

FOUR OF THE BEST

YOUR GARDENING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Readers Digest

It is the start of the New Year, and what better way to begin it than with a splash of colour in your garden or a patch of lovely juicy tomatoes.

For the non-gardener, this might seem like an impossible task, but gardening, like so many other things in life, is something that requires just a little effort, a little help from others and the end result is, in many people's opinion, most satisfying.

Your Gardening Questions Answered is a 448 page volume crammed with questions, drawings, charts and photographs, arranged alphabetically by subject. It makes life easier for the amateur gardener who wouldn't know one end of a spade from the other!

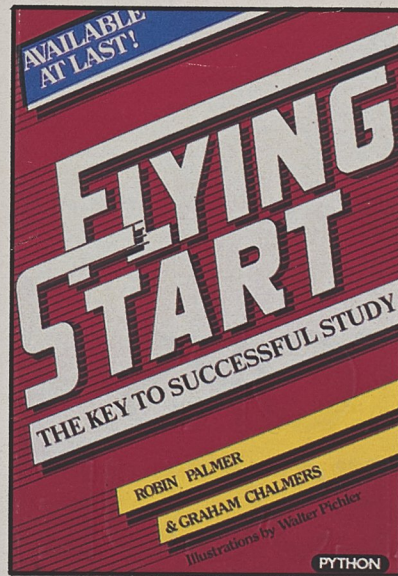
Simple to understand with its question and answer format, this is a lovely book to give someone as a present, or if you are just a little tempted to have a go at gardening, give yourself a treat.

Your Gardening Questions Answered is published by the *Readers Digest*.

NEW NATION PEOPLE'S HISTORY

THIS is a fascinating collection of articles published in the *New Nation* newspaper since 1987, written by the University of the Witwatersrand's History Workshop. In the articles, the authors try to correct some of the distortions of history that are found in many South African reference books. The articles deal with issues such as the formation of South Africa's trade union movement, the history of rural struggles in the northern Transvaal, political organisations in the 1960s and 1970s and the birth of South Africa's Black Press.

Readers are taken through the development of the rural areas, the birth of the Witwatersrand's townships and the colonial era in the Eastern Cape.



The most exciting part of this collection deals with South African literary history. Readers will meet, and be enthralled by, the tales of many of our unsung literary heroes, such as Sol Plaatje, Peter Abrahams and RRR Dhlomo.

People's History is published by the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand.

FLYING START, THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL STUDY

By Robin Palmer And Graham Chalmers

THIS book is a must for students who really want to study. There is no-one as creative as a student explaining an examination failure! "Useless lecturers," you will hear one mutter, "Impossible exam paper," says another. There are a host of excuses — familiar and exotic. But rarely is the student to blame — some other external factor has caused his or her downfall!

Ironically, most students who do fail have 'what it takes'. Most students who fail do not fail because of lack of ability, they fail for a combination of reasons.

At last, a book, written by two university graduates intended to help the student or pupil successfully bridge the

gap between school and university by showing how to organise their time and plan studies, take notes during lectures, research and write assignments, memorise effectively and prepare for examinations.

Professional, down to earth and intelligent, this has to be one of the few books that really understands human nature at its worst when it comes to study. It will certainly help the student knuckle down to work with less effort and more encouragement.

It deals with the difficulties experienced by students when tackling that first daunting year at university, and certainly dispels some of the myths that tend to terrify every new student.

With suggestions on how to achieve self-discipline by developing habits that assist study, the importance of concentration, different kinds of reading and practical advice on how to answer questions, *A Flying Start* is a highly recommended book. No student should be without one.

A Flying Start is published by Python Publications.

BAKING FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT

By The SA Sugar Association

THIS booklet is worthy of a review. Easy to read, it supported the TV 2 & 3 programme of the same name run towards the end of last year. *Baking for Pleasure and Profit* deals with starting a business in a simple step-by-step manner, using easy-to-read recipes, giving advice on how to keep your business going, and giving costings on all ingredients. This will indicate how you will make your profit, how to get your friends together to join in and how to economise.

The booklet also provides the reader with a table showing how to keep monthly records and accounts, and is full of handy hints to perfect your baking to a professional standard.

If you would like to obtain *Baking for Pleasure and Profit*, write to *The SA Sugar Association, P.O. Box 2503, Durban 4000*.

