



Southern African Bulb Group

www.sabg.uk

SABG Newsletter no. 46 April 2022

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News

- ★ At last we have a face-to-face meeting, in just a few days time! See below for details.
- ★ A large number of books on South African plants are for sale, listed at the end of this Newsletter.

Dates for your diary

- ★ **Sunday 17 April 2022: SABG meeting in Winchester**

From the Editor

We have had several new members joining the SABG recently – welcome! After a longer interval than I intended, here at last is another Newsletter. Don't forget that you can find all our newsletters, starting with the first one (Autumn 2004) on our web site¹.

The SABG Committee has been busy organising our Spring 2022 meeting, as described below. We are looking forward to meeting again with old friends and new faces alike. If you hope to attend, and have not already done so, it will be helpful if you could email me (richard@sabg.uk). I will then send you the code for the hall entrance door.

Other members have also been active. I've included three more of Uli Urban's photos from his garden in Portugal, plus the wonderfully named *Albuca clanwilliamigloria*, and a question about *Lachenalia orchoides* var. *glaucina* from David Lloyd.

Other items in this Newsletter are about books: a review of "The Genus Agapanthus" and two lists of books for sale – those remaining from Terry Smale, and a list from Ben Turner. The books will be available at the Spring meeting. You can optionally reserve them before the meeting if you are attending, or have them posted to you.

¹ <https://sabg.uk/newsletter:start>



Oxalis purpurea 'alba' [Uli Urban]

Notices and Requests

SABG web-site

We have had reports on rare occasions that the web address we use, sabg.tk, has been blocked by web browsers. This is apparently because some free .tk domains have been used for nefarious activities, causing some over-zealous Internet service (broadband) providers to black-list the entire .tk top-level domain, which is a grossly unjustified over-reaction, especially as we pay for our domain. (Can you tell I'm annoyed?)

Accordingly, I have registered the domain sabg.uk and you will find our web site at that address as well as at the other one. For the time being, we shall keep both addresses in use (through the magic of the World-Wide Web, the pages themselves are not duplicated), but please try to remember to use sabg.uk and let me know if you run into any difficulties. If all is well we shall eventually stop using the .tk domain. The .uk domain does also accord with the fact that the majority of our members are in the U.K., and none are in the Tokelau Islands², although there will be no change in our welcome to members anywhere in the world.

Regarding the actual content of our web site, I've been investigating news feeds and have just added a list of the

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokelau>

most recently updated pages³, which I'm hoping might be useful to people who just want to see what's changed, and a section in the news page⁴ showing the most recent messages in the Pacific Bulb Society's "PBS List". Of course, in both cases, some of the items might be less useful than others.



Moraea polystachya [Uli Urban]

Email addresses and contact details

We need to make sure that our members' email addresses are kept up to date, as this is our main channel of communication. Please let me know if any of your contact details have changed recently, including your postal address, phone number and email address.

We can record both a "land line" and a mobile (cell phone) number, if you wish to provide them. As mentioned in the previous Newsletter, we can also hold two (or more) email addresses, in which case our emails will go to both (or all) addresses, useful if you think one of your email addresses might sometimes "lose" your incoming emails.

We do not have email addresses for a few members. We post printed copies of the newsletter to those whose postal addresses we believe are correct. If you have acquired an email address recently, please let us know as we would prefer to send you newsletters and other communications that way. We are grateful to one or two members who have made donations to cover the cost of posting their newsletters.

In the next Newsletter

I plan to produce the next Newsletter (no. 47) for distribution in summer 2022. Contributions of text, pictures or both will be most welcome.

³ <https://sabg.uk/info:web:changes:start>

⁴ <https://sabg.uk/news:start>



Gladiolus priorii [Uli Urban]

More on the Saunders' Gladiolus book

Concerning the Saunders' *Gladiolus* book described in Newsletter 45, SABG member Michael Craib kindly sent me a link to a video of the book launch event in August 2021. If you click on the link in this footnote⁵ you can spend an hour watching it on YouTube. It may take a while to get started, depending on the speed of your broadband connection.

The video includes a recorded presentation by John Manning, description of the project to complete the book, a discussion of conservation issues, etc. The event made a fitting tribute to Rod & Rachel, who I met only briefly at the IBSA convention in 2017, but I have my own copy of the book now to remember them by.

