

“GREENING YOUR HOME THIS SPRING”

Writing this article after one of the frostiest weeks this winter it is really heart-warming to know that this cold spell will pass. We will soon be looking at our gardens with rejuvenated eyes as the sap begins to rise and our bodies are vitalised into action with warmer and longer days.

There are many things to be done this spring and here are a few suggestions:

- Our beautiful planet needs as many trees as possible. 2009 trees of the year are – *Acacia galpinii* (Monkey Thorn, Apiesdoring); *Halleria lucida* (one of my favourites) also known as the Tree Fuschia or Notsung and *Pterocarpus rotundifolia* (Round-leaved teak, Dopperkiaat). Should none of these take your fancy then ask your local nursery for alternate indigenous trees best adapted to your area. A really good way of adding trees to your garden is also by planting fruit trees.

- National Arbour Week is from 1 – 7 September. If you do not own a garden consider planting trees at your school, church or at your scout hall. Municipalities have nurseries and may welcome the opportunity of local residents greening public open spaces which they can then adopt and care for.

- Spring is a perfect time to decide to start a veggie patch. There is nothing better than growing your own fresh food. Springtime is a good time to start with carrots, parsnips, Swiss chard, lettuce, beet root, garlic, peppers, tomatoes and pumpkins. Soil preparation and fertility is important so, starting a compost heap is recommended. With the rainy season upon us consider installing a rain tank to harvest all that free water from your roof.

- With food security and nutrition uppermost in the minds of the less fortunate you could start a food garden at local schools and within communities.

- Alternatively, you could pull out and destroy some plants these being those alien invasive plants that infest river courses and sneak into gardens and win the battle for space, light and nutrients against the indigenous plants. It would be advisable to educate yourself in how to win this war and have continued success. Plant indigenous trees in their place as those aliens just love to take up residence in empty spots.

For hands-on resources and information on all of the above suggestions contact Share-Net on 033 330 3931 ext. 144 and speak to Clare or ext. 124 and speak to Rhona.