

FORUM BOTANICUM

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

SAAB (EASTERN CAPE): The branch consists of 22 members in the three university centres of Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown and Alice. Because of the large distances between these centres, it was decided at a meeting in August, 1972 not to hold any regular meetings during a year but to combine them into a single meeting to be held at the time of the Annual General Meeting in the form of an "open day" to be held in turn at one of the three universities. Due to the lack of a head in the department at the University of Fort Hare, it was felt that Alice could not do justice to an "open day" and so the University of Port Elizabeth acted as host for 1974.

The Annual General Meeting of the branch was held in Port Elizabeth on Saturday, 18th May. The following were elected to serve on the committee:- Prof. J.G.C. Small, Chairman, Dr. M.C. Olivier, Hon. Sec./Treasurer, Mr. D. Ferreira (Alice), Dr. A. Jacot-Guillarmod (Grahamstown), Miss. S. Troughton. Mrs. Auriol Batten of East London, joined during the year and Mr. Ott of Uitenhage was regarded as having left the Association.

During the year the co-ordinating Council for Nature Conservation in the Eastern Cape was formed and Dr. A. Jacot-Guillarmod represented SAAB at the inaugural meeting. It was agreed the Eastern Cape Branch of SAAB should become a member of the Council and that Dr. M.C. Olivier should be the representative with Mrs. N.R. Urton as her alternate. This Council has the same aims and ideals as the one in Cape Town and is giving attention to the following matters: (1) River mouths and estuaries, (2) St. Croix Island, (3) the Baakens Valley Freeway, and (4) Coastal marine reserves.

SAAB - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at 17h10 on Tuesday, 2nd July, at Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Notices and the Agenda have been circulated to all members. Several amendments to the Constitution have been proposed by Council covering two irregularities

in the composition of the Council and the changing of the date of the Annual General Meeting to coincide with the proposed holding of congresses at the beginning of each year.

The main Council meeting will be held on the same day at 11 am.

MISS PHYLLIS EDWARDS, Librarian of the Department of Botany in the British Museum (Natural History) paid a very brief visit to Grahamstown after her short stay in Cape Town. In Grahamstown she stayed with Prof. and Mrs. Gledhill and met local botanists and librarians at an informal social evening, renewing old acquaintances in many cases.

BOTANISTS HONOURED: The Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns recently announced the winners of 10 annual academy awards in the Arts and Science.

The Havenga Prize for Biology was awarded to Prof. Miriam de Vos, associate professor in the Department of Botany at the University of Stellenbosch.

A special prize for his botanical research in the Mesembryanthemaceae went to Dr. Hans Herre former Curator of the University Botanic Gardens, Stellenbosch.

PROF. S.C. SEAGRIEF until recently associate professor in the Department of Botany, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, and acting head since the retirement of Prof. Twyman, has now been appointed to the chair of botany.

PROFESSOR EGIL RAMSTAD is visiting professor for a year in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. He has come from Ife-Ife, Nigeria, where he is Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy in the university there. He was previously Professor of Pharmacognosy at Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, U.S.A. and prior to that was acting chairman of pharmacognosy at the University of Oslo, in his native land, Norway.

His research interests have centred from the beginning around plants and micro-organisms. His earliest work included studies of plant anatomy and since then he has branched out to study the nature and origin of drugs of natural origin. He is hoping to extend investigations into the flora of South Africa with a view to finding new compounds of medicinal value. He is also joining in with the department to which he is attached at Rhodes University, in research into natural products, both phytochemical and biogenetic.

A lecture tour of South African departments of pharmacy at both universities and technical institutions is being planned. Anyone interested should write to

Professor Ramstad at Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown 6140, as soon as possible.

SCIENTIFIC LIAISON OFFICER: The Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria, has one of its officers stationed at the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England, for a period of two to three years to act as liaison officer for the Institute.

The present incumbent is Dr. J.H. Ross formerly of the Botanical Research Unit in Durban. He will be returning to Head Office at the end of this month and his place will be taken by Mr. H.R. Tölken from Pretoria.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA: The Society is planning a field trip through the Little Karoo to the Knysna Forests from 13th to 19th July. The excursion leader will be Prof. H.B. Rycroft, Director of the National Botanic Gardens and Vice-President of the Society. It is planned to combine this tour with the annual field trip of the final year botany students from the University of Cape Town. The tour will encompass the main vegetation types of the Southern Cape e.g. fynbos, Karoo and forest.

RHODESIA - YEAR OF THE TREE: 1975 has been chosen as the Year of the Tree in Rhodesia when it is hoped at least three million trees will be planted in Tribal Trust Lands, and is sponsored by the Y.F.C. (Youth for Conservation). As the symbol for the Year they have chosen that ubiquitous tree of Southern Africa - the Australian Gum! The gum is considered the best for next year's purpose because it provides poles and firewood, is fairly drought resistant and grows quickly. The gum can grow into a useful tree in six to seven years, whereas indigenous trees can take 50 to 100 years to each maturity!

POSTS VACANT: The Botanical Research Institute in Pretoria has two vacancies for technicians in the Botanical Survey Section. Either male or female persons may apply and will be required to do background work of projects planned by professional officers of the section. Matriculants will have to complete the National Diploma for Technicians, while employed by the Institute.

Salary Scale: R2280 - 2400 x 150 - R4200. Starting salary with B.Sc. - R2700. At present this is augmented by a 15% allowance.

Those interested should apply to the Director, Botanical Research Institute, Private Bag X101, Pretoria, 0001.

EDITORS/REDAKSIE

Mrs. E.P. du Plessis, CSIR, Pretoria. (Until 30 June, 1974)
Mr. E.G.H. Oliver, Bot. Research Unit, Stellenbosch