sunrise, sunset, dawn and dusk times for pretty much any major town in the world. But from a bulb-growing point of view, much more useful is the data it provides on climate and light levels. This data has ultimately been sourced from a journal called Climate Research, and from NASA, and although it covers the period 1983 to 2002, the comparisons between different locations which it provides are still valid, and very revealing. (For anyone who wants to look at the data themselves, and perhaps see figures for their specific location, from the home page just click on 'Location' and drill down through region and country to pick the town or city nearest to you.)

The first table below gives the insolation figures for selected locations, and clearly shows the dramatic differences between the UK and South Africa, and even the UK and the Mediterranean. I have shifted the figures by six months for the Southern hemisphere locations, to reflect the different seasons, i.e. January in the UK is taken to be equivalent to July in South Africa.

Insolation

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maidstone	0.72	1.40	2.47	3.63	4.65	4.92	4.91	4.32	2.97	1.81	0.92	0.54
Sheffield	0.63	1.17	2.14	3.28	4.29	4.47	4.47	3.78	2.61	1.46	0.72	0.47
Edinburgh	0.54	1.20	2.04	3.13	4.41	4.55	4.24	3.55	2.43	1.38	0.72	0.44
Lyon	1.15	1.98	3.29	4.16	5.00	5.56	5.84	5.03	3.66	2.18	1.30	0.94
Jerez	2.30	3.25	4.56	5.43	6.25	7.26	7.51	6.64	5.18	3.49	2.47	1.96
Athens	1.83	2.56	3.68	5.36	6.78	7.91	7.83	6.98	5.35	3.32	2.06	1.57
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Cape Town	2.67	3.41	4.63	6.16	7.44	7.96	7.93	7.02	5.63	4.06	2.91	2.50
Springbok	3.29	4.10	5.24	6.56	7.87	8.34	8.15	7.30	5.97	4.54	3.57	3.04
Windhoek	4.55	5.39	6.15	6.56	6.87	7.14	6.61	6.28	5.87	5.16	4.74	4.37

Clearness

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maidstone	0.31	0.37	0.40	0.42	0.44	0.43	0.45	0.46	0.42	0.39	0.34	0.28
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Cape Town	0.54	0.55	0.57	0.62	0.65	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.62	0.58	0.54	0.54

The website also gives figures for 'clearness' defined as "The monthly average amount of the total solar radiation incident on a horizontal surface at the surface of the earth divided by the monthly average incoming top-of-atmosphere insolation for a given month, averaged for that month over the 22-year period (Jul 1983 - Jun 2005); (i.e. clearness index is the fraction of insolation at the top of the atmosphere which reaches

'Insolation' is defined as "The monthly average amount of the total solar radiation incident on a horizontal surface at the surface of the earth for a given month, averaged for that month over the 22-year period (Jul 1983 - Jun 2005). Each monthly averaged value is evaluated as the numerical average of 3-hourly values for the given month. Source: NASA Langley Research Center Atmospheric Science Data Center."

I believe the figures were principally collected/ calculated for the benefit of the solar power industry – the unit of measurement is kWh/m²/day – and there is no distinction made for different wavelengths, which are significant for the different phases of growth and flowering. However, again, for the purposes of comparison, I think the figures are very revealing. Cape Town, for instance, has anywhere between 2 and 5 times the average insolation in the winter compared to Maidstone (which I chose as the nearest similar location, i.e. not coastal, to my home of Canterbury.) Springbok, in the Northern Cape, has even higher light levels, and Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, has higher levels still. The Mediterranean cities fall somewhere in between.

the surface of the earth). 0 = very overcast and 1 = sunny."

I have given the figures for Maidstone and Cape Town by way of example, which confirm what we would all suspect, that our weather as well as our high latitude is a problem in the UK.

All of this of course begs several questions. Firstly how much real difference do the light levels make? This is harder to quantify, but there is no doubt that, as alpine growers have known for many years, it is difficult in our relatively gloomy country to get plants from areas with higher light levels to grow 'in character', that is in the compact form they display in the wild, and this problem is almost certain to be more pronounced with winter-growing plants.

Secondly, and more importantly, is what can we do about this lack of light? All the answers are pretty well-known – keep greenhouse glass as clean as possible, avoid shade from trees or buildings, place plants as close to the glass as possible, and use supplemental light.

I am not sure how many members of the SABG currently use supplemental light, although recent items in the newsletter reveal that some definitely do, albeit in some cases to allow plants to be grown indoors. I also saw, on a visit to the late Bill Squire a few years back, that he had a bank of lights installed in the greenhouse where he grew his *Lachenalia* collection, which no doubt partially explains why the *Lachenalias* he brought to SABG meetings were always so compact and floriferous.

