



# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

P O Box 442 Bergvliet 7804



WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF SA

NEWSLETTER NO 11

MAY 1999

## FROM THE TOADSTOOL

(JOHN GREEN 7121341)

The urgent need for personal involvement in caring for the forest, which creates much of the environment in which we live, is highlighted by:

- The two attacks in the popular Lower Forest have resulted in many people being too afraid to walk alone there any more. Individually, we must find ways to manage this threat and repossess our space; the alternative is to retreat further behind security fences and give up the very reason why we live in this "Fairest Cape in all the circumference of the globe".
- SAFCOL, the current steward of the Tokai and Cecilia Forests as well as the Arboretum, has now started the process of inviting tenders for the old Dept of Forestry plantations and assets throughout the country. Our area is part of the Boland Region, the smallest of the seven regions which are available for commercial bids. SAFCOL have stated that they will not consider bids for any portion smaller than a region. The local community must establish a strong stewardship presence to have a stake to ensure that future commercial managers of the area respect our community rights and the interests of the natural environment.
- The fierce ongoing contest for political power in the Western Cape, is complicating the essential process of identifying and managing a future integrated planning vision for the forest area and three reformatories. All future developments must be assessed in the context of the urban fringe of the Cape Peninsula National Park and the scenic importance Constantia Valley and **be subject to strict Environmental Impact Assessment in the scoping stage.** We have a major responsibility as the affected local community to be watchdogs over our environment and to grab every opportunity to get involved in the planning process.

**TEA GARDEN IN THE ARBORETUM:** "Lister's Place", named after the original Cape Conservator of Forests, is now open for teas everyday except on Mondays. Daleen Botes is collecting old books, pictures and articles of interest about the early days of forestry and information about trees. She will have these available in the tearoom for perusal over a cuppa. I recently found a most informative article in the NBI Kirstenbosch Library published in South African Journal of Science Vol 26 1929 "Exotic Trees of the Cape Peninsula" by GA Zahn. He was the forester in charge of Tokai at the time and we have found a memorial to him on one of the rocks near the Information Centre. We will put a photocopy in the tearoom and would love to get an original. Also there are excellent reference works such as RJ Poynton's Eucalypts in South Africa, and other articles which may be gathering dust in attics or unused bookshelves. Do you know of anyone with possible items which they would like to put on loan in "Lister's Place".



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**"OUR MISSION: PEOPLE CARING FOR TOKAI FOREST"**

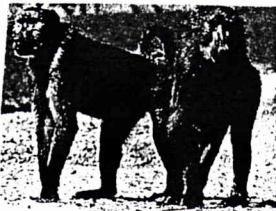




**RE-CREATING THE FLORA OF GONDWANA:** the March edition of the Botanical Society's Journal "Veld & Flora" has an article about how we are trying to rejuvenate the old Tokai Arboretum. A copy of the article is attached for your interest. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the National Botanical Institute (Anthony Hitchcock and Fiona Possoy, on the horticultural side, and Ally Ashwell and Wendy Hitchcock, on the educational side) for all the help and encouragement they have given us rank amateurs in our attempts to care for our tranquil forest retreat. Regrettably, the last month of our long hot summer took a terrible toll on many of our new trees and the drying up of the river and water supply precluded watering at the critical time.

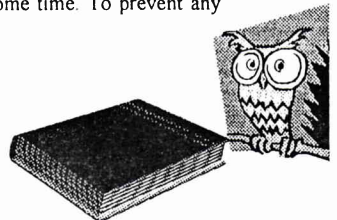
**BUILDING & REPAIRING BRIDGES:** with the help of a SAFCOL team, chain saw and old drag- pulley, we have rebuilt one of our bridges over the stream in the Lower Plantation and repaired the other before the rainy season. Unless the stream- bed is now cleared of debris and the old farm bridge repaired by SAFCOL we can expect flooding as soon as the rains start in earnest. Anything that you can do to clear the odd branch out of the river or to discourage children from putting more debris in will help. Our next task is to repair the bridge over the wetland in the Arboretum. The huge log supports over the bed are now rotting away and will be very difficult to replace. We will therefor do a temporary repair to buy a few more years of use.

**WATTLE INVASION IN LOWER FOREST:** Les Keith(7129859) leads the never ending mission of pulling up 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 and are concentrating on keeping the area alongside the Prinskasteel River as alien-free as possible. Please join us for an hour or so or pull up wattles while walking your dogs.



