

**KOGELBERG  
Branch of the Botanical Society of SA**

**Newsletter:  
April 2013**

News Editors: Ed & Merran Silberbauer

**THE BATTLE OF BETTY'S BAY  
ROUND 601**

The next attack takes place on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2013, from 9am to noon  
**VENUE:** Agapanthus Road, off Porter Drive, access also from Adenandra and Aulax roads.

**TALKS**

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April** **Treasuring the Oystercatchers of Betty's Bay** by Richard and Sara Starke who are well known for their work with these birds, including rearing abandoned chicks, and caring for sick birds. They have spoken to us before but this talk brings us up to date and includes new visuals. 6pm in the **Nivenia Hall**, HPG

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May** Dr Kenneth Oberlander who specialises in the genus ***Oxalis*** will lead a walk and give a talk centred on ***Oxalis sp.*** Meet at Harold Porter parking at 2.45pm for a walk 3 - 4.30pm either above Harold Porter or Oudebosch. The talk will be at the usual time **6p.m.** in the **Nivenia Hall**.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June**- To mark the 100th birthday of BotSoc and Kirstenbosch with a special celebration Kogelberg Branch has invited Dr Brian Huntley to talk about **Kirstenbosch**. Dr Huntley is the author of the book **Kirstenbosch, the most beautiful garden in Africa**. 6Pm in the **Nivenia Hall**.

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July** we hold our **AGM** to be followed by a talk by Prof David Richardson Director of the Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology at University of Stellenbosch.

At all talks there will be liquid refreshments and a voluntary collection will be taken. Please see the notice boards in all villages for any possible change of venue.

Contact Merrilee Berrisford 028 272 9314.

**WALK SATURDAY 20TH APRIL.**

Barbara Jenman writes "We are walking along a contour path above Centre Shopping Centre towards Pringle and returning along the same way. Meet at the Harold Porter

Gardens parking area at 8.30 am". For further details contact Betsey on 082 337 9244 or 028 272 9761 or Barbara on 082 338 4109

### **REPORT ON HACK NO 600**

A grand turnout considering that this was the last day of the Easter holidays, the weather was far from promising and most of the "swallows" have left their temporary nests and migrated back to their summer homes. ( some of these "summer" homes are still experiencing Winter blizzards )Returning to bad weather is a poor reward for these wonderful people who travel 6000 miles or more to help us rid Betty's Bay of alien invasive trees. It is of interest that these migratory hackers make up 24 % of the average number of active hackers in our area. Would that 24% of our local population took a similar interest in this vital exercise

Concern was expressed at tea time over the non appearance of our longstanding hacker and road verge alien cleaner upper – Pieter "the verger". A search party was dispatched led by Frik who located Pieter -he having been holed up in a thicket of blombos. Pieter's knees are not what they used to be and believe me knees have to be 100% to get through this foul variety of hacker unfriendly fynbos. Recovering from this misadventure Pieter joined us at a most convivial aftermath braai at No.10 Kloof road. A fitting end to 600 hacks manned by our outstanding men, women and youngsters over the last 50 years. A special mention and toast to the sandwich and tea making professionals without whom no hack would have taken place beyond hack No. 1 !

Wind drove the naafi to shelter in a donga among dumped builder's rubble in order to prevent the tea mugs from being blown off the tables. Enjoying the tea were Jill Attwell, John & Andrea Benn with son Allan and grandson Daniel, Merrilee Berrisford with sister Jean Cohen and brother Martin "Spook" Trainor and his wife Yolande, John Whitehead, John McNaught Davis, Tom Dreyer, Frik Potgieter, Tim Attwell, Barbara Jenman, Allan Heydorn, Jan & Betsey Joubert, Lewis & Ed Silberbauer. Christine Dreyer made the sandwiches and Merran Silberbauer made the tea. Pieter de Waal missed tea. At the aftermath we were joined by Peter Berrisford, Pauline McNaught Davis, Avril Nunn & Caroline Silberbauer.

Next month a return to Agapanthus road, the hack area can also be accessed from Adenandra and Aulax roads.

Ed Silberbauer, Convenor.

