

FORUM BOTANICUM

Vol. 12, No. 7

July, 1974
Julie 1974

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

EDITORS OF FORUM: This month sees a change in the editors. Mrs. Enid du Plessis announced her resignation at the Council meeting in February to be effective from the beginning of July.

During the twelve years existence of Forum Botanicum there have only been three co-editors. Enid du Plessis joined Dr. J.P. Jessop in March, 1967 on my transfer to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. At this stage Forum was a private publication sponsored by the National Botanic Gardens, Kirstenbosch. In October 1968 it became the official newsletter of the newly formed S.A.A.B.

From the time of Dr. Jessop's resignation in 1970, Mrs. du Plessis has borne the unenviable part of the editorship very ably - that of getting the news and information. The writing and reproducing of Forum in Stellenbosch is far less taxing on one despite the often shoestring of information. In many cases Enid du Plessis has remarked that getting news for Forum out of the South African botanical world is like the proverbial blood out of a stone.

I can definitely say that without her dynamic personality and enthusiasm for Forum, this newsletter would not have come out as it has during the past few years. I shall miss very much her unique personality in Forum affairs but know that she will in the future still be as keenly interested in its wellbeing as she always has been.

Mrs. du Plessis' side of editorship has been taken over by a "triumvirate" of Miss M. Welman, Miss S. Zwanziger and Mr. N. Pienaar on the staff of the Botanical Research Institute in Pretoria. They will be responsible for collecting all news and information. It is hoped that their task will not be as difficult as that of Mrs. du Plessis and that botanists will be forthcoming with news and information about themselves, visitors, their departments or institutes. Don't accuse those who send in news as trumpetblowers when you are too lazy to write anything yourself!

Please communicate with any of the three abovementioned persons at the following

address:- The Editors
Forum Botanicum
c/o Botanical Research Institute
Private Bag X101
PRETORIA
0001

DEPARTEMENT VAN PLANTKUNDE, UNIVERSITEIT VAN STELLENBOSCH: Die Universiteit van Stellenbosch het in 1974 met twee nuwe kursusse in biologie begin. Die een kursus, Biologie (Geneeskunde) ressorteer onder die Departement Dierkunde, maar word aangebied deur die departemente van Plantkunde en Dierkunde en die Departement Mikrobiologie van die Fakulteit Geneeskunde. Hierdie kursus is bedoel vir eerstejaarstudente in die Fakulteit van Geneeskunde en Tandheelkunde. Die ander kursus, Biologie, ressorteer onder die Departement Plantkunde en word aangebied deur die Departemente Plantkunde en Dierkunde. Hierdie kursus is bedoel vir die studente in Landbou en in Bosbou.

Vanaf vanjaar kan studente uit die Fakulteite van Landbou en Bosbou Botanie II as twee afsonderlike vakke behandel. Hul kan die een helfte as Plantmorfologie (Algemene Plantkunde of Botanie IIA) en die ander helfte as Plantfisiologie (Botanie IIB) volg en afskrywe.

Die studentegetalle is vanjaar soos volg:

Biologie (Geneeskunde)	-	219
Biologie	-	108
Botanie I	-	105
Botanie II	-	23
Botanie IIB (plantfisiologie)		9
Botanie III	-	20
Honneurs	-	2
M.Sc.	-	8
Ph.D.	-	4

DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE: The campus is situated on the Cape Flats at Bellville South, almost halfway between Cape Town and Stellenbosch and caters for the needs of the Coloured population.

The Botany Department this year has 123 first-year students, 17 second-year and 22 third-year. There is a single honours student and no research students at present.

PROFESSOR NANCY VAN SCHAİK has been appointed to the newly-established chair of genetics at the University of the Witwatersrand. She is the third woman to be given a full-time chair at the university. She assumes duty in January next year.

Prof. van Schaik who was born in the United States, came to the Republic in 1954

and has been associated ever since with the Department of Genetics at Pretoria University - as part-time or temporary lecturer, lecturer and then senior lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture. She was recently appointed to an associate professorship in genetics. She is a widow with two sons.

