



GREEN-THUMBED: Jill Farrant, a scientist and professor of molecular and cell biology at UCT, is interviewed on SABC3's 21 Icons tonight.

SABC3's 21 *ICONS* South Africa series zooms in at 8.27pm today on its larger-than-life 16th icon of its second season, the Queen of Rain, Jill Farrant, who is a scientist and professor of molecular and cell biology at the University of Cape Town.

Described as one of South Africa's heroines, Farrant specialises in plant responses to water deficit stress.

21 *ICONS* is a showcase for the South African spirit, a tribute to the men and women who have helped to shape our country and our world. The series is part of an annual project that features unique narrative portraits and short films by Adrian Steirn, one of the continent's pre-eminent photographers and film-makers.

In an intimate conversation with Steirn, Farrant talks about her life growing up in a small village in Limpopo and her fascination with outdoor exploration.

Today, she is a pioneer in the field of plant molecular and cell biology and has made a global impact with her research into "resurrection plants": drought-resistant plants that "come back to life" from a dried-out state 24 hours after being given a drop of water.

The plants that are able to be revived and live again are a mirror of Farrant's personal life, which has included tumultuous times.

● Catch the latest line-up of guests on *The Graham Norton Show Series 16*, on BBC Entertainment on Tuesday November 18, at 9.40pm. Anne Hathaway reveals how her husband proposed, Matthew McConaughey talks about the scale of his latest movie, Lena Dunham reveals she once took a vow of celibacy and Mickey Flanagan says he hates travel, while Sia performs live in the studio.

Hathaway, talking about her new film, *Interstellar*, which co-star McConaughey describes as

Queen of. Rain

Heroine captivates with resurrection power

"enormous", says: "The first time I saw it was very special. I saw it with my dad. I am normally very self-critical, but on this movie it's so big it just swept me up and took me to another place."

McConaughey says: "I've never been part of something this big. The scope and scale of it is ambitious. No one gets more bang for your buck on screen than director Chris Nolan and in this one he ups himself. It's epic."

Asked about filming the zero-gravity scenes, Hathaway demonstrates her rather unique "floating in space" technique.

Talking about her Oscar-winning role in *Les Misérables*, and asked whether the hair-cutting scene was traumatic, she says: "It was my suggestion because it raised the stakes for the audience. When the cutting started I was very nervous. It was weird."

Revealing that her husband proposed to her just after she had agreed to do this, she says: "I was very excited when I put the phone down and he said: 'Okay darling, there's probably one thing you're not thinking about. How do you feel about being a bald bride?'"

McConaughey says of his

friendship with Hathaway: "I invited her to a party and she showed up - a little tardy, but she showed up at 6pm... the next day." Revealing that he had made Hathaway and her husband welcome anyway, he says: "Nine hours later we had stopped counting the wine bottles and we had crashed two other parties. It was excellent!"

Dunham, talking about her book and early life, says: "I took a vow of celibacy when I was 9. I wrote down the contract on paper and then ate it. My mother had refused to sign it. It turned out to be completely unnecessary anyway."

On attending showbiz parties, she says: "I don't get invited. I don't drink, yet I still end up sloppy and offensive - it's a special talent."

Flanagan, whose new series is set in France, says: "I don't like travelling, but I do like a holiday where there's a nice hotel, food, a TV and a mini bar. I don't like the idea that people go through torture when they go away."

Sia performs *Chandelier* live before she chats about her album and her unique performance style. Norton pulls the lever on the more foolhardy audience members brave enough to sit in the Red Chair.