

FORUM BOTANICUM

VOL. 26, No. 2

ISSN 0015-847X

APRIL 1988

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

CONTENTS/INHOUD

Pages 28+37 missing.

New International Scientific Journal	21
Annual Report of SAAB for 1987	22
Vacant Posts	30
In Memoriam H. Merxmüller	33
In Memoriam G.V. Britten	34
Report of the Scientific Editor S. Afr. J. Bot.	37
Herbarium Cabinets for Sale at U.C.T.	40 43
<i>SAAB Congress 1988</i>	<i>40</i>

NEW INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

Evolutionary Trends in Plants (ETP) is a new journal bringing you the best current research in plant evolution, genetics and ecology. A single volume (comprising 2 or 3 parts) is published annually and in addition to being a top-line academic journal, ETP also functions as an international forum for news, views and short general features of interest to those working in these disciplines.

Volume 1 of the journal was published in 1987 and includes reports on major research laboratories, a special feature on the current status of new-Darwinism, together with research papers, reviews and conference reports charting major developments across the spectrum of evolutionary studies.

Library subscriptions cost 320 SFr p.a. including any future supplements such as indexes. A reduced personal subscription rate is available at just 90 SFr p.a. All prices include postage and packing.

For further information contact **Evolutionary Trends in Plants**, Postfach 174, CH-8042 ZURICH, Switzerland.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF SAAB FOR 1987

At this congress I see out my first year of office as President of SAAB. Due to the help of Council and the executive committee this has not been as onerous a task as I had anticipated. A large number of people in various parts of South Africa and SWA are acting on behalf of the members of our association and all their contributions are acknowledged in reporting on the activities of SAAB as follows:

1. VERGADERING VAN DIE RAAD EN UITVOERENDE KOMITEE

1.1 Raadsvergaderings

Soos in vorige jare is raadsvergaderings beperk tot drie:

- (a) 'n Kort raadsvergadering is na die Algemene Jaarvergadering op 12 Januarie 1987 aan die Universiteit van Natal gehou.
- (b) Die halfjaarlikse Raadsvergadering is op 17 Augustus 1987 by die Navorsingsinstituut vir Plantkunde, Pretoria gehou.
- (c) Die derde Raadsvergadering is op 11 Januarie 1988 by die Nasionale Botaniese Tuin, Kirstenbosch gehou.

1.2 Uitvoerende Komitee

Geen volle uitvoerende komiteevergadering is gehou nie. Die President, Ere-Tesourier en Ere-Sekretaris het egter dikwels gedurende die jaar byeengekom en die President, Vise-President en Ere-Sekretaris het in Middelburg, Kaap gedurende die jaarvergadering van die Karoo Biome besprekings gehou. Aangesien daar nie formeel vergader is nie, het ons heelwat bespaar op reiskoste en ons informele byeenkomste het tog daarvoor gesorg dat die werk op hande nie afgeskeep word nie.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Council approved purchasing a copy of dBase this year so that all members could be readily accounted for and files updated on the microcomputer. It is now a simple matter to delete members from the files if they do not pay their fees as the executive has decided to be ruthless this year and exclude members who have not responded to a second statement. As a result of the increase in subscription from R15 to R30 we lost a few members but our member-

ship has never-the-less increased from 622 to 657. One notable feature that emerged from the breakdown of our members on the dBase print-out was how few honorary members we had. This was rectified as discussed below.

Membership as of 31 October 1987 is:

<u>Honorary</u>	<u>Retired</u>	<u>Life</u>	<u>Institutional</u>	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Affiliate</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>Total</u>
16	4	12	14	467	62	82	657

Inspite of efforts early this year to recruit more student members their numbers are still low and I would urge lecturers and professors to encourage their students to join SAAB.

Regrettably I must report that three outstanding botanists and members of SAAB died during 1987: Dr R.A. Dyer, Professor J.F.V. Phillips and Miss G.V. Britten.

