

Older news items

Following the [latest news items](#), older items below are listed in order of increasing age.

2025

- I've just added to our digital library a PhD thesis spotted by Carl Garnham: [A systematic revision of Drimiopsis Lindl. & Paxt. \(Hyacinthaceae\)](#) by Pearl Dijeng 'Matlhapi Lebatha (2004). Although it's a thesis, with much botanical information, there are also colour photos and paintings of the species. [13 March 2025]
- I've just been asked a question about South African bulbs with prostrate or low-lying leaves. This led me to discover a botanical article on the subject, which mentions eight genera containing species with this habit, and seven potential hypotheses as to why they do it. I've added the article and a short note to our [library](#), under a new sub-heading "Botanical studies". [11 February 2025]
- Audrey Cain died on 23rd January 2025. Born in Kenya in October 1936, she moved to the UK in the early sixties. On the steamer from Cape Town to the UK she met the chief engineer, whom she later married. He died in the nineties, but Audrey continued to live in their house in Woolston, where she grew many alpiners - she was active in the AGS. She also served on the SABG Committee for many years. Although she had been unable to get to a meeting for a long time, she had been very involved and enjoyed working on the plant sales table and talking with other members.
She was known for her collection of both hardy and tender bulbs, which she photographed when they flowered and documented their growth. She was an early pioneer in publishing these photos and associated information on the Web as her "BulbWeb" website. Although no longer available in its original form, a modified copy of [Audrey Cain's BulbWeb](#) has been restored. During the last ten years she had the foresight to ensure that her South African bulbs were gradually transferred to the care of Exbury Gardens.
Audrey's funeral was held at Southampton crematorium on the 13th February, attended by family, friends and SABG members. [14 February 2025]
- Website address: The old [sabg.tk](#) domain name has expired, is no longer recognised and will not give access to our web-site. We have been using [sabg.uk](#) since 2022. Please make sure you change any old bookmarks ("favourites") to [sabg.uk](#) as soon as possible. [31 January 2025]
- Sue Bedwell, aged 76, died peacefully in her sleep at the end of November in Sobell House Hospice in Oxford where she had been for about a week. Sue was a long time member of the SABG, formerly a member of the SABG Committee and was always very helpful to the group, looking after our catering supplies and sometimes making good suggestions for speakers for our meetings. She was also a member of several other plant-related groups including the Nerine and Amaryllid Society and the Alpine Garden Society, being a very active member of the Oxford AGS Group, winning many awards and 1st prizes in their shows. She will be sadly missed by all who knew her.
Caroline Stone of the Nerine and Amaryllid Society wrote: "Sue had been a great support to the Society for many years serving two terms as Chair. She always helped out with the Society displays at the Malvern Autumn Show and her wide range of plants were always a big help with the mixed display that made up part of the stand. Often she brought tiny and rather fragile plants that were a worry to place but very interesting for people to see, but also *Clivia* and *Haemanthus* as well as Autumn flowering *Narcissus*. Only about 8 weeks ago she was still gardening, although finding her energy levels depleted. Sue was a proper character and a great

plantswoman as well as friend to many of us.”

Sue’s funeral was held in the Oxford area on Monday 6th January 2025, followed by a reception at Waterperry Gardens.

