

Garden Route



Botanical Garden Trust

Incorporating
The Garden Route Botanical Garden
&
Southern Cape Herbarium

Trust No IT 2704-97

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Christmas Newsletter 2005

A Happy Christmas to you all and an exciting and fruitful Year in 2006

Apologies for the missing October Newsletter! We decided to concentrate our overstretched energies first on getting back into contact with "Friends" new and old, as we had lost contact with so many. The response has been overwhelmingly good and thank you all for being so forgiving, friendly, and happy to pay your subs! Thanks to your help, we now we have your updated information on an updated database and listserver and hope communication will be much better from now on, we would like it to be two-way so please contact us too!

Our Web Page is worth a visit, please have a look at it soon www.botanicalgarden.org.za

So much has happened since March when the last Newsletter was sent out – impossible to fit all the news in to one email sized chunk! However we do still have the very attractive posters up in the Lecture room which were put up for the Fantastic Fynbos Fair (FFF), they tell in pictures a lot more than we can tell here – so come and look at them if you have not already.

Of course a walk through the garden and a visit to the Moriarty Centre will also show you a lot about what we have been up to and what has worked and what not! Come in the mornings as Danielle is not there after 1pm and the office is closed then.

Please also note that Sylvia Zemva is selling plants to the public every day, you need just to be a little patient and find where she is working in the garden, then ask her to come and help you, ask any of the gardeners working in the garden where she is likely to be.

We also have keen and knowledgeable site guides if you want a guided tour round the garden – please phone the office and book for this.

So much in the world around us is changing that we simply have to move with the flow. This is a great challenge as so many of us are undeniably senior citizens though definitely young at heart! BUT the keynote to this newsletter and to 2006 is CHANGE and how we intend to deal with it. Please help us to achieve this successfully. We really do welcome your constructive ideas about all we have done and plan to do.

"Deftness will be required of those who have chosen conservation of nature as their mission. The most skillful will learn to abandon favourite theories, comfortable opinions, cherished classifications, and the fear of controversial policies. And, of course, an inspiring vision is essential. In the frenetic, noisy years ahead, only such visions will attract attention and kindle hope. Finally, conservation on the ground must replace the repetitive cycle of conferences, reports, recommendations to governments, and ineffective treaties."

(Michael Soule and John Terborgh in Continental Conservation: Scientific Foundations of Regional Reserve Networks)

We took part in the “**Greater Good Giving Exchange**” in Cape Town in August (thank you if you voted for us!) – as far as raising funds went it did not! BUT it did force us to gather together our wits and motivate why we are necessary and important, in short clear one pagers. Below is what we felt was the most important. What we also learnt loud and clear is that very very few people see or understand the connection between a healthy and sound biodiversity and the welfare of people and animals. We spoke to literally hundreds and hundreds of people pouring through the marquee at the Water Front – there were only 3 Conservation oriented organizations there out of 60+ NGO's - most others were about saving children or animals, and they got the attention! We really do not grudge this, but what was upsetting was that even the organisers and facilitators of the event and the workshops the day before, simply could not accept that our primary concern was the environment - when so many babies and animals are dying – our contention “NO healthy environment = NO food or quality of life for Animals, Babies or any Life”, fell on deaf ears and we were strongly challenged for not doing something more directly for “people”! We feel we ARE a people-centred organization, that works with plants!? What do you think?



The most fascinating visitor

Our Work is Vital

The Garden Route is disappearing – smothered by Multi-million Rand housing estates - Golf courses – Polo Estates – “Tuscan” villas – Elite White “locations” or self imposed “ghettos” with almost no green or open spaces!

So why are we vital?

Because we hold visible documented proof of the actual and potential wealth of our vegetation & biodiversity - of the inestimable value of our indigenous knowledge -

We have the data – images – plants – maps - detailing & proving this fabulous natural wealth

- Everyone who cares needs access to this data and these resources
- Government; Local, Provincial and National, will have to make use of this data
- Developers and consultants, vegetation, environmental, and botanical experts can't function without it
- Organisations and NGO's - Donors & Funders - need this data to be easily and speedily available

The plethora of new Biodiversity, Conservation, Spatial Planning, and Environmental laws, National & Global, make it absolutely vital and essential that this data is available **and** accessible – quickly and locally.

Southern Africa is too big and has TOO MANY plant species to house all the data & species in just a handful of mega-herbaria and 8 Botanic Gardens, separated by thousands of kilometers.