3. MEDALS AND AWARDS

There were a number of nominations for awards for achievements by outstanding botanists in the past year.

3.1 No South African medal for Botany is to be awarded.

3.2 SAAB Senior Medal

As the annual congress is being held at Kirstenbosch, SAAB Council has voted to award senior medals to two botanists who have excelled in their field while based in the South-western Cape.

- (i) The SAAB Senior Medal for 1988 is awarded to Professor H.B. Rycroft;
- (ii) The SAAB Senior Medal for 1987 is awarded to Miss E.E. Esterhuysen.

3.3 SAAB Certificate of Merit

The certificate of Merit for 1988 was awarded to Miss Grace Britten on 8 October 1987. Unfortunately Miss Britten was at that stage very ill and she died shortly afterwards.

3.4 SAAB Junior Medal

Inspite of the new procedure for the award of the junior medal which is based on the PhD thesis, the committee appointed had

great difficulty in coming to a decision. Council has therefore discussed the possibility of awarding more than one medal in future. The Junior Medal is awarded to Dr M.T. Smith of the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Natal, Durban for his thesis entitled "Membrane changes and lipid peroxidation during ageing in seed of Lactuca sativa L."

3.5 Honorary Members

A number of senior botanists were granted honorary status this last year:

Professor H.P. van der Schijff	Mr L.C. Leach
Dr K.P. Gordon-Gray	Mr H.B. Nicholson
Dr M.M. Vogts	Miss M.D. Gunn
Mr I.F. Garland	Mr J.W.H. Giess

4. CONGRESSES

The annual congress in Durban in January 1987 was well attended and well organised. Unfortunately, due to no fault of the organising committee, there were numerous problems of accommodation at the University of Natal residences and I had two letters from the authorities apologizing for the facilities that they provided. We thank the organizers, and the participants of the Durban congress for their comments on the completed questionnaires which will be used to improve future meetings.

The January 1988 congress at Kirstenbosch organised by Ms Gill Scott and her committee is well in hand and we look forward to a stimulating meeting there and at the UCT venue.

The 1989 congress at Pretoria is already well into the planning stage; in 1990 the congress is planned for Grahamstown and in 1991 it is to be held in Windhoek.

5. PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION OF BOTANY

As has been stressed by Professor Theron, our past president, and others, botany needs to get more public attention and we must promote the subject. We were fortunate early last year to be asked by the editor of Archimedes, Mr P. Erasmus, to contribute to a special issue of the magazine on botany. Archimedes is a South

African science magazine widely circulated to schools. We had very little time to compile articles and in about 6 weeks contributions on all aspects of botany and related plant sciences were sent off to the editor. The magazine appeared in August 1987. I wish to thank all those concerned for their contributions. We hope that it will encourage a few pupils to consider botany as a career.

It will be necessary to soon revise the booklet produced by SAAB on "Careers in Botany". We would appreciate volunteers from the membership at large to tackle this task.

6. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES OF SAAB

The Regions will report independently on their activities but I would just like to point out that the Northern Transvaal, OFS, South Western Cape and SWA Regions appear to be very active whereas the Eastern Cape Region appears to be dormant and that in spite of repeated calls for the formation of regional committees in the Southern Transvaal and Natal, botanists in these regions do not appear to be interested in regional activities.

7. REPORTS/VERSLAE

7.1 SAAB Representation on International & National Scientific, Biological and Botanical Associations

7.1.1 Joint Council of Scientific Societies (JCSS)

Professor N. Grobbelaar our representative on this committee reports, amongst other things:

- (1) The JCSS is attempting to improve the image of natural scientists through the medium of radio and television. Members of SAAB are urged to publish in journals such as Archimedes and Spectrum to reach the schools.
- (2) SAAB has been asked to be represented on the school syllabus committees and names have been put forward to JCSS of SAAB members willing to undertake this task.
- (3) Although most biologists are in favour of a National Institute or Council for (Fundamental) Biology, due to the economic climate it

is not suitable to continue with this proposal and the idea has been shelved for the time being.