Bill's lights were, I believe, a home-made set-up created using domestic lamp-holders and bulbs (see photo in Newsletter 39⁷). Commercial LED-based lights specifically designed for greenhouses are now widely available, and relatively affordable. They operate over limited wavelengths, tailored to either the growing or flowering stages, or a combination of both, and are cheap to run compared to old-fashioned incandescent or fluorescent lights. (I have a suspicion that their widespread availability has something to do with the popularity of certain home-grown herbs!)

Some years ago I installed some conventional fluorescent lights (in waterproof battens designed for outdoor use, as these are clearly much safer in the potentially damp atmosphere of a greenhouse) to boost the light levels in the greenhouse where I grow most of my Western Cape bulbs. Bill Squires lights were, I think, only turned on when conditions were dull. I used my lights in the same way for the first couple of years, but they are now on a timer, set to come on for a fixed period every day. I decided this would be simpler; apart from anything else, it saves me forgetting to turn them off at night, as happened on more than one occasion. I don't really know how much they reduce the light deficit, but I do feel I have seen a certain increase in flowering at least. The newer LED lights have figures quoted for light intensity in lumens; perhaps there is an SABG member out there with the relevant technical

knowledge to be able to assess the relationship, if any, of lumens to the insolation measurement unit given above. In the meantime, I would be confident that the design and brightness of these newer lights would be a significant improvement on the fluorescent tubes, and I hope to be able to try some out next winter. If I do, I will report back.

Jeremy Spon

I have been very pleasantly surprised by the effectiveness of my artificial lighting this winter. I have managed to successfully flower nearly all my *Lachenalias* this March – *Lachenalia haarliamensis*, *L. bachmanii*, *L. contaminata*, *L. mathewsii*, *L. liliflora*, *L. viridiflora* and some *L. longituba* are well on the way. [Some photos taken at the end of February are shown on page 10.]

I have been trying to pollinate them with a paintbrush and I'm hoping they set seed - if so I will clean some up and post them to Jon in time for the distribution later this year.

David Lloyd

Bulbils

Buying seeds from Silverhill's

In addition to the distribution of Terry Smale's bulbs and our forthcoming Bulb & Seed Exchange, those of you whose green fingers are getting a bit itchy might be looking for other ways to obtain new wonders to enjoy.

Members may remember that Jeremy Spon organised a joint purchase of seeds from Silverhill Seeds and Books⁸ in South Africa. Jeremy reported that Ondine at Silverhill was very helpful, the seed arrived safely, and he distributed it to the other seven people who participated.

Jeremy said that "overall the order was a success – quite a lot of work, but it all went pretty smoothly. However it did transpire that Ondine had already decided to adopt a version of my approach, whereby she pooled orders from the UK, sent them in one parcel, with a single covering phytosanitary certificate, by courier to her son who lives in Aberdeen, who then sent the individual orders out in the UK post. She intends to continue using this approach, making a charge to each person over and above the cost of the seeds to cover the internal UK postage and a share of the cost of the phyto and the courier.

"This of course means that there is little point in me putting together another joint order, at least for the foreseeable future – anyone in the UK can now order

7 <https://sabg.tk/media/newsletter:sabgnews39.pdf>

8 <http://silverhillseeds.co.za/>

from Silverhill, safe in the knowledge that their order will be covered by a phyto without it adding a great deal to the cost of their order. There may just be a slight delay in the actual turnaround, as Ondine will have to wait until she has enough orders to justify the courier's charge, although I get the impression that the flow of orders is sufficient that any such delay should be slight."

Jeremy is concerned that some members may be put off ordering on their own account because of the recent changes to plant health regulations in the EU, which still apply in the UK. He said that it would be nice to do what we can to help Silverhill's business to thrive, given how dependent we all are on them for seed of the bulbs we all want to grow. By the way, they accept PayPal, so ordering should be fairly painless. I can't see the phytosanitary certificate process mentioned on their website, so I suggest you check with Ondine at info@silverhillseeds.co.za before you place your order.

Oxalis lasiorrhiza

A request from Peter Farkasch for information about an unknown *Oxalis* was discussed by Jon Evans and Paul Cumbleton, and I had planned to put it in the "Notices and Requests" section of the Newsletter, but then Peter obtained an identification for the plant, so I moved the story here, just as an excuse to include a photo of it, and to mention iSpot.



The picture shows the unknown plant with the hardy *Oxalis melanosticta* 'Ken Aslet' in the background for comparison.