The Garden Route & Southern Cape is a distinctly individual area with its own flora and biodiversity – it is historically under-collected, under-researched and under-resourced. This **must** change!

We have fought for 10 years to successfully develop the Garden Route Botanical Garden and Southern Cape Herbarium – we have done so using a fraction of the money estimated necessary by SABONET to develop such facilities.

We have had a huge advantage in being independent – BUT now we need farsighted, sensitive and hard-headed Champions / Patrons / Trustees / Sponsors / Partners / Donors / Guardian Angels - to make sure we, together with other similar institutions, reach our potential and deliver what is needed over the next 10 – 50 years! To make sure that there is Garden Route at all! To make sure Southern Africa reaches its potential and provides a healthy natural environment for all its peoples into the future.

It is from this starting point that we hope to move forward - to change our structures and methods to hopefully make it possible for us to not only survive financially, but also to address the dire needs which are so glaringly obvious.

To do this we need people who are willing to be fully involved, will help with fundraising, fund-generating, and devising innovative new strategies for the Trust – we are sure these people are among you and would really like to have a chat about it if you feel you can help in any way at all. We desperately need a bookkeeper – funding has been sought in proposals for 2006, but we might have to ask for a volunteer if need be! We need to rejuvenate our Trust Board and would like to identify new and active people who would find it stimulating to work for a very good cause and one which is so important to the Garden Route where we are privileged to live in such lovely surroundings.

We are thrilled with the successful “**Get lapsed Friends back**” drive which has been a huge success, now we need more NEW “Friends” – so if every friend gets another friend to join up that would be wonderful!!

Projects we are engaged in at the moment

Horticulture & Indigenous Plant Management

- Best practice for natural rehabilitation of degraded areas – training in propagation of local plants for rehabilitation sites.
- Propagation methods for indigenous vegetation
- Management of Fynbos & Indigenous vegetation in Urban / Semi-urban areas
- Horticultural Management Manuals for Indigenous vegetation in the Southern Cape in preparation
- Cultivated Garden Plants originating from the Southern Cape (Hybrids & cultivars) – displayed in the Cultivated Garden Beds
- Planting up collections of Succulents for display and naming them

Indigenous Knowledge & Culture

- Finding and plotting Rock Art and habitation sites
- Collecting and identifying the vegetation of Rock Art sites
- IMITHI – Traditional Medicinal Plants - adding value by processing & producing safe & tested remedies
- Indigenous Knowledge re medicinal & useful plants (Khoisan descendants)
- Video & CD on the medicinal plant use of the area and cultural significance
- Displaying all this information through developing the Khoisan Maze, the Medicinal Mound and the Rock art Shelter.

Taxonomy & data-basing of plant species / Herbarium

- Collecting specimens from under-collected areas
- Targeting Families and Taxa not yet present in the Southern Cape Herbarium
- Vegetation surveys as independent specialists
- Finding, verifying, and reporting on Red Data species
- Accessing and mounting the backlog of specimens collected and then data-basing (digitising them)
- Developing an Image Herbarium and Library on CD and on the Web
- Erica hunting and completing Connie Smit's Key to Southern Cape Ericas
- Book / CD on Proteas of Southern Cape in process



Mitch Krog organizing & training Coast care workers at SanParks, Ebb & Flow



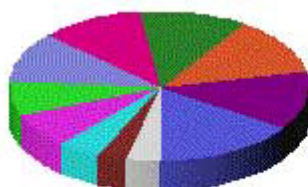
Tom Nel, left at the almost completed Rock Art Shelter, planting and final touches to come



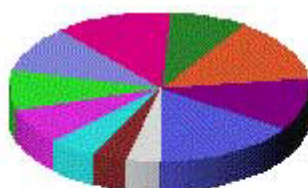
Doreen Court, with Nick Wray (curator of Bristol Botanical Garden twinned with GRBG) watching herbarium volunteers at work

We have a lot of info for you on our Webpage – www.botanicalgarden.org.za – Please let us have your comments. The site is still being developed and we need someone dedicated to keeping it up to date! However we already get a number of enquiries from all over the world from people logging on to the site.

These are the statistics so far, prepared by Mitch Krog. The ongoing hosting, design work, web site updates, statistics and e-mail listserver functions are donated by Mitch and his company in Canada, AllOver.ca. Thank you so much Mitch and we do value all you do for us in this way - plus of course the horticultural work you do as well!



