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Friends of Tokai Forest



Newsletter No. 7 January, 1998

P. O. BOX 442, BERGVLIET 7864



FROM THE TOADSTOOL - JOHN GREEN

I must apologise for the long lapse since our August newsletter. Our physical activities in the forest have been fairly dormant during the exceptionally dry late Spring and year end holiday periods. Behind the scenes, however, there has been plenty of activity and the new committee has planned a full year for 1998. We are also involved in the process of creating the new "CAPE PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK"; the environmental issues flowing from proposed new developments at WESTLAKE; and PORTER TRUST lands; and the future of the TOKAI and CECILIA plantations.

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You are cordially invited to a

Gettogether on February 14

Stroll in the Arboretum, Prinseskasteel & the Redwoods

Bring & Braai with Other Friends

3pm to 5pm Stroll & chat in the Arboretum & walk up the river to the redwoods

*5pm to 7pm Bring & Braai behind the Information Centre
(Fires provided; bring own refreshments, rugs and/or chairs)*

Other Friends Groups are also invited. An enjoyable opportunity for old and young to regenerate the soul in our special forest environment.

RSVP to Lesley 72.2282

(to give us some idea of numbers - or just pitch up with your family and potential Friends.)

FROM THE TOADSTOOL Continued ...

We understand that Cabinet has now made a decision about the future of TOKAI & CECILIA Plantations. SAFCOL will continue to have management responsibility and custodianship of the defined area of the plantations but ownership will continue to vest with the State. SAFCOL and the SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS are planning to hold a workshop with Municipalities and other interested parties (including the Tokai Residents Association and Friends of Tokai Forest) to discuss the legal and strategic issues involved in the management of the plantations abutting the new National Park.

We will also be involved in bi-monthly meetings with the CAPE PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK PROJECT TEAM and other NGO's with the intention building a partnership between NGO's and the Social Ecology Department. At the first meeting in November last year, indications were that the Park would get off the ground early this year under the management of three section rangers; Fish Hoek to Cape Point, Silvermine/Constantiaberg, and Table Mountain. The intention would be that groups like the Friends of Silvermine and ourselves would then work closely with the Park's Central Section Ranger to care for Tokai. This will provide a whole new dimension and challenge to Friends of Tokai Forest and there will be wonderful opportunities for really meaningful involvement.

We have also been invited by the planners of PORTER TRUST DEVELOPMENT to become involved in the planning process. Two new leases have received the nod from the South Peninsula Municipality and facilitate the "re-ruralisation" of portions of the site; the Flower Farm and housing estate abutting the Lower 'Dog' Forest, and putting the area above the Stone Church and sports field abutting the Constantia Uitsig under vineyards. We are currently meeting with the planners to learn more about proposals for the area abutting the Arboretum and the Manor House. Again we desperately need Friends to get involved in these planning processes as our resources are very stretched.

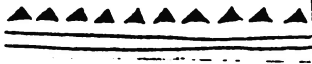
JOHN GREEN

We welcome on board three new committee members:

Fadiah Abbas who has accepted the Education Portfolio
Sylvia Smith is now our Membership Secretary
Les Keith has taken over the Alien Invaders from Bob Lee.

Your Committee are: Chairman/Arboretum: John Green 72.1341
Secretary: Lesley Skarzynski 72.2282, Treasurer: Rudi Skibbe 72.7653
Education: F. Abbas 73.4989, Natural Habitat & Species: Sibyl Morris,
Alien Invaders: Les Keith 72.9859, Walks: Gerry Higgs 72.4176 & 61.7076
Membership: Sylvia Smith 72.4788

We are lucky to have SAFCOL managing our forest!



SAFCOL have stated that to them environmental management is an integral part of their business. Sustainable forest management is not possible without a holistic and sensitive management of the total environment – the management of our water and soil resources, biodiversity and the social environment.

World wide consumers of wood products have been demanding assurance that the wood has been obtained in an environmentally responsible manner. Representatives of forestry organisations, indigenous people's organisations and environmental organisations, including Worldwide Fund for Nature decided to establish the FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CERTIFICATION (FSC).

SAFCOL are aiming to obtain FSC certification of all five regions of their operations by 1998.

The Principles of the Forest Stewardship Council are:

- i) Compliance with laws and FSC principles**
- ii) Tenure and use rights and responsibilities**
- iii) Indigenous peoples' rights**
- iv) Community Relations and Workers' Rights**
- v) The efficient use of the forest's multiple products**
- vi) Conservation of biological diversity**
- vii) Appropriate Management Plan and long-term objectives**
- viii) Appropriate Monitoring and Assessments Conducted**
- ix) Maintenance of Natural Forests**
- x) Plantations managed in accordance with conservation principles.**



SAFCOL accept that the responsibility for controlling the effects which they have on the environment rests first and foremost with all their employees.