**THE BABOONS OF TOKAI:** In 1962 Jose Burman, in his book "Safe to the Sea", wrote "The main source of the Prinskasteel is the plateau on Constantiaberg which is (or was the last time I saw it,) the haunt of a troop of baboons." Last Saturday, while relabelling trees in the Arboretum with Capt Michael Fowkes, we had the wonderful experience of being right among some 100 of their descendants, many of which were very young infants. Totally unconcerned, the baboons continued grubbing at the base of trees a couple of metres from where we worked. We even changed a label from a ladder without knowing that 3 youngsters could have touched us from the branches above! Long may man and the natural creatures of our forest be able to live in such harmony.

**PRINS OR PRINCESS' KASTEEL?** Burman also relates legends from early slaves and herders that a Khoi chieftainess, who dwelt in the Constantia Valley, had her eyrie in the great cave now known as Elephant's Eye. She was reputedly abducted by passing Portuguese sailors while bathing in Princess Vlei. The legend claims that it is her tears which feed the "Prinskasteel"river. Burman learnt from Dr Purcell of Kreupelbos that the cave had been a large one with a shaft and passages at the rear. During the 1920's an escaped convict took shelter there and evaded capture for some time. To prevent any recurrence, the authorities closed the shaft.



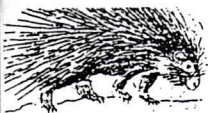
**NEW EXHIBITS FOR THE EXHIBITION CENTRE:** Now that we have remounted the old displays in the classroom, we need to replace some of the outdated material. New displays will include the "Raptors of Tokai" and Callan Cohen from the Fitzpatrick Institute and the renowned bird photographer, Peter Steyn have this in hand. We are discussing the "Early Inhabitants of the Southern Peninsula" with Gerald Klinghardt of the SA Museum and Jenny Mountain and Sibyl Morris will tackle the "Flora of the Acid Sandveld". Michael Fowkes is redoing the detailed tree map of the Arboretum and will be pressing the different types of oakleaves and collecting the different acorns for display. Lesley Skarzynski will be making plaster casts and painting models of the "Fungi of the Forest". Anthony Hitchcock has plenty of information for a "Trees of Gondwana" display. We are looking for interesting artifacts to mount on the pillars between the windows in the exhibition and meeting room. We have lots of ideas and contacts but need willing hands to make things happen. We welcome anyone with specialist interests and/or artistic talents or just enthusiastic amateurs like ourselves to become part of the team. Please give us a call.

**VISIT BY FRIENDS OF LIESBEECK:** Liz Wheeler and her Friend's Group will be visiting us on **15<sup>th</sup> May at 9h30**. They will meet us at the main parking area in Orpen Rd and have a look at our bridges, riverbank stabilisation, and plans for the burnt out area. We will then move to the Arboretum to look at the new self-guided "Oakleaf Trail" and plans for revamping the Information Centre and follow this with a cuppa in Lister's Place. We welcome our own "Friends" to join in, or even better, to pull a couple of wattles in the Lower Forest before hand.

**ARBORETUM GETOGETHER ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY:** **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June** meet in the Arboretum for a stroll along the Oakleaf Trail, talk about the Information Displays and have a cup of tea or snacks and wine in Lister's Place while perusing some of the old documents that we are slowly getting together. Suggestions as to how we can improve our caring for Tokai Forest are always welcome and active Friends even more so!



*"Hey! Was that you clowning around with that bird-call thing?"*



## FROM THE FOREST FLOOR

Jenny Mountain Tel: 794.7129

Fax: 794.7850

Lesley Skarzynski Tel: 72.2282

WESSA held a Western Cape Friends Workshop at the Barn attended by representatives of Friends Groups from as far afield as Paarl and Bot River. At least 50 people enjoyed a most fulfilling and thought-provoking day. We were addressed by three speakers.