PROF. MERXMÜLLER VISITS S.W.A.: From the end of February, 1974, to the beginning of April Prof. Herman Merxmüller of the Botanische Staatssammlung in München paid his fourth visit to South West Africa. In a lecture to the South West African Scientific Society in Windhoek he talked about the role of the amateur botanist. Mention was made of the help which the Botanische Staatssammlung received from an amateur collector with their new revision of *Criminum* in S.W.A. which is at present being undertaken.

Prof. Merxmüller, Mr. Willy Giess and his wife undertook a collecting expedition of about five weeks to the Waterberg, the Grootfontein area, the Kaokoveld and the Namib north of Swakopmund. In most areas the veld was in exceptional condition. In the Waterberg the grass stood over 1,5 m in parts, ferns were plentiful and near a fountain *Adenostemma caffra* (Asteraceae) was found in full flower. Near Grootfontein they collected the first record of *Cucumis humifructus*, the aardvark cucumber with spherical subterranean edible fruits about the size of a tennis ball.

In the Kaokoveld they were joined by Mr. W. Jankowitz, botanist of the Department of Nature Conservation and Tourism of S.W.A. and Mr. Rolf Kasselt. On a granite dome near Kamanjab *Lefeburea upingtoniae* (Apiaceae) and a species of *Xerophyta* were collected. Near the Kunene the new species of *Rogeria* related to *R. adenophylla* growing almost 2 m high was covered with large yellow and red flowers.

In the riverine vegetation many interesting and possibly new plants were collected including *Priva auricoccea* with attractive pink flowers which were unknown until now. Near the great Omabzu fountain two species of *Caralluma* were found, one with small flowers, similar to *C. peschii*. In the southern Kaokoveld rich material of the newly described monotypic *Phluctidocarpa flava* (Apiaceae) was collected. *Brachiaria psammophila*, normally rare, was frequent in the Möwe Bay area. Excellent rains had also fallen in the Erongo Mountains where Cyperaceae were growing in profusion and collections were made of *Utricularia arenaria*, *Ramphicarpa fistulosa*, *Eragrostis viscosa*, *Limosella grandiflora* and *Lindernia intrepida*.

On the 6th of April they returned to Windhoek with almost 800 collections and Prof. Merxmüller flew back to Germany on the 9th.

SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR QUATERNARY RESEARCH: The biennial SASQUA conference will be held from 31st May to 3rd June 1975 at the South African Museum, Cape Town, coinciding with the Museum's Jubilee celebrations and immediately preceding the annual congress of the Southern African Museums Association. The theme of the conference will be "Recent Progress in later Cenozoic studies in Southern Africa".

One session of the meeting will be devoted to Quaternary shorelines and fluctuations if speakers to be invited from the INQUA Shorelines Commission are able to come. Another will be on the palaeo-ecology of the southern Cape. Further sessions will be concerned with progress reports on current research in the Republic of South Africa, and neighbouring territories and with reviews of particular fields of study. This should give ample scope for multidisciplinary participation with a focus on later Cenozoic environments.

It is proposed that conference sessions be interspersed with field excursions. Thus, presentation of papers will take place on Saturday 31st May, Monday 2nd June and, possibly, the afternoon of Wednesday 4th June. Excursions are planned for Sunday 1st June and Tuesday 3rd June. One excursion will be to the Melkbos area, 50 Km from Cape Town, where there are palaeontological and archaeological occurrences as well as exposures of sequences of coastal sediments, including fossil soil horizons. The second excursion will be to the Saldanha area with the opportunity to visit Langebaanweg palaeontological site and further marine sequences. In addition, the Council of SASQUA will meet on Friday 30th May and a business meeting of SASQUA will be held during the conference.

Provisional titles of papers to be read at the conference should be supplied as soon as possible. At a later stage copies of papers will be requested in order that they may be duplicated and circulated prior to the conference. Subsequent publication of papers through the South African Museum is planned. Acceptance of contributions for publication will, however, depend upon referees' reports.

Conference fees will be as follows: Members - R2-00; Non-members - R5-00. The cost of the excursions will be extra and will be communicated to participants in due course.

All correspondence should be addressed to Mrs. Margaret Leakey, Organizing Secretary, SASQUA Conference, South African Museum, P.O. Box 61, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa.

FIRST NATIONAL WEEDS CONFERENCE: This conference will be held on 13-14 August, 1974, in the Agrivaal Building, Hamilton Street, Pretoria. It will be opened officially by Dr. W.A. Verbeek, Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Technical Services and involves 21 speakers, several of whom are S.A.A.B. members. A report in Forum will follow the conference.

