



# Newsletter

## April 2018

“The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies.”

### **SPRING INTO ACTION** to ensure a riot of color in September

Autumn is when Mediterranean plants begin waking up. Look around and you’ll see the first signs of the new growing season. April fools (*Haemanthus coccineus*) and March lilies (*Amaryllis belladonna*) are lighting up the landscape.

And this is just the opening act. A succession of different bulbs will enchant gardeners over the coming months. Then, for the final chorus, the winter-growing annuals join the show.

Spring is the season of flowers in the Cape. Think of sheets of bright daisies in Namaqualand. Or the glowing hues of massed bulbs in Nieuwoudtville.

You can recreate this magic in your garden, without irrigation. Work with nature and make use of indigenous annuals and bulbs. But you need to start soon, to give plants enough time to develop.

With the equinox behind us, the worst is over for our gardens, even if we ourselves are still reduced to sponge baths. Remember that drought stress is a function of both temperature and rainfall. Shorter days equal fewer hours of sun and less heat, giving plants a breather even if the rains haven't yet come.

So get out there and begin planting. The best spring displays are born now, in autumn.

# Annuals: sowing the seeds of spring

The massed spring flowers of the Cape bring tourists from all over the world to South Africa. Annuals and bulbs dominate these displays. Annuals are plants that complete their life cycle – germinate, grow, flower and set seed – in one year.

In the Western Cape, annuals should be sown from March to May. The seeds will germinate once rains start. Plants develop during winter to flower in spring. You can collect seeds from your own plants to ensure a repeat performance every year.

Most Cape annuals need light, free-draining soil and will flower best in full sun. They thrive on sandy and poor soils.

Prepare the ground by breaking up the soil. Use a fork followed by a rake to create a fine, even-textured surface for sowing. Make sure your planting area is ready before the rains come.

Once the first winter rains arrive, broadcast the seed over the prepared bed. The seeds may look tiny, but don't sow too many. Most annual Cape daisies have a spread of at least 20 cm. Plants will be more vigorous and free-flowering if they have enough space.

Indigenous Cape annuals are trouble-free, but you will need to keep the weeds down.

## FEATURED PLANT

Mexican sage  
*Salvia leucantha*



## SPRING-FLOWERING ANNUALS

### Bittergousblom

*Arctotis fastuosa*

### Gousblom

*Arctotis hirsuta*

### White Namaqualand daisy

*Dimorphotheca pluvialis*

### Namaqualand daisy

*Dimorphotheca sinuata*

### Bokbaaivygie

*Dorotheanthus bellidiformis*

### Cape jewels

*Nemesia strumosa*

### Wild cineraria

*Senecio elegans*

### Size

↑ 60 to 120 cm

↔ 60 to 120 cm

### Soil

Not fussy

Prefers good drainage

### Exposure

Full sun to light shade

### Season

Flowers autumn to spring

### Drought resistance

3 months per year



Wild Mexican sage has white flowers with purple calyces. Fairholme also stocks other color forms:

LEFT: Midnight  
TOP: White Mischief  
BELOW: Danielle's Dream



Mexican sage is native to Central America and Mexico. Although it is evergreen, it does best when cut back to the ground after flowering.



From 1 May 2018, Fairholme Plants will be on Facebook! Visit us, follow us and like us!

## Bulbs: a gift that keeps on giving

South Africa has the greatest diversity of bulbs in the world. Most of these occur in winter rainfall areas. They disappear during the hot dry summers, surviving underground. From autumn onwards, new growth emerges, providing a rich and varied display right up to early summer.

The majority of bulbs sold at garden centers do not need lifting during dormancy. You can plant them and leave them, sometimes for years. Do not disturb unless overcrowding causes reduced flowering.

Most Cape bulbs like sun. In general, bulbs must have good drainage to prevent rotting.

Planting time is from March to May – now! If you buy dry bulbs, get them into the ground as soon as possible. Don't wait until they begin to sprout.

Our indigenous Cape bulbs combine well with spring annuals and are perfect for rockeries. They are also great for containers. The tiniest patio has room for a pot of Cape cowslips (*Lachenalia* cultivars) or freesias.

### SPRING-FLOWERING BULBS

**Bobbejaantjies**  
*Babiana* cultivars

**Suurkanol**  
*Chasmanthe floribunda*

**Freesia**  
*Freesia* cultivars

**Kalossies**  
*Ixia* cultivars

**Chincherinchees**  
*Ornithogalum thyrsoides*

**Sparaxis**  
*Sparaxis* cultivars

**Watsonias**  
*Watsonia* species



### **Size**

↑ 90 cm

↔ 60 to 90 cm

### **Soil**

Not fussy

Tolerates seasonal flooding

### **Exposure**

Full sun to partial shade

### **Season**

Flowers spring to autumn

### **Drought resistance**

3 months per year

## **FEATURED PLANT**

**Mexican petunia**

***Ruellia simplex (britoniana)***



Mexican petunia is not a petunia, although it does come from Mexico, the Caribbean and South America. Plants spread by rhizomes and tolerate drought once established.



**Contact us**

**[www.fairholmeplants.co.za](http://www.fairholmeplants.co.za)**

**[fairholme@breede.co.za](mailto:fairholme@breede.co.za)**

**cell 082 550 8703**

**PO Box 302**

**Grabouw 7160**