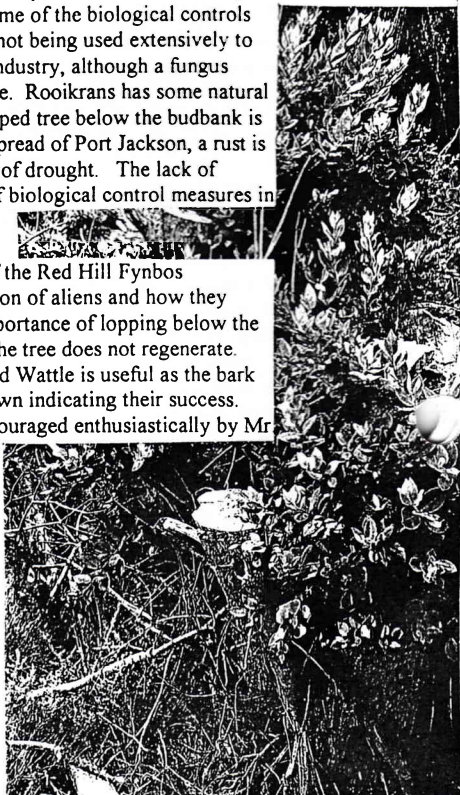
**Mr. Frank Raymond:** an Environmental Attorney, gave us information on addressing our rights as citizens when a development, which we perceive as environmentally sensitive, is planned. He explained the planning institutions through which new developments are channeled, the lines of authority and the bureaucratic processes involved.

**Mr. Alan Wood:** a Plant Pathologist from the Plant Protection Research Institute in Stellenbosch, spoke about Biological control of alien weeds. We learnt that a seedbank, of 200,000 alien seeds, can be found covering an area of one square metre of ground! Biological control is seen as a long-term suppression of alien vegetation: viz. wasps laying eggs in the flowerbud and weevils eating the seeds of *Acacia longifolia* for example. Weevils eating the buds of *Sesbania*. Moths eating mature seeds and weevils eating the immature seeds of the *Hakea* plant as well as a variety of fungi injected into the bark of alien trees. These are some of the biological controls being used today. We heard how biological control is not being used extensively to control the Black Wattle because of its importance to industry, although a fungus mixed with cooking oil can be applied to a chopped tree. Rooikrans has some natural fungi which kills the crown, but garlon applied to a lopped tree below the budbank is very effective in controlling this alien. To control the spread of Port Jackson, a rust is used which lives on the galls. The tree eventually dies of drought. The lack of funding today is a limiting factor in the development of biological control measures in South Africa.

The third speaker, **Mr. Jeremy Croudace**, manager of the Red Hill Fynbos Restoration Project, spoke on the Mechanical Eradication of aliens and how they survive clearing efforts. Mr. Croudace stressed the importance of lopping below the budbank of the species which coppice, to ensure that the tree does not regenerate. Ringbarking some of the species such as the long-leaved Wattle is useful as the bark peels off very easily. Before-and-after slides were shown indicating their success. We certainly laud the efforts of this group who are encouraged enthusiastically by Mr. Croudace.

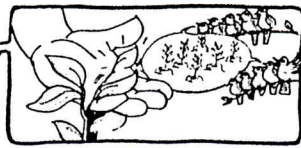
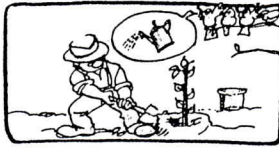
As far as the Circular Walk "The Oak Leaf Trail" in the Arboretum is concerned, this is now complete. Informative pamphlets can be obtained from Lister's Tea Room in the Arboretum. Follow the yellow painted numerical Oak Leaves!

HOW DOES THE  
GALL-WASP HELP  
CONTROL THE  
SPREAD OF LONG-  
LEAVED WATTLE?



Pohutukawa re-sprouts vigorously from stumps making the clearing of trees difficult and expensive. Every effort should be



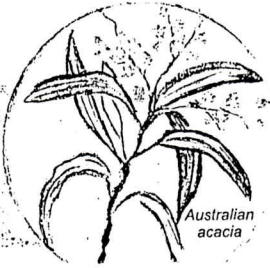


**FROM THE ROOT**

Les Keith Tel: 72.9859

**Aliens:**

Forests of Australian acacia (wattle) trees were planted 100 years ago to stabilise drifting sand on the Cape Flats. Acacia are now serious pests.



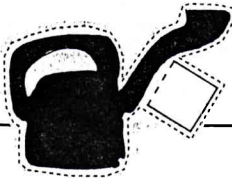
Australian acacia

SAFCOL have spent a number of days in the Lower forest trying to eradicating the long-leaved Wattle (Australian Acacia) and the Black Wattle (Acacia Mearnsii). A formidable job indeed. The Black Wattle was brought in originally For commercial reasons for its tanning bark. They are now serious pests.

If **one** person pulled out say five a day....  
..... that would be 35 a week  
And if **two** people pulled out five a day...  
..... that would be 70 a week.  
Now, if **five** people pulled out **five** a day.....  
**That** would be an eradication programme!

