

# FORUM BOTANICUM

Vol. 15, No. 1

January 1977  
Januarie

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

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DR MARY AGARD POCOCK :- On December 31st., 1976, Dr Pocock celebrated her ninetieth birthday in Grahamstown. No longer active botanically, she is nevertheless one of those who has contributed greatly to South African botany and to botanical renown of this country overseas.

Her main line of work has always been algology, especially South African seaweeds and the green algae of fresh water. Her fame is perhaps more widespread overseas than in this country, especially for her studies on Volvox and Haematococcus. Besides studying algae intensively, Dr Pocock had a deep interest in ferns, principally the genus Ophioglossum. In 1925/26, with one or two companions, Dr Pocock made a trip, mainly on foot, from Rhodesia across Angola to the port of Luanda. This months' long journey gave her the opportunity to collect many interesting and rare specimens and to make careful yet artistic studies of these and the scenery, in water colours. This collection, part of which is in Rhodes University Herbarium, together with the paintings, produced some new species.

While acting as head of the Department of Botany at Rhodes University, Dr Pocock was instrumental, with Miss E. Archibald, in founding the university herbarium (1942). This, started as a student teaching herbarium to supplement the Albany Museum Herbarium, now houses over 25 000 sheets and the archives include Dr Pocock's notebooks of her Rhodesian and Angolan trips, unpublished reports of expeditions made to the Swartberg, etc., and a volume of photographs of tree studies, as well as her water colour sketches of Angolan plants.

Periodically, Dr Pocock would take off into orbit on a 'Round-the-World-in-365-days' trip, to visit her many colleagues and friends in algological work and her scattered family. The coming of the aeroplane made it easier for her to scrape up a little dust from a hollow in a rock at Stonehenge ('for culturing - there's sure to be Haematococcus in it') or to wade deep into the Tasman Sea to collect seaweeds off the coast of New Zealand.

She holds the Crisp Medal of the Linnean Society (awarded 1957), is an FLS and FRSSA, as well as having been awarded, Honoris Causa, the degree of D.Sc. by Rhodes University in 1967 and having received many other distinctions.

The South African Association of Botanists can be proud to acknowledge Dr Pocock as one of its first Honorary Life Members! (A. Jacot-Guillarmod)

INDIGENOUS WOOD AUCTIONS:- Public auctions of indigenous wood from the forests of the southern Cape were held in October last year at ten different depots of the Department of Forestry.

These annual auctions are the only opportunity that the furniture industry has for obtaining material of indigenous wood in the southern Cape. These auctions have been held since the beginning of this century but were temporarily halted in 1938 when the forests were closed due to indiscriminate exploitation. After the Second World War the sales were resumed.

During the last sale the Minister of Forestry, Mr A J Raubenheimer and the Chief Director of Forest Industry of the Department of Forestry were present at one of the depots and acted as auctioneers. At this auction the record prices for stinkwood and yellowwood were obtained. Five stinkwood blocks from a single tree were sold for R11 525.

The total volume of wood sold in 1976 was 1 948,15 m<sup>3</sup>. The highest prices realised were:- Stinkwood (Ocotea bullata) R3 600 per m<sup>3</sup>, Yellowwood (Podocarpus latifolius) R700 per m<sup>3</sup> and Yellowwood (Podocarpus falcatus) R320 per m<sup>3</sup>.

SUCCULENTA 1978: This is the title of the Second International Succulent Plant Congress to be held in Southern Africa. It is planned for July 1978 at a venue in South Africa.

DRAKENSBERG BOTANIC GARDEN:- Botanists, but especially Taxonomists wishing to get familiar with high altitude flora are advised to visit this Botanic Garden during summer months. Brochures and enquiries are obtainable from the Curator, A van der Zeyde. Address: P O Box 157, Harrismith. Telephone: 3804.

FLORA OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, Vol 22 (1976) published by the Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria, and containing revisions of the families Flacourtiaceae, Passifloraceae, Begoniaceae, Clusiaceae etc, is available at R8,60, post free, from the Department of Agricultural Technical Services, Division of Agricultural Information, Private Bag X144, Pretoria.

BOTANICAL ART: The Hunt Botanical Institute is organising another international exhibition of botanical art to be held sometime during 1977. They have successfully held similar exhibitions in their short existence. The paintings exhibited

are from their own extensive collections of contemporary botanical art for which the Institute is trying to build up as complete a collection as possible. A number of amateur and professional botanical artists from South Africa are already represented in the collections. It is rarely that a professional botanist, who paints as a hobby, falls into the category of botanical artist. Such a case has happened to Mrs Esmé Hennessy of the Botany Department, University of Durban-Westville. Following her recent revision of the South African species of Erythrina, superbly illustrated by herself, she has won recognition as a botanical artist of repute and has been commissioned by the Hunt Institute to submit paintings for the exhibition.

BAYER, M.B.:- Haworthia Handbook. KIRSTENBOSCH: National Botanic Gardens. 109 monochrome photographic illustrations, 5 colour plates from watercolour paintings, 184 pages. Soft cover. Price: R5-00.

This is hardly a handbook as the title claims. The text consists basically of an identification key and an alphabetical list of epithets hitherto applied in Haworthia. Under each epithet the basionym (where applicable) and current name (where the epithet is no longer recognized in the original context) are listed together with the appropriate literature reference and sometimes rather irrelevant and unmotivated notes on the systematic position of the taxon concerned. Various new combinations are made and three taxa are newly described: H. retusa (L.) Duval f. acuminata Bayer from the Riversdale area, H. divergens Bayer from the Oudtshoorn area and H. maraisii V. Poelln. var. meiringii Bayer from the Montague area. There are no descriptions or notes on environmental requirements and cultivation. The geographical distribution is very briefly mentioned, which is laudable from a conservation point of view, although readers not acquainted with South Africa may have preferred small distribution maps. There are a useful literature list and short biographies of Von Poellnitz and G G Smith.

