



WESSA
PEOPLE CARING FOR THE EARTH



Newsletter JAN/FEB 2019

OUR VISION | To be a highly effective and well-supported champion of the environment.
OUR MISSION | To implement high impact environmental and conservation projects which promote public participation in caring for the Earth.

Dear Friends of the Environment,

For some, the year ended facing the loss of a loved one. Shortly before Christmas the McDaid family informed us of Paul McDaid's death. Paul served on the WESSA Sedgefield Committee for many years and continued on the George/Sedgefield Branch when the branches amalgamated. His particular passion was for Water Affairs and he was active on the Knysna Water Forum until a few years ago.

Paul passed away aged 90 years. Our sincerest condolences to Mary and the family.

We hope that the Festive Season has been kind to you all. By the time this reaches you we will already be in the second month of 2019 – so let's get cracking.....

Our topics this month are primarily botanical with a little recycling thrown in.

The WESSA Eden Committee were – yet again – rained off the Outeniqua Family Market early in December but on the 5th January we were out in full force! Thank you OFM for having us again!

Our themes were:

- ➔ **Awareness of the most common local invasive alien plants**
- ➔ **Recycling plastics** in particular the small bits and bobs by filling plastic bottles to use as bottle bricks
- ➔ Fund raising selling botanical posters and cards

We had some very interesting conversations – and some help filling bottles too!

A few photos:-



 WESSA proudly presents

Shoreline Triple Whammy @ Buffels Bay

Coastal Creatures, Birding & Geology

with Louw Claassens, Peter Ginn and Paul Rixom respectively.

Join us at Buffels Bay to explore 3 aspects of the coast with our experts. Participants will be split into 3 groups and rotate from one theme to the next.

Bring chairs, sun protection, refreshments.

Booking essential! wessageorge@isat.co.za

 23 March 2019

 09h00- ca 13h00

 Buffels Bay

 R 100 for Knysna Basin Project & WESSA Eden

UPDATE ON THE OUTENIQUA PASS DISPLAY

We have mentioned in previous Newsletter that WESSA Eden is sponsoring the creation of this Display.

Shortly before Christmas 2018 we received this e-mail from Finn:

"We did two collection trips and collected some beautiful plants from the south facing slopes of the Outeniqua pass. After this, we unfortunately were slightly slowed down by the fire and by collection permits. I will be back on it soonest.

Of the collected plants, most of them are still in propagation. 45 fully accessioned plants from 15 different species have already been propped up and are in the garden.

We have dug in all of the rocks on the south side of the wall and mulched the areas that have been planted up. Bertie is currently watering the plants in.

Attached is a photo of the outcomes of 'Phase 1' of the Outeniqua Pass Display along with its corresponding invoice.

Thanks for making this possible!

Kind Regards

Finn Rautenbach"
(Garden Route Botanical Garden Trust - Manager)
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 Email: manager@botanicalgarden.org.za
 Website: www.botanicalgarden.org.za
www.facebook.com/gardenroutebotanical



For the benefit of other non-botanists such as myself, Finn has kindly summarised the specialist terminology :

"Collecting"

When we go on a collection trip, we visit the area of interest in search of interesting plant species. The plant species are selected for a number of reasons : Conservation (rare plants), Horticultural value (shape of the plant, size of flowers) and the purpose for which we want to use them in the garden.

It is important that when we collect to keep in situ conservation in mind. I will only collect from a plant if I can see about 10 specimens in the vicinity in order not to deplete the wild population. Plants are collected by taking cuttings, taking seed or removing an entire plant. A method is chosen based on the number of plants present as well as how that specific plant grows best. For example, I would never take cuttings of a restio as that will never work!

For every plant collected there needs to be a collection sheet filled out. This collection sheet mentions things like soil type, lithology, aspect, biotic interactions, location and so on. It is very important to log as much information about the plant as possible. This information is then used to "Fully accession" the plant. This basically ensures that I know exactly where every plant in the bed comes from and when it was planted out. This is incredibly important for a botanical garden to do, as a botanical garden is essentially a living genetic collection of plants. The purpose is to collect specific genetic material in order to ensure conservation of very specific vegetation types in our region.

