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# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

P O Box 442 Bergvliet 7864

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NEWSLETTER NO 9

AUGUST 1998

FROM THE TOADSTOOL

(JOHN GREEN 721341)

• *VISION FOR TOKAI AS THE PEOPLE'S GATEWAY TO THE CPNP*

The CPNP (Cape Peninsula National Park) has published a document for public comment by 21 August on channeling public access into the Park. This proposes a "Gateway" concept. Tokai is already a critically important gateway used by 120000 picnickers as well as thousands of dog walkers, horse riders, mountain-bikers and nature lovers. Along with the burgeoning development of the central Peninsula, it is inevitable that this tranquil rural area is going to be subjected to massive further people pressure. It is therefore essential that we get involved now to ensure that the development decisions are in harmony with our long term quiet enjoyment of our beautiful environment.

At our last meeting in the Arboretum there was general agreement that we should promote the development of an integrated vision for Tokai as the "People's Gateway" to the new CPNP. Although only the SAFCOL portion of Tokai appears to have been included in the CPPNE (Protected Natural Environment ultimately destined for incorporation into the CPNP), the Porter School and the two Constantia reform schools, plus the approaches managed by the local authority (SPM), are integral parts of the tranquil gateway to the central portion of the CPNP dominated by Constantiaberg. All these players, plus residents and environmentalists, need to workshop a creative future vision for the whole "Gateway" including all the State or quasi-government managed land abutting it. This vision would then guide the many detailed subsequent plans and negotiations.

As a kickoff proposal we suggest that the Manor House and the Arboretum become the focal points of the Tokai Gateway to the Central CPNP: there is no other significant public entry to Constantiaberg between East Fort at Hout Bay and Silvermine. The Park headquarters could be centred on the Manor House.

There must be substantial scope for integrating a number of the functions currently spread among the three reform schools. This would not only provide a wonderful opportunity to upgrade the schools by generating funds from sale/lease of surplus facilities and reduced operating costs; but could also release historic buildings and developed areas to the Park.

Gateway activities could then be concentrated in already developed areas thus preserving the tranquil approaches to the Gateway while providing economic opportunities for providing Gateway activities such as interpretive centres, museums, restaurant/tea-rooms, conference centres, camp/caravan sites, picnic areas, lodges, backpacker and other accommodation. An equestrian centre could facilitate trails to be sensitively developed over the mountain to Hout Bay and Silvermine and possibly later over Glencairn towards the Southern Peninsula.

**WILDLIFE AND  
ENVIRONMENT  
SOCIETY OF SA**

*People caring for the Earth*



TOKAI MANOR HOUSE

We also need to establish who has the responsibility to control the interface between increasing urbanisation and non-domestic animals in an area which is currently under the authority of SAFCOL and Porter with the upper reaches managed by the CPNP. Who do we call on to take urgent action if their is a serious problem. We will be taking up these issues with the various authorities and would appreciate written comment to guide us.

## ARBORETUM

The new Gondwanaland theme for the Arboretum continues to make good progress. An old seadog, Capt Michael Fowkes, is exchanging his navigational charts to resurvey the existing trees since the last survey was done in the mid-1980's. This is helping us to establish where the main tree families are situated; where trees have died; and which areas are best suited for replanting.

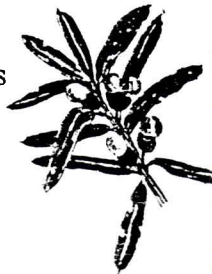
The NBI at Kirstenbosch has supplied us with another 70, mainly indigenous Afro Montane forest trees, which an increasing band of enthusiastic volunteers have been planting under the direction of Anthony Hitchcock and Fiona Powrie from the NBI. We are delighted to welcome all new members who are willing to give up a couple of hours every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday at 8h30 to join Les Keith( phone 729859) and his team to plant trees and control aliens in this unique Arboretum and the Lower Forest. Our next workparty will meet at the Arboretum on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug.

