

In your garden

Issue 8 - 26 August 2021



The stunning Impala Lily

The Impala Lily is a winter flowering beauty! For most of the year these plants, which sort of look like miniature baobabs, are dormant with no leaves or flowers. In winter that changes, and they are covered in their star-shaped flowers. The flowers are white and edged in pink or red and have red lines leading to the centre of the flower.

Visitors to Kruger Park should be familiar with the Impala Lily. Every rest camp seems to have numerous examples in their gardens. It is interesting that the latex from the bark and trunk is poisonous, yet some species of antelope browse on these plants. Where protected from browsers the Impala Lily can grow into a fairly large shrub. They are, however, poisonous to cattle and goats.

The Impala Lily makes a great addition to your garden if you can offer it the right conditions. They are suitable for inclusion in a rockery but do well in a container. You need to plant them in a well drained area with sandy soil. In summer they should be given a lot of water, but they shouldn't be watered during winter. Avoid exposing them to frost. Impala Lilies can be grown from seed, but they can take up to 5 years to flower.



Cape Gecko

Here is a gecko that prefers to live in your garden rather than your house. The Cape Gecko is a small reptile with a body length of around 5 cm. They vary quite a lot in colouration. Some are heavily spotted; others have bars and others are similar to the above picture. Whichever colouration they have they blend in well with their surroundings and are not easy to spot.

The Cape Gecko is found over much of the inland regions of South Africa. They spend their day sunning



Ladybird fly away home

Like many people I have always been intrigued by Ladybirds. They have striking colours and seem quite content to crawl all over your hand if you pick them up. Some people believe that Ladybirds are lucky. In some countries, such as Russia, people sometimes make a wish upon seeing a Ladybird.

Ladybirds aren't such cute creatures if you happen to be an aphid. These little bugs have a big appetite for aphids which makes them a friend of gardeners. Any creature that helps

themselves or searching for food on tree trunks, branches or on walls. Much of their diet consists of smaller insects with ants being a favourite. The Cape Gecko only lays two eggs at a time. They are diurnal creatures and are not active at night.

An interesting fact about these little creatures is that us humans have helped them expand their natural range in South Africa. When driving across the country you may well find that your car has an extra passenger or two. They have also been known to be present on plants that are transported from one area to another. The Cape Gecko has even managed to establish itself in areas that would normally be too cold for them. They take cover in cracks, under bark or rocks or any other spot that offers protection from the cold and predators.

control aphids is welcome in my garden! It beats spraying chemicals on these plant sucking creatures.

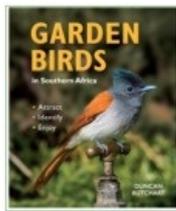
While most of us are very familiar with adult ladybirds, few of us would be able to identify them in their larval form. At this stage in their development, they are longer and covered in spines. Do you know that not all ladybirds are red! Some species are orange, yellow or black. Their distinctive colouration is a signal to predators that they are distasteful.

The species of Ladybird shown in the photo is a Lunate Ladybird (*Cheilomenes lunata*). They grow to about 7 mm in length. They are active during the day and predominantly feed on aphids. The Lunate Ladybird is normally black with red patches, but some are black with yellow.

Advertise in this newsletter

"In your garden" is looking for advertisers. This newsletter is aimed at South African gardeners, particularly those that are interested in indigenous plants as well as the birds, butterflies and more that their gardens attract. If you are interested, then please contact us at: steven@natureinyourgarden.co.za.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Subscriber Competition

As a subscriber to this newsletter, you are in line to win a copy of "Garden Birds in South Africa" by Duncan Butchart.

This excellent book describes around 100 birds that are likely to appear in gardens in South Africa. The book describes how you can set up a bird friendly garden to attract different species. 50 species of plants are described including trees, aloes, proteas and much more. The main part of the book covers 101 species of birds. This section not only helps to identify them but also how to attract them. Other chapters detail subjects such as feeding birds, providing nesting sites and migration.

This competition will close when the newsletter has 1,000 subscribers so why not encourage your friends and family to subscribe! Unfortunately, this competition is only available to subscribers in South Africa. Delivery will be done to the winner's nearest branch of Postnet.

Send me your garden bird list

Do you keep a garden bird list, and you live in a housing complex or estate? I would like to start building up a database of garden birds for as many complexes and estates as possible. As I start getting information then I will make it available to anyone who is interested. So, if you have a garden bird list then I would like to ask if you would be kind enough to send me a copy, and to send any updates as new birds are added to your list. In future issues I will be inviting readers to send in a short article about the birds in their gardens. It is your chance to brag about the birds that visit you and how you attract them.

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