Once we get the plant material to the Garden, we commence the "Propagation" of the plants. This means we grow the plants up in our propagation yard from seed, cutting, or from transplanting until such a time that they are mature enough to be planted out into our garden. For cuttings this takes a good few months. For transplanting, it takes about a month (just to ensure that the plants survive the stressful transplant and take root in the new soil medium). Once they are ready we then plant the plants into the bed. As I plant them, I log their accession details on a google document on my phone and they are then "Fully accessioned"

Thanks Finn!



BOTANICAL SOCIETY GARDEN ROUTE BRANCH

Dear friends of The Garden Route Botanical Garden and of The Botanical Society of South Africa,

Thank you for taking the time to read this important email. As you will all remember, we all met on 6 December 2018 to discuss interest in formalising a branch to once again represent those of us living in the Eden region. We all agreed that a branch was needed, and an Interim Committee was elected (see cc'd email addresses for full committee contacts). The committee have been liaising with Head Office since to get our branch off the ground.

“ The main purpose of this email is to reach out to all members who fall under The Garden Route Branch as per the list sent to us by Head Office. As not all of you are on this list, perhaps due to expired membership or other reasons, I decided to forward this to all attendees of the 6 December meeting as well.

The second function of this email, is to alert you as to our current status on the following important matters:

1. BotSoc National AGM
2. The Garden Route Branch AGM
3. Twigs
4. Garden Route Botanical Garden- BotSoc Volunteer Day

1. BOTSOC NATIONAL AGM

12 FEBRUARY 2019 IN CAPE TOWN

- Two members of the Interim Committee will attend the national AGM on behalf of the Garden Route Branch.
- In attendance:
Jo-Anne King, Interim Branch Chair
Finn Rautenbach, Interim Branch Secretary

2. THE GARDEN ROUTE BRANCH AGM - SATURDAY, 16 MARCH IN GEORGE

- It makes the most sense to hold our first official branch AGM after the national AGM, so please save the date for Saturday, 16 March at 10:30am.
- Official notice will be emailed in due course when our venue is confirmed (most likely the Environmental Education Centre at the Garden Route Botanical Garden in George).
- In the meantime, please have a read through the latest draft of our new branch constitution (attached) which we received from BotSoc Council.
- If you wish to attend our AGM and are not a member of BotSoc yet, you can apply online: <http://www.botanicalsociety.org.za/MembershipAndSupport/SitePages/MemberApplication.aspx>

3. TWIGS

- It was brought to my attention that previously, localised subgroups known as “Twigs” operated from their own home towns. I would love to find out if these Twigs are still in operation/contact, or if any of you are interested in initiating a Twig for your home area.
- In future, it could be a lovely outcome if the Twigs took turns choosing and organising outings in their areas, which the other Twigs could support at their convenience (and all supported by the branch committee in any possible way).
- With the above in mind, please get in touch with me if you are currently, or want to be, part of a Twig. As I understand, the following Twigs may already be in existence, or otherwise would be a good starting point:
 - Calitzdorp - Knysna
 - Mossel Bay - Nature's Valley
 - Oudtshoorn - Plettenberg Bay
 - Stillbaai

I have attached a useful map that shows the areas that fall under The Garden Route Branch.

4. GARDEN ROUTE BOTANICAL GARDEN - BOTSOC VOLUNTEER DAY WEDNESDAYS, 10:00AM - 12:00PM (FROM 30 JANUARY ONWARDS)

- The GRBG Prop Yard, which mainly cultivates locally indigenous flora, was initiated by the Eden



members of BotSoc in 2013. It would be great to re-involve ourselves with the GRBG, and the interim committee feels that the BotSoc-built Prop Yard is the perfect place to start. It is in much need of a little TLC.

- You are therefore all invited to join me at the Propagation Yard at the Garden Route Botanical Garden this Wednesday from 10am until 12pm!
- Bring your gardening gloves, a hat, sunscreen and a bottle of water! Everyone is welcome to join for tea/coffee and biscuits at the GRBG offices afterwards.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this period. Your support will be invaluable as we grow this branch. I look forward to exploring, studying and protecting our beautiful Garden Route with you all this year.