7.1.2 SA Council of Natural Scientists

SAAB is represented by Professor N. Grobbelaar but all those registered should get the bulletin so there is nothing to report.

7.1.3 Internasionale Unie van Biologiese Wetenskappe (IUBW)

Professor N. Grobbelaar doen verslag:

- (1) As gevolg van druk wat die Nasionale Komitee van die IUBW op die WNNR uitgeoefen het, is daar besluit dat die SNO 'n spesiale Taksonomie Stimuleringsprogram in Suid-Afrika van stapel gaan stuur.
- (2) Die Nasionale Komitee van die IUBW oorweeg dit tans om by die IUBW aan te beveel dat 'n nuwe internasionale navorsingsprogram oor die uitwerking van "Droë toestande op lewende organismes" van stapel gestuur behoort te word. Hopelik sal Suid-Afrikaanse navorsers 'n aansienlike bydrae tot so 'n program kan maak. So 'n program sal ook die fisiologiese droogte wat deur hoë souttoestande veroorsaak word, insluit.

7.1.4 Die Advieskomitee vir Plantkundige Navorsing in die Landbou (AKPNL)

Die komitee het op 21 Oktober 1987 vergader. Dr O.A. Leistner (Sekretaris) doen verslag. Die Advieskomitee versoek dat die saak van Prioriteite in die Plantkunde weer eens by die raadsvergadering van SAGP te berde gebring sal word. Onder die titel "Rasionalisasie van plantkundige navorsing in die RSA" word verslag ge-
doen dat:

Vroeg in die komende jaar kan daar 'n besluit verwag word vir die plasing van die NIP. Daar is aanduidings dat 'n amalgamasie van die MBT en die NIP sal plaasvind om een nasionale plantkundige organisasie onder die Departement van Omgewingsake te vorm. Daar word nog onderhandel of die NIP in sy huidige vorm of met verlies van sekere afdelings oorgeskakel sal word.

7.2 Publications

7.2.1 Council for Scientific Publications/Raad vir Wetenskaplike Publikasies (RWP)

Professor N. Grobbelaar reports that the attempts of RWP to produce a combined national publication by the South African Wildlife Management Association and the SA Institute of Ecologists came to nothing and the matter has been dropped. Editors of existing journals are urged to produce thicker numbers with high quality contents to influence readers in the international sphere. Editors must maintain the identity of their publications by not publishing material which should appear in other national journals.

7.2.2 South African Journal of Botany

Professor J.N. Eloff will be presenting an independent report.

7.2.3 Forum Botanicum

1987 was the 25th year of Forum Botanicum and Miss W.G. Welman as editor has kept the news coming with very little support from the universities. I would like to suggest that each university botany department or institute appoints a sub-editor to compile information or news to be sent to Forum. They may also like to make suggestions and assist Miss Welman who has carried out this task since 1985.

7.3 Reports of the subdisciplines of Botany

7.3.1 International Association of Plant Physiologists

Professor N. Grobbelaar is our representative and reports of continued activity of this Association.

7.3.2 Working Group for Systematic Wood Anatomy

Professor C.T. Johnson, convenor of the group, has provided a list of researchers and research topics which will be published in Forum Botanicum. A data base of microscopic slides and a xylarium is being established.

7.3.3 Working Group for the Flora of Southern Africa

Dr Gibbs Russell reports that 22 persons attended the meeting at SAAB in Durban. The AETFAT Register of Taxonomic Projects in

7.3.9 Habitat Council

SAAB is represented by Dr C. Scheepers who reports that this Council has been active in a number of environmental issues and looks to the continued support of botanists through SAAB.