MEMO TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE OF THE CSIR:

As a result of attending the recent Braun Blanquet course at Naboomspruit and Pretoria - which was jointly sponsored (organized) by the CSIR and Botanical Research Institute - we have unanimously decided to approach the National Committee for Environmental Sciences with a firm suggestion that similar workshops be organized on an annual or, at least, biennial basis. These workshops serve the invaluable function of bringing together people from all over the Republic who have similar interests and backgrounds, and it allows them to meet and to work on and discuss problems of mutual interest.

With increasing pressures on our natural environment there is a general recognition of the need to study the environment so that it may be managed as wisely as possible. We in the Republic have much to learn in the field of plant ecology, from other countries. Some of this learning is through the literature and some by overseas study. We have now arrived at a point where it may be necessary to reconsider ways and means of updating local ecological expertise. Obviously overseas travel is important, but in some instances workshops conducted by local experts and/or overseas experts specially funded for the purpose will, we are sure, benefit more people. Not only will we improve the level of expertise we will also improve the level of contact between plant ecologists in South Africa.

At the recent Braun Blanquet course the participants were from the Botanical Research Institute, Departments of Nature Conservation, post graduate students, and University lecturers - all of whom learnt from the other. As University lecturers we found the course particularly stimulating as it allowed us to up-date our thinking in regard to the Braun Blanquet method, and this will obviously have an impact on our teaching and hence on the new generation of plant ecologists.

We would, therefore, strongly recommend, that thought be given to the holding of more workshops in the future. In fact we would strongly urge that future workshops be organized, at least every two years, on some aspects of applied ecology. This will also bring us into direct contact with the people who are applying the knowledge that we have taught, and it gives us the regular opportunity of mutual discussion. In such a small country (population-wise) we need to have such regular meetings and if these are not arranged we tend to stay in our own areas - isolated.

As far as the workshops are concerned we suggest that these are conducted by some local or overseas expert, that consideration be given to rotating the venue through the veld types, that a suitable time is late March/April, and that participants be selected from Universities, Nature Conservation Departments, Botanical Research Institutes and other allied ecological organizations. We also feel that the actual organization of these workshops should be the responsibility of a committee under the auspices of CSIR and Botanical Research Institute - we see these two as the apex bodies.

As regards possible future topics we suggest:-

- (a) Soils for plant ecologists
- (b) Sampling methods and sample sizes
- (c) Ecological approach to landscape planning - the integration of basic information
- (d) Productivity.

This memorandum was submitted to the Council of S.A.A.B. with the recommendation that S.A.A.B. act as organisers.

Memo compiled by: Dr. E.J. Moll, University of Cape Town; Dr. G. Theron, University of Pretoria; Dr. R. Lubke and Mr. J. Tew, University of the Witwatersrand.

POS IN UNIVERSITEIT BOTANIESE TUIN, STELLENBOSCH: Mnr. H. Meyer wat sedert 1933 verbonde is aan die Botaniese Tuin van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, het in 1973 die aftree-ouderdom bereik en is vanjaar weer tydelik in sy pos aangestel. Mnr. Meyer wat 'n veelsydige tuinier is, het na die aftrede van dr. Herre hom op die versorging van die vetplante toegelê.

Applikasies vir sy pos word ingewag deur die Registrateur tot 12 September 1974. Applikante moet 'n tuinboukundige opleiding en kennis en ervaring van die kweek en versorging van Suid-Afrikaanse vetplante hê.

Die salarisskaal is R2 700 x 150 - R4 800 x 300 - R5 100 plus 'n addisionele toelaag van 15%. Die Hoof van die Botaniese Tuin, prof. P.G. Jordaan, of die Registrateur sal op navraag graag verdere inligting verskaf.

=====

EDITORS/REDAKSIE

Mr. E.G.H. Oliver, Botanical Research Unit, Stellenbosch (Production)
Miss M. Welman, Miss S. Zwanziger, Mr. N. Pienaar, BRI, Pretoria (News)

CORRESPONDENCE/KORRESPONDENSIE

The Editors
Forum Botanicum
BRI, Private Bag X101
PRETORIA
0001