### **PRINGLE BAY HACK NO 83**

On Sunday 24 March 2013 the Hack Group cleared a large growth of Rooikrans on a property on High Level road, a large Port Jackson which was encroaching on the same road and a substantial amount of Australian Myrtle on two properties on the northern side of the road

The hackers present were Ed Silberbauer, Frik Potgieter, Jane Fearnhead, Sue Fielden, Sue Folb, John Dowling, Nick Helm, Andre Maritz, Willie Kotzee, Ian Cushny, and John Whitehead. The mid-morning coffee and sandwiches were provided by Marion Cushny.

The next hack will be on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

John Whitehead. Convenor.

### **RAFFLE**

We know Kogelberg Branch has talented members; now a 'secret' member with a generous spirit has created an item of beauty to be raffled for branch funds. Louise du Toit of Rooi Els is a jeweller who, when she learnt BotSoc. was celebrating its 100th birthday, decided to use silver and garnet to make a winged insect which could be used as a pendant or brooch; a faceted garnet is the body, wings are leaf-like silver, it hangs on a stainless steel cable and a silver pin makes it a brooch. This is a great opportunity to raise a goodly sum. Thank you, Louise.

Tickets are R20 each and are available from committee members, at hacks and talks and the Pringle Bay Bookshop. Distant members can take tickets paying by EFT (details below). The draw will take place at the June 15th celebration of BotSoc's 100th.

Payment by EFT must be done before May 15. Please add your name and phone number to your beneficiary reference. KOGELBERG BRANCH OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA. Bank FNB Branch Hermanus, code 200412 Account no 62106618608.

Merrilee Berrisford

### **DISA BLOOMING AMAZINGLY**

I first came to the Harold Porter NBG in August 1991 which was not long after the 1991 Easter fire. I was very impressed by my first exposure to the Disa uniflora flowering in Disa Kloof in December and January. There was a good quantity of them and the following season was even better.

But slowly over the years it seemed that the numbers diminished and I placed most of the blame on the trees that have been growing ever bigger and shading them out. However after the 2010 fire we have now had two years of really spectacular Disa showings in both Disa Kloof and Leopard's Kloof.

Having grown older, and hopefully a little wiser, I am now thinking that the massed blooming is more due to the fires and the ash particles with easily assimilable nutrients being made available to the plants. Keep an eye on the quantities of Disas flowering in the next few years and see what you think!

Jane Forrester.

## YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

### VERGES AND FIREBREAKS

Concern has been expressed about the untimely mowing of our verges and firebreaks in spring. Your committee intends taking this issue up with the powers that be. Whilst accepting the necessity for the mowing it should not be done at flowering time. To assist in the preparation for their approach you are all asked to advise our chairman of any plants of particular botanical interest that you know grow in such areas. Please contact Merrilee Berrisford, preferably by email, with full details. [mberrisford@xsinet.co.za](mailto:mberrisford@xsinet.co.za) or call her 028 272 9314.

### KIRSTENBOSCH PLANT FAIR

The annual garden fair and plant sale takes place on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2013. To mark the century of the Botanical Society special plants will be on sale termed champions and centenarians – read all about them in the March issue of Veld and Flora.

For more details contact Kirstenbosch Branch.021 671 5468 or email [office@botsoc-kirstenbosch.org.za](mailto:office@botsoc-kirstenbosch.org.za)

### REVISED NAMAQUALAND FLOWER GUIDE

You may know that the Kirstenbosch Branch of BotSoc in partnership with Struik Nature are publishing a **completely revised edition** of Annelise le Roux's Namaqualand Spring Flowers with nearly 1000 species illustrated – so this is greatly expanded book with many new photographs, nomenclature up-dates, etc.

There was an ad in the March Veld & Flora and more details of the book, calling for sponsors and subscribers, are available on the new Kirstenbosch Branch website <[www.botsoc-kirstenbosch.org.za](http://www.botsoc-kirstenbosch.org.za)>.

Eugene Moll.

### FLOWER OF THE MONTH

The deciduous amaryllid ***Brunsvigia orientalis***, or candelabra flower, flowers in autumn and produces its growing leaves in winter. The leaves are pressed flat on the ground to minimise water loss. The sphere of 20-40 bright red flowers attracts sunbirds that perch with ease on the distinctly curved flower stalks. The plant and flowers later straighten drying to form three-angled fruit capsules that split open on the ridges as the plant tumbles in the wind. The dispersed seeds are fleshy and have no dormant period, germinating in the rain.