8. COUNCIL FOR 1988

The outgoing president, Professor Theron, made this point in his last report:

"Ek wil weer eens 'n beroep doen dat met die verkiesing van die volgende Raad die SAGP-lede meer aktief betrokke sal raak sodat ons seker is dat die mense wat op die Raad dien dié is wat die lede graag wil sien."

I am pleased to announce that this has indeed happened and this year we had a large number of nominations for council and for the first time in many years an active election was held.

At the end of this term 5 council members are retiring and are thanked for their service. Professor G.K. Theron (Vice-President), Professor H.A. van de Venter, Professor J.N. Eloff, Professor A.E. van Wyk, and Dr O.T. de Villiers. Five new members have been elected and Mr T.H. Arnold was re-elected for a further two years.

The Council for 1988 is as follows:

President	: Professor R.A. Lubke
Vice President	: Dr G.E. Gibbs Russell
Secretary	: Mr A.R. Palmer
Treasurer	: Professor C.E.J. Botha
Members	: Professor E.J. Moll, C.T. Johnson, Drs P. Linder, D. Botha, W. Bond and Mr T.H. Arnold

9. FINAL WORDS OF THANKS

Finally I would like to express my thanks to all those SAAB members who have given the association, the secretariat and myself support over the past year. I especially would like to thank Professor Guillaume Theron for his advice and good council during

the past year. It means a lot to have a Vice-President to turn to when many of the issues which are strange to one need to be elaborated upon. Secondly, I thank Tony Palmer, for all the hard work that he has put in as secretary. He has been very involved with SAAB this year while he has changed jobs and got on with his research topic. Somehow he has managed very well in all these fields. Professor Ted Botha has also been extremely helpful in putting SAAB micro-computer-wise into a new phase which will be of great assistance to future Councils.

It is on this note that we look forward to a second year of the Secretariat in Grahamstown.

Prof. R.A. Lubke

VACANT POSTS

McGREGOR MUSEUM, KIMBERLEY: VACANCY : BOTANIST

The McGregor Museum is a Province-aided institution dedicated to the study of all aspects - human and natural history - of the arid zone ecology of the Northern Cape. The Museum houses a herbarium of over 25 000 plant specimens representing the vegetation of the Northern Cape and Upper Central Karoo.

The botanist would be responsible for taxonomic and ecological research, maintenance and expansion of the herbarium and participation in all museum-related activities.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified graduates. Minimum qualification requirement is a B.Sc (Hons.) Salary will be determined according to qualifications and experience. Conditions of work are the same as for the Civil Service with generous leave and sick leave, pension, medical aid and, in certain circumstances, subsidised home ownership.

Applications on an official Z.83 form, accompanied by the names of two referees, should reach the Director, McGregor Museum, P.O. Box 316, Kimberley 8300.

VACANCIES: FORESTRY RESEARCH TECHNICIANS:
S.A. FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The S.A. Forestry Research Institute offers the following job opportunities to suitably qualified candidates:

1. Institute Headquarters: Pretoria
Forest botany
2. Jonkershoek Forestry Research Centre: Stellenbosch
 - (a) Forest hydrology
 - (b) Ecological research (Information management)
 - (c) Ecological research
3. Saasveld Forestry Research Centre: George
Silvicultural research
4. D.R. de Wet Forestry Research Centre: Sabie
 - (a) Tree breeding
 - (b) Silvicultural research

Applicants should be in possession of the following qualifications:

1. Three year BSc degree in botany, or Diploma in Forestry or Horticulture.
- 2a, b, c: Appropriate three-year BSc degree or Diploma in Forestry.
- 3 & 4: Ditto.

Applications (accompanied by Curriculum vitae) should be forwarded to:

The Director
S.A. Forestry Research Institute
P.O. Box 721
PRETORIA
0001

Enquiries: Mr P.A. Kirkman (012) 28-7120

THE CAPE DEPARTMENT OF NATURE & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
(RESEARCH SECTION)

invites applications from suitably qualified persons for the following post:

BOTANIST/ECOLOGIST

The position requires a bilingual, organised and self-motivated person with an ability to carry out independent research. Responsibilities include ecological research, scientific advice to managers, farmers, planners and developers, and conservation evaluation of areas in the northern, central or northeastern Cape Province.

