

FORUM BOTANICUM

Vol. 14, Nos. 10 & 11

November 1976

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

EDITORIAL: Due to the lack of news and support received from SAAB members it was not possible to produce an issue of Forum Botanicum in October. If matters continue as they have done for the last six months it might be necessary to produce Forum every second month. (E.G.H.O)

SAAB. COUNCIL: At recent Council meetings some of the following matters have been discussed:-

1. Block nominations: Changes are necessary in the Constitution to enable block nominations for the Executive to be made. This is to facilitate the day-to-day workings of SAAB through an Executive in one centre.
2. Recognition of outstanding work: Proposals about the S.A. Medal for Botany and other forms of recognition are being investigated.
3. Representative: Mr H.C. Taylor has been appointed as the SAAB representative on the Flora Conservation Committee of the Botanical Society, for 1976.
4. Amalgamation: Steps are being taken to combine the northern and southern Transvaal regions to form a single branch.
5. IAPP: Prof de Bruyn of Stellenbosch has been nominated as SAAB's representative on the International Association of Plant Physiologists until June 1979.
6. Congress: Discussions were held regarding the Congress in January 1977 in Durban and the delivering of papers. A subcommittee consisting of Dr Edwards (as Convenor), Dr de Winter, Prof Grobbelaar and Dr Getliffe was formed to investigate arrangements for Congresses and to set up guidelines for the future.
7. Congress 78: It has been unanimously agreed to hold the 1978 Congress together with the Grassland Society in Bloemfontein. A post-congress tour to Lesotho is envisaged.
8. National Journal: Subjects such as the name of such a journal, the composition of the editorial committee and the offer by the Botanical

Research Institute in regard to Bothalia have been discussed. A subcommittee consisting of Prof Lewis (as Convenor), Prof de Bruyn, Dr J.J.A. van der Walt and Dr E.J. Moll is to go into the Bothalia offer.

9. Publicity: A poster advertising SAAB has been finalised.
10. Permits: The President has been given authority to deal with recommendations from SAAB regarding the issue of collecting permits to bona fide botanists.
11. Congratulations: Council sent congratulations to Prof R.H. Compton, an Honorary Member of the Association, on the publication of his **Flora of Swaziland** on his 90th birthday.
12. New Member: Mrs P. Ferrar, University of the Witwatersrand, was accepted as a member.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Towards the beginning of this year the Department of Agricultural Technical Services set up a committee to advise it on botanical matters, the Department being the one responsible for botany in the Government.

Thus far the Committee has met twice at the Botanical Research Institute in Pretoria to discuss a wide range of topics. The Committee consists of Dr B. de Winter (as Convenor), Dr D.J.B. Killick and Dr D. Edwards of the Botanical Research Institute, Dr H.A. Lückhoff of the Department of Forestry, Prof H.B. Rycroft of the National Botanic Gardens, Mr P. le Roux of the Interprovincial Nature Conservation Committee, and representing SAAB Prof O.A. Lewis, Prof C.F. Cresswell, Prof N. Grobbelaar, Prof M.C. Papendorf, Prof E.A. Schelpe and Prof H. van der Schijff, Mr P. van Wyk of the National Parks Board with Dr O.A. Leistner as Hon. Secretary.

The Committee formed three subcommittees to deal with various aspects of botany as follows:

Herbarium Subcommittee: Dr de Winter (as Convenor), Prof Rycroft, Prof Schelpe and Dr Leistner

Ecology Subcommittee: Dr Edwards (as Convenor), Mr van Wyk and Dr Lückhoff

Physiology Subcommittee: Dr de Winter (as Convenor), Prof Cresswell, Prof Grobbelaar and Prof Lewis.

The Herbarium Subcommittee met in Durban at the Botanical Research Unit in July. By invitation, Profs T. Steinke and T Villiers and Dr B. Noel attended to discuss the position and future of the Natal Herbarium. It was decided that a need existed for a regional herbarium in Natal and that it was best placed in Durban. The present housing of the herbarium

should be modernised, fireproofed and have air-conditioning. The staff should be increased slightly to cope with the work.