(Information obtained from SAFCOL's Environmental Report for 1997)





We are representing the Wildlife & Environmental Society as observers of the WESTLAKE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS and the Sandvlei Trust and Tokai Residents Association are on the main steering committee. I have supported the concept of mixed use (eg residential, light industrial, education, and healthcare) provided that the following environmental principles are not compromised on this already seriously degraded site:

- 1) The Rivering area must be upgraded to ensure natural wetland and waterflow from source to Sandvlei;*
- 2) Integrity of mountain profile from crest to valley must be maintained in keeping with the Cape Peninsula National Park and the scenic rural aesthetics of the Constantia Valley.*
- 3) No unsound environmental practices should be allowed which may form precedents for future developments in the area such as Pollsmoor, Silvermine Communications, Council Nursery, and Porter Trust lands.*

- JOHN GREEN.

Membership Drive

**We urgently request each & every member to please
enrole just ONE more person to our group.**

There are a great many changes taking place in our area and we need a large body of members, as well as friends to get involved in the planning processes as our resources are very stretched.

Some membership fees are OUTSTANDING. We genuinely feel that we are doing a good job with monitoring events around Tokai, attending meetings, hacking, planting and education. It is all extra work keeping up with the membership. THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME THAT WE WILL BE ABLE FINANCIALLY TO MAIL OUT TO THOSE WHO DO NOT REMIT PAYMENT.

Membership renewal/application Form enclosed . . .



Friends of Tokai Forest



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - APPLICATION

Date

NAME

POSTAL ADDRESS

.....

..... code.....

Telephone

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP (please indicate)

Family/Group - R20 per annum Single - R15 per annum.....

Five Year - R75.00 Corporate -phone 72.1341 for details

OPTIONAL DONATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION R.....

Do you require a copy of the constitution? YES..... NO.....

*Kindly make cheques/postal orders payable to FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST
and return, together with the above application form to:*

The Treasurer, P.O. Box 442, Bergvliet, 7964

Snake Season

Snakes have had a bad press ever since the very first one chatted up the very first woman ! While the consequences for posterity of that particular conversation may have been dire, present day anxiety about snake encounters is largely unjustified.

There have been many sightings of snakes in the Arboretum and lower forest this summer. One should expect to come across a snake if one walks in such an environment. Just remember that a PuffAdder will give you no sporting chance before it strikes. Snake bites in the Western Cape are an extreme rarity and seldom if ever result in the sort of abrupt demise portrayed in folk mythology. In most instances the snake in your path will be aware of you long before you are aware of it and will glide silently away.

You should nevertheless be able to recognise the four most important venomous snakes found in the Western Cape:

The COBRA is yellow-brown and about 1.5m long. When provoked it rears up and spreads a "hood".

The BERGADDER is mottled black and white and about 40cms long. Found on ledges and among rocks the snake hisses loudly when disturbed.

The PUFFADDER is short (90cms), thick and rather immobile. It seeks to avoid detection by lying still and so it may be trodden on by the unwary walker. (The art therefore is to STAY standing on the snake and then jump like mad...!)

The BOOMSLANG is long (1.5m) and thin and usually a shade of green. As its name implies it is usually to be found in trees. As the fangs are at the back of its mouth it is really quite an achievement to be bitten by this reptile.

We are trying to CONSERVE the delicate area in which we live and ALL species are necessary and important for the turning over of all life, including snakes.

(With apologies to Mick Leary and thanks to the Editor of MOUNTAIN EARS for lines borrowed.)

ARBORETUM - Gondwanaland Project

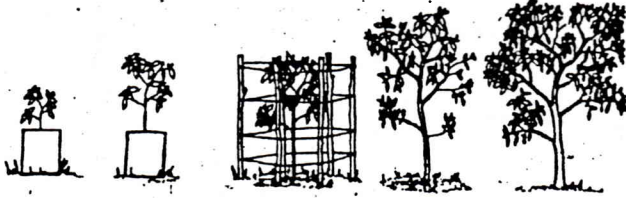
With the aid of the National Botanic Institute (NBI) we are data capturing SAFCOL's records of all the existing trees in the Arboretum and classifying major family groups by area.

