



JAN/FEB NEWSLETTER 2011



#### **DECEMBER GARDENING CLUB MEETING**

Thank you to Yvonne Peddie who kindly opened her home up to us. Yvonne has put a huge amount of energy into her garden and as you can see from the pictures above it has really paid off! Another big thank you to Marianne from Culterra who led the discussions, it was informative and we have a better understanding about our soil.

#### **JANUARY GARDENING CLUB MEETING**

Thanks to Colleen Kreser for hosting our last meeting, your efforts are much appreciated! It was fantastic to see so many people attending. We had a short discussion about Garden Design & Planning and then chatted to Colleen about her garden and problems she was facing. My next newsletter will cover some of what was discussed – if you would like the newsletter email me. I will send the next newsletter out at the end of Feb.

The next meeting will be held on Friday the **4<sup>th</sup> of March** @ 1358 Woodgreen Way, Highgate West. The meeting will start at 9am with Paul Vonk from Mayford Seeds talking about "**Success with Seeds and Bulbs**". Be sure you don't miss this meeting- it is important to plant your seeds/bulbs in the correct season, instead of buying costly annuals every season, if done correctly planting from seed is easy and will give you a spectacular display or colour! The meeting may take a bit longer than an hour but if you need to go it doesn't matter the meetings are very casual.

#### **CULTERRA EARTHWORM FARM / CARBON GARDENING**

Earthworm composting is a low maintenance, low effort hobby that can be carried out in the corner of your house. An earthworm farm does not produce offensive odours and is an environmentally friendly, natural process which you can use to compost your green waste that comes from your kitchen and vegetable garden. In this way you are benefiting the environment by putting carbon back into your garden soil. The compost that is generated from your compost bin can be used as an organic fertilizer for fruit trees, vegetables and in your flower garden.



### POTTING SOIL & HOW TO USE IT

Culterra Potting Mix is manufactured from the best raw materials available on the market. Time is taken to well mature the composted pine bark and ensure that it is at the correct pH for optimal plant growth. The product is then carefully sifted to the correct grade ensuring that no waste material is supplied to the end user. Our potting mix has a slow-release fertilizer added to the mix to improve plant growth. This fertilizer lasts for up to 5 months. When growing plants in pots it is always advisable to use a potting mix based on quality and not price.

Add Culterra Potting Mix to your new larger container with some Culterra Bone Meal and place the plant at the right level (the plant should be at the same level as it was originally grown and there should be 2 to 3 centimeters from the top of the soil to the lip of the pot). Fill with Culterra Potting Mix and press lightly. Cover the surface of the pot with Culterra River Sand, Macadamia Nut Shells or our Decorative Bark Chips for aesthetic appeal. Water deeply to settle the potting mix and then allow the pot to drain.

### GARDEN DESIGN

If you enjoy spending time in the garden and start to create a pleasurable space, it will reflect your personality. I have had the pleasure of working on 2 gardens. The first was mostly indigenous, Strelitzias, Aloes, Succulents, Grasses and some beautiful Fever/Acacia and Olive Trees. The second is at my existing home which more of a classical style, using Abelia & Photinia hedges and pretty annuals. Both the gardens reflected my personality – neat, structured with a high contrast. Even though the plants and space were completely different I still managed to create the same mood and found them both pleasurable.

Many people say they cannot design and are not creative and it frustrates me because if you understand how design works you will automatically learn how to be creative. Designing beautifully is about creating something within certain parameters. There are always parameters to every type of design. Once you understand the parameters you can use your flare to break the rules and create something new.

### My 10 Garden Design Formula / Steps:

1. Site Analysis. Take a walk through your garden at different times of the day. Think about the different areas as little separate rooms within in that space – it doesn't matter if your garden is small. Look at what is working or is functional, for example a tree that creates good shade or a pathway leading you to another area. Then look at what you don't like and what needs to be taken out. Also look at how you can change the hard landscaping to enhance the flow of the area. Take note of which areas get sun and which areas are predominately in shade.
2. Make a rough aerial-view sketch of what is there or more accurately use your house plans and trace the house and garden area.
3. Add in all the hard landscaping like paving stones water features that will be staying.
4. Add in where north, south east and west is so you know where the sun rises and sets.

5. Assess you and your family's needs. For example do you have kids that need an area to play, do you want a quiet area to sit, does your husband need an area with a hammock? This is where you start to create rooms of space. Different rooms in the garden for different activities.
6. Look at the style of your house. Is it modern? If it is you will probably use straight lines and more structure, if it is more classical with rounded pillars a more curvy flowing style will suite better. The garden is the clothing of the house. If dress a young person in old fashioned clothing they will look out of place, same goes for your house and garden!
7. Now trace your plan onto some trace paper and play around with a few ideas. Add in a water feature in your peaceful area or a space that is quite place a bird bath. Try curvy bed or straight beds. Make sure you are practical, the pathways need to be wide enough for two people to walk if you have the space and the garden needs to have a balance of open lawn and beds.
8. Once you have the structure start doing some plant research. Look in books, search the internet and go to the nurseries. Look at plant you like and dislike and make a list of plants you like. Also add in whether they like sun or shade, damp or dry and also the size that they grow when they are fully grown – all of these factors are very important. You will need to categorise your list into Trees & shrubs (skeleton plants), decorative, pretties, fillers and some star performers that become focal points.
9. Slot the plants into the plan spaces where they will fit. The bigger plants at the back and smaller at the front. Imagine what they will look like together. This is where the design creative part comes in. Think about line, colour, texture, balance, emphasis, focal points, flow and mood. Brighter colours are happier but darker shrubs create depth.
10. Work on one room at a time if you do not have the time and budget to re-do the entire garden.

Just remember that we are all different and we change so let your garden be flexible and change as you grow. The more experience you gain the better you will become and the less mistakes you will make. Let your garden be your canvas and bring the painting to life.



If you have any topic suggestions or ideas email me – [lisa@designelement.co.za](mailto:lisa@designelement.co.za)  
 If you do not want to receive these newsletters anymore please reply with stop in subject

*Plant carrots in January and you'll never have to eat carrots.*  
 ~Author Unknown

Join us at the next meeting and find out when you should plant your carrots!