REQUIREMENTS

Qualifications: The applicant should possess a B.Sc (Hons) degree in Botany/Agriculture/Nature Conservation as a minimum qualification for this post. An opportunity will be provided for the successful applicant to further his/her qualifications.

Assumption of Duty: The successful applicant should be prepared to assume duties as soon as possible.

SALARY SCALES (according to qualifications)

Assistant Nature Conservation Scientist: R15 912 X 789 - 22 224

Nature Conservation Scientist: R22 224 - 2 3013 X 1 179 - 26 550
R25 371 X 1 179 - 30 087
R30 087 X 1 179 - 34 803
R33 624 - 34 803 X 1 431 - 37 665

Normal Civil Service benefits apply.

Applications, together with a full curriculum vitae, should be addressed to:

Dr K.C.D. Hamman
The Assistant Director (Research)
Cape Department of Nature & Environmental Conservation
Private Bag 5014
STELLENBOSCH
7600

Tel. (02231) - 70130

IN MEMORIAM H. MERXMÜLLER, 1920 - 1988

Hermann Merxmüller was born in Munich, Germany on 30 August 1920 and he died in Munich on 8 February 1988. He studied at the Ludwigs-Gymnasium and at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich where he achieved the Doctor rerum naturales in 1951 and "Habilitation" in 1954. In 1948 he was appointed at the Botanische Staatssammlung, Munich where he made rapid progress. Ten years later he was appointed as Director of the Botanische Staatssammlung, and in 1958 he was elected to the Directorate of the Institut für Systematische Botanik and appointed as Professor of Botany at the University of Munich. In 1969 he became the Director of the Botanical Garden München-Nymphenburg.

He took an active part in international botanical activities and served on the councils of six international organizations, amongst others the International Organization of Biosystematics and the International Association of Plant Taxonomy. From 1966-1970 he was General Secretary of AETFAT.

He was a member of the Bavarian, Austrian and Danish Academies of Science and the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina as well as Honorary member of several scientific societies and Honorary President of the Bavarian Botanical Society.

He was awarded medals by the Société Botanique de France (1954); Jardim Botânico Rio de Janeiro (1958); National Botanic Garden of South Africa (1963); International Association of Plant Taxonomists (1975); Botanische Garten, Berlin-Dahlem (1979); Sociedad Broteriana (1981).

Prof. Merxmüller received one of SAAB's three special medals presented during the AETFAT Congress in Pretoria in January 1982. Unfortunately, because of ill health, he had to receive this award in absentia.

Botanical travels took him to practically all European countries as well as to the East and both North and South America. He collected widely in South Africa and particularly South West Africa/Namibia, which he visited on several occasions. His collection numbers more than 32,000 specimens of which about 6,000 are from Southern Africa, mainly South West Africa.

He was author and co-author of 175 publications of which 66 deal with African plants. He published on general systematics, the taxonomy of Southern African and European plants, cytotaxonomy and plant geography.

A deep interest in the flora of South West Africa/Namibia characterized the Botanische Staatssammlung from the time he became director and initiated the production of the "Prodromus einer Flora von Südwestafrika".

Shortly after the project was started, Prof. Merxmüller took up a personal contact with the Botanical Research Institute. As a result, a close scientific co-operation and strong bonds of friendship developed between the Botanische Staatssammlung and its South African counterpart. Plant exploration of South West Africa/Namibia was undertaken jointly by the Botanical Research Institute, its regional branch herbarium in Windhoek and Prof. Merxmüller himself. Most of Merxmüller's tours were organized by and undertaken in the company of Willy Gies of the Windhoek Herbarium, that dedicated and prolific botanical explorer of South West Africa, who also became his personal friend. As a result of these joint efforts South West Africa/Namibia is today reasonably well explored.