The NBI is nurturing rare seedlings from ancient tree families which existed before the breakup of the huge southern continent (Gondwanaland) 180 million years ago. We will then continue the Gondwanaland planting theme from May through to September to build on the start which we made during Arbor week last year. We need people to get involved with labeling, growing, information pamphlets, displays in the Information Centre and possibly even a small nursery of our own.



1998 TREES OF THE YEAR

Apodytes dimidiata (white pear) and *Greyia flanaganii* (Koi/wild bottlebush)



Lower Forest - River Bank, Trees & Aliens

Les Keith is now co-ordinating the work party on the **THIRD SATURDAY MORNING OF EACH MONTH**. Last year we made the best of our lovely mild winter weather from May to September to plant over 200 indigenous trees along the river banks which had previously stabilised. The little saplings initially made remarkably good progress despite the hot spells in October but the continuing heat took its toll of many of the young trees which were planted later. The survival rate is much higher for trees which have an opportunity to get established in bags before being planted out. This February and March we will therefore bag as many young seedlings as possible before the planting season. **LUCY CONRADIE** has volunteered to guide us in this venture and we look forward to an improved survival rate this year.

ANY VOLUNTEERS ?



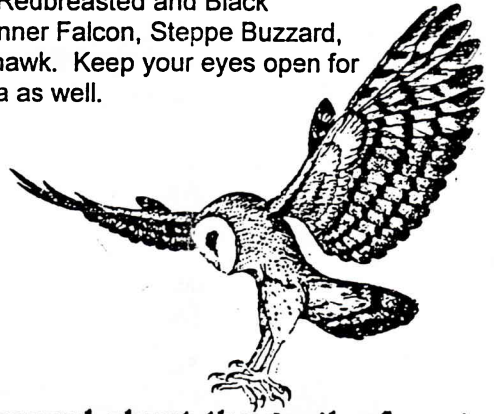
SPECIES AND HABITAT REPORT JANUARY 1998

SAFCOL has pruned the pines in the *Diastella proteoides* area and has also felled the trees selected a few months ago. This will certainly benefit the plants in terms of increased sunlight and water reserves.

Flowerwise there is little to see at this time of year, except for the *Diastella* and a few *Erica* species in the same area (*E. pulchella*, *E. multumbellifera*, *E. imbricata*, *E. coriifolia*). From March look out for the spectacular *Brunsvigia orientalis* (Candelabra flower), the little pink *Gladiolus brevifolius* and the *Bulbine favosa* with its bright yellow spikes of flowers – all in the lower forest.

The Spotted Eagle Owl pair, which has been resident for a number of years in the field adjoining Dennendal West and the clearfelled area, raised two chicks this summer which were last seen in the area at the end of December. Raptors seen lately in the lower forest include Yellow-billed Kite, Redbreasted and Black Sparrowhawks, Rock Kestrel, Lanner Falcon, Steppe Buzzard, Jackal Buzzard and African Goshawk. Keep your eyes open for Cape Grey Mongoose in this area as well.

SIBYL MORRIS



The plantation manager is concerned about the death of raptors after eating rats and mice poisoned by local householders. If you are experiencing trouble with 'vermin' then please use rodenticides, such as "RACUMIN" that will not kill owls. Obtainable from Scala Chemist, Medical Centre, Claremont.

The views and opinions expressed in this News letter are not necessarily those of the committee or members of the FRIENDS.



WALKS with Gerry

Telephone 72.4176 and 61.7076

Saturday

FEBRUARY: 28th: 7.00 A.M.:

Please note that this is a **SATURDAY** and an early start. We will be joining the **SILVERMINE FRIENDS** on their "Disa walk". **MARK HAWTHORNE**, their Education Officer and **HERON & BRIAN BURGER**, excellent Botanists, will be taking the walk. Meet us at Gate #2, which, when you rise to the top of **Ou Kaapse Weg** is the entrance on the left which drives you into a parking area and ablution block. Bring light snack/juice/cameras and binocs.

Sunday

MARCH: 8th: 4.00 p.m.:

We will be joining **KEVIN WINTER** and the **FRIENDS OF LIESBEECK** for a bird watching walk along the Liesbeeck River. Note the time and the meeting place: **Enviro Centre - Valkenberg Hospital**. This walk will last 1.30 hrs.

Sunday

29th: 9.00 a.m.:

Meet at Arboretum - travel by car to before gate of Silvermine Dam Reserve for a walk down the left to Noordehoek Peak.

Sunday

APRIL: 26th: 9.00 a.m.:

Meet at Arboretum for a walk along the **Vlakkenberg** with the Vineyards below us.

