



So named because of the four longitudinal black stripes down its back, the Striped Mouse is an opportunistic omnivore with a varied diet. In certain areas they're primarily granivorous, while in others they may eat more plant material than seeds. They also enjoy a wide variety of vegetable matter and insects. *Rhabdomys pumilio* has a wide habitat tolerance throughout South Africa and Namibia.

This rodent helps to pollinate many protea species as pollen clings to its head while feeding. When the mouse moves off to feed on neighbouring flowers of the same

species, it carries the pollen with it, assisting in fertilising these flowers.

They normally excavate a burrow at the base of a grass thicket, ensuring that the entrance is well hidden, and line the chambers with soft, leafy debris. Alternatively, they construct a ground-level nest under cover of dense tall grass stands. Often seen among the tall grasses growing on the perimeter of cultivated land, Striped Mice forage by day, particularly early morning and late afternoon. These rodents are seldom active at night as they can't maintain

## See how they run

their body temperature if the ambient temperature is below 5°C.

Body length is 18 - 21 cm, while the weight range is 30 - 55 gm. Colour varies from dark grizzled russet brown to a grey-white. The sides and underparts are lighter but vary from off-white to pale grey-brown. Research has shown that average body size varies in different geographical areas and that tails can be shorter or equal to the body length.

In central Africa, where these chaps are also found, they breed throughout the year, but in the south, breeding usually is confined to the summer months - September to May. During this period, the adult females appear to be territorial with limited home ranges, which probably overlap the large male home ranges. Litters are born after 25 days' gestation with the average litter size being five to six altricial young. They only begin to wander from the nest after 14 days and have a life span of 18 months.

## Get consent

When selling a property at Atlantic Beach, home owners have to obtain consent of transfer from the ABHOA. And to issue this all-important document, the Home Owners' Association first determines whether all debt has been paid in full.

Secondly, the property has to comply with the estate's architectural guidelines and the landscape manual. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that paint colours should be as per the architectural guidelines, no illegal structures are allowed on the property and the lawn must be cynodon grass and not kikuyu.



## Chancing their luck

The audacity of some residents leaves one breathless. Several home owners have cleared their own private paths through valuable fynbos from their homes to the golf course. Some even going so far as to erect picnic sites halfway - complete with statues and a braai area!

Please be warned: these paths are on golf course land and golf operator Atlantic Beach Management has advised they have to be removed. Those residents who don't remove their golf hiking trails will have it removed for them - at a cost.

# Spotlight on Subashni Thaver



**Position:** ABHOA receptionist  
**Date & place of birth:** 16 September 1973, Verulam  
**Career to date:** Retail industry, motherhood & current employment  
**Education:** Pending

**Personal best achievement:** Motherhood  
**Professional best achievement:** My current position  
**Most-liked about Atlantic Beach:** Friendly people  
**Least-liked about Atlantic Beach:** Unfriendly people  
**Aspirations for the estate:** Harmony  
**Person who's had the biggest influence on your life:** My mother  
**Person you'd most like to meet:** My biological mother  
**Favourite actors:** John Travolta & Salma Hayek  
**Life philosophy:** Believe in yourself  
**Biggest ever opportunity:** Moving to Cape Town  
**Biggest ever disappointment:** Being given up for adoption  
**Hope for the future:** Tertiary education  
**Favourite reading:** Fiction



**Favourite colour:** Blue  
**Best TV programme:** Two and a Half Men  
**Favourite food/drink:** Sea food, water  
**Best time of day:** Bedtime  
**Favourite music:** Indian  
**Favourite holiday:** KZN South Coast

**Favourite sport (self):** None  
**Favourite sport (spectator):** None  
**Biggest extravagance:** My daughter  
**Pets:** English bull dog Jessie passed on  
**Miscellaneous dislikes:** Arrogance  
**Married:** Morgan (18 yrs)  
**Children:** Kiara (7)  
**Hobbies:** Reading, watching movies, cooking & baking

## Making a Match

Food and wine matches is an enduring subject. Contrary to what many believe, there's no real art to it, merely sensitivity to the flavour of food and the taste of the wine.

