

## KOGELBERG

### Branch of the Botanical Society of SA

**Newsletter:  
October 2014**

News Editors: Ed & Merran Silberbauer

### **THE BATTLE OF BETTY'S BAY ROUND 619**

The next attack takes place on Sunday 2nd November 2014, from 9am to noon  
**VENUE:** Above Rooi Els off the R44, turn in at the white gates.

### TALKS

**Saturday, 18th October Dr Sophie van der Heyden** will speak on **Using genetic tools for unravelling the evolutionary history of South Africa's unique marine biodiversity.** Her interests are wide, but primarily focus on the conservation and sustainable utilisation of marine species and the marine environment. In the Nivenia Hall, HPG at 6p.m.

**Saturday, 15th November** We await confirmation of this evening's speaker.

**Saturday Morning 13th December In Pringle Bay's Community hall at 10.30a.m.** Alison Kock, Research Manager of Shark Spotters who will speak on **Living with sharks in Cape Town - can an improved understanding of shark behaviour help us learn to live together?** Her discussion will include sharks in the Kogel Bay area.

### **SPECIAL DATE Saturday 31st January (not the usual third Saturday)**

Ethnobotanist and member of this branch, **Dr Tony Cunningham**, will speak on **"Ebony and Ivory: the East African trade for musical instruments and Ming furniture."** Make a note of the date: Tony is not often in this country.

At all talks a voluntary collection will be taken and the attendance register will be circulated. Please note that the purpose of the register is twofold, firstly to advise the HPG for their records of the number of people attending and secondly so that regular attendees can be contacted should any alterations to the programme be made or, as has happened, a visitor offers a talk at short notice. Liquid refreshments are also offered.

Contact Merrilee: 028 272 9314.

### **WALK SATURDAY 18TH OCTOBER**

Meet at the Harold Porter Gardens at 9a.m. for a walk to an undisclosed destination. Please contact Barbara on 0823384109 for further information.

### **REPORT ON HACK NO 618**

The chain gang again tackled the tall eucalyptus and Acacia elata in the “parking area” south of the Disajeugterein. That area now looks a lot better but it is hard work as these trees have to be cut down and then cut up in order to clear the site.

The light brigade continued with the pulling up of a million seedlings of the main enemies “C acacia, gum, myrtle and pittosporum. Well worthwhile but we have been doing this for the last 50 years and it will remain an ongoing problem. The major sources of this infestation are the enormous aliens growing in the adjacent property belonging to the Disajeugkamp the owners of whom have “C they tell me “C other priorities among which the removal of aliens does not fall! Odd.

The Joubert clan was out in force, Jan with sons Pierre and Francois and their sons Luke (8), Timothy (4) and Jacques (5), David Bossenger, Tom Dreyer, John Whitehead, John & Andrea Benn, Peter Berrisford, Caroline and Ed Silberbauer. Di Knott made the sandwiches and Merran Silberbauer made the tea.

Next Hack: Nov.2nd. The plan is to haul out a multitude of rooikrans seedlings on a property owned by Mrs Lorna Lindsey situated on top of the hill as you exit the city of Rooi Els towards Betty's Bay. Two white gate posts mark the entrance to this property. There are aliens to suit everyones taste “C from the smallest to the quite large.

Ed. Silberbauer, Convenor.

### **PRINGLE BAY HACK NO 97**

On Sunday 28th September 2014 the Hack Group continued with eradication of alien vegetation on the road reserves along Albatross Rd and Gull Road in the Point area of Pringle Bay.

The hackers present were Frik Potgieter, Edward Silberbauer, Tom Dreyer, David Muirhead, Chris Geldenhuys, Penny Behrens, Andy James, Rinie Schenck and John Whitehead.

The very welcome mid-morning coffee and sandwiches were provided by the Marion and Ian Cushny

The next hack will be on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

As usual we will meet on the pavement opposite Drosters Centre, in Central Avenue, Pringle Bay, at 08:30 and will then proceed to the hack site. The hack stops at 11:30. Everyone who would like to help rid Pringle Bay of alien vegetation will be welcome. Hacking tools are provided. Contact John at (028) 273 8807, or just turn up at the meeting point.

John Whitehead, Convenor.