Discussions were also held on regional herbaria in general. It was concluded that these are an essential part of the botanical information and research organisation and were best placed as part of the Botanical Research Institute and that they should where possible and advisable be placed in or near regional botanic gardens.

JOHN P.H. ACOCKS has been honoured by SAAB with the awarding of the South African Medal for Botany which is awarded solely on the grounds of outstanding botanical research. Mr Acocks well-known in this country and overseas for his classic Veld Types of South Africa, recently retired from his full-time post with the Botanical Research Institute but has been re-engaged to re-write it for a completely revised edition. He was recently also awarded a Gold Medal by the Wild Life Society for his contributions towards conservation.

COL H.A. BAKER died on 11th September in Cape Town. He was co-author of the book, *Ericas in Southern Africa* and author of several papers describing new species in the genus Erica.

Col Hugh Baker was born in Britain in 1896 and joined the Royal Engineers full-time. He was stationed in China, Israel, Nigeria and France. After retiring at the end of the Second World War he settled in the Cape where he became interested in the local flora from a horticultural angle concentrating mainly on geophytic species.

His interest in Ericaceae was aroused by Capt T.M. Salter who suggested that he collect Ericaceae to replenish the partially damaged collections of the British Museum. This collecting turned into an absorbing interest for Col Baker until shortly before his death. His collections are housed in the British Museum, Bolus Herbarium and National Herbarium, Pretoria. His private set of specimens was given to the Compton Herbarium, Kirstenbosch.

SOUTH AFRICAN PROTEA PRODUCERS AND EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION: Sappex is a body which was founded eleven years ago to foster the interests of commercial growers of proteas in South Africa. The Association is based in the south-western Cape where the majority of producers are active.

Protea growing, particularly for the cut-flower trade, is becoming increasingly commercialised due to the recent upsurge in the value of local sales

and exports. In 1973/74 the export of protea cut flowers totalled R342 000 while in the 10 months up to April 1976 it totalled R1 142 000. Added to this are the local sales on the market in Johannesburg and Cape area making a possible R3 000 000 for 1975. Most of the exported flowers are represented by proteas and other indigenous flowers, including rising exports of dried flowers. It is expected that the export of indigenous flowers with proteas in particular will soon become a useful earner of foreign currency for South Africa.

Flowers picked for the trade come from either open veld on farms or from cultivated orchards. With the increase in handling costs and the increase in quality requirements more and more suppliers are turning to large orchards of selected forms and varieties. However in the case of continuing picking from wild populations, conservation aspects have become very important.

In connection with this new "industry" the Department of Agricultural Technical Services has established a Protea Research Unit of the Horticultural Research Institute based near Stellenbosch. Here the staff under Mr G. Brits are dealing with the cultural, breeding and selection aspects.

WHATS NEW IN PHYSIOLOGY is the title of a monthly newsletter sent out by the International Association of Plant Physiologists. Council has decided that these be duplicated and be sent out to members of SAAB with Forum Botanicum. A batch of three will be sent out in December.

PROTEA GIFT: Recently Mr & Mrs Frank Batchelor of Stellenbosch gave their well-known 35ha farm "Protea Heights" to the South African Nature Foundation. For many years now this flower farm has concentrated on the production of many species of Proteaceae for the flower trade. Selection of good forms has been one of Mr Batchelor's absorbing interests. In handing over the farm to Dr Anton Rupert, chairman of the Foundation; he knows that his lifelong work will be continued under the supervision of Dr G Jacobs of the Department of Horticulture at the University of Stellenbosch.

VACANCY: A vacant technical assistant post in the Botany Department, University of Port Elizabeth, exists. The minimum qualification is a BSc - degree or equivalent. The salary scale is:

3300 x 180 - 5100 x 2400 - 5340// x 240 - 6300 plus 10% pensionable allowance

Applications should be addressed to the Registrar University of Port Elizabeth P O Box 1600 Port Elizabeth 6000.

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