SHORT STORY

It was a bad day. In fact, it had been a bad week. Something was wrong — was it just coincidence, or were there rumblings in the sky? By Dudu kaZikhali

ANCESTORS TO THE RESCUE

WHEN I, along with the file filled with my conference papers, fell to the pavement, the papers flew in different directions, carried by the fresh early morning breeze. My heart sank when, from my prone position on the concrete, I saw some float down into the gutter. I was so angry, lying there helplessly, flat on my stomach. The pain in my right hand and knee seared through me like a sharp saw. What a sight I must have looked! An old woman like me lying prostrate on the pavement, crying over her lost papers, not wanting to get up and face the disaster. As I struggled with the decision to get up or just stay lying there, I heard a thin, unsure, even frightened voice in the mist of my pain. "Sorry Ma, sorry Ma, let me help you up."

I was grateful, not so much for the assistance, but for the attention. At least someone cared.

As I limped to the hotel where the conference was taking place, I kept thinking how strange it was that I should fall down like that again. The previous day, as I had rushed to the garage to collect my car, I had fallen badly and injured my left knee. Now it was the right.

I spoke to 'them', for I believe things like this don't just happen. I believe there is a cause and a reason for everything. I looked up into the sky, "What have I done? Why don't you protect

me?" I asked. I felt a tear peep between my eyelids and begin to wet my eyelashes.

Of course 'they' would not reply. Whoever heard of ancestors talking to you in broad daylight like that, in the middle of a busy street, with the noise of the traffic roaring in one's ears.

I felt a little better after that. I felt much calmer and able to cope with the rest of my day.

That morning, in the conference room, I did not hear a word of the speeches, just the drone of the voices. My thoughts were riveted on these so-called ancestors. "Who are they?" I kept repeating to myself. "Do they really exist? What kind of phenomenon are they, what influence or real power do they have over our lives?"

As I sat there, I went over the rituals we go through at our times of communication with them. The dropping of the snuff, the one-way conversation in a belief that it is in fact two-way. The umsebenzi where the bones after the meal are burnt in the belief that the smell in the smoke is an offering to them. The tshwala all brewed in the earthen pot or embizeni.

Was all this of any significance, or just plain mumbo jumbo as my father would say? Many times I had heard my friends and colleagues talk about the wonders done by izinyanga or amadlozi.

Max, my friend, is a firm believer in



Illustration: Bhekisani Manyoni

the ancestors. He once told me how, when he had been out of work for more than a year, he decided to go home and seek a consultation with the amadlozi.

His father slaughtered a goat, or isilwane, for him. His mother brewed the utshwala and the village medicine man 'spoke' to the ancestors in the special family hut, ebuhlanti, interceding that he be forgiven and given a job! Lo and behold, it happened, Max got his job, and a good one at that!

Stories like that make you think!

On the other hand, I have known friends who religiously slaughter a beast every year, but I see no appreciable difference in their lifestyle or possessions. Perhaps the ancestors are angry and will not reply.



For instance, during the Natal floods we firmly believed that King Shaka was probably angry because of what he would regard as a desecration of his home when a film shooting session took place there.

Anyway, with all of this in my mind, I decided to get out of town that weekend to spend two days at my grandmother's house in the country. My grandmother, who has been dead for fifteen years, had left her home to my uncle and his wife.

It is a lovely old house, with large shady trees in the garden, all surrounded by a high fence.

At about 3.30 am on the Saturday, I finally arrived at the gates. Of course, they were locked. I hooted and hooted

for at least an hour. Just as I had resigned myself to sleeping in the car, I called out to my grandmother: "Awu Nkgomo, must I really sleep outside my own home after driving for so many hours? I'm so tired, I want to sleep."

I eased myself onto the back seat, leaned against the cold hard window and closed my eyes. It was going to be a very uncomfortable few hours to day-break.

About five minutes later, as I was gazing longingly at the house, I saw the lounge lights go on. I hooted frantically. The front door opened and I saw my beloved aunt's figure silhouetted against the light. She came down the path, opened the heavy gates, and I drove in. We kissed in greeting, and as

we walked to the house she asked, "Where did you phone from?"

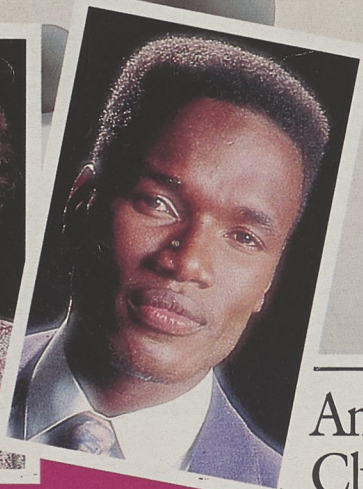
"Why?," I asked.

"I was woken up by the ringing of the phone, but when I went to answer it, there was no-one there," she answered. "Then I heard the hooting, and came to the front door."

"Awu," I said, and didn't say anything more, except to thank her for opening the gate for me. Somehow, I knew my grandmother had woken her up.