Jon wrote that "the leaves seem quite thick and leathery, and heavily veined, which makes it quite unlike any yellow oxalis I know. If I had seen them without

flowers I would have suggested *O. brasiliensis*, but that is magenta". He asked Paul whether he could throw any light on it, but Peter reported that it had been identified as *O. lasiorrhiza*. Jon found photos on iSpot which seemed to match it⁹. iSpot is a web-site for hosting records and photos of plants and animals in nature; although hosted by UK academic institutions including the Open University and the OpenScience Laboratory, it has a large number of South African bulb sightings.

The species is endemic to koppies in the Nieuwoudtville area, but is not listed on the Pacific Bulb Society wiki¹⁰, which is usually another good place to browse when trying to identify something. It is thought to be closely related to *O. pes-caprae*, as discussed in a systematic article¹¹, which is better known (indeed, *too well* known, see Newsletter no. 35!¹²)

In the next Newsletter

I plan to produce the next Newsletter (no. 45) for distribution in summer 2021. Do let me know of anything you would like to be included.

SABG Committee

Chairman

Paul Cumbleton cumbleton@yahoo.co.uk

Bulb & seed exchange

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Treasurer

Rodney Sims rodney.sims@tiscali.co.uk

Secretary & Membership

Alina Hughes abmhughes@gmail.com

Newsletter & Web editor, Committee minutes

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9 <https://www.ispotnature.org/communities/southern-africa/view/observation/413650/oxalis-lasiorrhiza>

10 <https://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/pbswiki/index.php/HomePage>

11 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269100195_New_relatives_of_Oxalis_pes-caprae_Oxalidaceae_from_South_Africa

12 <https://sabg.tk/media/newsletter:sabgnews35.pdf>

Lachenalia photos by David Lloyd (see page 8)

L. contaminata



L. liliflora



L. mathewsii



Constitution

Aims

The **Southern African Bulb Group** (SABG) promotes the cultivation, study and conservation of bulbous plants from southern Africa.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in these plants by application form with a joining donation. The amount of the donation required is stated on the application form, and may be varied from time to time, at the discretion of the committee. Membership of the group shall entitle the member to participate in all general activities of the group.

Members may resign by letter or email to the Secretary. A member may be asked to resign, or be expelled from the group, at the discretion of the Committee.

Committee and Officers

The group is managed by a Committee consisting of members with a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and up to three other members. The Officers and other Committee members shall be elected at a group meeting once every three years. All Officers and Committee members shall be eligible for re-election if they wish.. The Committee may co-opt up to two extra members, for example to fill a vacancy.

A list of members with their contact details will be maintained by one designated person, and made available to those Committee members who need it for the purpose of managing the group. The list will not be made available to any organisation or individual outside the group other than as required by law.

Meetings

The aim is to have a number of planned meetings a year (usually two) which any member may attend. Meetings are also open to members' guests and non-members on payment of the meeting charge.

Committee meetings will normally be scheduled to take place at the same place and date as the planned meetings, or may be held online.

There will be no Annual General Meeting. Any member may call for a special meeting by letter, supported and signed by five other members, to the Secretary; this will be arranged by the Committee to happen together with the next planned meeting. Notice of a special meeting, giving details of any matters to be discussed, will be communicated to the membership at least one month before that meeting. The quorum for a special meeting is 25, or half the membership, whichever is less. Minutes will be taken by the Secretary of any special meeting, and distributed to the membership.

Procedures

The Chairman, or other officer in his or her absence, will conduct the planned meetings. At any meeting the Chairman or their stand-in will have a casting vote if required.

All communications between the Committee and the other members will as far as possible be by email or other online means. Any member not having access to the Internet can receive communications by post on provision of stamped and addressed C5 envelopes to the Secretary.

Finances

There is no yearly membership fee, but the Committee may request a levy if finances make it necessary.

The Committee will maintain a bank account in the name of the group. Cheques must be signed by any two of the three officers.

The Treasurer will maintain accounts of income and expenditure. The accounts will be audited annually by an independent person and after approval be published to all members by email or newsletter.

Surplus funds may be disbursed as grants to further the aims of the group, at the discretion of the Committee.

Changes to the Constitution

Revisions to the constitution will be framed by the Committee and presented to a special meeting for ratification. If accepted by majority vote of the special meeting, the Committee will notify members and any other interested parties of the changes made.

Dissolution

In the event of any decision to close the group, the whole membership will be notified within a month. If not revoked during the following twelve months from that notification, the group assets will be donated to a plant charity.