Knowing wine inside out is a good start, but it's still up to you and your palate. There are no rules, but there are a few key points to happiness. One: don't get stuck on the flavours of the food and the wine, look instead to the sweetness. The wine should be a touch sweeter than the accompanying food. This helps it climb over the dense and long-lasting flavours of a mouthful of food to be among one of the last tastes.

Two: texture, or how does the wine feel in your mouth? A full-bodied, dense and lingering experience or a refreshing burst of frisky acidity? Matching the food's texture to the wine often works, while sometimes opposites attract. Three: your wine should be able to muscle through

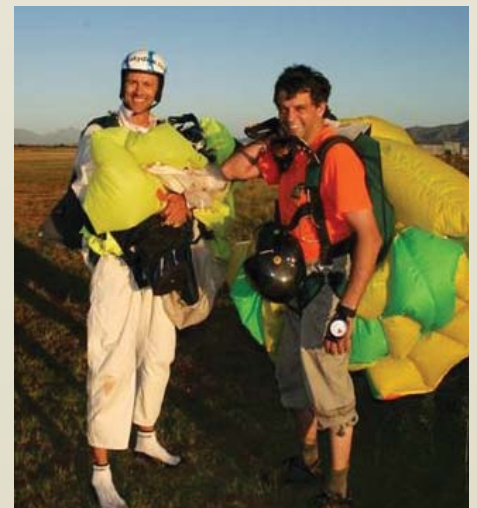


the food in terms of intensity. Usually, this means it should have the acid or the tannin to stand up to the food, or simply the quality. A poor wine won't go with most food for this reason – it just has nothing to offer in terms of complexity.

Lastly, there are times to ditch wine and remember beer. It goes surprisingly well with many foods and a sweetish one is best with super spicy stuff, such as a curry.

## Soaring High

'Mad Markus', otherwise known as the Atlantic Beach estate manager, has taken to the skies – literally. He's recently progressed from tandem skydiving to static line to free falling. The photo shows how happy he is. Of course, a jump suit to fit his 6'6" frame was a problem. In addition, he lost his shoes during his free fall dive when he opened his chute. Somewhere someone got hit on the head with two size 11 shoes falling from the heavens.



# Swop and score

Alien vegetation is invasive because they spread and displace South Africa's natural trees and plants. To encourage Atlantic Beach homeowners to clear their gardens of aliens as per the estate's environmental management plan, the ABHOA is offering a swop programme. Remove your exotic species, such as roses, yellow bells, marmalade bush and kikuyu, and exchange these for bio-indigenous species. Rosemary and proteas may be planted in pots and care must be taken that they don't propagate outside a container.

One of the most common invasive pests in the Western Cape, indigenous to East Africa, is kikuyu grass. It's extremely difficult to control and is invading roadsides throughout Cape Town at an alarming rate. Of even greater concern is that the entire bank on the northern section of Chapman's Peak Drive is engulfed in kikuyu. It has systematically destroyed all in its path.

To help solve the alien invasion, start at home by ensuring that you're not adding to the problem by growing invasive exotics

species is one that's occurred in that region for thousands of years and wasn't brought there by direct or indirect human action. A plant species in its native range usually has a large variety of natural enemies (predators, parasites and diseases) that have co-evolved with it, keeping its population numbers in check without eradicating it. Since all indigenous plants in an area have their own natural enemies, none of them has a competitive advantage over the others; therefore, they all live in a state of equilibrium with one another.