**Work Parties: 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday 8.30 a.m. Orpen Rd. entrance.**

**Help!:**



We are looking for a small (12volt?) pump with a small (30ml?) outlet to help us water saplings (planted on the river banks) during the increasingly lengthening dry periods.

**FROM THE PINECONE - MEMBERSHIP- Michael Fowkes Tel: 712.4663**

Annual membership subscriptions are now due for the year July 1999 to June 2000. Enclosed with this newsletter is a **Membership / Renewal Form**. ( New members joining in the first half, ie July to December 1998, renewal subs are due in June 1999. After December 1998, renewal will be June 2000). Subscriptions may be posted to **The Treasurer, Friends of Tokai Forest, PO Box 442, Bergvliet 7864 or handed to any Committee Member.**

The Membership Form has a space for you to record your interests and we would be delighted if you would like to become involved in any way.

**Michael** has undertaken a mammoth job of surveying the Arboretum, which has kept him busy for the best part of a year, and he reports as follows:

**Arboretum Survey:** A check of the present "Tree Plan" (posted in the Information Centre) was started in July 1998 with the intention of establishing where the main tree families are situated; where trees have died and/or fallen; and areas best suited for replanting.

To establish a system of identity, it was found necessary to tag each tree with the old Dept. of Forestry numbers. (This will explain the white tags that have appeared on the trees in past months and mystified many of the regular users of the Arboretum – including the baboons who I suspect were removing some of the lower tags as quickly as I was attaching them.)

Many of the trees have a descriptive plaque with the scientific name, the common name and a number. (This number does not conform to the plan index and refers, probably to a S>A> Tree or International Tree Index.)

This exercise is almost complete and it is hoped that the updated plan will form ground work for a number of ideas developing to generate increased interest and enjoyment of the Arboretum.

Some examples to look for when doing the circular walk:

**The Algerian Oak** (*Quercus canariensis*)

**The (stately) English Oak** (*Quercus robur*)

**The Cork Oak** (*Quercus Suber*) (also found along the banks of the lower forest river)

**Observing & Recording Trees:** Is not only an enjoyable activity it makes interesting reading at a later date. Choose half a dozen favourite trees close to where you live or work. Visit each one several times during the four seasons and build up a fact file that records their special features at different times of the year. Make bark Impressions capturing its diverse patterns and textures by placing a piece of paper flat to the surface of the trunk and rubbing it lightly with a wax crayon. Label your rubbing with the date, the trees name and its location.

"In the company of flowers we know happiness  
In the company of trees we are able to think,  
they foster meditation."

"The wood is not just a place to walk through,  
a tunnel of beauty to pass through  
It is a cathedral, a place for silent contemplation  
And the observation of the charm of nature."



Do diarize our Walks – the Brochure is included in this newsletter – and/or give it to a friend. We have had some exciting walks sofar, with more to follow for the year. Last month saw us leave from Kalk Bay, over the saddle between the low, dome-shaped mountain of Trappieskop on our left and Kalk Bay Mountain on our right, to explore the caves. The views from this point were stunning. Lovely Clovelly below, the Atlantic shoreline in the distance, the little harbour and the majestic blue sweep of False Bay. And wonderful crisp, clear blue skies that were a bonus for photography. Lower Aladdin's cave was explored by the bravehearts with torches. We saw King Proteas. We failed to find Devil's Pit, possibly very overgrown. We walked into Echo Valley, a double-ended valley, through which the path runs the full length. Into the Amphitheatre, a rock-surrounded bowl and down into the Amazon Forest full of indigenous trees. Lots of yellowwoods. Over a pleasant little stream and stop for a "doggy drink" and onto Weary Willies. (To find out what *this* is you will have to come with us next year!)

The next walk traces the legend of Elephant's Eye. All are welcome. Including children. Unfortunately, no dogs.

Don't miss the ever popular Mushroom Pickin-'n-Cookin' in June. Come early to get a good seat. Starts 9.00 a.m. with Dr. Nicki Alsop. Lots of fun for the children who will enjoy the hunting for and collecting of the fungi. Bring rubber gloves for the poisonous ones! And a knife for cutting them instead of pulling them out of the ground and damaging the spore runs.

See you at the Arboretum (meeting place) 8.00 a.m's (generally) or refer to brochure for time change and what to bring.

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## !!!!!! URGENT REQUEST !!!!!!

### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT PORTFOLIO

We are urgently looking for someone to take over this portfolio for year end highly successful event in the Arboretum. Are you that person?