The illustrations are all together in front of the book, and arranged in alphabetical order. This makes it easy to find a specific illustration quickly. However, this arrangement has the disadvantage that related species are not grouped together, so that novices will have difficulties in identifying plants with the aid of the illustrations. The excellent illustrations all depict vegetative plants, and there are no illustrations of flowers. (P.V.)

240 GRASSES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA by Lucy K A Chippindall and A O Crook, 1976. Published by M O Collins (Pvt.) Ltd., Salisbury. Price: R68.00.

The Guide to the identification of grasses in South Africa (1955; reprinted 1959) by Lucy Chippindall has been out of print for some years now and will not be reprinted. A new guide to grasses by this author is thus bound to stir great interest.

Each of the 140 species is dealt with in a separate pamphlet consisting of two sheets (4 pages) which are glued together and perforated along the left margin. They are available separately and two ring-back binders are supplied in which they can be kept. Symbols depicting "flower head", habit, habitat soils, and altitude as well as an indication of A or P (annual/perennial) are given in the right hand margin of the first and third page of each pamphlet. Both margins are visible simultaneously as the lower page is wider than the upper. The symbols are designed as identification aids and the reader can arrange the pamphlets according to them.

The first page of each pamphlet gives the title of the work, the names of the authors, the scientific name and its derivation as well as the common names used in Rhodesia, South Africa and, where applicable, in South West Africa, Mozambique (spelt "Moçambique" through) and Angola. One English and one Afrikaans common name is proposed as a standard name for each species by printing them prominently. Although a number of common names is provided the first page of most pamphlets is left partly blank. The second page is devoted to a line drawing of the entire plant and sometimes a closer view of the inflorescence. Unfortunately real close-ups showing important details of the inflorescence are hardly ever given. In the case of Bothriochloa glabra for example, the characteristic pits in the spikelets are only just discernible in the illustration of the inflorescence. Of the twelve or more artists represented in the work S R Edwards and H R B have made the most outstanding contributions.

The third page is headed by the two selected common names and a small generalized distribution map. On the rest of the third page and on the fourth page information is given on the following: characters useful for recognition (a feature which adds greatly to the value of the work), economics, the range (which is largely a duplication of the information provided by the distribution map), habitat and habit, inflorescence, spikelets and leaves.

The symbols given in the margins of the first and third page are explained on a pamphlet entitled Key to Identification Panels. In the parts of the work seen no information on altitude was given except in the case of Cynodon dactylon. No flower head symbol is provided for Eragrostis capensis presumably as it does not fit into any of the twelve highly artificial inflorescence types distinguished. The title page and a list of the 240 species dealt with are given in a separate pamphlet while some botanical

terms are explained in an illustrated glossary also presented in pamphlet form.

The main identification aid in a work of this nature is the illustrations. For this reason the line drawings should have been given on the first page of each pamphlet. It is questionable whether the elaborate system of symbols is fully justified. A guide to the main inflorescence types with an indication of the species possessing the type in question would have gone a long way towards achieving the same goal. This can be seen to some extent in Volk's Gräser des Farmgebietes von S.W.A. To provide more "mustard after meat" the idea is put forward that the information on each species could have been reduced somewhat so as to fit on two pages. These would have been bound into a book of some 500 pages in which the species could have been largely arranged according to inflorescence type.

Much hard work, dedication and expertise have gone into the preparation of this work and one would like to recommend it unreservedly. But the price..... (OAL)

VACANCY IN THE COMPTON HERBARIUM, NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS OF SOUTH

AFRICA:- Applications are invited for a Professional Officer (Botanist) in the Compton Herbarium, Kirstenbosch, vacant as from 1st April 1977.

DUTIES: The post is primarily intended for graduates interested in taxonomy. Successful applicants will be encouraged to do taxonomic research on any group of South African Angiosperms of their own choice and opportunities will be provided for field work. However, a certain proportion of their time will have to be devoted to routine herbarium duties.

SALARY SCALE: R3480 x 180 - 5100 - 5340/5340 x 240 - 6300  
x 360 - 7380  
Plus 10% pensionable allowance  
Plus an annual vacation savings bonus.

APPLICATIONS: The prescribed application forms and further information are obtainable from:- The Director,  
National Botanic Gardens of South Africa,  
Private Bag X7,  
CLAREMONT.  
7735

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 11th February 1977.

JANKOWITZ, W J, Aloes of South West Africa: 62 pages, 47 colour photographs, soft cover. Available in English, Afrikaans or German from the Department of Nature Conservation and Tourism, P.O. Box 13186, Windhoek 9100, South West Africa. Price: R2-50.

This handy little book is the second in a series on the plants, animals and nature reserves of South West Africa. It fills a gap in the readily available printed matter on Aloe, as South West Africa was insufficiently covered in Reynolds' monograph, and a number of new species have been described since the publication of that work.

Although obviously aimed at the layman, the professional botanist will be enchanted by the good colour photographs of which two depict the habit and inflorescence of each species. In addition there are water colour paintings of the flower stages from bud to fruit. For each species the geographical distribution, diagnostic features, flowering time and vernacular names are briefly mentioned. The plants themselves are very briefly described.

There is a short chapter on the care of aloes in cultivation, and another on protective legislation. (P.V).

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