### ROOIELS HACK

**First Saturday** of the month **8.30-10.30**. Tools & refreshments provided. Contact: Anuta Scholtz [anuta@omail.co.za](mailto:anuta@omail.co.za) or tel 083 388 8239 or Evette tel 028 273 8483

### A GLORIOUS WALK IN THE AREA OF ROOISAND

September the 20th was one of this year's rare sunny spring days when 12 Botsoc members under the guidance of Amida Johns walked down towards the Bot River estuary to see a colourful panorama at Rooisand. It is hard to believe that once that was where cattle grazed. More recently with funds from government and Arabella, Cape Nature's workforce has removed the alien regrowth after a fire 4 years ago. Now it is flowers, flowers and more flowers. ***Crassulas, lobelias, Protea repens, P scabra, Lobostemons, Metalasia inversas***, red data ones e.g. ***Leucadendron linifolium***, and ***Xiphotheca reflexa***, there were also buchus, orchids, little painted ladies and rare yellow bulbines and many more! Also there were flamingos swishing across the water, white breasted cormorants, tortoises and we had a perfect viewing of a Denhman bustard,

For those members who missed this treat you do have time to see the wealth of flowers walk from the Rooisand parking area where the hide is, back towards Arabella along the estuary path that loops around to return you to the start.

Barbara Jenman.

### VISIT TO THREE GARDENS

On Monday, 22 September a group of keen Botsoc gardeners visited three gardens in Kleinmond. What a treat! After a very windy weekend, Monday was the most perfect sunny summer day.

We started at Henriette Botha's garden in Palmiet. The most striking features of this garden were the clivias in full bloom and growing in abundance, the strelitzias and the trees "C each one grown from seed. The garden has the feel of having been established many many years ago. Yet Henriette told us that 18 years ago it had been covered in builders' rubble, which she set to having cleared and then proceeded to treat the soil, bringing in as far as possible local soil which she built up in the ratio of four parts soil, four parts compost and one part bone meal. With the soil so well prepared and with regular adding of compost, she now waters only once a month in summer. It was unbelievable to hear that these strong flourishing trees were at the most 18 years old and many considerably younger. Even the wild almond, ***Brabejum stellatifolium***, had these thick, almost gnarled trunks, as if much older. Henriette believes in planting from seed. Her strelitzias have reached the stage where she now no longer collects the seed, except from the yellow ones, as she says that she just cannot keep up "C "They shout at me at night to plant me out!" Everything grows prolifically in this garden; even of those she feels have now had their life I heard her say: "Maar die goed wil nie doodgaan nie". What a testimony to a happy garden!

Next stop was Jeannette Fischer's garden, also in Palmiet. This garden showed a very happy marriage between indigenous and non-indigenous, forming a delightful whole. The informal layout where one could wander through the paths, coming upon hidden gems between or behind the cone bushes and pincushions growing among forget-me-nots and daisies, was delightful. Of particular note here was the ***Leucospermum conocarpodendron***. Also very striking were the ***vygies***, in full bloom and beautiful and Jeannette very generously handed out cuttings. Interesting trees here included the sweet-thorn, ***Acacia karroo*** and a beautiful carob tree. It was interesting to hear that Jeanette fertilises with chicken manure "C completely knocking the belief that manure is a no-no with proteas "C her garden is evidence to the contrary. She also says: "My man is 'n man vir saad en steggies." Do I detect that those of us who love the nurseries have something to learn here?

From there to Joy Ruger's garden which has the most beautiful backdrop of the Three Sisters mountains. Joy showed us photos of the plot, or rather "pine plantation", when they bought it in the 1970s, the mountain view hidden by the pines. Hard to believe the transformation which they have since brought about "C the rock pool, the stream, the trees, the beds with essentially indigenous plants, but here again a happy blend of indigenous and exotic, especially the shade section of azaleas in full bloom, tree ferns and others, leading on to an open bed where nature does the planting "C amongst others buchus, ericas, felicias "C living up to the derivation of their name, ***felix*** (happy) with the plural ***Felicia*** (happy things) "C indeed a garden of happy plants! The bauhinia, planted as a Pride-of-de-Kaap, turned out to be an exotic bauhinia and lives gracefully among its indigenous neighbours. Joy also told us that she uses kraal manure in her compost.

It was interesting that all three of these gardens had been laid out and nurtured from scratch. But here are gardeners who are not easily deterred! Time, perseverance, patience, but the results are lovely indeed.

Charlotte Rademeyer.

### **THE SINS (botanical) OF THE FATHERS**

According to researchers alien plants first came to South Africa about a millennium ago. The first damage, in the form of invasive alien plants (IAP) was done by the early botanists for whom it was high fashion to have large collections of alien plants, and also to make gifts of them to your acquaintances. Later IAP's were imported, from mainly Australia, to stabilise the sands of the Cape Flats. Colonists also wanted the Cape to look like Europe thus the Oaks and Pines.