Incidentally, the first link given in my newsletter article, referring to <https://saundersgladiolusguide.com> no longer works, but thanks to more Web magic, in this case the "Wayback Machine" at <https://web.archive.org>, there is a partial backup (a direct link to it is in the footnote below⁶).

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXma7zbbTzk>

⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20210803063222/https://saundersgladiolusguide.com/>

SABG meetings

Reports on recent SABG meetings

Reports on the SABG meeting on Sunday 6th October 2019 and the online "Zoom" virtual meeting on 28th March 2021 will appear in the next Newsletter.

The next SABG meeting

Our next meeting will be held on **Easter Sunday 17th April 2022** at the usual meeting room in the Badger Farm Community Centre, Winchester.

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.

In the morning, Jon Evans will give a talk on "Autumn Flowering Bulbs at Kew". After a lunch break there will be time for two or three short presentations, including one from Paul Cumbleton and one from Richard White on "Learning about South African bulbs on the Web".

As before 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, or email them to me beforehand.

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. The Sainsbury's supermarket based on the same site will in any case be closed as it is Easter Sunday.

As before, 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 the free parking time limit.

SABG Autumn 2022 meeting

We have not yet chosen a date for our Autumn meeting in 2022. More details of the meeting will follow in due course.



Book review: “The Genus Agapanthus”

The genus *Agapanthus* first came to my notice many years ago while I was living in Adelaide. A house in the suburb of North Adelaide had a warning notice on its front gate which read “Beware of the Agapanthus”. Undeterred, I now grow a few *Agapanthus* varieties obtained from garden centres, but until now I hadn’t given very much thought to the wild species from which these cultivars had been developed. Strictly speaking, *Agapanthus* have rhizomes, not bulbs, but they do come from southern Africa, more to the east than the west – they are endemic to South Africa and Lesotho, except for one or two species just extending into Eswatini (Swaziland) and southern Mozambique. I’m sure many of us grow their cultivars in our gardens.

I was therefore delighted to receive from Kew a copy of “*The Genus Agapanthus*” by Graham Duncan, published in October 2021 by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew⁷, as one of their Botanical Magazine

Monographs, ISBN: 9781842467237. This is the same series as “*The Genus Lachenalia*”, also by Graham Duncan, with which many members will already be familiar.

You can see the [Advance information sheet](#) and [four sample page spreads](#) in our online digital library⁸. Copies are obtainable for approximately £50 from Kew and other online sellers⁹.

The hardback book has 244 pages and is illustrated by many photographs. More than half of the book is devoted to substantial and comprehensive sections on history, cultivars, cultivation including propagation, ecology and conservation and aspects of biology including pollination.

As befits its status as a monograph, the book also contains a full taxonomic treatment, placing the genus in the Amaryllidaceae but without any close relatives. Eight species are recognised, with *A. inapertus* containing four subspecies. A new species is described and published in the book, *A. pondoensis*. All eleven taxa are described in detail with colour photographs of plants in habitat, watercolour paintings by Elbe Joubert and distribution maps.

As with the *Lachenalia* book in the same series, the extensive and detailed information and the wide ranging topics covered will ensure that this volume will be of great interest to enthusiasts, gardeners, those seeking the plants in the field, conservationists and armchair botanists alike.

Other books on *Agapanthus* so far this century include:

- “*Agapanthus: A Revision of the Genus*” by Wim Snoeijer (2004) is said to focus on identifying the cultivars available at that date.
- “*Agapanthus for Gardeners*” by Hanneke Van Dijk (2004), Timber Press, 96 pp.

and two slim booklets:

- “*Grow Agapanthus*” in the Kirstenbosch Gardening Series, also by Graham Duncan (1998, second edition 2002), concentrates on the species and subspecies.

⁸ <https://sabg.uk/library:start#genera>

⁹ <https://www.nhbs.com/the-genus-agapanthus-book?bkfno=254549>; <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Genus-Agapanthus-Botanical-Magazine-Monograph/dp/1842467239>

⁷ <https://shop.kew.org/the-genus-agapanthus>



- “AGM *Agapanthus*”, RHS Grower Guide (2020) describes and illustrates all the *Agapanthus* cultivars which had received the RHS Award of Garden Merit up to that date, with notes on how to grow them.

Agapanthus is not included in “*The Amaryllidaceae of Southern Africa*” by Graham Duncan, Barbara Jeppe, et al. (January 2021): despite the earlier publication of DNA evidence to include *Agapanthus* in Amaryllidaceae, there seem to have been arguments both for and against its inclusion. An advantage for Graham Duncan and perhaps also for us is that *Agapanthus* is not duplicated in these two books!