Page Views



Bandwidth

	Date/time range	Page views ?	Bandwidth ?	Visitors ?	Page views bar
1	Oct/2005	2102	48.61M	383	
2	Sep/2005	1666	35.69M	322	
3	Nov/2005	1653	42.71M	311	
4	Jul/2005	1513	26.36M	300	
5	Aug/2005	1510	38.77M	289	
6	Jun/2005	1403	31.11M	237	
7	Apr/2005	1010	26.50M	164	
8	May/2005	964	23.90M	191	
9	Mar/2005	608	16.63M	172	
10	Feb/2005	420	11.19M	105	
	2 other items	481	11.03M	-	
	Average	1110	26.04M	213	
	Total	13330	312.49M	?	

Some highlights of the past year –

The wooden Gardener's recreation room was constructed with funding from the Lottery and the Gardeners moved in and have it looking really nice. Thanks to Yvette van Wijk and Pat Gillespie for donating carpets, tables, chairs etc to make this a warm and welcome environment for the gardeners.

The Bamboo Forest has been almost eradicated from behind the Moriarty Centre while the dangerously tall and old Cypress trees have at last been felled thanks to Southern Cape Tree Services. Because of this we can build our much needed shade-houses and get the tunnel (donated by EFS in 2003 and blown down in early 2004) operational again.

Wallie Geyeza our new foreman has been a great asset. Productivity has increased noticeably since he was appointed. We have received many comments from people over the last few months on how good the garden is looking and this always makes our efforts worthwhile.

Sylvia Zemva and Sydney Ngcakana both enrolled with UNISA for 2005. Sylvia is waiting with great anticipation for her exam results. Sydney, though not as successful with his very difficult bridging year, has been accepted for a 3 month internship at Kirstenbosch in the Compton Herbarium – the chance of a lifetime for him and we wish him the very best and hope this is the beginning of his dream of becoming a famous Botanical taxonomist.

The highest highlight was the alteration to the Moriarty Centre itself – once again thanks to Audrey Moriarty's generosity. The Lecture room is almost double in size and much lighter and brighter (remember it is available for functions at a reasonable rental), while the Herbarium Quick Guide room has also almost doubled in size and is much easier to work in and more accessible. We also have toilets with an outside door at the Moriarty Centre which have made a huge difference when we have a crowd of people or a tour group. Thanks to Rob Kurtz the builder and his team and to Gideon Henning for the draughting of the plans which have worked so well.

We at last found someone brave and skilled enough to build the rock art shelter near the Khoisan Maze. Lottery had allocated us the funds to build it and when we explained the idea to Tom Nel, he just did it!! It is so authentic that modern descendants are often found ensconced! We plan to do copies of local Rock Art which relates to the Khoisan maze. (But we have to stop the vandalism first!).

Fabulous Fynbos Fair + Spring Plant Sale & the Autumn Plant Sale – these are herculean efforts by our volunteers & staff each year and bring in much needed funds. Thank you to all who supported the events and who renewed their subs for 2006. We are planning a different event next year which we hope we are getting funding for! Called "Celebrate our Garden Route", it will include a much wider range of participants displaying their projects and wares, anything to do with the Environment and sustainable use of the land. Please contact us if you would like to take part? We are hoping to draw a much wider visitorship to this event and also partner with these other organizations in a really tangible way. Please help us to make this a success.

Weekends out in the wilds – groups of about 20 people thoroughly enjoyed hunting Ericas at Besemfontein in the Klein Swartberg. Exhilarating & sometimes hair-raising 4x4 tracks led to the highest peaks and incredible views with a mind boggling range of new plants to find and catalogue. Hunting succulents in the Little Karoo, based in B&B's & tents at Louis Jordaan's Minwater Conservancy, this was a fascinating, if cold, weekend for all.

Veg Surveys etc. – arising out of the CEPF funded meetings last year we took on many challenges! 6 vegetation surveys later plus revegetating Flat Rock Dunes & rescuing plants under a new Eskom poweline – we are much wiser, have earned a fair amount of money, and have added hundreds of specimens to the Herbarium. We also realize we need more expert help to work at this level and pace, BUT need the funding to employ them before we can do the work – we are looking for sol



Wally Geyeza on tractor donated by Haddad & Son



Audrey Moriarty enjoying Christmas Party with Rob Kurz & Gideon Henning at back in enlarged lecture room



The stunning Outeniqua Mountain Fynbos display in the marquee



Connie Smits looking at Ericas on the Knife-edge overlooking Die Hel



Vegetation surveys which can hopefully help preserve habitats of Red Data & species such as these

Vandalism – a perennial problem!