The botanical fraternity is equally guilty. About 40+ years ago Botsoc recommended the New-Zeeland Christmas Trees (***Metrosideros excels***) as a good tree to plant along the coast. Today, in our area, it is one of the worst IAP's. The Mountain Club recommended to the members to go into the mountains with a pocket full of Hakea seeds to propagate.

Later came the plants for commercial gain, black wattle (***Acacia mearnsii***) for its tannic acid, the various Pines and Blue-gums for timber, or prickly pears for cattle food and eating. All are now some of our worst invasives.

“The famous Cape Floral Kingdom is seriously threatened by Australian hakea's, wattles and myrtles, and northern-hemisphere pines. These displace the native species, reduce water yields and increase fire intensities and erosion.” - Author: Dr Brian van Wilgen CSIR Stellenbosch

A large part of the damage was done in the name of botany. We, the voluntary “botanists” of today, must bear equal guilt and responsibility to recompense nature by eradicating the invasives if we want to have a Fynbos Floral Kingdom in the future, there is only about 40% left.

### **DIE SONDES (Botanies) VAN DIE VADERS**

Volgens navorsers het die eerste vreemdeling-plantte sowat n millennium gelde in Siud Afrika aangekom. Die eerste skade, in die vorm van vreemde indrigger plante (VIP) was gedoen deur die eerste Botaniste vir wie dit hoogs modies was om vreemde plante in te voer, en ook aan kennis te gee. Later is VIR'e ingevoer, meestal uit Australië, om die sandvlaktes van die Kaap te stabiliseer. Koloniste wou ook hê dat die Kaap soos

Europa moes lyk en het Eike en Denne geplant.

Die botanies gemeenskap is net so skuldig. So 40+ jaar gelede het Botsok aanbeveel dat die Nu-Zeelandse Kersfees-boom (*Metrosideros excels*) n goeie boom is om by die kus te plant. Vandag is dit een van die slegste VIR'e in ons area. Die Begklimklub het ook lede aangemoedig om met n sak Hakea saad in die berge in te gaan en dir te saai.

Later het plant van VIR'e plaasgevind vir gewin, so het die swart-wattel (*Acacia mearnsii*) vir looisuur, en die Denne en Bloekoms vir timmerhoud, asook Turksvye as n vrug en veë-voer, ook gekom.

“The famous Cape Floral Kingdom is seriously threatened by Australian hakea’s, wattles and myrtles, and northern-hemisphere pines. These displace the native species, reduce water yields and increase fire intensities and erosion. “ - Author: Dr Brian van Wilgen CSIR Stellenbosch

N groot deel van die skade is gedoen in die naam plantkunde. Ons, as vrywilliger “botaniste” moe gelyke skuld vir die skade aanvaar, en verantwoordelikheid om die natuur te herstel deur VIR'e uit te roei anders gaan ons nie n n Fynbos Blomme-koningryk in die die toekoms hê nie, daar is nog net sowat 40% oor.

WORD VERVOLG/TO BE CONTINUED

Jan Joubert

## KOGELBERG BRANCH ACTIVITIES IN AUGUST.

### CREW outing to Babilonstoring.

It was my first time out with CREW, a special day. It was a sunny Tuesday; CREW personnel and Amida Johns led enthusiasts from Kleinmond and Betty’s Bay on an expedition to the slopes of Babilonstoring, somewhere between Bot River, and Hermanus. The targets were three plants endemic to the mountain, *Gnidia sonderiana*, (endangered), *Euryops lasiocladus* (critically rare) and *Argyrolobium splendens* . The latter had been thought to be extinct but Nick Helme had found it on the western slopes of Babilonstoring so Amida was hoping to find it further along.

The farmer gave permission for us to use his road which saved a long, uphill march. Early on keen hacker, Barbara Jenman, bemoaned the fact that she’d left her saw at home. Amida laughed, “You should see what is ahead” - endless, dense stands of tall *Hakeas* interspersed with pines which would daunt even the Betty’s Bay faithful.

Amida's trained eyes spotted the first ***G sonderiana*** from the car window; everyone spread out on both sides of the road, finding the sprawling plant with yellow flowers not yet fully opened. An estimated rate of 50 "C 100 plants per hectare was recorded. A mystery ***Metalasia*** flowering in the same area was later keyed out as ***M tenuifolia*** (vulnerable)

Next stop was when bright red ***Erica cruenta*** meant that we'd reached the shale or at least clay confirmed by the presence of ***Brunia noduliflora***. This is where the team pushed through scratchy *Hakea* to find stands of ***Euryops lasiocladus*** with their yellow flowers.