Please telephone GERRY on (h) 72 4176 or (o) 61 7076 or (fax) 61 5667 or  
e-mail [higgs@dockside.co.za](mailto:higgs@dockside.co.za)

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## AN ODE TO AN OWL

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The vibrant colours of the day begin to fade. The dappled hues of pinks and blues begin to cream themselves over the sky as the sun makes its final decent for the day. The Mountain Chat does his rounds calling noisily from the tree “vheck-your windows-vheck your doors.” The Hadedas announce loudly their coming to roost. Dusk begins to fall.

“Whoo-who” as the night takes on the gentleness and protectiveness of its black coat. You are lucky. You have heard an owl.

Is it because they have been regarded as omens by those less knowing? Have they been hunted? Killed to near extinction? Does the appearance of one on ones roof still hold the spell of death of a beloved family member and are tales of the night still woven around the central figure – the owl.

So much misery heaped upon such a wise creature.

Or is it the abundant use of rodenticides and insecticides that have caused their demise?

**Spotted Eagle Owls** are the most common in our urban areas. Using indirect indicators to find them is the best solution to “owl hunting”. Owls, especially Spotted Eagle Owls, are heavily mobbed by smaller birds. During the day owls normally sleep in well secluded and thickly covered roosts where the smaller feathered ones leave them to their peaceful sleep. Late afternoon, however, when the wise old birds emerge, small birds cash in on the opportunity to give the rat-hunters a hard time. Birds dashing in and out of thick cover with their alarm calls at an absolute peak, generally indicate the presence of an owl. The Black-eyed Bulbul is a common fellow that never fails to locate an owl in the garden. With tails flicking, crests fully raised and an excitable “peed-peed-peedly-oo” they announce their find to the entire bird world. The Cape Robin may discuss policies to chase the owl out while the nimble Cape White-Eye with his beautiful white occipital ring gathers all his mates to pester the poor fellow.

Calling starts at dusk with a deep disyllabic call from the males and trisyllabic calls from the females. The nature and pitch vary greatly depending on the region, the season and the reason. Duets are often heard, but seem to bore noticeable after midnight and before dawn. Owlets, utter very loud “sheezing” calls.

It is very important for the observer to notice that baby owls are totally unaware of the dangers posed by human beings. Bill-clicking is about the only defensive mechanism the young have and people often think such baby owls are abandoned by the parents, especially when they have been





nested and reared on the ground, which is quite common. Best to leave them undisturbed as the parents will definitely come back. Take care. Respect the parents' approach. This can be quite ferocious. Anything that resembles danger they will swoop down for the attack, quite fearlessly, with outstretched talons as sharp as daggers.

Attracting owls to the garden is not easy. They are fairly territorial and are loathe to venture out of their territory. It is however advisable to provide them with a suitable nesting box, made out of simple wooden planks. The basis should be 500 x 500 mm with three sides 400 mm high. Leave the one side uncovered as an entrance and fit a roof to the top to provide shelter against rainy conditions. Place the nesting box in a well covered tree facing southeast at least 4 metres high. Owls are not attracted by food. Don't waste your time.

They prey on a wide variety of insects, birds, mammals and reptiles. Garden birds such as doves feature high on their dietary preference and the rat and mouse hardly fail to escape their talons. 'Spotties' cash in on frogs that are attracted by insects around street lights. Beetles and crickets will also do. It is rather comical to observe a 'Spottie' trotting after fast running beetles in the road. But, sadly, they do fall prey to oncoming cars in their endeavours.

Owls are extremely useful birds, apart from their natural beauty and splendour. They adapt very well to urban conditions and will stay in their territories for years if undisturbed. Find them, enjoy them and protect these free roaming rat and mouse hunters for future generations to come.

**Do be more careful about the use of rodenticides.** Remember, there is a beginning and an end to all things. The small birds rely on the caterpillars and worms. The bigger birds rely on the smaller birds and the rodents. If they have been poisoned, the entire processing breaks down and dies. The only thing that doesn't, is the poison, which has a horrible habit of hanging around for years and years and years.....

I'd rather see the owls.