The "Prodromus einer Flora von Südwestafrika", was aimed at providing a preliminary account of the flora of South West Africa. It was completed in 1972 after 20 years of intensive research, a singular achievement seen in the light of the world's long list of uncompleted floras. This work supplied the most basic botanical information required for the management of the territory's most important natural resource namely, the vegetation, which constitutes both its natural grazing lands and provides the cover which binds and retains its soil.

He is commemorated in the grass genus Merxmuellera Conert and in many species such as Barleria merxmuelleri P.G. Mey., Carex merxmuelleri Podlech, Corchorus merxmuelleri Wild, Erica merxmuelleri Dulffer and Hermannia merxmuelleri Friedr.

Herman Merxmüller made a lasting contribution not only to the knowledge of the flora of Southern Africa and Namibia but in a much wider sense to botany world wide. He was an outstanding scientist who devoted his life to Botanical Research.

O.A. Leistner and W.G. Welman

IN MEMORIAM G.V. BRITTEN, 1904 - 1987

Grace Violet Britten was born in Grahamstown on 23 February 1904 and completed standard 8 at the Victoria Girls High School. She died in Grahamstown on 10 October 1987. She was a Botanical Assistant to nine

curators in the Albany Museum Herbarium from 1921 to 1969. She returned to work immediately after retirement until 29th February 1984. This represents 63 years of service to the herbarium and botany.

The Albany Museum Herbarium, which had its origins in the small collections of plants donated by Dr W.G. Atherstone and Dr L. Pappé in 1860, grew in size and stature under Dr Selmar Schonland, who was appointed Curator of the Museum in 1895. On 1 June 1921, the day on which Miss Britten was appointed as temporary junior lay assistant, the Grahamstown Botanical Research Unit came into being as a functional regional station under the Botanical Research Institute of the Department of Agriculture.

Her interest in botany and her knowledge grew apace and when Dr Schonland retired in 1926 and Mr R.A. Dyer took over as the first Honorary Curator of the Herbarium she was dealing with all the regular herbarium work from pressing and mounting to public information. In the many years that lay ahead a succession of officers-in-charge relied heavily on her capable organisation of all the herbarium work while they completed their research projects.

The garden became a very special part of Miss Britten's work and she built up a collection of succulents from far and wide by collecting local plants and exchanging with other institutions such as the Worcester Karoo Garden and the Botanic Gardens at Kirstenbosch and at Stellenbosch University, as well as with private individuals. From its small beginning as a research adjunct her garden was becoming useful as a display area for rare and interesting plants.

Miss Britten joined the staff at a time when there was great interest in botanical exploration. Herbarium collections expanded in response to the stimulus provided by the establishment of the Botanical Survey. Many specimens collected for the Museum by numerous people had all to be pressed, poisoned, identified mounted and labelled before filing in the Herbarium and any duplicates destined for the National Herbarium, Bolus Herbarium, Compton Herbarium and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew were sorted, listed and parcelled.

Visiting botanists made the Herbarium their base and there were times when the entire floor space was covered in presses of damp plants needing daily changing. Miss Britten's wide knowledge of the plants of this region and their localities was often called upon and it never failed

to impress visitors that she was usually able to guide them to within metres of any plant they might ask for. Her knowledge of the petaloid monocotyledons and succulent flora of this region as well as of the flowering herbs which she gained while developing the garden, collecting, for her Flower Table display and for the more or less annual Wildflower Exhibitions held by the Albany Horticultural Society between 1930 and about 1970, never faded.

Miss Britten also played her part in setting up permanent museum displays and was responsible for mounting the display of grasses and fodder plants, proclaimed weeds and poisonous plants which was planned by Mr Dyer in 1929 - 1930 for the Agriculture Room.