We are ensuring that no new exotics from other Gondwanaland countries are introduced which could be potentially invasive. For example, only male saplings will be chosen from the NZ and Chilean yellowwoods currently being nurtured by NBI. It amazing to see how even the Outeniqua yellowwood is rapidly taking over in the riverine areas of the Arboretum.

## LOWER FOREST

The soaking winter rains interspersed with sunny days have given our young trees along the riverbank a chance to recover and get their roots down. Unfortunately, they have also encouraged the Golden Wattle seeds to germinate and develop rapidly especially in the new plantations between the stream and Dennendal Ave. Every small wattle which you can yank out, while walking the dog, before it gets too big will save having to ringbark and poisoning later. We will leave examples of the different wattle invaders at the forest entrances so that you know which ones to eradicate. Many thanks for the thousands that you have already pulled out: the combined effort makes a major difference.

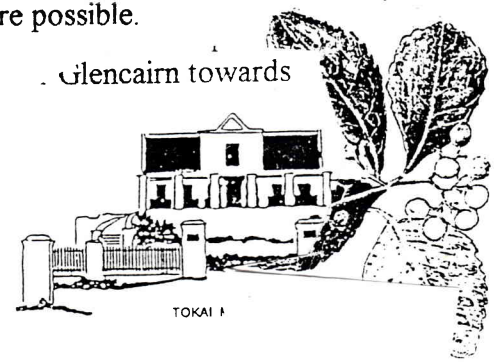
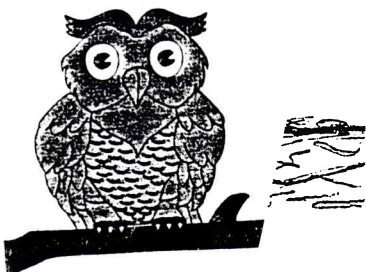
SAFCOL have recently cleared the stream between the gums of hundreds of branches and sticks which clog and cause overflowing. Please educate the youngsters not to throw items into the stream; rather have fun by building branch hideouts a reasonable distance from the stream banks. Thank you for developing a new path on the Constantia side away from the stream to allow the banks to restabilise. Because of the Koffieklip and steep erosion it is very difficult to protect and revegetate them as we have done on the other side. We encourage horse riders and bikers to avoid the riverine areas where possible.



Real yellowwood



Forest shrew





## RELATIONSHIPS WITH WILDLIFE & ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY

Patrick

Towns previously reported potential problems in our relationship with WESSA have now been fully resolved and I would like to thank Regional and National Board management for the effort that they have put into promoting constructive discussion with the CPNP on the complex issues regarding contractual rights and Gateways to the new Park. We are also pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in discussions with WESSA's national board which have ironed out previously contentious issues relating to proposed changes to the "Friends' Groups" constitution. We are now working closely with WESSA Regional staff to promote conservation of the Sand River Catchment, Little Prinsessvlei, and Westlake Environmental Management Plan; as well as promoting the Arboretum and Information Centre as a resource for education and greening of the Cape Flats townships.

### • **BABOONS**



During June I received a number of appeals, mainly from horse owners, to do something about the baboons which have moved lower down into the plantations this winter and in much larger numbers. The troop of over 200 appears to have an unusually large proportion of youngsters and has been feeding mainly on watsonias and small bulbs in the meadows and even as low as the Swaanswyk Rd equestrian centre. SAFCOL management have also been asked to "control the baboons on their property" but have consistently adopted a live and let live policy. We are not aware of any serious incidents resulting from interface between the troop and dogs, horses, or humans and the baboons do not appear to have raided houses or dustbins as a source of food. On two occasions over the last 3 years, including 6 weeks ago in the Arboretum, the plantation manager has deemed it necessary to put down injured baboons.