*Gazania*



*Elytranthus neochilus*



*Tecoma capensis*



*Olea europaea-africana*

Many invading alien plants were brought into the country for practical purposes such as forestry plantations. However, in South Africa these plants have no natural enemies that would have controlled them in their own countries. Basically, they're a problem because they:

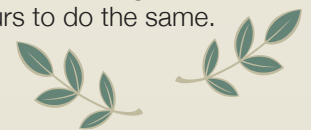
- use much more water than native trees and plants. Rainwater is prevented from reaching rivers and thus people and ecosystems are deprived of much needed water. Many springs and streams have dried up because of invading alien trees.
- displace indigenous plants and destroy precious vegetation such as fynbos in the Western Cape.
- cause devastating fires with flames of up to 15 m high. Fynbos flames only reach 5 m.
- cause soil erosion. Because of the intense fires in invading aliens, the soil is damaged. With the first rains the soil is then washed into rivers causing rivers and dams to fill with sand.

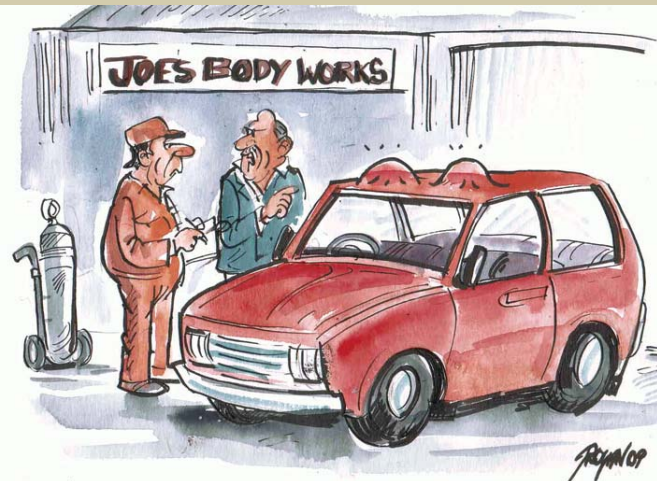
Not all invading alien plants are harmful - oak trees, bottlebrush, azaleas and most fruit trees are aliens that don't spread aggressively.

in your own back yard. Getting to know the Cape floral kingdom is also a good idea, because you'll learn about the amazing variety of endemic plants that the Cape is endowed with, some of which will undoubtedly suit your garden.

Understand that the word 'indigenous' has a wide meaning. Plants are indigenous to the region in which they originated and evolved. A native plant

To enable the fynbos to revert to its natural state, the ABHOA is reducing its irrigation to twice a week. After a while, we'll cut down further to once a week only. In turn, do your bit for South Africa and the estate and start eliminating exotics from your garden. Ask your neighbours to do the same.





Of humps and bumps

"They've gone and put in new speed bumps at our golfing estate!"

# Jazzy day

A wonderful day was spent at Baroness Ingrid von Essen's private Capaia wine estate on 15 March. To the sound of jazz music, residents toured the cellar, tasted wine and enjoyed a scrumptious picnic. And the young ones had fun with pony rides, slip and slide, plus horse cart rides. As an enthusiastic Atlantic Beach resident, Capaia general manager Bernabe Strydom assisted in coordinating the event. Thank you from all attendees.



# Eagle encounters

Meet some eagles at Colebrook Park on 9 May at 14h00. A talk will be given on local predatory birds, plus a breathtaking fly and display. It's also a good opportunity to talk about our resident owl population with the experts from Spier.



# Quite cricket old chap

Resident cricket fans had a jolly good time at the South Africa vs Australia test match from 19-23 March. As one of Atlantic Beach Golf Estate's community events, guests enjoyed the pleasure of a private suite at Sahara Park, a delicious buffet meal, plus pre- and post-match snacks. And the match, of course (which we won).

# Dumping it

Many residents are dumping their garden refuse illegally at the ABHOA offices. We have to pay for the bags to be removed. Only six bags of garden refuse per household per week are allowed.



Also, instead of the awful practice of dumping grass cuttings and branches on open plots, please take your excess garden refuse to Vissershok. There's no charge for bakkies and trailers.

# Winter hours

With winter around the corner, nursery hours have changed to every second and last Saturday of the month. At the start of spring, it will back to business every Saturday again.