2024

- The [list of available bulbs and seeds](#) for the **November Seed and Bulb Exchange 2024** has been published. Deadline for requests is 16th November. [Jon Evans, 3 November 2024]
- The timetable for the **November Seed and Bulb Exchange 2024** has been announced. Details have been emailed to members in Bulletin 51/2, and can also be found on our [Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) page. [Jon Evans, 10 September 2024]
- **Correction** to the [list of bulbs and seeds](#) for the main **2024 Bulb & Seed Exchange**: Bert Zaalberg reports that the bulbs listed as *Gethyllis gerardii* are almost certainly *Gethyllis gregoriana*. He wrote that “Since *gerardii* is an unpublished species name, I tried to get more info through Paul Cumbleton to find out its proper name. Paul told me that he purchased them in 2006/2007 as *G. gerardii* from Gordon Summerfield. Location info was Nardouwsberg, Clanwilliam. After having seen pictures of flowers and leaves, I’m pretty certain this is *Gethyllis gregoriana*. Leaves are quite diagnostic for this species and match the description Paul gave me. I assume it was a simple typo from Gordon back then, since *gregoriana* was cultivated by Gordon Summerfield in those days.” (Thanks, Bert!) [21 August 2024]
- The [list of bulbs and seeds](#) in the **2024 Bulb & Seed Exchange** is available: members’ requests to reach Jon Evans by **30th August**. [16 August 2024]
- Joint order for **South African bulbs grown in Israel**: SABG member John Davies has contact with a nursery growing bulbs in Israel, and is preparing an order by this weekend which SABG members are welcome to join in. *Daubenya* species are £3.50; all other bulbs are £2.50, postage by Royal Mail is £5.60. Please send wish lists to John Davies (*email address in Bulletin 50/3, or ask me – Richard*) by midnight on **Sunday 21st of July**. First come first served, payment on confirmation of order. The list of bulbs available from Israel is <https://photos.app.goo.gl/6vSjiNHv6dyPWHBo7> (which takes you to a Google Photos gallery of excellent pictures of the bulbs available). Definitely worth a look even if you aren’t thinking of ordering (and it might change your mind!) [17 July 2024]
- Very occasionally I change the “theme” (style) of the web site. The current theme has a choice of a light or dark background. To change from one to the other, click on “Toggle theme” at the very top on the right-hand side. For more information, see [About the SABG web site](#) [20 June 2024]
- The timetable for the annual **Bulb & Seed Exchange** for 2024 has been announced. Details have been emailed to members in Bulletin 50/2, and can also be read on our [2024 Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) page. [Jon Evans, 19 June 2024]

2023

- An SABG member has drawn my attention to a study of the South African species of *Ledebouria*, which I have added to our [library](#) [22 November 2023]
- The **November 2023 Ephemeral Seed and Bulb Exchange** has now finished. The material available was listed here [here](#). [22 November 2023]
- The **November 2023 Ephemeral Seed and Bulb Exchange** is in progress and here is the [list of seeds and bulbs available](#). [3 November 2023]
- More options to order seeds and bulbs from South African and other suppliers are described in **Bulletin 48/3** emailed to SABG members. [23 June 2023]

- An SABG member is proposing to make a joint seed order to Silverhill Seeds, as described in **Bulletin 48/2** emailed to SABG members today. If you are an SABG member, didn't receive this bulletin and are interested in joining in, please let me know and I'll put you in touch. [10 April 2023]
- The [Auction of books \(March 2023\)](#) has closed. Successful bidders will be contacted by email to arrange payment. [1 April 2023]
- SABG members who have an email address (the great majority) should have received **Bulletin 48/1**, the first of a planned series of [SABG Bulletins](#), which are intended to be smaller and more frequent than the [Newsletters](#), and thus to provide more timely news and certain information for members only, such as members' contact details, which is not appropriate to appear on the web-site. However, suitably edited versions will appear [here](#). [30 March 2023]
- As an experiment, I have added a couple of Discussion sections to the [Cultivation](#) and [Hardiness](#) pages. Please feel free to try them out (there are direct links to them at the bottom of the home page). [30 March 2023]
- An SABG member has brought my attention to **Jacques Amand** (<https://jacquesamandintl.com/>), which is a UK retail and wholesale supplier of a very wide range of bulbs, including many South African species. I have added them to our [Links page](#) [29 March 2023]
- We are running another auction of Southern African bulb-related books, principally by email, although postal bids will also be accepted. The deadline for bids is 31st March. More details and instructions are at [Auction of books \(March 2023\)](#). [14 March 2023]

2022

- I have just added Bert Zaalberg's [Massonia.com seed list](#), Rob Scott's [Shire Bulbs 2022 list](#) and his [information sheet](#) and Gordon Summerfield's [latest \(2022--2023\) catalogue](#) of South African indigenous bulbs and seeds to our [Links page](#). [11 November 2022]
- The Ephemeral [2022 Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) is in progress. Here is the [list of seeds and bulbs which are available](#). The deadline for sending requests for bulbs and seeds from the [2022 Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) to Jon Evans is 18th November. Many thanks as always to Jon Evans for his hard work. [7 November 2022]
- The main [2022 Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) has finished. Here is the [list of bulbs and seeds which were available](#). If you requested bulbs and seeds from the list, you should have received them by now. [21 September 2022]
- The [Nerine and Amaryllid Society's](#) 25th Anniversary Talk is open to NAAS members and non-members. John Grimshaw will talk on "Amaryllids I have known" at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Westbourne Road, B15 3TR on Saturday 8th October 2022 at 10.30am. Further details in [this notice](#) or from the NAAS. [11 August 2022]
- I've been investigating news feeds and have just added a list of our [Recently changed web pages and documents](#) and a section in the [News](#) page showing the most recent messages in the Pacific Bulb Society's "PBS List". [11 April 2022]

