



# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

PO BOX 442

BERGVLIET 7864

"PEOPLE CARING FOR TOKAI FOREST"

## FROM THE TOADSTOOL

(JOHN GREEN 7121341)

### NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO CARE FOR TOKAI FOREST

**TEA GARDEN IN THE ARBORETUM:** after very careful thought and participation in the planning process, we have supported SAFCOL's application to serve teas in a small area behind the Information Centre.

This provides the opportunity to revamp the information exhibits. These

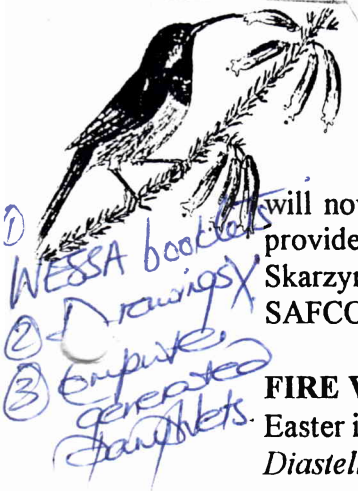
will now be in the classroom, where there is much more light, and outside. It will also provide a place to display and sell pamphlets etc. Jenny Mountain (7947129) and Lesley Skarzynski (7122282) will be delighted to have any assistance as they work with SAFCOL to prepare up to date and appropriate display material and brochures.

**FIRE VS FLORA IN THE LOWER FOREST:** the fire during the devastating South Easter in December took out 2 hectares of pine plantations and all but one of the very rare *Diastella Proteoides* fenced off in the centre of the burnt out area. This area of the 4<sup>th</sup> generation plantation surprisingly is one of the richest remaining remnants of the "Acid Sandveld" which originally covered the valley from Westlake to Constantia. 160 species of fynbos have been identified under the pines in this plantation including some found nowhere else on the Peninsula. SAFCOL have generously offered to forego the commercial salvage of the burnt timber or replanting while we wait to see how the fynbos recovers. We need volunteers to monitor the regeneration and to control the wattle seedlings which will shoot up after the first rains. Please call John or Jenny.

**THE TREES OF THE ARBORETUM:** the last detailed survey recorded over 1500 trees in the Arboretum in 1985. Many of the original giant pines have reached the end of their lives and there is no longer any trace of many of the newer plantings. Capt Michael Fowkes(7124663) has forsaken his ocean charts and has made great progress identifying surviving trees. We are now ready to relabel major trees and draw up visitor information as well as identify priority areas for replanting and controlling invasive growth. We are sure that many of you would really enjoy working in the tranquil arboretum and learning about trees. Neither Michael nor I knew one tree from another when we started.

**CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT IN THE ARBORETUM:** more about last year's event later, but Gerry Higgs(7124176), who conceived the event and made it happen, needs assistance this year. Please give one of us a call if you would like to get involved. We have a wonderful setting and successful formula. All we need to do now is to repeat it without losing the atmosphere by getting too big.

**WATTLE INVASION IN LOWER FOREST:** Les Keith(7129859) leads the never ending mission of pulling out young wattles in the Lower Forest before they need to be hacked and poisoned. We meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday at 8h30 at the main parking area in Orpen Rd. Please join us for an hour or so or pull up wattles while walking your dogs.



**WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF SA**  
*People caring for the Earth*

*Two of the Primary Goals of the Friends of Tokai Forest are:  
"To Develop an Awareness of the Species & Habitats of the Area and  
To Conserve for the Benefit of Present & Future Generations"*



## THE FLORA OF TOKAI & BERGVLIET

Sibyl Morris(7124250) reported in November, before the fire, that all but one of the 9 *Diastellas* appeared healthy and had grown well over the last six months. The bad news is that all but one were destroyed by the fire. The good news is that she has discovered another one near Elizabeth Close.

She wonders how many of you noticed the spectacular display of *Moraea fujax* next to Orpen Rd in October? There must have been hundreds of them. This is the bright yellow species with an exceptionally long trailing leaf up to 1,5 metres in length. Unfortunately, as the name reveals (*fujax* = fleeting in Latin), the flowers last only a few hours. Other interesting sights (all geophytes: ie plants with an underground food storage organ e.g. bulb, corm, rhizome or tuber) have been *Moraea angusta* (pale yellow or sometimes grey blue iris), *Satyrrium candidum* (a tall white orchid), *Hesperantha radiata* (aandblom or night blooming geophyte), *Hexaglottis Lewisiae* (with a bright yellow flower), *Lapeirousia corymbosa* (with an exquisite deep blue flower), and *Geissorhiza hispidula* (with a small yellow flower). Sibyl writes that this plant was identified for me by the world authority on Iridaceae, Dr Peter Goldblatt, who remarked "You seem to have some very interesting plants in your forest!" All of these were found in the lower forest and a number are featured on the informative photo exhibits displayed there).

Between 1915 and his death in 1919, William Frederick Purcell, enumerated 595 species of indigenous plants on his farm *Bergvliet* which then covered 343 hectares, from Heathfield Main Rd to Firgrove and Kreupelbosch to Strawberry Hill. This area was only 0,7% of the Peninsula but included 26,4% of its flora! Sibyl has recorded over 160 species in the Lower Forest alone and this "Acid Sandveld" (dominated by Tertiary to Recent sands) is now all but covered by urban sprawl and ploughed fields.

We thus find ourselves as the current environmental stewards of an extremely rare habitat and highly endangered species. We have 2 hectares of burnt out plantation which was rich in flora species to monitor and maintain. We have a few experts, some excellent old and new records and of course Sibyl's photographs, and very few hands to do the job. What a wonderful opportunity "to care for the earth" in a really meaningful way right on our doorstep. Please give us a call.