#### **Help us to conserve.**

A non-invasive yet highly efficient poison (**Racumin**) for rats and mice, which breaks down before it becomes part of the food chain is obtainable from:

**Safcol Forestry :** Tel: 712.7471

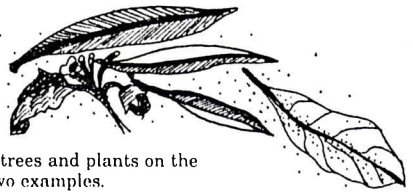
**Chemist :** Tel: 61.7076

**Bayer Chemicals:** Tel: 511.2191

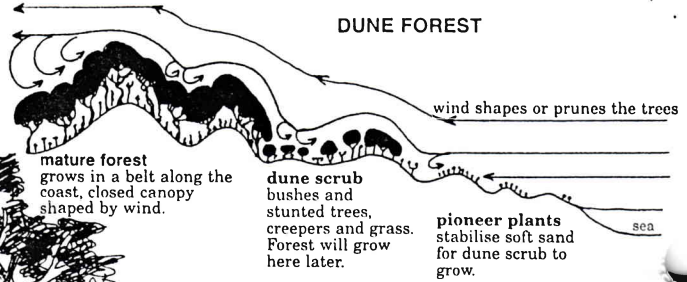
**Dr. Gehard Verdoorn:** Tel: 011- 888.4677

# HOW FORESTS WORK

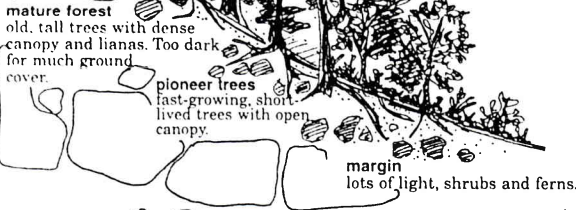
by Sally Argent & artwork by Jenni Hunt



The previous page showed how we can recognise three layers or storeys in a forest (vertical structure). Forests also change as we walk through them, and have different trees and plants on the edges and in the centre (horizontal structure). Here are two examples.



## AFROMONTANE FOREST

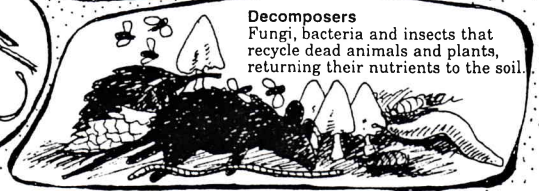
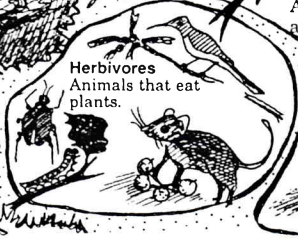
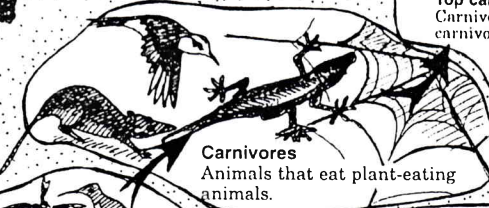
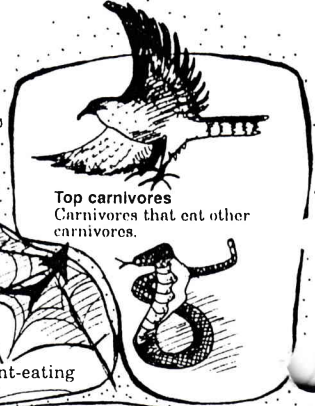
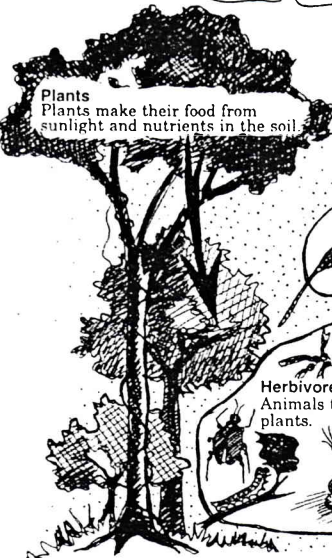


## Growing forests

Forests change as they grow. Pioneer trees are gradually replaced by forest trees which grow to form a mature forest that can live for hundreds of years. These changes are called succession.

## FOREST FOOD CHAINS

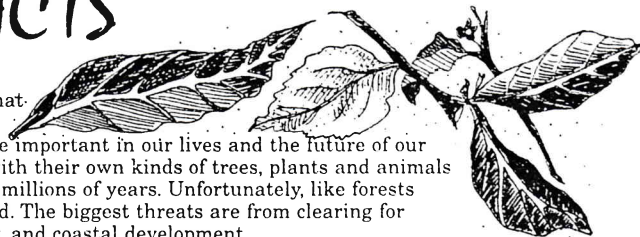
In a forest each plant and animal has its particular place to live (habitat) and job to do. The animals and plants form a food chain and are dependent on each other.



