



## NEWSLETTER March 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 the time being we must sadly say goodbye to our wonderfully artistic lay out, Janet Bezuidenhout. Janet and her husband have decided to travel to foreign shores for a good while and devote their energies to other things. We are sad to see them go, but of course wish them a stimulating time with exciting experiences which will return them to us enriched.

Travel safely Janet and Pierre!!!!.

I very much feared that I would have to return to my very amateurish layout, but Wilmari Nel has kindly jumped in and is under severe pressure to use a programme that is new to her. For this reason the Newsletter is a tad late this month. But we are extremely grateful to Wilmari for tackling this project!

Our next event will be the **Shoreline Triple Whammy on Saturday 23 March** – see below for details.

WESSA proudly presents



<b>Shoreline Triple Whammy @ Buffels Bay</b> Coastal Creatures - Louw Claassens, Birding - Peter Ginn Geology - Paul Rixom 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. To reduce parking problems please team up with lifts. Let us know your starting point and whether you can offer a lift or need one. Bring chairs, sun protection, refreshments.		Saturday 23 March
		09H30 – ca 13h00
		Buffels Bay Directions will be sent to booked participants
		R100 for Knysna Basin Project & WESSA Eden
<b>Booking essential!</b> <a href="mailto:wessageorge@isat.co.za">wessageorge@isat.co.za</a>		

Please diarise the upcoming WESSA Eden attractions



**Workshop on combating the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer Beetle** hosted by Glenwood Lodge. More info below.  
**Thursday 14 March, Venue Glenwood Lodge, Glenwood Avenue at 18h00**

Please RSVP to [admin@glenwoodlodge.co.za](mailto:admin@glenwoodlodge.co.za)

If you missed this date contact Glenwood Lodge for future workshops

 **Thursday 14 March @ 18h00**

The **WESSA Eden AGM** we will celebrate another busy year with Cheese and Wine and Mark Dixon as our speaker.

 **Monday 15 April @ 18h00**

**A visit to Rolbaken** hosted by Mary and Dick Carr seeing how a denuded farm returns to being a natural and protected area.  
Booking now open [wessageorge@isat.co.za](mailto:wessageorge@isat.co.za)

 **Saturday 18 May**

## GARDEN ROUTE BOTANICAL GARDEN



**Garden Route Botanical Garden**

**Keep up to date with events on**

<https://business.facebook.com/gardenroutebotanical>

For example: A great experience making land art in the Garden Route Botanical Garden with Janet Bezuidenhout. Don't miss out on a chance to learn more about Land Art with Janet on the 21st of March.

Should any members of the Botanical Society NOT have received this notice please see below and contact Jo-Ann directly: 060 976 5283, [grbotsoc@gmail.com](mailto:grbotsoc@gmail.com)



### **Official Notice of 2019 Garden Route Branch AGM (BotSoc)**

Notice is hereby given of an Annual General Meeting of the Garden Route Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa (BotSoc), to be held on Saturday, 16 March 2019.

**Venue:** Garden Route Environmental Education Centre (GREEC), [Garden Route Botanical Garden](#), 49 Caledon Street, George

**Time:** Registration will commence at 10h00, Meeting commences at 10h30

Jo-Anne Isobel King

Interim Chair  
The Garden Route Branch  
The Botanical Society of South Africa

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## RECENT NEWS

### Information on how to combat the Polyphagous Shothole Borer Beetle



The PSHB beetle (Polyphagous shothole borer) is only the size of a sesame seed but along with its fungus partner is proving to be an international challenge. Recently Prof. Wilhelm de Beer of the University of Pretoria visited George. Two other universities, Stellenbosch and Grahamstown (Rhodes) are working together with the University of Pretoria. An information session was held on 21 February at Glenwood Lodge.

Unfortunately notification in the local press was at extremely short notice.

**See article: BOME VREK OP 'N STREEP**

[www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/bome-vrek-op-n-streep-201902210814](http://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/General/bome-vrek-op-n-streep-201902210814)

At the request of WESSA Eden and in the interest of reaching a wider public, Glenwood Lodge along with the Glenwood

Conservancy have kindly offered interested parties the opportunity of a workshop that will summarise the findings of previous workshops. Hear first-hand the evidence of successful treatment through a combination of fertilisation, irrigation and treatment with fungicides and herbicides. The effectiveness will be discussed and demonstrated.