2021

- I've just discovered and added the *Bulbinella* book by Pauline L. Perry (1999) **Bulbinella in South Africa** (*Strelitzia* **8**, 78 pp.) to our [library](#) page. Although Bulbinellas 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. [1 November 2021]

- I've added Paul Lewis's web-site to our page of [Links to other web sites](#): don't forget to click on "BLOG" at the top of his home page (<https://www.paullewis-plantbreeder.co.uk/>) to see his results breeding *Crocasmia* and *Gladiolus*. It's not a selling page, but you can contact him through the form on his "ABOUT" page to ask how to acquire his plants. [18 October 2021]
- I've added a page on [How to grow South African bulbs](#). Please let me know of any further sources of similar information. [10 September 2021]
- The 2021 **Bulb & Seed Exchange** has now closed. Members who submitted requests by email should have received a confirmation reply from Jon Evans, who posted requested bulbs and seeds to members on 6 September. [7 September 2021]
- Paul, our chairman, has some spare bulbs for sale, to UK members only. UK members should have received an email with the list and instructions. [6 August 2021]
- The AGS East Surrey Group is holding an **informal afternoon get together** to remember [Terry Smale](#).
 - Terry had a multitude of interests, knowledge and achievements. In his memory, Jennifer would like to invite SABG members to come together to remember Terry and think and talk about all he has meant to everyone. On 21st August, from 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm, at Banstead Community Centre, there will be an informal afternoon get together, with a buffet provided. One or two people have offered to give some insight into Terry's life, and if any of you would like to stand up for a few minutes, with or without digital images, Jennifer would love to have your participation.
 - Saturday, 21st August 2021 at 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm, Banstead Community Centre, Park Road, Banstead SM7 3DL
 - Suzanne Mace is kindly organising the food, and can inform on arrangements for anyone who would like to say a few words. We do need to know in advance who is coming, so the food can be arranged. Please therefore, would you reply as soon as possible, to Suzanne. I do hope you can come. I know Jennifer would be so pleased to see you all there.
 - [Jon Evans, 21 July 2021]
- The problem which occurred in June with our PayPal account was resolved. If you are not able to use alternative methods, you can use PayPal to make a donation to cover the costs of sending you the bulbs. For more information, please refer to our [Payments](#) page. [25 June 2021]
- **Graham Duncan's Lachenalia book** is available again for just £40 from PostScript books (<https://www.psbooks.co.uk/Genus-Lachenalia>). This excellent book was originally priced at £130. Thanks to Alice Vanden Bon for drawing my attention to this offer. [6 April 2021]
- We are sorry to have to report the death of [Terry Smale](#) on 16 February 2021, at the age of 76. He was one of our founding members and always a friendly and enthusiastic source of plants, information and encouragement. He will be greatly missed, and not just by SABG members: he was an active member of the BCSS, Mesemb Study Group, AGS and RHS. He had a large collection of Conophytums – the BBC filmed his plants for a 6-minute section of the "Gardeners' World" programme shown on Friday 28th August 2020, which can be seen on-line at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08qn68n>¹⁾. On behalf of the SABG and its members, the Committee send their condolences to his wife Jennifer. [8 March 2021]
- **Buying seeds from Silverhill**: Some members may be put off ordering from overseas suppliers because of the recent changes to plant health regulations in the EU, which still apply in the UK. Jeremy Spon reports that Ondine at Silverhill's now pools orders from the UK and sends them in one parcel, with a single covering phytosanitary certificate, by courier to her son who lives in Aberdeen, who then sends the individual orders out in the UK post. She makes 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. So anyone in the UK can now order from Silverhill's, 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 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 hopefully the flow of orders will be sufficient that any such delay should be slight. 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. They accept PayPal, so ordering should be fairly painless, but I can't see any description of the phytosanitary certificate process on their website (<https://silverhillseeds.co.za>), so I suggest you email Ondine at info@silverhillseeds.co.za to check before you place your order. [21 January 2021]

