

CREW NEWS

Christmas edition November 2005

Cape Holly *Ilex mitis*

News from the Office

Welcome to the first CREW newsletter! At our workshop in 2005 we were requested to start a newsletter-it has taken quite sometime to get the first newsletter going since we made the mistake of trying to get you all to write in the middle of spring when you were far more interested in being out in the field. Now that spring is well over and the plants are dropping their seeds or starting to hide underground, and we are preparing for the end of the year, we thought we would see what you think of our idea of a newsletter. Each group has written something for us, and Caitlin has stylishly pulled it all together. As this is our first edition we ask you please to give us some feedback. Do you like sending us your news? Is it interesting to know what the other groups have been up to? What do you think of our design? We are really looking forward to your comments.



↑ *Ixia pupureorosea*

The Kirstenbosch CREW team would like you all to know that we are so happy with how things have gone this year. Now that CREW has been in existence for two and half years we are really starting to see the fruits of all of our efforts. For the groups who already existed before CREW started you have continued to engage with us and to grow in your ability to find really important sites and populations of threatened plants. We have also seen how you are working more and more with landowners who have important populations of plants-this is so encouraging! For all our groups who started as part of CREW we are amazed with your development, and how you now know so many more plants than we do and are becoming so much more independent. We can't believe how we often receive phone calls or emails with new discoveries of really rare and threatened species. It is because of all your hard work and commitment that we were able to convince SANBI to make this project sustainable and now they even want us to expand our work to other parts of the country. All of you are such great examples that I will take to other potential volunteers to get them excited to do similar work up North.

Besides the work of the groups we have also grown the base of volunteers who come on our extra CREW field trips to all the gap areas where we don't have groups. The number of volunteers on each trip keeps growing; this makes these trips so much more enjoyable and many of you have shared in the excitement of finding some true botanical rarity such as the new population of *Pterygodium cruciferum* found on the Agulhas Plain last weekend; the rare limestone endemic *Moraea calcicola*, which was growing with a suite of other restricted Vredenburg peninsula species such as *Ixia pupureorosea* and *Felicia elongata*; or the extremely rare *Corycium microglossum*, an orchid that only flowers after fire on the highly transformed acid sand plain fynbos around Malmesbury. There have been so many exciting finds this year that I could fill 3 pages.



↑ *Corycium microglossum*

The success of our extra fieldtrips has been largely dependent on having accurate historical data on where these species occur so that we could find them again. We would like to thank our BotSoc volunteer Margaret Kahle for all her



Margaret identifying ericas at the ID course held recently→



↑ Liz in Tulbagh

hard work entering this information. Margaret has come into the office every day for the last 6 months and diligently entered all Cape Nature's data on rares collected in the 1980's and 1990's. Liz Metcalf has also volunteered in the office and has been fantastic at helping mounting and accessioning specimens that we receive from all our groups. Thank you so much Liz and Margaret.

In the New Year we will be sending out schedules of general volunteer fieldtrips and ID courses as well as T-shirt and cap designs bearing our new logo-below are the options for you to vote on. Please don't forget to keep your diary free for our workshop on the 18th & 19th March. From the Kirstenbosch team we wish you all a happy Christmas and New Year with your family and loved ones. Rest well and come back refreshed for another exciting year of botanising and conserving our unique flora.

Tilla Raimondo

Latest logos

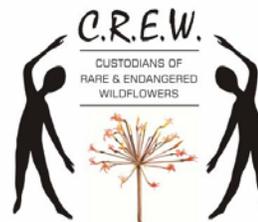
These are the options by various designers-PLEASE VOTE FOR US!



Option 1



Option 4



Option 2



Option 5



Option 3



Option 6

Please email your vote to Caitlin at vonwitt@sanbi.org





News from the CREW Groups



Caledon

On September 29, we, that is Johan Bosman, Tilla, Ismail, two newcomers, Annetjie Gordon and her mom, and I visited the farm Phesantekraal, owned by the Delpont family headed by Gawie and Maude.

The section we visited first had burnt some one or two years earlier. The veld was in very good condition and well looked after. The site is located on a southwestern gentle hill slope. It was evident that the present owner had a special feeling for the land, so ploughing of the site seems very unlikely.



↑ *Homeria elegans*

We found extensive patches of *Moraea bellendenii*, lots of *Bulbinella barkerae*, *Athanasia juncea*, *Athrixia capensis*, *Berkheya armata* and some *Tritoniopsis* fairly well-spread. To top it all off we found a few *Homeria elegans* and *Lobostemon capitatus*.