Another review has appeared in “*Amaryllids*”, the Journal of the Nerine and Amaryllid Society (2022 Part One).

Bulbils

Bulbinella in South Africa

I’ve added the book *Bulbinella in South Africa* by Pauline L. Perry (1999: *Strelitzia* 8, 78 pp.) to our Digital library web page¹⁰. Although *Bulbinella*s are not strictly bulbs, they are geophytes (with a “compact corm-like structure”) and form a conspicuous element of the flora in many areas of South Africa where true bulbs grow. I’d be interested if anyone has experience with growing them in cultivation in the UK or other areas with similar climate.

Lachenalia orchioidea var. *glaucina*

I’ve grown these *Lachenalia* from seed that I bought from eBay 3 years ago, as you can see they have started to flower. I thought I was buying *Lachenalia orchioidea* var. *glaucina* but they look a bit violet/purple to me. Any ideas? They might have faded if I bring a pot of them to the Easter meeting.

I grew them under lights in my greenhouse and they did get a couple of feeds each year. I had another pot of them when they were small but had a problem with slugs, those horrible big brown ones with an orange band around the foot. Last year I got slug nematodes from Green Gardener, they are worth the money!

David Lloyd

Albuca clanwilliamae-gloria

(Looking at Jon Evans’ Bulb & Seed Exchange list last summer, I couldn’t believe someone would call a plant *Albuca clanwilliamigloria*, so I looked it up – and the plant really does exist, although the correct name may be even longer, *A. clanwilliamae-gloria*. It reminded me of a quotation from “*The Water Babies*” by Charles Kingsley, explaining that taxonomists “are forced to call everything by long names now, because they have used up all the short ones, ever since they took to making nine species out of one”. I happened to mention this to Uli Urban, who had provided the seed for the Exchange, and he kindly sent the following information about this little-known species of *Albuca* and the somewhat

¹⁰ <https://sabg.uk/library:start>

unexpected benefits of microwaving pollen!)

Albuca clanwilliamigloria is the queen of the genus with tall (apparently up to two metres) inflorescences of bright golden yellow flowers. They do not have the green stripe on each petal which is so typical for *Albuca* flowers so their colour is a true yellow. The flowers are hanging.



Albuca clanwilliamae-gloria near the N7 north of Clanwilliam [Ismail Ebrahim]¹¹

It was described and named by the German botanist couple Ute and Dietrich Müller-Doblies and named to honour the town of Clanwilliam where it grows nearby. Both of them are incredibly dedicated to botany as an old school science. Ute Müller-Doblies told me that this particular *Albuca* grows within thick tussocks of *Restio* which serve as some kind of natural staking for the very tall and somewhat lanky plants. There may well be other benefits of being housed in the extremely dense and hard rootstock of a *Restio*.

I was very pleased to be able to offer seed of this very beautiful plant. I only have one single bulb which travelled forwards and backwards between my friend Chris Lovell and myself. With a lot of online correspondence with several knowledgeable people and many trials I got the right technique to microwave the

pollen to overcome self incompatibility and achieve a good seed set. Hopefully the seed will germinate well.

If the seed is viable germination in *Albuca* is fast and straightforward and growing the seedlings on is no problem. Watch out for slugs and snails, though.

This *Albuca* has the winter growing pattern of South African bulbs. Older bulbs may remain dormant for more than one season, though, which is typical for many bulbs from dry climates. This is a test of the gardener's patience ...

For those interested in the details, here is the "recipe" for microwaving the pollen. It combines the advice from different people. *[More details by Uli including photographs of the process can be seen at the Pacific Bulb Society wiki¹².]*

To collect the pollen I use a cotton swab (Q-tip), I do not remove the anthers from the flowers. The swab with the pollen on it is placed in a drinking glass with about 1cm of water in the bottom, the swab points upwards and has no contact with the water. The glass is placed on the rotating plate of the microwave oven with a mug of water next to it. Microwave at max power, which is 700W in my case, for 10 seconds. Then I collect additional pollen with the same microwaved swab and with this mixture I pollinate. Preferably young flowers before they are fully open. I carefully open the 3 inner petals to get to the stigma. But I also pollinate mature flowers. Afterwards I keep the swab dry in the same glass without water on a sunny windowsill and repeat the process every day with the same cotton swab which contains some old pollen from the previous days.