We really HAVE to find a way of stopping the vandalism in the garden. This is not only a problem for the garden we find, but is rife all over this area of George – it is clear that it is mainly perpetrated by groups or gangs of privileged schoolchildren who live in the area. We are trying to raise funds for a security guard every night to be armed with a camera, as well as backup from his office and the police. We intend to publish photos of the perpetrators, we would hope that parents and their schools would then find out what their offspring are up to at night and hopefully do something about it!

We could perhaps (if we could raise the money) put a huge, sharply spiked, and very expensive fence right round the whole garden with really strong prison style gates (the first wooden teak gates were broken by ramming with a bakkie two weeks after being erected!). However this would mean that our small herd of bushbuck & smaller buck too, would not be able to visit each morning and get their daily medicinal herbs, protea, and young tree snacks, otters would not be able to reach the dam. Hikers would no longer be able to walk through to the mountain from the Northern end of the garden, we would have to lock the gates at 5pm each day so all the many people who walk their dogs after work would not be able to get in!!! What do you think about this?

What might help is if we formed a “Guardians of the Botanical Garden” group who would have badges and info sheets and every-time they visit the garden would be able to stop people who are walking through flower beds or even picking flowers!, riding bikes round the dam or straight down the medicinal mound, letting their dogs run amuck without leads on, drinking and littering, throwing stones at the birds, stealing / breaking or moving the signage, leaving their doggie’s do’s where they fall, the list is endless and we have seen it all or the results! Also if you live right next door you could make sure you phone the security company or the police when you hear noises at night, shouting, drunken revelry, screams, cars or motorbikes revving, etc etc. Any takers for this, it would help clear your whole area of this scourge!? What we need is someone to run with this idea and be the coordinator – preferably someone who lives locally!

People sometimes ask us what we need, we also had to make a list for the Greater Good Exchange! Soo...

Things we need that are vital to reaching our project goals

Computers:

In order to make our databases and Image Library truly user-friendly and get them online and working for everyone’s benefit – we need to upgrade properly and get the best possible system going.

- 4 x new pentium 4 computers with XP Pro & 17" or 19" LCD Screens – approx R8000 ea
- 1 x 3D Professional Scanner (Scan plant material in 3D) – offered on internet \$35 000
- 1 x 8 Port Wireless Network Access Point - 1 x 8 Port Normal Network Hub - 3 x Wireless Network Cards (PCI) -
- 2 x Wireless Network Cards (PCMCIA) - 1 x File Server with RAID System and Backup System -
- 1 x Lockable File Server and Network Hub Cabinet – 1 x Colour laser printer – R5000 - 1 x UPS 2 hour -

Garden Equipment:

- 2 x Petrol Blowers (STIHL BG 85) - 1 x Industrial (self-propelled) mower – approx R15,000 - R20,000
- 1 x Industrial STIHL Petrol ChainSaw (STIHL MS 440) - 1 x STIHL Pole Pruner (STIHL HT 101) - R
- 2 x Petrol Brush Clearers / Brush Saws (STIHL) - 1 x Hedge Trimmer (STIHL HS 75 or HS 80)
- 1 x Industrial Chipper / Shredder – approx R30 000 - 1 x Smaller chipper of shredder – approx R5000
- 1 x Tractor Trailer (so we can retire our very shaky old one) - 1 x Tractor Grass Cutter Attachment
- 1 x Grass Edging Machine - Industrial Sprinklers (cover large areas) - Hosepipes – R400 to R3000
- 2 x New heavy duty push mowers (& retire our very old ones) - 2 x New heavy duty weed-eaters (ditto)

Garden Projects:

- Paving / Tarring roadway and additional pathways + Paths & paving in Maze
- Teagarden – Wooden house or Franchise Caravan - Children’s Playground near tea garden
- Northern section of garden an Eco Adventure Playground – R400 000 +
- Soil, good weed-free topsoil - Rocks, cost of collecting, transport and placing - Signage, vandal proof
- Bicycle Racks at entrance to garden – R600 - Palisade Fencing around entire garden perimeter – R700 000
- Turnstyle at entrance with counter & small kiosk -
- CCTV Camera System with Recording Equipment (Vandal Proof) or nightly effective security personnel

Nursery Equipment:

- Shadehouse with irrigation – R30 000 - Greenhouse with irrigation & heated beds – R20 000

Office Equipment:

- Typist Chairs - - 60 stackable plastic chairs – approx R50 each = R3000
- Book cases for Library (plus files, magazine storage boxes, books!) - Desks & small tables

Left: Compost toilet vandalized later burnt right down!