Evidence of *Corymbium* coming into flower was found; *Wurmbea* sp, *Geissorhiza setacea*, some *Sebaea*, *Indigofera nana*, *Babiana patersoniae*, the attractive *Watsonia laccata*, *Lapeirousia corymbosa*, the lovely *Ornithogalum dubium*, the dainty *Moraea tripetala* and many other species were observed.

The area visited was free of large aliens, the only transgressors found were some alien grasses. We found evidence of an ongoing alien clearance program: we actually found freshly removed *Ichium* - now this is something very commendable. We were very impressed with the condition of the veld and the farm overall and would like to commend the Delpont family for their efforts.

Best wishes to all CREWERS and may you all enjoy a blessed Christmas.

Adriaan Hanekom



↑ From left: Tilla, Adriaan, Johan (Ismail, Annetjie & her mom in background) at Phesantekraal



← *Bulbinella barkerae*



↑ *Satyrrium carneum*



Darling Wildflower Group

This flower season has seen a shift from collecting everything at each site to looking for the specials at as many sites as possible. We have found new sites for *Nemesia strumosa*, and had an interesting visit from Dr. Kim Steiner from the USA who is busy revising the genus *Nemesia*.

The little *Gladiolus quadrangulus* was found at a completely new site on the farm Baarhuis, and a very healthy stand along the Bokbaivygge Route at Yzerfontein. Both sites were similar in that the plants were growing in very wet areas within the reed beds.

At last we found the elusive *Pterygodium cruciferum* at Contreberg after an absence of quite a few years. These orchids are known only from here and at the Durbanville racecourse! They usually only flower after a burn and in very wet areas, but this year the conditions must have been perfect for them to emerge.

A healthy stand of 17 flower spikes and many more leaves were found. The landowner plans to burn that vlei next year so we hope to see more in 2006.



↑ Helene and Maggie with *Pterygodium cruciferum*

During a walk in Tienie Versfeld in mid-October a very healthy number of the late-flowering *Lachenalia purpureocaerulea* were found. To date this is also the only known site in the Darling area.

The stand of *Geissorhiza darlingensis* in Tienie Versfeld this year was the best we have ever seen. The flower spikes were larger with more flowers per spike. This unusual geissorhiza with yellow flowers and a purple centre is only found at this site, flowering late September to early October. The population seems to be increasing as each year the area where they grow is larger.

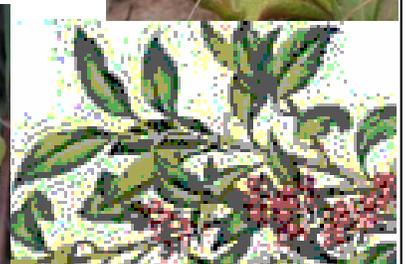


↓ *Lachenalia purpureocaerulea*

These are just a few of the highlights of our year, as each visit to a site always delivers something special. We thank the members of the CREW program at Kirstenbosch for their help, and the various landowners of Darling for allowing us to walk in their veld.

Helene Preston

↓ *Geissorhiza darlingensis*





News from the CREW Groups

Friends of Tygerberg

The Friends of the Tygerberg Hills CREW group have been wonderfully busy the last few months. Activities included a bimonthly CREW talk for all the Friends, a small CREW talk every other month just for the CREW group and then also several field outings throughout the area.

The biggest find in the Tygerberg Nature Reserve and also later at De Grendel was most certainly *Lachenalia liliflora*. It was thought that the last surviving population was destroyed in Durbanville last year, when the area was developed into a housing estate!

Another highlight included our visit to 6 BOD military site where we found several special species such as *Leucadendron levisanus*, *Chondropetalum rectum*, *Serruria aemula*, *Serruria trilobha*, *Lampranthus reptans* and *Diastella proteoides*.



↑ *Lachenalia liliflora*

We also visited a few new areas such as Backsberg, Klappmutskop and Meerendal where landowners are very keen to find out more about the special plants found in the Renosterveld fragments on their properties. Karen Marais especially did a lot of hard work throughout spring season regularly monitoring both the Uitkamp Wetland and the Durbanville Race Course and she also did an educational talk for the "Vroue-Landbou-Vereniging" on "Wildflowers found on our public open spaces".

Overall the Friends of the Tygerberg Hills CREW group definitely learnt a lot during this year through the field outings and talks and we look forward to keep on monitoring our area and creating greater public awareness on Renosterveld in the future.