This combines the different advice I got, but I do not know which of the combined actions taken is the key. Success rate with this procedure is good, about 75% of the flowers seem to form a seed pod, the others abort. Please keep your fingers crossed for me that these seed pods will contain viable seed at the end, both for myself and to share.

Uli Urban

SABG Committee

Chairman

Paul Cumbleton cumbleton@yahoo.co.uk

Bulb & seed exchange

Jonathan Evans jonevans46.uw@btinternet.com

¹¹ licensed under <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

¹² <https://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/pbswiki/index.php/Microwave>

TreasurerRodney Sims rodney.sims@tiscali.co.uk**Newsletter & Web editor, Committee minutes**Richard White richard@sabg.uk**Secretary & Membership**Alina Hughes abmhughes@gmail.com**Books for sale**

Some of Terry Smale's books, listed originally in Newsletter 45, were not sold. Here is a list of those that remain, with slightly reduced suggested prices, plus *Wildflowers of Northern South Africa* by Fabian & Germishuizen which was not listed previously. Ben Turner has also provided a list of books on South African plants he has for sale. Contact him concerning his books or me (Richard White) concerning Terry's books.

All unsold books will be offered for sale at our Winchester meeting on 17 April, which will avoid postage charges – if we have to post books to you, we will have to add on the cost of postage or courier. You can find information on some of these books by searching online.

Terry Smale's books

To buy one or more of these books, email or write to me, Richard White, 1 Cottage Mews, Fordingbridge, SP6 1RJ.

Author	Title	Notes	Suggested price
	Cape Action Plan for the Environment September 2000		£1.00
Acocks J.P.H.	Veld Types of South Africa	Botanical Survey of South Africa No. 28	£6.00
Bomback E.S.	Manual of Colour Photography	Inscribed as a prize to Terry in a (pre-digital) photography competition	£1.00
Boughey A.S.	The Origin of the African Flora	Text of a public lecture	£3.00
Clifton R.T.F.	Geranium Family Species Check List: Part 4 - <i>Pelargonium</i>		£8.00
Cowling & Richardson	Fynbos		£7.00
Craib, Charles	Geophytic Pelargoniums		£50.00
Eliovson, Sina	Namaqualand in Flower		£2.00
Fabian & Germishuizen	Wildflowers of Northern South Africa	See https://silverhillseeds.co.za/product/wild-flowers-of-northern-south-africa-second-hand/	£8.00
Goldblatt etc	Systematics, Biology and Evolution of some South African taxa	Contributions from the Bolus Herbarium No 13 - Includes P. Goldblatt African Iridaceae	£4.00
Hilliard & Burt	The Botany of the Southern Natal Drakensberg		£4.00
Mason, Hilda	Western Cape Sandveld Flowers		£2.00
Perry, Pauline	<i>Bulbinella</i> in South Africa		£7.00
Preston-Mafham Ken	Madagascar - A Natural History		£4.00
Reid & Dyer	A Review of the Southern African Species of <i>Cyrtanthus</i>		£8.00
Rex Peter	Landscapes of South Africa - The Cape - car tours, walks, picnics		£1.00
Rice & Compton	Wild Flowers of the Cape of Good Hope		£2.00
Williamson, Graham	Richtersveld National Park		£8.00
	Flowering Plants of Africa Volume 60 June 2007		£4.00