Above: Motorbike in dam, note bottle floating near!

Our friends data-base:

Our year has always run from October to October but we have decided now to get ourselves more organized and run the year from February to February in line with our financial statements. SO from 2006 we will only start 2007 in February 2007! This means you will get from October 2006 to February 2007 free!!! (sounds like a TV ad!). Once again thank you to all who paid so willingly in response to our pleas this year, we are over the R9 000 mark already.

Now we have some other pleas – Staying in contact by Email is by far the easiest, quickest and cheapest option and we badly need you to make sure we have your email address and also that it is CORRECT! But many of you do not have Email so--- please contact us if:.....

- a) you have Email but do not get our mailings
- b) have changed your Email, fax no, or address in the last 2 years or so
- c) have just got an Email address or a fax No for the first time
- d) have only a fax but do not get our mailings
- e) have neither fax nor Email and do not get our postal mailings

Our biggest problem at the moment is getting the fax messages through, and sending postal messages out in time! We do really apologise about this, it is not fair that those with email (by far the majority now) should get things more often and more reliably than those with faxes and snail mail! A sign of the times for sure! How we can sort this out is one of the things we are asking ourselves, and hopefully we will get it right by next year! Of course it would be so very much easier if everyone was on Email! Maybe we could send SMS's as short reminders, but many people with no email also do not have cell phones? Anyway please be patient and perhaps if you really want to make sure you get our mailings, you could drop some self-addressed envelopes into the office so we have no excuse for not posting to you - about 6 per year would help.

Someone said the other day that we have probably one of the biggest membership of NGO's in George! We have about 400 entries on our data-base (this is not counting couples as separate entities though) – BUT not all are paid up, yet If everyone paid up we should get about R20 000 per year (averaging it at R50 to include the couples) which would pay for 2 whole months running expenses! This is our aim for 2007.

Proposed Events for 2006

This is a preliminary list with preliminary dates only –We would very much like to coordinate our events with other environmental NGO;s however - so many people belong to them ALL and would like to go to everything!

February	Evening talk & slide show about Rock Art and plants found locally by Yvette van Wijk & Hugo Leggatt
April	Sat 27 th Moonlight Meander with Judy Dixon on Swartvlei beach (Full Moon) fundraiser for the GRBG Autumn Plant Sale – organized by the Botanical Society Garden Route Branch
May	Sat 7 th Starlight Stroll with Judy Dixon (New Moon) fundraiser for the GRBG Erica Hunting in Attawaskloof, based at Bonniedale guest farm
June	Pacaltsdorp Skaapskoprivier walk & Rock Art site + pm history of Hansmoeskraal talk by Hugo Leggatt Digital Photography Day – just all taking pics and helping each other with some help on Computers
July	IMITHI course – using Medicinal Herbs for first aid Day with Peet Peens on his valley Bushveld farm near Herbertsdale Identifying trees & enjoying new scenes
August	Botany for Gardeners Walk and botanizing at Monati Conservancy, Herold's Bay with Lise and David Day
September	Succulents & Proteas in the Ladysmith area, based at Anysberg Nature Reserve
October	Probably from 13 th to 15 th “Celebrate our Garden Route” a really big event including many environmentally focused + sustainable land-use NGO's & orgs + local choirs / music and green school clubs etc etc.
November	Evening Birds and night-time Frogs in the Bot Garden
December	Christmas picnic at the Moriarty Centre

NB dates are not fixed yet, more courses or talks will be added and some of these may move. This is just a provisional list!

Farewells – It was with great sadness but also a great party, that we said goodbye to Pat Gillespie in June this year – Pat has spent the year traveling all over the world visiting her large family. Pat was such a constant and ever present factor in the Garden, that we are still regrouping to fill all her multitude of duties that she had taken on! We wish her well and hope she settles down and makes a great garden in Durban with her son. We are all hoping she will come & visit us soon!
We were saddened by the deaths of a Trustee, Dennis Booyesen of CNC and Sue Bellow a volunteer – both were young and vital people and this makes it even harder to understand the quirks of fate, we miss them all.