Ince Erasmus *Pterygodium cruciferum* at the Durbanville Racecourse ↓



↑ FOT at the 6BOD military base



Fourcade Botanical Group

The FBG has continued with its monthly plant sampling trips in the area between the Kabeljous and Gamtoos Rivers. The area has been experiencing a most devastating drought and our trips have not been all that interesting. However, we have recorded a few interesting things such as *Gasteria nitida* and *Haworthia* spp, and on 29 April this year we located more than 20 plants of *Kniphofia citrina*.



Kniphofia citrina →

The area where we have been working is to be developed, and thanks to CREW the information that we have recorded has been sent to the firm busy with the EIA. Lets hope the development will be sympathetic towards the plants and perhaps it will become the Gateway to the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve.

On 2 November the area mentioned above was very badly burnt, as were vast areas of the Tsitsikamma to the east and the van Stadens River area to the west. Some good rain followed this so our next sampling trip should be more exciting.

Jennifer Gouza has started an eco club with local children and has been doing some interesting things with them that tie in very nicely with their school syllabus. The children are very excited about their camp in early December with the CREW from Cape Town and some of us (can't say we're excited...I think apprehensive is the word to use!).

Caryl Logie



↑ From left: Caryl, Caitlin, Bart and Tilla at St Francis bay
← Ismail and Jennifer doing an activity with the children from the eco club





News from the CREW Groups

Harmony Flats Working Group

The year started for us by meeting the new student, Elzanne Burger, working with the City and Cape Flats Nature. We started off the usual way by doing our planning for the year and looking at the various activities that needed to take place at the reserve. The highlight of the year was being invited to the CAPE Fynbos Fynmense conference, which was held at the Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden in July 2005. We presented our video made by George Davis of SANBI, which told a story of our appreciation and wonderful memories of Harmony Flats and our determination to conserve it. The video was a real success and it was voted as one of the top five presentations. The Harmony Flats Working Group was also awarded a CAPE certificate of appreciation for the good work that the group has done in helping to manage and conserve the Harmony Flats Nature Reserve. A couple of members of the group even featured on Helderberg Radio where they discussed their work.

We had our annual arbour week programme between the 29th August and 1st September this year. After some initial hiccups we managed to have a successful programme. The activities included tours through the reserve to learn about some of the special plants at the reserve, a competition for the kids with interesting prizes for them to win and tree planting on the edges of the reserve. We had a total of 10 schools and about 300 kids attending the programme.

CREW organised a series of ecology courses for the group to help us understand the importance of the reserve and the processes that make it special. We learnt about the ecology of fynbos-how fynbos is adapted to drought, fire and other conditions; and plant-animal interactions. The course included a tour of the Kirstenbosch nursery and demonstration of horticultural techniques.

We will be preparing ourselves for a busy 2006. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism has approved funds to be spent at the Harmony Flats Nature Reserve for infrastructure development. It will include a resource centre, nursery structure, play park for the kids and upgrading of the fence and paths on the reserve. The container that will serve as the resource centre (herbarium and educational centre) has already arrived. The new infrastructure will be used to attract the community and tourists to come and enjoy the Harmony Flats Nature Reserve.

Ixia versicolor at the Harmony Flats Nature Reserve →
Harmony Flats Working Group at Kirstenbosch ↓



Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Group

This year was a busy one for the Nieuwoudtville Eco Club. The Biodiversity Facilitators held a Winter School in July 2005. Many different activities were offered to children and adults in the course of one week. Special highlights were the workshop: how to make you own garden and the excursion to the Wildflower Reserve.

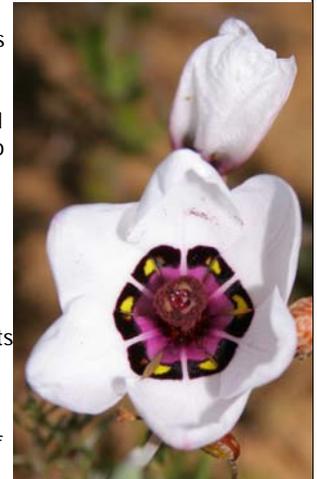
The "Nieuwoudtville Top 10" poster has been finalized and printed. It describes 10 special plants of Nieuwoudtville, where to find them and special features. It will be distributed to local schools and used for awareness-raising in the local community.

In some excursions the Biodiversity Facilitators realized that many children have some knowledge about local plants and their use: a great opportunity to learn from each other.