You need not be a flower fundi to enjoy observing the nature in our surprising forest. We have recorded some 17 raptor species, including owls. The Black Sparrowhawks nested successfully again this year in the "dog forest" (near the rope swing), and fed 30 of my ducklings to their offspring! Sibyl says that a *Gymnogene* is currently active in the "picnic forest".

**WALKS & ACTIVITIES:** Gerry Higgs (7124176) excelled in the organisation of many activities last year. In addition to her and Peter's walks, on the last Sunday of each month, the **Mushroom Pickin'n Cookin'** with Dr Nicky Allsop and Carols by **Candlelight** in the Arboretum proved to be incredibly popular. We will definitely repeat these events this year and, hopefully, be better prepared to handle much larger numbers than generally attend our functions. Gerry's current diary of walks through to mid-year is:

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Feb A Rock- Pool-Ramble**

Meet 8am Arboretum & Return approx 2pm. Walk from Muizenberg to Fish Hoek along the sea-edge. Fresh fish at Kalk Bay? Swim in tidal pools? 12kms.

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Mar Silvermine Dam to Noordhoek Peak**

Meet at Arboretum at 8am or at Dam at 8.30. Walk to Noordhoek Peak.

Optional braai at Dam afterwards. Grids and Fire provided.

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Apr Eat your heart out Alladin**

A circuit walk of great variety. Caves, Forests, Proteas, Views and the Amphitheatre.

**Sunday 30 May Mushroom Pickin'n Cookin'**

9am Arboretum. With Fungi fundi Nicky

Bring basket & knife for collecting & gas stove for cooking

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June The Princess' Waterfall**

Visit the coy Khoi maiden's cave and the 3 tiered waterfall from her tears.



**FRIENDS GETOGETHER IN THE NEW TEA GARDEN:**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April 1999**

3pm Arboretum Information Centre. Discuss the survey of the trees & the new plantings.

Walk the self-guided ecology trail.

Consider the exhibits and discuss how we can improve them.

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June World Environment Day**

3pm Arboretum. Detail later

**WEEDING WATTLES & CARING FOR LOWER FOREST:**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month 8h30 to 10.30**

Meet at Main Parking Area or follow river to farm bridge

20 March, 17 April, 15 May, 19 June



**Your Forest needs You!**

**CONTACTS**



CHAIRMAN	:	John Green	7121341
SECRETARY		Lesley Skarzynski	7122282
TREASURER		Rudi Skibbe	7127653
ALIENS		Les Keith	7129859
WALKS		Geraldine Higgs	7124176
HABITAT		Jenny Mountain	7947129-
EDUCATION		Fadiah Abbas	7134989
MEMBERSHIP		Michael Fowkes	7124663

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# THE TOKAI ARBORETUM

**THE ARBORETUM AS AN EDUCATION RESOURCE:** In 1996, we worked with others to come up with a new vision for the Arboretum which had accomplished its original mission to research and develop suitable trees for commercial forestry and dry agricultural areas. We agreed that we should "Maintain the Tokai Arboretum as a National Monument and provide an education and recreational resource by preserving, growing, and displaying forest trees." Subsequent steps towards achieving this vision have included networking with the NBI (resulting in Teacher Workshops and the Southern Hemisphere / Gondwana theme); a detailed survey of the current state of individual trees; some replanting; research of historical records to develop appropriate material for display in the Information Centre; and preparation of educational trail guides.



**CIRCULAR WALK/ SELF- GUIDED TRAIL:** Last year we developed a self- guided trail for school children which was curriculum- based as well as covering some broader conservation issues. The trail follows the "Circular Walk" and many hundreds of school children were brought to the Arboretum by their teachers who had been made aware of Tokai's education potential. We felt that, whilst curriculum- based information and worksheets was very valuable, the environment lends itself to experiential learning about so many more conservation issues such as over- population, the value of water as a vital resource, the importance to our environment of forests and their eco- systems.

**BROCHURE FOR ALL ARBORETUM VISITORS:** We have thus remodeled the educational information and prepared a brochure for all visitors. This will shortly be available from the Information Centre and will give the history of the Arboretum and some interesting facts about the area along the trail. We hope that this will make a visit to the Arboretum more meaningful. However this is not the ultimate document and Jenny and Lesley will appreciate your feedback.

**TEA GARDEN & INFORMATION CENTRE:** The revamp of the exhibition room and approval process of SAFCOL's proposed tearoom are nearing completion. You may have noticed that most of the old exhibition material has been moved from the dark central room, which is being converted to serve light refreshments to a tea garden area behind the Information Centre. SAFCOL will be responsible for developing appropriate outdoor exhibits around the Centre and they have asked us to manage the process of developing a more modern and interesting internal display.

**DEVELOPING NEW EXHIBITS:** We need to review the existing material and create new permanent and temporary material. As many as possible of the old display boards, which are very well made, will be permanently mounted on the walls of the classroom, with possibly a couple in the tearoom. The concertina display boards in the centre of the room will be temporary displays which can be easily moved when we need to use the meeting room. This is a wonderfully exciting challenge and we welcome anyone with specialist interests and/ or artistic talents or just enthusiastic amateurs like ourselves to become part of the team. We can draw on expertise from the NBI, WESSA, SA Museum, and others as necessary. Phone Jenny, Lesley, or John for more information.

light boxes  
insects.  
light boxes  
leaves/fruit  
of diff trees.  
light boxes  
of fungus  
placed on an  
angle

get out  
a nice  
brochure  
& present  
to Lesley.