She is best remembered for her Flower Table displays. She arranged fresh indigenous flowers, labelled with their botanical and common names, in specially made copper jars on a long mahogany table in the Museum's main entrance. This was started in 1930 at the instigation of Mr Dyer and Miss L.L. Britten, and soon became very popular with members of the public. The idea of such a temporary display was new and other museums and institutes soon followed suit. The Flower Table display was kept up on a regular basis for nearly 40 years.

On 6 September 1941 the Museum was gutted by a disastrous fire. The Herbarium suffered relatively slight losses although nearly all the specimens were damaged by smoke and water. It is largely due to Miss Britten that the valuable old botanical books were saved.

In the three years following this fire Miss Britten and a succession of assistants were fully occupied in cleaning and remounting the damaged specimens. She records that the herbarium staff had hardly repaired 4,560 herbarium sheets when a second, smaller fire occurred in March, 1944 in one of the Museum store-rooms. Smoke penetrated the Herbarium and the work had to be done all over again.

Miss Britten received the Public Service Award for long service. She received the SAAB certificate of Merit on 8 October 1987. Throughout her career she gave unstintingly of her time and by example set high standards of loyalty and integrity for herself and for those who worked with her.

E. Brink and W.G. Welman

for publication in the February, April and June 1988 issues are again much greater than for any previous issues. Statistics for the last four years are as follows:

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
Articles	50	55	88	78
Short communications	5	2	10	5
Book reviews	0	6	21	2
Total number of pages	401	490	572	502
Manuscripts rejected or withdrawn	?	10	8	5
Number different referees used	?	74	141	128
Number overseas referees used	?	14	39	32
Taxonomy papers	22	27	29	45
Physiology papers	10	9	32	17
Ecology papers	11	15	26	16
Anatomy papers	12	6	11	4

Fewer papers were published than during the previous year, the greater number being those dealing with taxonomic subjects. The apparent growth in taxonomic contributions can partly be ascribed to the special issue of December. Similarly, a special issue increased the physiological contributions in 1986. The number of book reviews for the year is very small, only two having been published. This is largely due to a considerable delay in receiving these from the reviewers approached.

4. REVIEWING OF MANUSCRIPTS

The time required to get answers from some of the referees remains a problem, but the system which was started during 1986 of sending to three, or sometimes four referees, is much more satisfactory than the older one, where only two referees were used. Many reminders had to be sent to reviewers whose reports were outstanding. Authors' names now appear on the manuscripts and the dropping of anonymity has not given any problems thus far. As far as the referees are concerned, some of them have indicated that they have no objection to their identities being revealed to the authors and have in fact offered to assist authors if they wish to contact them. In two cases a referee made such a big contribution that the authors invited him to become joint author for the paper.

5. COMPTON PRIZE

The Compton Prize of R1 000 for the best paper published in the S. Afr. J. Bot. during the previous year will be awarded for the first time this year. The Editorial Committee will determine which paper should win the prize. The aim of the Compton Prize is to encourage authors to publish their best papers in S. Afr. J. Bot.

6. STATUS OF THE JOURNAL

Apparently some members of SAAB believe that the peer evaluation panels consider publications in our Journal inferior to publications in Journals published overseas. The fact that we use an overseas referee for every second paper published and that some members have experienced that it is easier to get some papers published overseas than here, shows that our Journal should not be considered to be inferior to all journals printed overseas.

7. COST OF THE JOURNAL

In order to determine exactly what the Journal is costing SAAB and the NBG, Mrs Frances Hanekom will in future be handling the administration of the Journal on a part-time basis. The personnel cost will therefore be accurately known. The postage is a substantial item. During the past year more than 2000 letters and manuscripts were posted. Few people realise how many steps are involved in publishing a scientific journal.