Kindest regards,

Jo-Anne King
060 976 5283 | joanne.isobel.king@gmail.com
Interim Chair & FUN(d)raiser
The Garden Route Branch | The Botanical Society of South Africa

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And whilst we are talking about things botanical, this article caught my eye in the Knysna-Plett Herald in December...

BEWARE OF THOSE GIFTED PLANTS

www.knysnaplettherald.com/News/Article/LifeStyle/beware-of-those-gifted-plants-201812121130

It is a proven fact that most of our listed alien invasive plants have jumped the garden fence.

They pose a huge threat to our environment because they displace indigenous flora; some are extremely toxic to humans and animals, while others clog up our waterways or are a fire hazard.

Gardeners sometimes accept plants as gifts from fellow gardening friends or buy some "unusual" plants at fetes or church bazaars. These new treasures may well be on the alien invasive list, so please check the status of the plants before you put them in your garden or pass them on to another friend.

DESIRABLE BUT LETHAL INVADERS

Alien invasive species are all very attractive and desirable, generally fast growing, hardy and easy to grow, and the bonus is that pests don't like them. In other words, they seem like ideal plants. There is generally a reason why these "unusual" plants are not available in nurseries or garden centres: by law the gifting, trading or growing of alien invasive species is prohibited. I'm not saying all unusual plants are invaders, but it is prudent to check.

Unbeknownst to me, I was gifted a Category 1a plant. I planted the little succulent (it certainly did not resemble a cacti species at all) and it grew at an alarming rate – 60cm in six months! I was fooled by its lush succulent growth, but as the "adult" spines and leaves developed I fortunately recognised it as *Austrocylindropuntia subulata*.



'ESCAPEE PLANTS'

An example of "escapee plants" is in Kingfisher Creek, Steenbok Nature Reserve, (Leisure Isle, Knysa) where Madeira vine and sword fern have invaded a huge area of coastal scrub. A lot of indigenous plant material has had to be removed to get access to these invaders. Their vigorous regrowth is alarming, and complete eradication will take time and money.

Another very invasive species on Leisure Isle which originated as a gift is *Equisetum hyemale* (snake



grass) (Category 1a). It has spread into the neighbouring properties and can't easily be controlled, because the outer surface of the stem is covered with a silica-like substance which makes

it very difficult for chemical control to penetrate. It also forms stolons deep down in the earth, making manual control almost impossible.

The beautiful, sweet-smelling Ipomoea alba (Category 1a) (White Moonflower) is favoured by many gardeners. The other day I saw it growing in a friend's garden, (the seeds came from her Johannesburg garden). It has now found a new home in a new estate in a new part of the country. Under favourable conditions, this plant will spread and invade our forests and river banks.

The above examples illustrate how easy it is to unknowingly populate an area with alien invasive species.

Let us not contribute to the misdeeds of the past. It is time for us gardeners to be more careful about what we are planting, gifting or selling – the wrong plants can have a long-lasting negative effect on the environment.

There are four categories of alien invasive plants, as follows:

CATEGORY 1A:

These are invasive species which must be controlled and, where possible, eradicated. Any form of trade or planting is strictly prohibited. Officials from the department of environmental affairs must be allowed access to monitor or assist with control.

CATEGORY 1B:

These are established invasive species which must be controlled and, wherever possible, removed and destroyed. Any form of trade or planting is strictly prohibited and landowners are obligated to control these plants on their properties. A species management plan should be drafted for large properties.

CATEGORY 2:

Invasive species regulated by area. A demarcation permit is required to import, possess, grow, breed, move, sell, buy or accept as a gift any plants listed as Category 2 plants. No permits will be issued for these plants to exist in riparian (river bank) zones.

CATEGORY 3:

These are invasive species that can remain in your garden. However, you cannot propagate, gift or sell these species and must control them in your garden. In riparian zones or wetlands, all Category 3 plants become Category 1b plants.

All the Alien Invasive plants occurring in the Knysna area are listed on the Gardening at Leisure website: www.gardeningatleisure.co.za.

If you are unsure about a plant that you received as a gift, or other plants which may be suspect in your garden or neighbourhood, take a picture and send to esther.knysna@gmail.com. I will assist you with the identification and give relevant information.