# FOREST FACTS

by Sally Argent & artwork by Jenni Hunt

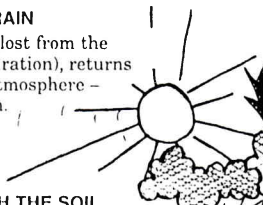
South African forests are so small that they are not marked on most forest maps of the world. However, they are important in our lives and the future of our planet. African forests are unique, with their own kinds of trees, plants and animals which have developed together over millions of years. Unfortunately, like forests everywhere, they are being destroyed. The biggest threats are from clearing for agriculture and subsistence farming, and coastal development.



## TEN REASONS FOR SAVING FORESTS

### THEY MAKE RAIN

Water vapour, lost from the leaves (transpiration), returns water to the atmosphere - our future rain.



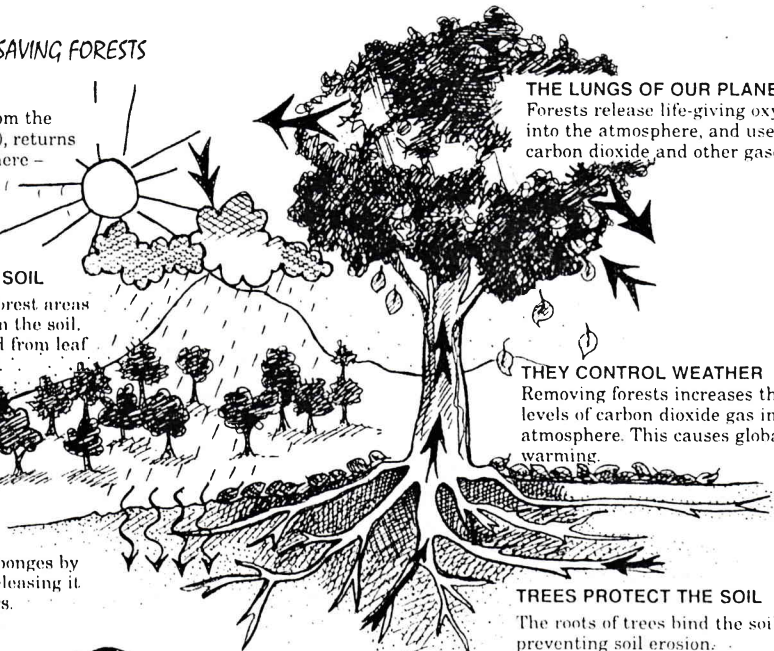
### TREES ENRICH THE SOIL

The high rainfall in forest areas washes nutrients from the soil. These are replenished from leaf litter and fallen trees.



### A GIANT SPONGE

Forests act as huge sponges by absorbing rain and releasing it slowly back into rivers.



### THE LUNGS OF OUR PLANET

Forests release life-giving oxygen into the atmosphere, and use up carbon dioxide and other gases.

### THEY CONTROL WEATHER

Removing forests increases the levels of carbon dioxide gas in our atmosphere. This causes global warming.

### TREES PROTECT THE SOIL

The roots of trees bind the soil, preventing soil erosion.

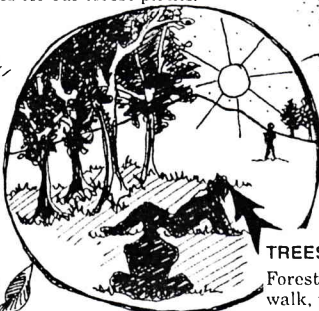
### FORESTS PROVIDE MEDICINES

Aspirin (painkiller) and quinine (for malaria) come from trees. There are still many undiscovered medicinal uses for our forest plants.



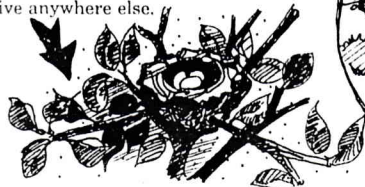
### FORESTS PROVIDE HOMES

Trees provide food and shelter for many animals that are unable to live anywhere else.



### USEFUL MATERIALS

Forests provide people with wood for houses and furniture, fuel, paper and chemicals.



### TREES ENRICH OUR LIVES

Forests provide us with shady places to walk, picnic spots, peace and beauty.



