

# FORUM BOTANICUM

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NEWS-LETTER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOTANISTS  
NUUSBRIEF VAN DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE GENOOTSKAP VAN PLANTKUNDIGES

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JOHN HUTCHINSON: We learn with profound regret of the unexpectedly sudden death of the world-famous botanist, Dr. John Hutchinson, at the age of 88 years. He was for many years in charge of the African collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and later became Keeper of Museums at Kew. He retired voluntarily in 1948 to be free to write on botanical subjects of his choice. He was the author of numerous important botanical works. "A Botanist in Southern Africa" is an account of his two journeys in 1928 and 1930, during which he became a close friend of General Smuts. He was the last surviving contributor to Flora Capensis having written the Proteaceae in Vol. 5 with Dr. E.P. Phillips in 1912. Just after the First World War Dr. Hutchinson applied for the post of botanical assistant in the Bolus Herbarium, University of Cape Town, but subsequently was appointed to the staff of Kew. From a humble beginning in the Gardens he reached the pinnacle of botanical fame. He leaves a wife and two daughters, one of whom, Mrs. Vermeulen, lives in Cape Town. (R.A. Dyer & E.G.H.O.)

NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES: The National Committee for Environment met for the first time in June 1972 to launch the National Programme for Environmental Sciences. Its aims are:-

- (1) To take any action rounding off Phase III of the IBP (International Biological Programme).
- (2) Co-ordination of South African participation in the activities of SCOPE (Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment).
- (3) Consideration of South African participation in other international research programmes (for instance an invitation has been received to take part in

the IOC, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's GIPME programme Global Investigation on Pollution of the Marine Environment)).

- (4) Co-ordination of other research on pollution and environmental conservation on a broad basis, particularly when of national importance.
- (5) Co-ordination with the National Committee for Nature Conservation (NACOR) and co-ordination of research on nature conservation.
- (6) Advise the Department of Planning's South African Committee for Environmental Protection on technical aspects of pollution and environmental protection. The National Programme is at present divided into five divisions.

#### 1. Division of Inland Waters

The convener of the sub-committee is Mr. W.J.R. Alexander of the Department of Water Affairs. This sub-committee will organize a research programme covering all research on inland waters which does not fall under the administration of the Interdepartmental Co-ordinating Committee for Hydrology and thus includes all research on fresh water fish. Numerous working groups have been formed and these will deal with actual research.

- 1.1 Hydrochemical Working Group for the Orange River Project.  
(Convener: Mr. M.R. Henzen, National Institute for Water Research).
- 1.2 Mosquito - Aquatic Snail Working Group for the Orange River Project.  
(Convener: Professor B.C. Jansen, Veterinary Research Institute, Onderstepoort).
- 1.3 Hydrobiological Working Group for the Orange River Project.  
(Convener: Dr. R.G. Noble, CSIR).
- 1.4 Pongola System Research Working Group.  
(Convener: Mr. W.J.R. Alexander, Department of Water Affairs).
- 1.5 Working Group on the Wilderness Lakes.  
(Convener: Professor B.R. Allanson, Rhodes University).
- 1.6 Working Group on Aquatic Weeds.  
(Convener: Dr. G.J. Stander, Water Research Commission).

## 2. Division of Terrestrial Biology

The convener of the sub-committee is Dr. J.C. Strydom of the Department of Agricultural Technical Services. This sub-committee will organize selected topics dealing with pollution, environmental protection, ecosystem research, the productivity of terrestrial ecosystems, terrestrial animals and plants. Accent in particular is on aspects which can be taken up in the SCOPE Programme.

The following working groups have been organized:

### 2.1 Botanical Surveys in Conservation Areas.

(Convener: Dr. D. Edwards, Botanical Research Institute).

### 2.2 Rare and Threatened Plant Species.

(Convener: Dr. B. de Winter, Botanical Research Institute).

### 2.3 Plant Physiological Working Group.

(Convener: Professor N. Grobbelaar, University of Pretoria).

### 2.4 Ecosystem Research.

(Convener: Professor A.J. Pienaar, Department of Agricultural Technical Services).

### 2.5 Pesticides.

(Convener: Dr. I.H. Wiese, Plant Protection Research Institute).

### 2.6 Terrestrial Weeds.

(Convener: Dr. D.P. Annecke, Plant Protection Research Institute).

Other working groups will be formed later.

## 3. Division of Marine Pollution

A convener and sub-committee have not yet been appointed. The research will be planned to fit into international programmes like GIPME and particular attention will be paid to the transport of pollutants to the sea, and monitoring of pollutants in the sea.

## 4. Lower Atmosphere Division

Dr. S.P. Jackson of the University of the Witwatersrand is the convener of a sub-committee co-ordinating research on basic aspects of air pollution and environmental changes on the climate. Two working groups have been formed:-

4.1 Air Transport and Dispersion.

(Convener: Dr. J.K. Basson, Atomic Energy Board).

4.2 Urban Climatic Changes. (Convener: Dr. E.C. Halliday, CSIR).

5. Human Adaptability

The sub-committee (under the chairmanship of Mr. D.J.M. Vorster of the National Institute for Personnel Research) will concentrate on multi-disciplinary research on ethnic groups in transition from rural to urban forms of life.

SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SCIENCE: As from 1st September 1972 the S.A. Journal of Science, official journal of the S.A. Association for the Advancement of Science, has been taken over by Macmillans Journals, the publishers of Nature. Members of S<sub>2</sub>A<sub>3</sub> will continue to receive the journal, at a much reduced rate.

The new editor, Dr. Graham Baker, has arrived in the Republic and has offices in Johannesburg. He is a young Oxford graduate and a solid state physicist. He is most enthusiastic about the journal which will continue in its present form until January 1973 when the "new-look" journal will appear. This will be modelled on Nature and will certainly be a great advance on the South African scientific scene.

DR. STEVEN TIM, formerly of Rhodes University, Grahamstown, will take up an appointment at the beginning of this month at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York. Dr. Tim will initially be involved with the educational programme for which the Brooklyn Garden is world-famous.

DR. P. TYLER of the Department of Botany, University of Tasmania has recently been in South Africa for a short visit following the meetings of the Limnological Society of South African in Malawi. He is an authority on the Desmidiaceae but has also worked on bacterial oxidation of manganese and iron. He gave several most interesting lectures on Limnology at various centres.

BIOSYSTEMATICS CONGRESS: An international congress is being organised for biosystematists in Boulder, Colorado, USA from August 1973.

On application from the Council of SAAB, South African Airways offer a 14-21 day excursion from Jan Smuts Airport, Johannesburg to Denver, Colorado, USA. for a minimum of 15 people who must remain together in one group.

Airfare is R719-30 minus R45-00, i.e. R674-30. R149-00 must be spent in the USA. This can be on accommodation and congress fees. Six stops are allowed and the following have tentatively been agreed upon:- Jan Smuts - Rio de Janeiro - New York - Denver - Boston - London - Paris - Frankfurt (or another) - Jan Smuts.

Those interested in taking part should contact the Secretary, Dr. A. Eicker, Dept. Algemene Plantkunde, Universiteit van Pretoria.

Council is approaching the Zoological Society inviting them to participate in this group tour.

In regard to group tours to congresses overseas, Council has asked Mrs. E.P. du Plessis to investigate the possibility of a group attending the International Botanical Congress in Leningrad.

WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINED BOTANISTS: At the recent Council meeting the following committee was appointed to investigate this whole problem:- Prof. O.A.M. Lewis (convener), Mrs. E.P. du Plessis, Dr. F.M. Getliffe and Mr. J.P. Jessop. A questionnaire is to be circulated.

COUNCIL OF SAAB.: A meeting of Council was held on 19th August at the University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein and was attended by Dr. J.A. Coetzee (for Prof. J.G.C. Small), Prof. C.F. Cresswell, Dr. B. de Winter, Mrs. E.P. du Plessis, Dr. A. Eicker, Dr. J.N. Eloff, Dr. F.M. Getliffe, Dr. A. Jacot-Guillarmod, Dr. O.A. Leistner, Prof. O.A.M. Lewis, Prof. M.C. Papendorp, and Prof. H.P. van der Schijff with apologies from Dr. L.E. Codd, Prof. M.P. de Vos, Mr. E.G.H. Oliver, Prof. J.G.C. Small.

The next Council Meeting is to take place on 3rd February, 1973 in the Botany Department, University of Durban, Westville.

SOUTH WEST AFRICAN ADMINISTRATION, NATURE CONSERVATION & TOURISM: The Botanical Section comprises two Professional Officers.

Mr. C.J.G. le Roux (Senior Prof. Officer) is presently engaged in a project on the "Plant Ecology of the Etosha National Game Reserve". The purpose of the study is to map and describe the vegetation types and to explain the present veld conditions. Almost half of the area has already been mapped accurately allowing for elementary planning to be carried out. Other grazing experiments such as productivity limitations in certain grassland areas are being studied. An additional project is planned to determine the influence of "out-of-season" grazing on summer rainfall areas.

Mr. W. Jankowitz is busy with a project on the distribution of the genus *Aloe* in the Luderitz, Warmbad and Bethanie districts. The project is almost completed and it is hoped to publish the results next year.

Attention is also being given to a nature garden for South West Africa. The garden is situated in Windhoek and covers about 10,5 hectare. The final aim is to divide the garden into geographical regions in which only plants indigenous to the territory will be planted. The planning for the garden has been done by Mr. Hans Herre, formerly Curator of the University Botanic Gardens, Stellenbosch.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CONGRESSES: On instruction from SAAB Council, members' opinions are being sought on the matter of congress planning, to determine the most acceptable type of congress. Questionnaires were sent to members and so far the response has been particularly encouraging. Please return your questionnaire, duly completed, if you have not already done so.

ELEVENTH ALEX DU TOIT MEMORIAL LECTURE in published form is now available. It is entitled "Three-thousand million years of plant life in Africa" and is by Dr. Edna Plumstead of Johannesburg. It has been published jointly by the S<sub>2</sub>A<sub>3</sub>, the Geological Society, the South African Geographical Society and the Royal Society of South Africa as an Annexure to Vol. LXXII of the Journal of the Geological Society.

Copies of this valuable work (the only full published account of the South African fossil flora) may be obtained at R2-00 per copy from:-

- a) Hon. Sec. of Geological Society of S.A.  
Department of Geology  
University of the Witwatersrand  
JOHANNESBURG.