Please note that there is currently no registered or officially recommended treatment for this very destructive beetle, but since some success has been noted here, come to this workshop and find out more for yourself.

If you think you may have infected trees the Conservancy members will happily help with identification.

More information

Jodi 083 632 2201

Adri Joubert 083 2777 677

on [https://treetreatment.co.za/www.fabinet.up.ac.za/pdf/PSHB\\_information\\_sheet.pdf](https://treetreatment.co.za/www.fabinet.up.ac.za/pdf/PSHB_information_sheet.pdf)



The SHOT HOLE BORER “WHAT TO DO” GUIDE contains a practical guideline on the options that are available for private residents to treat their own trees. This guide does not endorse any specific products, nor does it represent an easy solution to the PSHB crisis South Africa is currently experiencing.

<https://polyphagous-shot-hole-borer.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/PSHB-SHOT-HOLE-BORER-%E2%80%9CWWHAT-TO-DO%E2%80%9D-GUIDE.pdf>

e-mail : [info@TreeTreatment.co.za](mailto:info@TreeTreatment.co.za)

*PSHB is not able to complete its life cycle on the entire tree species it attacks, those that the beetle is able to breed on are referred to as ‘reproductive hosts’. The current list of confirmed hosts in South Africa can be viewed at [www.fabinet.up.ac.za/pshb](http://www.fabinet.up.ac.za/pshb).*

*It is expected that this list will grow as research into this pest continues and as the pest moves to new areas.*

Source: [www.sanbi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SAN-BI-Biological-Invasions-Student-Project-Outline-for-2019-Polyphagous-Shot-Hole-Borer.pdf](http://www.sanbi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SAN-BI-Biological-Invasions-Student-Project-Outline-for-2019-Polyphagous-Shot-Hole-Borer.pdf)

To READ: An article that might be of general interest: **Tree apocalypse looms in the face of policy paralysis**

By Hilton Fryer • 11 September 2018

[www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-09-11-tree-apocalypse-looms-in-the-face-of-policy-paralysis](http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-09-11-tree-apocalypse-looms-in-the-face-of-policy-paralysis)



**Wednesday 27 March** – U3A Monthly General Meeting:

**Prof. Raymond Auerbach:**

**“Feeding the World Without Destroying It:  
Organic Farming, Climate Change and Your Health”**

10:00 = Tea, 10:30 = Meeting starts, at Emmaüs, Hope Street. Non-members R10

Carbon is polluting the atmosphere, and creating a greenhouse, and toxins and stress are driving cancers and non-communicable disease levels ever higher. Diabetes, hypertension, autism, gluten intolerance and obesity loom large, and for the first time life expectancy in the developed world is decreasing!

We will look at the drivers of climate change and the links between poor health on the one hand, and industrial agriculture, food processing and over-medication on the other. But all is not doom, gloom and despair: practical steps will be outlined which are required for a healthy planet, which are much the same as the steps which we need to take to keep ourselves healthy.

Steps to fix the “broken” food system will be outlined, including how to feed the world, how to transform African agriculture, how to take back the initiative in building local economies and how to change our lifestyles towards happier and more healthy old age. Can we grow old gracefully? Can we learn to listen? What on Earth do these two questions have to do with health and agroecology? Come along and let’s talk about it!

Contact Mike: 044 620 2589.

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**Western Cape Biosphere Reserve Research Workshop 4 April 2019 Invitation**



The Sustainability Research Unit hosted the first Western Cape Biosphere Reserves Research Workshop at the Nelson Mandela University, George Campus. The 2018 workshop was the first of its kind and provided an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to begin coordinating a research agenda for the Western Cape Biosphere Reserves. Following on from the 2018 workshop the Sustainability Research Unit will be hosting a second workshop to fertilize a collaborative research network of working groups for the biosphere reserves in the Western Cape.

The desired outcomes of the 2019 workshop include:

1. Encouraging the formulation of a network of research working groups by bringing together interested and affected parties
2. Electing co-chairs / champions for each working group
3. Facilitating working group dialogues to determine the scope of each working group
4. Providing a space for the development of Terms of Reference (ToR) for the working groups
5. Nurturing a biosphere-based collaborative research network that will be able to source new funding in the years to come.