Photo on page 99 of BotSoc wild flower guide No. 5.

Amida Johns

## **SNAKES**

An audience of over 60 which included several lively children were treated to a fascinating evening talk by François van Zyl, also known as the Snake Man. It was clear that although the talk was in a light-hearted vein, François not only loves and respects snakes, but is also an expert on the subject. We were shown a puffadder in a Perspex box. She had recently produced 17 young and was obviously bored to tears by us! The second venomous specimen was a Cape Cobra. A totally different character, she glared at us through the Perspex and frequently struck at us and opened her hood. A non toxic example was an egg eater. Beautifully marked and very small, she permitted a brave, young volunteer to take her out of her bag. Once set free on the table top she treated us to a series of athletic dry strikes that were most impressive. The star of the show though was a magnificent Southern African Python. She was draped around François' neck and placidly allowed us to touch her. Her length was well over 2 metres, and would eventually reach six metres.

While there is considerable controversy regarding the treatment of snake bites, the general consensus among the experts is that the victim should be taken as soon as possible to a hospital where cardiac monitoring and respirators are available. Obviously the identity of the snake should be ascertained, but this is not essential as the state of the wound usually makes it clear whether the venom is neurotoxic or cytotoxic. One affects the circulation and causes severe swelling while the other affects the nervous system causing temporary blindness and paralysis of the eyelids. Occasionally a snake gives what is called a dry bite. This causes bleeding but no venom is released therefore there will be very little pain.

One of our more dangerous snakes is the small Berg Adder. This species has the deadliest venom in that it is both neuro and cytotoxic, but unlike the puffadder, this little snake appears to avoid human contact.

Sadly, according to François, snakes are becoming rare and if the number of dead black mole snakes one sees on our roads, is any indication, one of the most useful species will soon become a rarity. Mole snakes eat not only moles but every type of rodent it can overpower. They and all the other snakes deserve our protection, quite apart from the fact that they are essential feature of our eco system.

Penny Palmer.

## **LOOKING BACK ON A FEW CELEBRATIONS.**

After fifty years and six hundred hacks we look back to the vision of hack founder,

Denys Heesom. Have we achieved what he wished to achieve? Yes and no. Indeed the approach to Betty's Bay from Pringle Bay passes through magnificent fynbos – the expressed fear voiced in 1963 that it might resemble the approach to Hermanus has been vanquished. The battle will never be won and possibly the battle against the New Zealand Christmas tree invasion of Sunny Seas has been lost (in spite of the efforts of a few of the residents). However the main arena of battle is being held. The original battle motto which was “Hack the Hakea” no longer applies thanks to the hackers and biological control of that enemy. Port Jackson is on the retreat around the dump too.

The first hack on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1963 was advertised in the press and locally and forty two turned up armed with their own refreshments and where possible, tools, these included both a contingent from the Cape Town section of the Mountain Club of South Africa and from CAV the Cape Town based Control of Alien Vegetation. Of interest is that the leader of the MCSA group was Tut Trainor (father of Merrilee Berrisford) and among the CAV members was Louis Silberbauer (father of Ed and Lewis). They worked in the area north of the Wallers' Holiday Camp and repaired to the Heesom house for the Aftermath.

From this hack until the 200<sup>th</sup> hack the Heesoms hosted the Aftermath and later also provided the tea and sandwiches. Michael (she was christened Maureen) Heesom and Ida Broadwith were the tea ladies.

The 100<sup>th</sup> hack is memorable in that it was a two day hack, with a group of forty ACF trainees from Youngsfield hacking the hakea on the Saturday above the Rooiels hill and on the Sunday the regular group augmented by members of the mountain club attacked the gum trees at the Big Bend on what was then Clarence Drive -now Porter Drive (2nd May 1971). At the Aftermath the mountain club presented a wild olive tree and a rooiels tree to Denys who proposed planting them near Bass Lake. Now in 2013 there are a good number of these trees in that area!

The 200<sup>th</sup> hack was held on the second Sunday of the month, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1979 to accommodate the mountain club who brought thirty hackers and the locals numbered twenty. Tut Trainor presented Denys with the floating trophy – The Golden Hakea, the hackers gave him the promise of the John Rourke book being prepared for publication – The Proteas of Southern Africa and Ed Silberbauer presented him with the “Silver tankard” award. Denys greatly appreciated this recognition of his leadership. Sadly two weeks later he died.