At the same place we saw ***Serruria meisneriana*** (endangered) and two subspecies of ***Erica viscaria***. Amida was still investigating the ***Adenandra*** flowering beside the road on the top section of the shale band.

Of the ***Argyrolobium*** there was no sign.

### Visit to the Karoo Desert NBG

Werner Voigt, very good friend of Kogelberg Branch from when he was Curator at Harold Porter welcomed thirteen members to his present home, the Karoo Desert Garden. What followed was a magic journey through the world of succulents of southern Africa with Werner as the excellent guide. First we were in the glass houses, one with the ***Haworthia*** collection, then ***Conophytums*** with strange "Cloaking ***C burgeri***, was it a mushroom? It's actually known as Burger's onion and is found only in one spot near Aggeneys where it is protected by a mining company. There were so many other amazing plants, each with its own water requirements which was marked by the colour of the stick holding the name plate "C black for winter rainfall, blue for summer, green for all year. Watering has to be a very precise activity. Red borders to the labels meant that plant is on the Red Data list.

Cameras were in action with Cheryl Kirsten very professional and Louise du Toit, the jeweller of Rooi Els, recording the weird shapes perhaps to inspire her designs.

Werner said that the Breede River area is very rich in bulbs, vying with Nieuwoudtville as bulb capital of the world. We saw evidence of this outside, where rows and rows of ***Lachenalias*** many in flower; also a striking yellow and white ***Ferraria*** and other delights.

It was time to go into the garden proper, colourful with daisies and vygies, the aloes still bright. The ***Welwitschia*** plant seems very much at home far away from Namibia. It is to

stay in position through changes to the layout of the garden, the roots are too deep to move. We inspected the Nama matjieshuise, one for living in, the other a cooking hut. Nama people wove the mats at home then came to the Garden to put them together. These are part of a Heritage Garden showing how people have used the plants that grow in the arid areas for many different purposes.

Having walked through the quiver trees up on the hill, we were all ready for lunch in the Quiver Tree restaurant "C highly recommended. There simply wasn't time to do more. Next time perhaps we'll do the hike up into the hills and see some of the treasures in their natural habitat.

Merrilee Berrisford.

### **KIRSTENBOSCH CYCADS FROM PEARSON TO THE PRESENT.**

Phakamani Xaba was involved at Harold Porter Gardens for a few years then left to rejoin Kirstenbosch seven years ago. There he was given the Dell to manage. This lovely valley is one of the oldest parts of this garden and includes the cycad collection. Here Phakamani developed his love for these special plants and has spent three years working on his Masters on their history and conservation. But why are these strange prickly plants so valued? These are Gymnosperms ( having naked ovules & reproductive organs arranged in cones!) and cycads are now the worlds most critically threatened plant group with an ancient lineage..300million years. A headline in the Argus Sept 20th reads; " Cycad thieves major threat to rare plants;"

Prof. Harold Pearson, first Director of Kirstenbosch started the collection in the Dell. Some of the stolen Cycads were grown from an original 1913 *Encephalartos latifrons*. The late John Winter started the cycad propagation & seedling availability to the general public.

Since 2007 Phakamani has been studying the reproductive biology of cycads & especially pollination; a very long process; almost 2 years from this to germination. They are dialtous; male & female; pollen & ovules are on separate plants. Much work has been done on pollination methods; dry or wet, long or short storage time, using smoke saturated charcoal? The aim is to multiply & then put back into the wild.

The biggest challenge is securing their safety in the wild where populations are declining. We wish you well Phakamani in this special & much needed field of conservation that you are working on.

Andrea Benn.



### **RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES**

<b>Month</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Rainfall mm		186	70,5
Temp, °C	Max	33	37,5
	Min	6	8

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/ AND/ OR STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP**

If you change your address, wish to resign or change your status, please notify the Botanical Society Head Office on 021- 797 2090, as they print the labels and keep the records.

We do only the newsletter, e-mails and posting. To receive this newsletter via e-mail (and save the Branch the costs of printing, packaging and postage) send your address to [merran@telkomsa.net](mailto:merran@telkomsa.net)

### **REMEMBER YOUR ARTICLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME**

**The editors reserve the right to edit contributions.**

**Deadline for the next newsletter is Tuesday, 4th November 2014**

Please address all mail to : Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of SA, P.O. Box 85, Betty's Bay 7141. E-mail : [merran@telkomsa.net](mailto:merran@telkomsa.net) no graphics please.