Ben Turner's books

All offers will be considered: email him at benjamin.turner@btinternet.com

- The Color Encyclopedia of Cape Bulbs by John Manning, Peter Goldblatt & Dee Snijman. Hardback. 2002. Timber Press. ISBN 0-88192-547-0. **SIGNED BY PETER GOLDBLATT**. Signs of wear on jacket and sunning to spine, otherwise good condition. £90.00
- People's Plants: A Guide to Useful Plants of Southern Africa by Ben-Erik van Wyk and Nigel Gericke. Hardback. 2nd Impression 2003. Briza Publications. ISBN 187509319-2. Good condition, slight sunning to spine. £40.00
- Creative Gardening with Indigenous Plants: A South African Guide by Pitta Joffe. Paperback. 1st edition, 3rd Impression 2005. Briza Publications. ISBN 187509329X. Signs of wear but otherwise good condition. £15.00
- Namaqualand: South African Wildflower Guide 1 Revised Edition. Text by Annelise le Roux & Ted Schelpe. Paperback. 1st ed., 3rd impression 1997. Botanical Soc. of S. Africa. ISBN 0 620 12114 9. Signs of wear, otherwise good condition. £10.00
- Stellenbosch to Hermanus including Kogelberg and Hottentots Holland: South African Wild Flower Guide 5 Second Revised Edition. Text by Anne Bean & Amida Johns. Paperback. 2nd edition, 1st impression 2005. Botanical Society of South Africa. ISBN 1 874999 59 9. Very good condition. £40.00
- Nieuwoudtville, Bokkeveld Plateau & Hantam: South African Wild Flower Guide 9 by John Manning & Peter Goldblatt. Paperback. 2nd ed., with amendments 2002. Bot. Soc. of S. Africa. ISBN 1 874999 17 1. Excellent condition. £20.00
- Cedarberg, Clanwilliam & Biedouw Valley: South African Wild Flower Guide 10. Text by Gretel van Rooyen & Hester Steyn. Paperback. 1st ed., 2nd impression 2004. Bot. Soc. of South Africa. ISBN 1 874999 19 8. Excellent condition. £30.00
- Wildflowers of the Table Mountain National Park: South African Wild Flower Guide 12. Text by Terry Trinder-Smith. Paperback. 1st edition, 1st impression 2006. Botanical Society of South Africa. ISBN 1-874999-60-O. Very small area of damage on front edge, otherwise very good condition. £40.00
- Grow Bulbs: A Guide to the Species, Cultivation and Propagation of South African Bulbs. Kirstenbosch Gardening Series by Graham D Duncan. Paperback. 2000. National Botanical Institute. ISBN 1-919684-26-3. Good condition. **SIGNED BY GRAHAM DUNCAN** (at Cambridge AGS conference 'Global Alpines' 2005). £10.00
- Growing South African Bulbous Plants: A Popular Guide by Graham Duncan. Paperback. 1996. National Botanical Institute. ISBN 1-874907-15-3. Signs of wear on front & back cover, fine inside. £4.00
- Field Guide to Wild Flowers of South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland by John Manning. Paperback. 2009. Struik Nature. ISBN 978 1 77007 758 4. Very good condition. £20.00
- Field Guide to the Wild Flowers of the Highveld by Braam van Wyk & Sasa Malan. Paperback. 2nd edition 1997. Struik Publishers. ISBN 1 86872 058 6. Good condition, some sunning to spine. £20.00
- Wild Flowers of the Northern Cape by Jill Adams. Hardcover. 1976. Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation, Cape Town. ISBN 0 620 02041 5. Good condition, fantastic illustrations. £6.00
- A Traveller's Companion to Namaqualand from Pofadder to Darling by Esta Mostert & Mike Crewe-Brown. Paperback. 1992. C B M Publishing. ISBN 0-620-16848-X. Good condition. £6.00
- Cycads of South Africa by Cynthia Giddy (pencil drawings/diagrams by Barbara Jeppe). Hardback. 1974. Purnell and Sons (SA) (Pty) Ltd. SBN 360 00274 9. NO JACKET but otherwise good condition. £30.00
- What Flower Is That? Spring. A Purnell Pocketbook. Southern Africa Series. By Hazel Stokes. Hardback. 1968. Purnell, Cape Town/Johannesburg. Very good condition. £8.00
- Wild Flowers of South Africa (no author). Paperback. 3rd impression 1992. Struik Publishers. ISBN 0 86977 580 4. Fair condition. £3.00
- Wonderful Waterwise Gardening: A regional guide to indigenous gardening South Africa by Ernst Van Jaarsveld. Hardback. 2000. Tafelberg Publishers. ISBN 0 624 03840 8. Very good condition. £20.00
- The Protea Book: A Guide to Cultivated Proteaceae by Lewis J Matthews. Paperback, 2002. Timber Press. ISBN 0 88192 553 5. Good condition. £30.00
- Proteas for Pleasure by Sima Eliovson. Hardback. 3rd edition 1973. Macmillan South Africa Publishers (Pty.) Ltd. Johannesburg. SBN 0 86954 006 8. Jacket torn and spine faded. Good condition inside. £5.00
- South African Shrubs & Trees for the Garden by Una Van Der Spuy. Hardback. 1st edition 1971. Hugh Keartland Publishers. Jacket quite damaged. Signs of age. Good condition inside. £5.00