I know – we have dealt with Invasive Alien Plants in the past but I promise we will have to carry on knocking this on the head!

For those newer to this Newsletter, WESSA Eden have compiled a list of the 15 most common invasive alien plants in our area. Just e-mail me wessageorge@isat.co.za for a copy.

And another important aspect of legislation pertaining to Invasive Alien Plants when selling property was dealt with by Fanie Botha, Director: Commercial – Millers Inc. and published in a December edition of the George Herald.

This is the complete text kindly supplied by Mr Botha:-

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

By Fanie Botes

An issue seriously neglected when drafting agreements for the sale of immovable property, is compliance with the legislation pertaining to alien and invasive species which might be present on the immovable property sold.

Invasive alien species are defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity as follows:

“They are plants, animals, pathogens and other organisms that are non-native to an ecosystem and which may cause economic or environmental harm or adversely affect human health. In particular they impact adversely upon diversity, including decline or elimination of native species through competition, predation or transmission of pathogens and the disruption of local ecosystems and ecosystem functions”

In South Africa, under the auspices of the Minister of Environmental Affairs, specific legislation was introduced on 1 August 2014 through publication of the Alien and Invasive Species Regulations, which regulations came into effect as from 1 October 2014. These regulations were promulgated in terms of National Environmental Management: Biodiversity (NEMBA) Act 10 of 2004

A total of 559 alien species in four different categories were then listed as invasive and a further 560 species identified and listed as prohibited, which means that these species may not be introduced into the country. The list includes both fauna and flora and was further supplemented in July 2016.

The above legislation is aimed at preventing the spreading of potentially harmful and devastating species, preventing the introduction into the country of more alien invasive species and introducing early detection and control by all landowners. Early detection or prevention of the introduction of alien invasive species might assist in timeous eradication thereof and a reduction in management costs where these aliens have been unwisely and unintentionally introduced.

The pertinent question is how the legislation impacts upon a landowner and in particular the seller of a property?



Regulation 29 requires that:

1. If a person, who holds a permit to have an alien specie, sells the property on which the alien specie is present, the new owner of the property must apply for a permit in terms of the legislation;
2. Any seller of an immovable property must, prior to conclusion of the sale agreement, notify the prospective purchaser of such immovable property in writing in regard to the presence of any listed alien invasive species on the property

Apart from the notification by the seller as aforesaid, it would also be advisable that the purchaser be required to acknowledge, as part of the sale agreement, that he has fully acquainted himself with the extent and nature of the property as well as all vegetation thereon and that he accepts it as such. Furthermore, the seller must be required, once again as part of the sale agreement, to confirm that he is not aware of the presence or holds any permit for any alien invasive species on the property.

A standard clause to be included in all sale agreements will typically read as follows:

The seller hereby records that to the best of his knowledge and belief there are no listed invasive species mentioned in terms of the Alien and Invasive Species Regulations promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, No 10 of 2004 upon the property. It is however recorded that as the seller is not sufficiently qualified to identify such species that the purchaser accepts the risk inherent in purchasing the property with any listed invasive species which might be thereon.

Some advisors argue that the above regulations only pertain to agricultural land, but in the absence of a definition of the term “land” in the regulations, it must be accepted that all immovable property, irrespective whether it is agricultural land or not, is subject to the provisions contained in the regulations.

One pertinent aspect that needs to be highlighted, is the fact that some alien invasive plants are categorised differently in different provinces. A specific plant may be categorised as harmful in the Eastern Cape, but less harmful in the other provinces. Some plants may be categorised as harmful in rural areas, but be exempted in urban areas in the same province. Care should therefore be taken before advising on this aspect.



POLYPHAGUS SHOT HOLE BORER BEETLE

I share the information that I receive – or find – in good faith and of course it goes way beyond my remit to check the articles.

But thankfully experts do react and rectify where needed – and this seems to be a case in point.

Thanks Arne for your input:-

Dear Christine

Many thanks for the great newsletter once again.

