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Subject: Life is a Garden eNewsletter - May 2012

**Life is a Garden eNewsletter****May, 2012****This issue:**

- Celebrate Mother's Day
- Bedding plant of the month
- Action plan for May
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- Diary

Mother's Day (13 May, 2012) - My Mother keeps a garden, a garden of the heart...

Celebrate Mothers this May

Mother's Day takes place on the second Sunday in May. The occasion celebrates motherhood and promotes the appreciation of mothers and mother-figures. South Africa, Europe and the USA all celebrate Mother's Day on this date each year and Mother's Day is now one of the most successful celebrations on the US calendar.

Scented plants

If you are looking for a romantic plant for Mother's Day, consider a collection of scented pelargoniums as a Mother's Day gift. When the leaves of pelargoniums are touched, tiny oil glands release scents of apple, rose, orange, lemon, peppermint, nutmeg or chocolate. Compact varieties suit containers, while those with a more vigorous growth habit are useful in hanging baskets, flowerbeds or threaded through climbers.

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Plant of the month - Fairy primula

Bedding plant of the month

The fairy primula (*Primula malacoides*) is a wonderful bedding plant which brings cold, drab winter gardens to vibrant, bountiful life. Primulas are invaluable to brighten up those shady areas in your garden. A visit to your garden centre will reveal richly coloured forms in purple, pink, crimson, red, white and shades of rose.

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Action plan for May

What should you be doing in May:

- * May is the month to look out for the big four 'P's' - pansies, poppies, pentunias and primula. Avoid transplanting bedding plants during the heat of the day and keep bedding plants moist.
- * Mulch the garden by spreading all brown fallen leaves across your beds.
- * Autumn is a great time to plant fynbos. Plant out ericas, metalasias, proteas and pincushions in sandy soil.
- * Invest in a small electric shredder and shred all garden waste, adding it to the compost heap. Keep the heap covered in very wet weather, but don't allow it to dry out.
- * Water citrus deeply once a week to prevent bud drop. Water and fertiliser should extend to the drip line of the outer branches.
- * Water bulbs from the winter rainfall region regularly during dry patches - babiana, freesia, ixia, lachenalia, ornithogalum, sparaxis, veltheimia.
- * Continue planting anemones and ranunculi bulbs for an extended flowering period.
- * Remove unnecessary tendrils and side shoots on sweet peas.
- * Protect conifers in your garden, as aphids do the most damage in winter. Spray foliage with an aphicide, and sprinkle insecticide granules around the root area - apply 60g per square metre. Water in well.
- * Protect roots of fuchsias from frost by covering with a layer of mulch.
- * This is a good time to plant evergreen trees and shrubs - they can settle before the real winter cold sets in.
- * Trim evergreen summer-flowering plants if needed,



Great plant ideas



African violets. Green gifts for Mother's Day.

but not winter- or spring-flowering varieties and not hibiscus.

* There's still time to sow sweetpeas and Namaqualand daisies directly into prepared beds. Look out for single colour sweetpeas and African daisies in orange, yellow and white.

What to sow and plant in March

Seeds: Ageratum, alyssum, antirrhinum, aquilegia, Bellis perennis, Namaqualand and Livingstone daisies, calendula, cornflower, campanula, candytuft, Canterbury bells, clarkia, delphinium, foxglove, gaillardia, hollyhock, Iceland poppy, linaria, lobelia, lupin, myosotis, nemesia, nicotiana, pansy, primula, pyrethrum, schizanthus, sweet pea, viola, Virginian stocks, wallflower.

Seedlings: Alyssum, antirrhinum, cineraria, delphinium, dianthus, foxglove, gazania, Iceland poppy, lobelia, pansy, penstemon, petunia, phlox, primula, schizanthus, sweet pea, sweet William, viola, Virginian stocks, verbena.

Bulbs: There is still time to plant exotic and indigenous spring-flowering bulbs such as anemone, babiana, cyrtanthus, freesia, Dutch iris, ixia, lachenalia, lillium, muscari, narcissus, ornithogalum, ranunculus, sparaxis, tulbaghia, veltheimia.

Vegetables: Broad beans, peas, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, spinach, onions and turnips.

Stars of the month

Dream up a few landscaping themes in your garden. What plants look really good in May?

Here is a list: Kurume azalea hybrids, poinsettias, proteas, star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides* 'Chameleon'), aloes, bush violet (*Barleria obtusa*), ribbon bush (*Hypoestes aristata*), Sasanqua camellia, luculia, nerine, plectranthus, red hot poker (*Kniphofia* spp.), sedum, Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*).

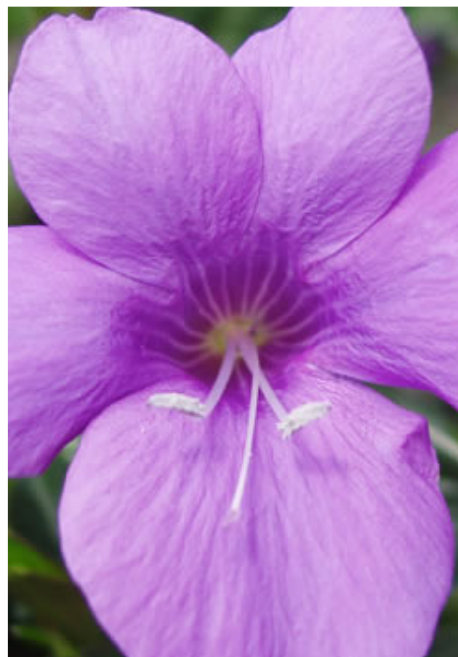
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Plant pansies this autumn.



The autumn-flowering Cape violet (Barleria)

Diary

For a detailed list of gardening events in your area, [click here](#).

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Plant autumn-flowering plectranthus



Plectranthus 'James'

Life is a Garden is the marketing arm of the South African Nursery Association.
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