- **Cape Seed and Bulb:** If it's bulbs you're after, here is the recent [illustrated list](#) from Jim Holmes (<https://www.capeseedandbulb.com/>) of Stellenbosch. [21 January 2021]

2020

- The latest [seed list](#) from Bert Zaalberg at www.massonia.com has just arrived. Contact Bert directly if you want to order anything or join his email list. [8 September 2020]
- Have a look at [Audrey Cain's BulbWeb](#), now hosted by the SABG, which contains over 1,400 photographs of plants in 175 genera (not all of them South African). [6 September 2020]
- The annual [Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) for 2020 has been completed. Bulbs and seeds have been posted out by its coordinator, Jon Evans. [5 September 2020]
- The annual [Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) for 2020 has been announced by its coordinator, Jon Evans. Details have been emailed to members, and can also be read on our [Bulb & Seed Exchange](#) page. [Jon Evans, 7 June 2020]
- An episode of the BBC Gardeners' World TV series with a portion devoted to wild *Gladiolus* with Rod & Rachel Saunders, filmed in the Drakensberg mountains in South Africa just before their deaths, has been shown on BBC television in the UK, and is available for streaming from BBC iPlayer (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000hr3l/gardeners-world-2020-episode-7>), until April, but unfortunately only for viewers in the UK with a BBC account (free to UK TV licence holders), as far as I know. [7 May 2020]

2019

- I have moved some pictures and information about our late former Chairman [Bill Squire](#) to a separate page [1 April 2019]

2018

- "Ephemeral" seeds (which germinate immediately) were available to members for two days only. For the list of species available, see [Ephemeral seed exchanges](#) [Jon Evans, 20 November 2018]
- In the latest October 2018 Silverhill Seeds newsletter (<http://www.silverhillseeds.co.za/newsletter.asp>), Ondine Schrick (who had worked for Rod and Rachel Saunders for over twenty years and is now the owner of the business) writes "We hope Rod and Rachel are in a gentler place now - perhaps at the top of a mountain gazing down over unfolding hills and valleys, tranquil. Work done, dreams and adventures fulfilled. The world a richer place for their time spent here." There are many other tributes in the Scottish Rock Garden Club forum (<http://www.srgc.net/forum/index.php?topic=16118.15>) [7 November 2018]
- The cremation service for our former Chairman [Bill Squire](#) was scheduled to place in Bangkok yesterday [7 November 2018]
- A [display of a small selection of Bill Squire's plants](#) was presented by Leo Squire and Tony

Bennett at the meeting of the Dorset Group of the Alpine Garden Society, of which Bill had been Chairman, on the 1st November, 2018. A small but appropriate tribute to a wonderful man. [*2 November 2018*]

- Sadly I have to report the death of [Bill Squire](#), our long-serving former Chairman, on Friday 26th October 2018. Not long after starting a “new life” with his partner in Thailand, he succumbed to a short but fatal illness. He was also well known as the former Chairman of the Dorset Group of the Alpine Garden Society, and the curator of the National Collection of *Lachenalia*. I am sure everyone will join with me in expressing our condolences to his family. [*29 October 2018*]
- I have just added [The South African Species of Dipcadi](#) by A. A. Obermeyer (1964) to our [Links to other web sites](#) [*29 October 2018*]
- For many years Audrey Cain maintained a large collection of photographs of bulbs, many of them South African, which could be viewed on her web-site, called “BulbWeb”. This has not been available for a while, but I am pleased to be able to report that, with help from Audrey and her son Doug, I have been able to reinstate the photos (about 1,500 in about 190 genera) and some of Audrey’s comments about them. The comments are mostly about flowering dates in cultivation, and require some more work to sort them out properly. However, rather than keep them hidden until this is done, I have made [a provisional version of BulbWeb](#) available on the SABG web site. Any comments will be welcomed by Audrey and me. [*10 October 2018*]
- There is a [special issue](#) of the Pacific Bulb Society’s journal “The Bulb Garden” dedicated to the lives of Rod and Rachel Saunders. [*Aiko Talens, 3 October 2018*]
- I’ve just found and added [Field Guide to the Flora of Grootbos Nature Reserve and the Walker Bay region](#) by Sean Privett and Heiner Lutzeyer (2010) to our [Links to other web sites](#) [*1 October 2018*]

1)

possibly restricted to UK viewers

From:

<https://sabg.uk/> - **Southern African Bulb Group**

Permanent link:

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