Call it mumbo jumbo, call it fanciful thinking. I'm still not sure about it myself, but could it be true that my grandmother is only out of sight, dead in the old form and very much alive in the new?

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ARIES

March 21 - April 21

Short-term aspirations in the employment sphere find fulfillment. Long-range ambitions get off to a good start.

A notable achievement will enhance your image in the eyes of influential people. Instinct will guide you reliably.

Make the enjoyment of life your goal at this stage. It should be a largely smooth-running interim with few issues to tax your powers, either mentally or physically. Acquire new friends and take up new hobbies.

Aim to be happy.

TAURUS

April 21 - May 21

A time for acquisition. Outstanding benefits could materialise through the goodwill of caring or influential relatives.

Accuracy and continuity on your part should ensure good progress and rewards to match your endeavours. Romantic issues take precedence.

Plan together with your sweetheart for a better future. If single and searching for love, you may soon have a pleasant announcement to make. Be positive and you will succeed in matters of the heart.

GEMINI

May 21 - June 21

A generally harmonious time and you should take advantage of the fact that most of those you come into contact with will be well disposed towards you.

You can expect your interests to flourish. You will acquire useful new friends too. Outwardly, there promises to be much variety in your programme,

with great prospects of new contacts and fresh scenes adding to your enjoyment of life.

Ability to project your personality and vitality benefits your romantic hope.

CANCER

June 21 - July 23

This is one of your very best cycles for making major changes and solving problems which have been hanging around for far too long.

Rapport with people in authority

LEO

July 23 - August 24

Personal affairs can be dealt with much more successfully now. You can lay the foundations for happiness in an area which has hitherto caused you a fair amount of worry. Business and monetary matters move along satisfactorily.

Key matters are coming up for consideration in both business and domestic environments. Be prepared to give some leeway if you hope to gain the approval and co-operation of people who matter.

VIRGO

August 24 - September 23

You can plan and act confidently since everything looks like going well for you in both personal and public areas of your life. Working contacts and conditions are on the upswing. More variety is foreseen in the social sector. There will be plenty happening in the domestic sphere to keep you interested. A go-ahead period for family plans since you will get the support you desire from important relatives. Get more out of life with your loved ones.

LIBRA

September 23 - October 23

An uneasy start yet you can get onto a sure and steady path.

Friendship is satisfying and loyal companions can help you reach your goal. Seek ways and means to increase your opportunities in the commercial zone.

Some domestic problems to attend to and you may need to splash out a bit moneywise to satisfy loved ones. However, your extra efforts and show of goodwill will be appreciated.



should be particularly good.

You can obtain special favours. In most respects, this will be a pretty even period.

Personal and social aspirations can be realised by effecting a few timely moves.

Improve the atmosphere in your relationship by learning to understand your mate better.

THE FUTURE

SCORPIO

October 23 - November 23

It is the right time to reach major decisions regarding the personal areas of your life.

Fresh arrangements will serve to place you on a better basis with people who are important in your life. Exciting things in prospect.

A splendid phase for matters of the heart, fulfillment and happiness can be yours simply by changing your attitude somewhat. Be agreeable and your true love will agree with you.

SAGITTARIUS

November 23 - December 22

You should be feeling pretty contented with life all around. A favourable trend enables you to prosper on the commercial level and have a peaceful private life. You can carry on with what you have in mind. It'll work out.

A thrilling romantic episode in your love saga. Married or single, you can fulfil your hopes in the course of this

round if you analyse this situation carefully and take clever steps to create an atmosphere in which love thrives.

CAPRICORN

December 22 - January 21

Circumstances will probably force you into a prominent position and cause others to look to you for initiative. Effective re-organisation should bring about success. Increasing returns are indicated from commercial enterprise.

Your intimate relationships will provide you with a great deal of fulfillment during this round. Companions will be devoted and dependable. Shared interests should prosper in terms of happiness. Contact from someone at a distance.

AQUARIUS

January 21 - February 20.

The most welcome feature of this harmonious cycle is that you'll get your chance to achieve something really worthwhile. Your general hopes will

also find fulfillment while you are realising that special goal. Boldness pays off. You can become more influential in your society by making a good contribution towards its success. Friendship is well-favoured at present and joint efforts in the leisure and sporting realms are certain to give you great pleasure.

PISCES

February 10 - March 21

A steadily progressive phase in which you can get your affairs into pretty good order. You could end this cycle cherishing entirely new ideas about your future. Pleasant social life and a few romantic touches in store for you.

As far as your financial prospects are concerned, the climate looks inviting and the success of a current venture could be the turning point in your fortunes.

You can afford to gamble a bit if you employ a calculated method.

William Smith

Econom