# RE-CREATING THE FLORA OF GONDWANA

The Friends of Tokai Forest rejuvenate the old Tokai Arboretum.

by Claire Attwood

The Tokai Arboretum, on the slopes of the Constantiaberg, provides a tranquil retreat from the traffic and congestion of central Cape Town. Few visitors guess that many of the lofty eucalyptus, pines and yellowwoods that make up this charming forest are well over 100 years old. Most of the 1 500 trees in the Tokai Arboretum were brought to South Africa around 1885 by Joseph Storr Lister, the chief conservator of forests for the Cape Colony, who had orders to identify trees that would be suitable for commercial forestry in South Africa. Having moved here from India, Lister did something that no other colonial forester had done; and began planting trees that originated in India and other regions that had once formed part of the ancient southern supercontinent, Gondwana. Unwittingly he laid the foundations for twentieth century horticulturists to create an arboretum with a unique theme - Gondwana.

Gondwana (the Southern Hemisphere supercontinent that held the continents of South America, Africa, Antarctica and Australia and included Madagascar, New Zealand, India, Turkey and Arabia more than 180 million years ago) is named after a region in northern India where the discovery of a rock series proved the common origin of the southern continents. When the supercontinent began to break up and the continents started to drift apart, they took with them plantlife with a common ancestry, but which evolved over time according to the changing climates. Many of Gondwana's original plants have since become extinct, but there are still a number that survive and show the link between the continents.

The climate of Gondwana would have been very different to the typically warm, dry weather that we experience in southern Africa today. Temperatures and humidity would have been high and even Antarctica would have been covered by dense rain forest. Pollen records have shown that Southern Hemisphere beech trees (of the *Nothofagus* family) originated in Antarctica.

The dream of recreating the vegetation of Gondwana in the Tokai Arboretum has been undertaken by the Friends of Tokai Forest, a group of volunteers affiliated to the Wildlife and Environment Society. The 'friends' are working with Anthony Hitchcock of the National Botanical Institute (NBI), who has been propagating Southern Hemisphere plant species in the hopes of finding an appropriate site to create a Gondwana arboretum and depict South Africa's ancient

most primitive plant families in the world and will be selected from families such as the Proteaceae (proteas), Araucariaceae (monkey puzzle trees) and species of yellowwood, *Podocarpus*. Anthony hopes that in the long term tree ferns and cycads will be planted too in order to create the desired atmosphere of a primeval forest, as cycads are represented on all the continents that once formed Gondwana.

Another valuable species that might eventually find its way to Tokai Arboretum is the Wollemia pine from Eastern Australia. *Wollemia nobilis* is a very rare and ancient relic tree belonging to the monkey puzzle family, Araucariaceae. It was first discovered only four years ago, and about forty of them are thought to exist today. Horticulturists at the Sydney Botanical Gardens have set about propagating the species and Anthony has already requested that one of these trees be reserved for the Gondwana Arboretum at Tokai.

The arboretum is already acknowledged as a valuable educational resource. The Friends of Tokai Forest, under the direction of the chairman, John Green, conduct regular tours of the forest for children from the Cape Flats, many of whom have little experience of the natural environment. Land-owners, SAFCOL, are assisting the friends by transporting school groups to and from the arboretum.

But is there a threat to Cape Peninsula National Park's precious indigenous vegetation? Naturally the Friends are aware of the dangers of introducing alien species that might become invasive, and all exotic specimens planted in the arboretum will be carefully monitored. If they show signs of spreading they will be removed.

Already the Tokai Forest is a favourite destination for mountain bikers, horse riders and walkers, and the creation of the Gondwana Arboretum will make this valuable recreational and educational resource a unique part of the Cape Peninsula National Park, where Capetonians and visitors can discover more about our continent's past. ☺



John Green (left) of Friends of the Tokai Forest and Anthony Hitchcock of the NBI with a monkey puzzle tree that will one day stand at the entrance to the Tokai Arboretum. Photo: C. Attwood.

floral heritage and its relationship with other Southern Hemisphere vegetations.

A complete census of the trees in the area was taken. Fortunately some of the trees are numbered and an outdated chart, which lists the species in the arboretum, has assisted the Friends of Tokai Forest to identify which trees are still standing. Many families of trees, it was discovered, are already grouped together in the Arboretum, for instance, there is a large stand of yellowwoods with specimens from various regions of southern Africa and South America.

Anthony explains that the new trees will come from some of the