From the middle of July, a number of the baboons started to regularly climb over the plantation manager's thatch roof and soon after this it became regular practice for them to pull out the thatch. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, the damage was becoming so wanton that he deemed it necessary to fire a warning shot to get them off the roof and, when this was ineffective, to shoot the ringleader. He also had to put down a female which was badly hurt in jumping off the roof. As abhorrent as it may be to urban dwellers, he gave the carcasses to his staff who consider the meat to be a delicacy. This has sparked a continuing major public outcry and the plantation manager has been charged.

Without getting into the legal arguments as to whether the managing authority of an area has the right or responsibility to kill wild animals which are causing damage to valuable assets, or are potentially a threat to human life, or other complex moral arguments, this unfortunate incident highlights the necessity for our first goal which is "To foster resonance amongst differing interests: Natural Environment & Commercial Forestry; Recreation; Residential & Future Development." To do this we need to establish what is bringing the baboons in much larger numbers into the lower reaches this winter. Various reasons put forward are: they come down because of the cold, but it is no colder this year. Tree felling, but this a normal ongoing activity. Good breeding season, why?



We also need to establish who has the responsibility to control the interface between increasing urbanisation and non-domestic animals in an area which is currently under the authority of SAFCOL and Porter with the upper reaches managed by the CPNP. Who do we call on to take urgent action if there is a serious problem. We will be taking up these issues with the various authorities and would appreciate written comment to guide us.

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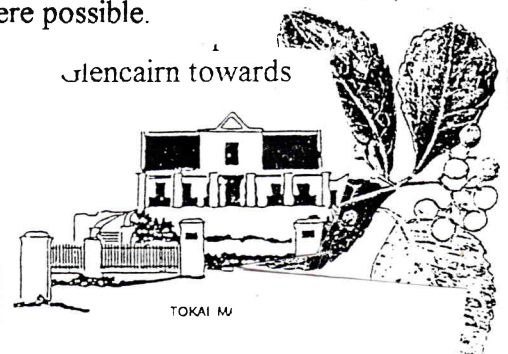
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Forest shrew



Glencairn towards



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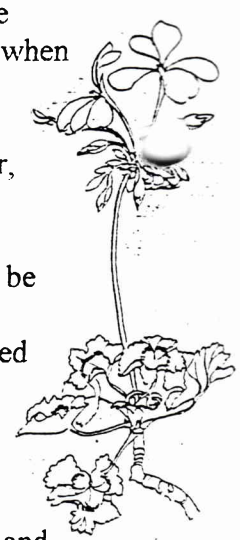


### SPECIES AND HABITAT

(SIBYL MORRIS 724150)

In addition to the baboons, we have had had a number of recent sad stories of wildlife being killed in the interface with humans in relatively rural areas. A rare Cape Otter was run over on the Blue Route opposite Pollsmoor/ Westlake as it could not cross under the bridge where people were sheltering; Two adult porcupines were knocked over in Maryland, leaving a couple of babies. Unfortunately, the survival instinct leads them to look for food wherever they can find it, in this case peoples' gardens. A dead Egyptian Goose was found in field off Dennendal Ave with a wound on its chest. Was this a case of being killed by humans infuriated with the noise or someone playing with a gun? Or was it a case of nature: a territorial battle between two males; possibly an over-ambitious black sparrowhawk. Please keep us informed of any sightings: the more we know, the more chance that we have to be able to encourage reasoned behavior to cope with wildlife when it encroaches into the suburban interface.

On a happier note: although there are not many flowers during the autumn and winter, there is a very special atmosphere at this time in the forest. On some mornings, when conditions are just right, the sight of glistening dewdrops on hundreds of backlit spiderwebs is magical. *Babiana villosula*( blue flowers with pleated leaves) are still to be seen as well as pale yellow *Homeria breyniana*, and various *Oxalis* species add lovely splashes of colour. The *Metalasia muricata* is especially good this year in the clearfelled area of the lower forest.