The workshop is for committed researchers and practitioners who wish to drive research in the Western Cape biosphere reserves and to be a catalyst for research activities in and on the biospheres. This includes but is not limited to:

6. Researchers and students working on or in biosphere reserves in the Western Cape
7. Directors of biosphere reserves in the Western Cape
8. Environmental NGOs operating within or working with Western Cape biosphere reserves
9. Practitioners and managers of protected areas in biospheres in the Western Cape
10. Citizen science groups within the Western Cape biosphere reserves

If you are interested in participating please contact :

**Sustainability Research Unit**

Ms Luzanne Visagie

SRU Administrative Coordinator

Tel: 044 801 5127

Email: [luzanne.visagie@mandela.ac.za](mailto:luzanne.visagie@mandela.ac.za)



**MINIMISING ORGANIC WASTE TO LANDFILL**  
LECTURES AND WORKSHOP HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2019 IN  
MOSEL BAY

WESSA Eden was invited to participate and this is a brief report from Roz Schubert who attended on our behalf:

**INTRODUCTION** - The meeting was opened by Eddie Hanekom and Belinda Langenhoven, representatives from the Western Cape Government – Dept. of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning. Eddie explained that there is no space in the province and that a 10 year plan needs be put in place. In South Africa organic waste amounts to 40%. Abattoir waste has been identified as being the most problematic food waste type to manage in the Western Cape. We were given a comprehensive booklet about this.

We were asked to introduce ourselves and they were pleased to have "Greenies" like Sandra Philander, Melissa McKay and myself there.

**SPEAKERS** - We were told that we would get copies of all the talks by email. So far I have not received anything so am just going to write a few points from my notes.

Quote from Melissa McKay: "**No such thing as organic waste only wasted organics**". She said there should be Norms and Standards for Organic Waste. We were told that these are in progress but not yet finalized.

Belinda Langenhoven: **Ways of reducing food waste:** Grocery Stores should reduce prices and sell as items approach sell-by date. Food rejected by stores e.g. apples should be quickly sold to the public rather than dumped.

In Cape Town **small composting units** have been given to the public to those who are willing to weigh and record how much waste goes in and how much is taken out as compost. After a year the Composting unit becomes their own.

Johan Gie spoke on behalf of GR District Municipality. He said that they were starting the same scheme here for people who would be willing to keep records for a year.

Sivuyile Mtila – Mossel Bay. Works Management and Pollution Control.

**Illegal dumping is a huge problem.** Moloks (large plastic bins) were placed where illegal dumping was taking place but that did not work well – some were destroyed. There are 2 Swop Shops and home composting is being encouraged. Mossel Bay Municipality want to develop a communication strategy to reach households in order to implement plans.

Yaseem Salie spoke about the **viability of Biogas projects** in South Africa. A non-profit organisation called Green Cape was established in 2010 to help grow the green economy. Nationwide 26 projects have been implemented, 11 in the Western Cape. Most projects use biogas on site.

Henry Thomson spoke about biogas from sewerage sludge. How this still produces Green House gases but they hope that eventually all the gases will be utilized.

Participants received a booklet produced by the WC Government called Developing a Generic Organic Waste Diversion Plan. Belinda Langenhoven went through this briefly.

#### WORKSHOP

Participants formed small groups and were asked to discuss waste disposal plans and what role our organisations could play in banning organic waste.

I mentioned the matter of the green bags and that we had heard that they were being dumped unopened with the other rubbish. Luckily we had 2 men from George Municipality in our group. I suggested that a training session be held for all municipal workers who are involved with refuse collection so that they can understand the importance of it. It was thought to be a good idea.

#### WHAT ROLE CAN WESSA PLAY

Our monthly News Letter could include articles about minimizing organic waste. Also a speaker at our forthcoming AGM in April would be welcome to give a short talk on the subject.

Event organised by : Evodia Boonzaier Directorate: Waste Management

Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Western Cape Government

Tel: 021 483 8321

E-mail: [Evodia.Boonzaier@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Evodia.Boonzaier@westerncape.gov.za)

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### TALKS UNDER WAY ON THE 'LAST STRAW'

The Department of Environmental Affairs is currently engaging industry and consumer bodies on proposals to phase out or completely ban plastic products such as straws and microbeads.