I have just returned from a PSHB workshop funded by my organization CABI and hosted by FABI in Pretoria. A word of caution – the PSHB spreads a pathogen which is what actually kills the tree, not the beetle itself. Once a tree is infected with the fungus, you can spray/treat the tree as much as you like with an insecticide, it will have no impact whatsoever. You would have to treat the tree with an insecticide and a fungicide which is not only costly, but you would probably have to do so repeatedly which in itself may kill the tree. In addition, there have been no scientific trials to determine the efficacy of Bandit against the

PSHB. It is also my understanding that it is illegal to use a pesticide for the control of a pest for which use has not been registered for use against. Because it is not registered for use against the PSHB there is no indication on the label as to what concentrations should be used and how it should be applied.

WESSA should not be promoting the use of any chemicals which have not been registered for use against a pest. Because there are no recommendations as to how it should be used against the PSHB it will result in injudicious use putting more and more non-target species at risk, something you talked about in your newsletter.

Thanks, Arne Witt



KNYSNA
BASIN
PROJECT

KNYSNA BASIN PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT 2018

<http://knysnabasinproject.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Annual-Report-Nov-2018.pdf>



THE 28TH OF FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL LEAP DAY FOR FROGS!

To celebrate this, join us on a Night Tour around the Garden Route Botanical Garden, and try spot our local night life! We hope to find a diversity of frogs, Knysna Dwarf Chamelion and many more interesting insects and animals.

You'll need • a flashlight and • a very good ear to track their calls, and lastly • lots of enthusiasm! R30.00

to participate For more info, contact the GRBG by phone: (044) 874 1558





JOIN THE TOUW RIVER CONSERVANCY'S 3RD ANNUAL CONVERSATIONS IN CONSERVATION EVENT!

The Touw River Conservancy, a community group dedicated to supporting local land owners on conservation issues within and around the Touw River Catchment in Wilderness, is hosting another networking and public awareness event focussed on a variety of fascinating conservation and nature related topics, open to the public.

The event, dubbed 'Conversations in Conservation' is taking place on the 2nd of March from 9:00 until 14:00 at the Fairy Knowe Hotel in Wilderness and is completely free to the public. Donations to the Conservancy will be appreciated. The intention behind the event is to create an opportunity for interested individuals to dig into local conservation issues through speaker sessions, question and answer forums and a 'conversation market' with a variety of conservation related stands and tables that will facilitate conversations between community members and a variety of experts and service providers in the field.

Matthew Koehorst, Chairperson of the conservancy says, "we want to create an opportunity for members of the public to gather and engage on a broad range of environmental topics specific to our region. Come and participate in our 3rd event like this, where we bring experts and fascinating people to share their conservation and environmental stories."

The Touw River Conservancy has run Conversations in Conservation for the last two years and hopes to expand the event this year with even more stories and information from the field.

The event will start with a speaker session featuring a number of local experts and practitioners with a focus on biodiversity and wildlife stories from the region, invasive alien plant management and more.

Following that, participants will have the chance to explore a variety of stands and stalls to engage more deeply in conversations with local activists, knowledge holders, and service providers.

"Join us in chatting with fascinating people involved with amazing stories and projects about our environment at our 'Conversation Market'. There will also be plants for sale, a plant ID table and more-it's going to be super!", says Sine Strydom, the Conservancy's secretary of finance.

Stands will focus on the following topics and offerings: Indigenous plant sales, indigenous plant identification (bring specimens with leaves, flowers and fruit if possible!), biodiversity and human/wildlife conflict management, clearing and invasive plant management contractors, citizen science opportunities, environmental service providers and more.

Come and meet like minded people and learn something new about the place we live through an interesting and engaging event hosted with passion!

DETAILS:

Date: 2 March

Time: 9:00-14:00

Venue: The Fairy Knowe Hotel, Wilderness

Costs: Free, donations to the Touw River Conservancy welcomed

Please RSVP to Janet Botes before February 25th at art@janetbotes.co.za

For media related inquiries contact Matthew Koehorst-matthew@sixkingdoms.org, 076 6189 722

Regards, Christine Ridge-Schnauffer

Honorary Secretary WESSA EDEN

along with Peter Ginn, Irene Ginn, Annemarie Gebhardt, Roz Schubert, and Monica Vacarro



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