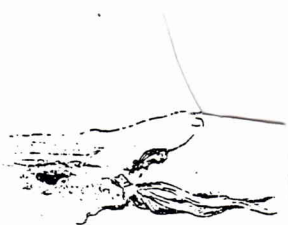


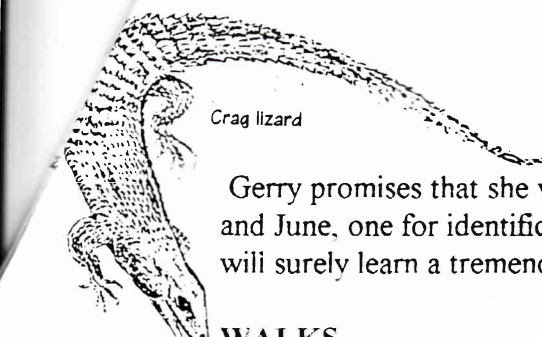
### MUSHROOM PICKIN' N' COOKIN

(GERRY HIGGS 724150(h)  
617076(o) 615667(fax))

Gerry has excelled herself with the imagination and effort she has put into organising and publicising the monthly walks. No more so than on the icy cold but sunny morning of Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June when over 200 people crowded on the lawn in front of the Information Centre to listen to Dr Nicki Alsop explain the essential interaction between fungi and forest trees and the basics of edible and poisonous mushrooms. We then split up into smaller parties to comb the forest for various types of fungi and were astounded when over 50 different varieties of every shape and form landed up on the tables for identification after barely an hour of hunting. These ranged from the deadly poisonous *Amanita phalloides*( Death Cup) - recognised by the olive- green cap, white gills, a skirt and a cup at the base of the stem: it probably comes from Europe with our oaks as it is nearly always found under them; to the smelliest, ugliest of them all, the Red Stinkhorn (*Clathrus archeri*) which looks something like a red octopus and you can't miss it as it, not surprisingly, attracts flies. The main edible mushroom found was the Pine ring (*Lactaria deliciosa*) with its very distinctive carrot colour which changes to brick- orange and then verdigris green with age. The orange stain and blue- green sap are distinctive.

The wonderful pictures on the front page of the Constantiaberg Bulletin and the most informative reporting are a wonderful reminder of a very special outing. We also welcome the 21 new families who have swelled the ranks of our fledgling organisation: we hope that you will continue to enjoy participating in "Caring for Tokai Forest".





Crag lizard

Gerry promises that she will organise two mushroom outings with Nicki next year, in May and June, one for identification and knowledge and the other for pickin' n' cookin'. t we will surely learn a tremendous amount about our wealth of fungi in the coming years.

## WALKS

Gerry was very disappointed with the poor turnout of only 7 for the Orienteering at the end of May. However 22 joined in July's walk with Mark Hawthorne, Conservation Education Officer CPNP, to Nellies Pool and the Muizenberg Caves. Mark is extremely interesting and informative with a wonderful sense of humour. We learnt much about the dynamic interrelationships between the plants, animals, insects, fungi, and soils making up the montane fynbos environment, eg why most February flowers are red because the Table Mountain Beauty butterfly only pollinates from red. Mark will be another hardy annual!

Hopefully all have received a walks brochure either with the May newsletter or this one. They are also available at Tokai Library or from Garlick at the Arboretum. Alternatively ask Gerry who will be happy to send you one. It is most encouraging that interest in our walks is bringing in many new members, some as far afield as Bloubergstrand, Somerset West and Stellenbosch.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The final date for entries to our photographic competition has been extended to 12<sup>th</sup> August, just sufficient time for presentation to judge Roy Johannesson on 17<sup>th</sup> August and printing the best dozen photos for display at our AGM on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August in the Arboretum when the winners will be announced. Entries to Sibyl Morris, phone 724150, who will select 60 to 80 slides conveying the beauty of the Cape Peninsula mountain chain, Tokai or Cecilia for presentation at our AGM. Great prizes including Bushnell binoculars, free films and processing donated by Cameraland; and a R250 dinner donated by the Cattlebaron.