Another big task is to develop a map of Nieuwoudtville using a GPS and thus to mark the rare and endangered species in the municipal area on the map to help the municipality to manage their resources better.

The last big activity of the year is coming up: the Nieuwoudtville Summer School from the 5-8 December 2005. Much anticipated by young and old in Nieuwoudtville, the Summer School offers this year activities such as abseiling, talk about rare plants, excursions, nature movie and an art workshop. Then we will take a break to start the new year with new energy.

Donna Kotze, Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Facilitator (INDIGO development & change)



↑ *Sparaxis elegans*, one of Nieuwoudtville's 'top 10'



↑ *Geissorhiza splendissima*



↑ Lu-Anne and Donna (Biodiversity Facilitators) doing a monitoring exercise



← Eugene showing the children from the Eco Club how to make their own garden





News from the CREW Groups

Swellendam

The annual workshop was an inspiring event for us. The example set by other teams together with informative talks and discussions sustained our enthusiasm for the year ahead.

Fieldwork with the Kirstenbosch team every 6 weeks is always looked forward to especially in terms of seasonal plant identification. Having samples of pressed and correctly identified plants from CREW has been a huge help to us in putting the right names in our herbarium files.

It has been exciting to see the re-establishment of renosterveld on farms that have protected areas such as Sandkraal and Muurkraal and to appreciate what the floral diversity potential is-even more rewarding is to see the farmers enjoying it.

To see 5 or 6 different species of *Aspalathus* in one area as well as other members of the Fabaceae such as *Liparia striata*, *Xiphotheca guthriei* and *Polhillia* has been an amazing experience. Not to mention the variety of "Buchus" and "Mesembs" (*Agathosma foetidissima* and *Trichodiadema* being interesting examples).

Whilst gazing from the top of a koppie over agricultural lands in a magnificent landscape, one builds an awareness of the huge irreversible destruction of plants that has already taken place, and the importance of our work to conserve as much as possible of what is left is realised.

It has been satisfying to pass this awareness on to two school groups that have been taken on interpretive walks through Bontebok National Park.

Flora Cameron

↓ Swellendam CREW pressing plants at Plaaitjieskraal



↓ The glorious *Liparia striata* in full flower



Christi Kloppers and Caitlin relaxing in a field of *Agathosma foetidissima* after a hard day's work →



Tulbagh Renosterveld Project

The Tulbagh Renosterveld Project was one of the BP conservation award winners for 2005. The BP Conservation Programme (BPCP) - a collaborative project between BP, Birdlife International, Fauna & Flora International, Wildlife Conservation Society and Conservation International - supports and develops young conservationists addressing global conservation priorities on a local scale through its Conservation Awards. Young conservationists receive training and funding, enabling them to implement and build networks with BPCP partners. The 2005 Conservation Awards saw 390 applications with 28 projects selected.

The Tulbagh Renosterveld Project aims to map all the natural vegetation fragments and to get volunteers involved in sampling the fragments for threatened and endemic plants. The data we collect will be used to prioritise sites for conservation stewardship and to provide guidance for the municipalities on where the important sites for conservation are.

Highlights for 2005

After having a meeting with some of the interested people in the Tulbagh area we managed to 'recruit' some really keen volunteers. Gerhard, Norman, Rosette, Rupert and Trish have been the core group coming on the field trips. Hopefully we will get to meet them at the next CREW annual workshop.

We have made a concerted effort to create awareness amongst the landowners. The response has been excellent and one of the landowners has expressed interest in conserving his renosterveld by initiating negotiations with Cape Nature's Stewardship programme. Most of the landowners have been very positive and interested in our project.

We have had a really successful field season in Tulbagh this year. The Tulbagh Valley has a total of 46 threatened plant species. We focussed on visiting the biggest and most connected fragments first and found new populations of *Sparaxis grandiflora* subsp *grandiflora*, *Moraea villosa* subsp *villosa*, *Geissorhiza tulbagensis* and *Xiphotheca lanceolata*, to mention a few. The most exciting discovery was finding a new population *Ixia campanulata*, which is only known from two localities in the Tulbagh Valley. This species was thought to only flower after fire but we found the population in mature veld that is approximately 15 years old.



↑ *Sparaxis grandiflora* subsp *grandiflora*

Many thanks to our group of volunteers in the Tulbagh area for all their hard work and awesome enthusiasm.

Ismail Ebrahim

↓ Rupert and Gerhard at de Heuwel