Mark Gordon, the department's deputy director-general for chemical and waste management, said the single-use products are considered to be unfriendly to the environment, especially the marine sector.

He said whenever the department does beach clean-ups, earbuds and plastic stirrers featured high up on the list of the waste and added that these posed a great danger to marine species.

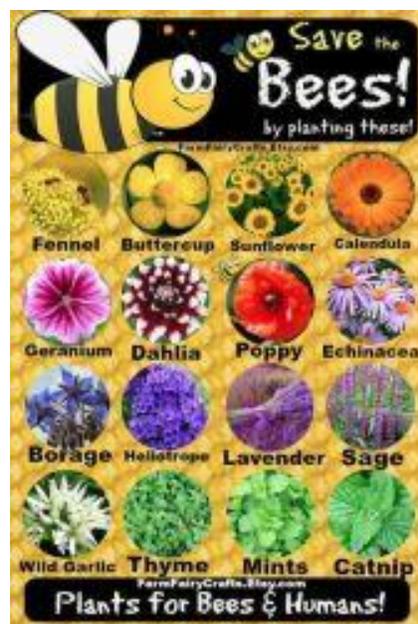


Full article: [www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/National/talks-under-way-on-the-last-straw-201903060939](http://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/National/talks-under-way-on-the-last-straw-201903060939)

### **Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve Forum Meet – Ladismith 26 February 2019**

"Biodiversity and Bees" presented by self-funded researcher Jenny Cullinan was my favourite. Although bees have been a recurring theme for me to read about over many years, the most important penny of all, only dropped for me as she talked. Captive honeybees are captive! They are not the same as wild honeybees.

"It is an important time in history as insect populations are collapsing with an 80% insect biomass loss globally in the past 25years" – is how she introduces her talk. The main reason for the decimation is the intensive use of agricultural chemicals. Her main area of research has been the Cape Point Nature Reserve where there are 92 wild nests (not all occupied). Our Cape honeybee is unique in the world in its reproductive cycle and the "girl power" adaptation to re-queen the swarm when the queen does not return from her mating flight to the nest (sometimes due to infamously strong Cape winds). Bees are a keystone species. Remove them and a massive collapse follows.



In Germany there are virtually no remaining wild bees. Bees are boxed, industrialized, managed and medicated. They have changed, lost their nature (this cannot be bred back) and the kept bees are not well. Bees only take from nature what they need says Jenny and during Q&A replied that she does not use/buy honey as bees only make what they need for themselves. Hives are built with surplus space in the upper section, in effect forcing the bees to make extra honey, which humans harvest. In Fynbos wild, free bees usually nest in rocks.

Bees in their own nests self-medicate on propolis. This is from resin collected from plants such as buchu – said to be a dedicated task and not pleasant. The bees knead the propolis and wipe themselves down as they come and go about. They maintain a very specific environment in their nests, managing temperature and numerous other creatures (as many as 300 other species!) in a give and take symbiosis, which keeps them healthy and productive.

Bees are 100% reliant on flowers. They are our pollinators, though solitary bees top them by far in efficiency of pollination services. There are nearly 2000 species of solitary bees, they are specialist pollinators. Solitary bees are indicator species, reflecting the health of the environment. It is of vital importance to support small organic farmers in order to retain healthy wild bee populations.

Bees in hives are stressed, unhappy, often unhealthy and prone to compromised immune system challenges. Maintaining wild bee populations is the best option. Herbicides, pesticides and agro chemicals are poisons to bees. To survive, bees need healthy above and below ground eco-systems. We need bees to survive.

There are many fascinating and precious intricacies to bee life which Jenny alluded to, definitely worth knowing about. Following on the CREW principle - a bee guardianship movement, COMB (Caretakers of Melliferous Bees), is now taking off.

Jenny records a bee diary on the UJUbee Facebook page. This is from an article posted on the 2nd Feb 2019: "Wild honeybees require natural nesting sites, something heavily constrained in the Western Cape resulting from intensive land-use and the dependence of the Fynbos biome on fire. Wild honeybees, kept wild and therefore not bred, are a critical resource for biodiversity in South Africa and should truly be protected in all pockets of natural vegetation".