## EDUCATION

(FADIAH ABBAS 734989)

Wendy Hitchcock, NBI Kirstenbosch Education Centre, really excelled herself in putting together resource material for teachers to progress the new Outcomes Based Education (OBE) syllabus if they bring school groups to the Arboretum. The material was presented at a workshop to some 30 teachers on 6<sup>th</sup> May and Fadiah is following this up within our Friends Group at 3pm on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August in the Arboretum. Debbie Atkinson, Jenny Mountain, and Lesley Skarzynski are keen to assist in getting the education project really moving and welcome anybody who would like to get involved to join them. We need people who would like to prepare information displays (eg mushrooms of Tokai, the Gondwanaland Arboretum, Raptors of Tokai plantation, Flowers of the Acid Sandveld) or assist teachers and school groups on education outings in the area. There is also a need to take Tokai to the schools in the form of talks, displays and slide shows. Anyone interested please give us a call or just come along on the 15<sup>th</sup> backpacker and other be sensitively developed ter over Glencairn towards



TOKAI MANOR HOUSE



Patrick Downey, WESSA's Educationist, is also leading the project to "Green the Townships" and is hoping to bring a group of Khayalitsha teachers to the Arboretum to discuss how we can be a resource for them to plant trees. This may well involve potting numbers of suitable surplus young trees which have seeded themselves for replanting by schools. If anyone is keen to get involved please give John Green a call(721341). Similarly, Mrs Martinus, of Habibia Primary Athlone, will be bring some 130 children to the forest during Arbor Week on the mornings of Tues 1 and Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. She needs your help to give the children a wonderful experience and cultivate environmentalists for tomorrow's world.



### AGM 29<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1998 3PM: ARBORETUM

We will be holding our second AGM in the Information Centre at the start of Arbor Week. Following our tradition we will start with Children of the Forest planting the 1998 Tree of the Year.

The White Pear (*Apodytes Dimidiata*). This lovely tree can reach a height of 25m and thrives on the fringes of coastal, inland and bushveld forests. The pale pinkish wood is very hard and was used in wagon construction. The roots and leaves are used medicinally and kill snails. It has sweetly scented white flowers and is food for black rhino and birds.

We will keep the business of the AGM to a minimum to encourage discussion on some of the major issues covered above and allow time for showing the Pick of the Slides from the Photographic Competition. We plan to finish this by 5pm to allow time for a glass of wine and a snack in the Information Centre where we can continue networking.

All are Welcome. Please Join Us There



### DATES

#### AUGUST:

- Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> at 3pm : Education the Way Forward : Info Centre
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9am : Tree Planting & Alien Pull : Arboretum
- Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> at 3pm : AGM/ Slides/ Snacks : Info Centre

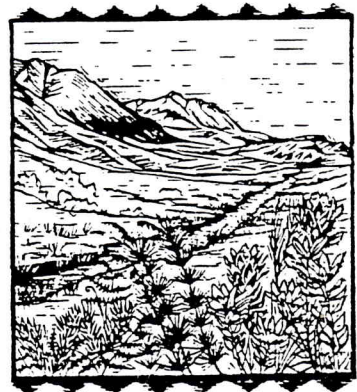
#### SEPTEMBER

- Tues 1<sup>st</sup> & Thu 3<sup>rd</sup> 3pm Habibia Primary Outing : Arboretum
- Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> at 9am : Tree Care & Clean up : Lower Forest
- Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm: Fynbos Walk with Sibyl : Lower Forest
- Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> at 7am : Bus to Lourensford & Walk : Arboretum

#### OCTOBER

- Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> at 9am : Tree Care & Clean up : Arboretum
- Weekend 24/25<sup>th</sup> : Cape of Good Hope Weekender

that you will continue to enjoy:



MOUNTAINS, FYNBOS  
AND WATER