The silver tankard was subsequently awarded to Rod Smitheman, Bo & Jill Attwell and Gordon & Sheila Cunningham. In 2003 the tables were turned when his sons made one for Ed Silberbauer. The 'tankard' is a beer can with a tin handle soldered on. This 'tankard' was coated in a layer of “old Cape Silver” and tastefully inscribed in Latin with red paint.

After Denys' death the Bettys Bay Wild Flower Society funded the hack which was convened by Rod Smitheman until his death.

The 300th hack saw 80 hackers in the field (again including a contingent from the mountain club) in the area of Agapanthus road. There was a walk arranged on the Saturday and many of the mountain club members camped either at Mooi Hawens Holiday Camp or in the Silberbauer garden where the next day the Aftermath took the form of a bring and braai.

A record was set at the 400<sup>th</sup> hack in April 1996 when 80 troops took the field on the mountain side of the Groot Witvlei area. The Aftermath was another bring picnic or braai held in Crassula Hall and attended by representatives from BotSoc for by then the Wildflower Society had become a branch of BotSoc.

For the 500<sup>th</sup> hack Crassula Hall was again the venue for a boerewors roll lunch given by the branch. At this Ed Silberbauer was awarded their highest conservation award by BotSoc, the Denys Heesom gold medal. The first presentation of this award had been in 1983 to the Betty's Bay Hack Group.

The 600<sup>th</sup> hack is documented in this newsletter. It is notable in that all three of Tut Trainor's children attended the 600<sup>th</sup> and two of Louis Silberbauer's. Currently Louis' son Ed convenes the Betty's Bay hack and son Lewis the Friends of Stellenbosch Mountain hack while (although not at the 600<sup>th</sup> hack) Ed's son James convenes the Friends of Helderberg Reserve hack in Somerset West.

There have been many other celebrations for instance the 40year, 45year and in February 2013 the half century of hacking. No doubt there will be more in future. We trust that new troops are in reserve waiting to join the fight to keep the fynbos free.

Merran Silberbauer.

## **GREEN HOUSE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS CENTRE**

### **AN INVITATION.**

Sited on the R43 at Vermont, the opening of the centre takes place on **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013** at **6pm for 6.30pm** by the Overstrand Mayor, Nicolette Guthrie-Botha, with speakers Rob Fryer (Vision for the Green House) and Michael Raimondo (producer of "The healing power of nature" TV series) speaking on "Films than inspire action for the environment". Those wishing to attend should reply to Anina Lee on 028 316 2527 or via email [anina.lee@ocf.org.za](mailto:anina.lee@ocf.org.za).

### **PLATBOS FOREST NEWS**

Located between Stanford and Gansbaai, this indigenous forest (which the branch plans to revisit later this year) has several winter celebrations planned

Two “Green Pop Reforest Fests one 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May and again on the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May during which the aim is to plant 4000 trees in the reforestation programme. The first is a Family weekend for people of all ages and includes entertainment suitable for children, the second a Friends weekend will have adult entertainment although children will not be excluded. Tickets cost R550 and R350 for children under twelve and includes camping all meals activities and trees. Enquires to [tickets@greenpop.org](mailto:tickets@greenpop.org).

In spring ( 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September) you are invited to become an African Tree Essences practitioner at a training session designed for health practitioners and therapists, for further information see [www.africantreeessences.co.za](http://www.africantreeessences.co.za).

### **RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES**

<b>Month</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Rainfall mm		72	41,5
Temp, °C	Max	32	32
	Min	12	14

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/ AND/ OR STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP**

If you change your address, wish to resign or change your status, please notify the Botanical Society Head Office on 021- 797 2090, as they print the labels and keep the records. We do only the newsletter, e-mails and posting. To receive this newsletter via e-mail (and save the Branch the costs of printing, packaging and postage) send your address to [merran@telkomsa.net](mailto:merran@telkomsa.net)

### **REMEMBER YOUR ARTICLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME**

**The editors reserve the right to edit contributions.**

**Deadline for the next newsletter is Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013.**

Please address all mail to : Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of SA, P.O. Box 93, Betty's Bay 7141. E-mail : [merran@telkomsa.net](mailto:merran@telkomsa.net) no graphics please.