Summary kindly provided by Sandra Falanga, CREW Outramps

### **And before closing – some food for thought**

#### **HUMAN DIET CAUSING 'CATASTROPHIC' DAMAGE TO PLANET: STUDY**

The way humanity produces and eats food must radically change to avoid millions of deaths and "catastrophic" damage to the planet, according to a landmark study published Thursday.

The key to both goals is a dramatic shift in the global diet - roughly half as much sugar and red meat, and twice as many vegetables, fruits and nuts, a consortium of three dozen researchers concluded in *The Lancet*, a medical journal.

"We are in a catastrophic situation," co-author Tim Lang, a professor at the University of London and policy lead for the EAT-Lancet Commission that compiled the 50-page study, told AFP.



**Currently, nearly a billion people are hungry and another two billion are eating too much of the wrong foods, causing epidemics of obesity, heart disease and diabetes.**

Unhealthy diets account for up to 11 million avoidable premature deaths every year, according to the most recent Global Disease Burden report. At the same time the global food system is the single largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the biggest driver of biodiversity loss, and the main cause of deadly algae blooms along coasts and inland waterways.

Agriculture - which has transformed nearly half the planet's land surface - also uses up about 70 percent of the global fresh water supply.

"To have any chance of feeding 10 billion people in 2050 within planetary boundaries" - the limits on Earth's capacity to absorb human activity - "we must adopt a healthy diet, slash food waste, and invest in technologies that reduce environmental impacts," said co-author Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Change Impact Research.

### **Where's the beef?**

"It is doable but it will take nothing less than global agricultural revolution," he told AFP.

The cornerstone of "the great food transformation" called for in the study is a template human diet of about 2500 calories per day.

"We are not saying everyone has to eat in the same way," Lang said by phone. "But broadly - especially in the rich world - it means a reduction of meat and dairy, and a major increase in plant consumption." The diet allows for about seven grammes (a quarter of an ounce) of red meat per day, and up to 14. A typical hamburger patty, by comparison, is 125 to 150 grammes.

For most rich nations, and many emerging ones such as China and Brazil, this would represent a drastic five-to-ten-fold reduction.

Beef is the main culprit. Not only do cattle pass massive quantities of planet-warming methane, huge swathes of carbon-absorbing forests — mostly in Brazil — are cut down every year to make room for them. "For climate, we know that coal is the low-hanging fruit, the dirtiest of fossil fuels," said Rockstrom. "On the food side, the equivalent is grain-fed beef."

It takes at least five kilos of grain to produce a kilo of meat. And once that steak or lamb chop hits the plate, about 30 percent will wind up in the garbage bin.

Dairy is also limited to about one cup (250 grammes) of whole milk - or its equivalent in cheese or yoghurt - per day, and only one or two eggs per week.

### **Pushback**

At the same time, the diet calls for a more than 100 percent increase in legumes such as peas and lentils, along with vegetables, fruits and nuts. Grains are considered to be less healthy sources of nutrients. "We can no longer feed our population a healthy diet while balancing planetary resources," said The Lancet editor-in-chief Richard Horton.



"For the first time in 200,000 years of human history, we are severely out of sync with the planet and Nature."

The report drew heavy fire from the livestock and dairy industry, and some experts.

"It goes to the extreme to create maximum attention, but we must be more responsible when making serious dietary recommendation," said Alexander Anton, secretary general of the European Dairy Association, noting that dairy products are "packed" with nutrients and vitamins.

Christopher Snowdon of the Institute of Economic Affairs in London said the report "reveals the full agenda of nanny-state campaigners." "We expected these attacks," said Lang. "But the same food companies pushing back against these findings realise that they may not have a future if they don't adapt", he said.

"The question is: does this come by crisis, or do we start planning for it now?"

Some multinationals responded positively, if cautiously, to the study.

"We need governments to help accelerate the change by aligning national dietary guidelines with healthy and sustainable requirements, and repurposing agricultural subsidies," the World Business Council for Sustainable Development said in a statement.

[www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/LifeStyle/human-diet-causing-catastrophic-damage-to-planet-study-201901170104](http://www.georgeherald.com/News/Article/LifeStyle/human-diet-causing-catastrophic-damage-to-planet-study-201901170104) Source Marlowe Hood, AFP | Friday, 18 January 2019



Regards, Christine Ridge-Schnauffer

Honorary Secretary WESSA EDEN

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