8. REVIEW ARTICLE

The first review article that was submitted for publication (Cladistics, by Dr Peter Linder) was refereed and will be published early next year. Members should note that the decision taken at the 1987 AGM has been implemented and they can prepare review articles according to the guidelines to authors.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the staff of the NBG and the Bureau for their support, frequently under difficult circumstances. Here I wish to make special mention of the assistance which Dr D.J. Botha has given us on many occasions with the translation of English abstracts into Afrikaans. Without the support of authors

and referees the Journal could not survive and they deserve the gratitude of all members of SAAB. A special word of thanks goes to the subeditors Proff. C.E.J. Botha, R.N. Pienaar, J. van Staden and G.K. Theron and Drs R.P. Ellis, O.A. Leistner and J.P. Rourke. Dr Rourke very ably deputized for me on several occasions when I was away from Cape Town. I do not think the members of SAAB realize how much work and frustration is involved in being a sub-editor. We certainly owe them a big vote of thanks for their services.

Prof. J.N. Eloff

1988 CONGRESS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOTANISTS

The annual congress of the South African Association of Botanists (SAAB) took place in Cape Town this year, during the week 11 - 16 January. The research staff of the National Botanic Gardens at Kirstenbosch was responsible for arranging the congress, attended by approximately 300 delegates from the Republic, neighbouring states and overseas.

Professor V H Heywood, director of the IUCN Botanic gardens conservation secretariat at Kew, gave the keynote address at the plenary session, the theme of which was "The role of botanic gardens in conservation". He emphasized the importance of this role in bridging the gap between pure and applied botany, in response to the world demand that "we use science more for practical ends".

The congress programme allowed for the presentation of some 100 each papers and posters covering various aspects of botanical research in Southern Africa. Two informal workshops were held, dealing respectively with cladistic approaches in botany and the relevance of

phytochemistry to taxonomy and ecology. In each case, short addresses were given by experts in different fields, followed by a panel discussion and practical demonstrations of relevant techniques. Both workshops were well attended and gave rise to much lively debate. The general consensus was that there is a great need for more such specialist meetings, dealing with such topics as gel electrophoretic studies, nectar analysis, serotaxonomic techniques and screening for taxonomically useful secondary metabolites. The valuable contributions to the workshops of non-botanists such as Professor A M Stephen and Mr W Campbell of the Dept. of Organic Chemistry (UCT), Dr P Brain, director of the Natal Institute of Immunology and Dr Stephen Compton of the Zoology Dept. (Rhodes University) emphasized the importance of cross-fertilization of ideas in all scientific fields.

A general meeting of SAAB members was held with the object of addressing problems that beset botanical education in this country, particularly at post-graduate level. The meeting, although well attended and giving rise to fruitful debate, would have been the more effective for the presence of departmental heads from the various institutions teaching botany.

The opinion of those present was that botanical training in South Africa at postgraduate level is at present inadequate for reasons which include low student numbers, lack of staff, and the fact that expertise in certain fields is spread too thinly. It was felt that greater efficiency would be achieved if each institution teaching botany were to develop its own specialist area according to its available expertise, draw up an appropriate programme of course work and advertise this for example via *Forum Botanicum*.

Dr Richard Cowling, who chaired the meeting, outlined the current development at UCT Botany department of a specialist post-graduate course in population ecology, which it was hoped, would attract students country wide. He asked that heads of other institutions teaching botany who were prepared to develop similar specialist courses contact him with a view to establishing a co-operative post-graduate programme. His telephone number is (021-) 650 3712.

The congress ended on a relaxed note with an open day and poster session at Kirstenbosch and one-day field excursions to Betty's Bay, Jonkershoek Forestry Research Station, Cape Point Nature Reserve and Constantiaberg. The congress organisers were dissatisfied in the rather poor turnout and the fact that many delegates withdrew at the last minute, which was a pity in view of the effort expended in planning the tours. Pre-congress tours would seem to be a better proposition.

Five excursions had been planned but the Worcester trip had to be cancelled. Twelve delegates visited Constantiaberg with Dr John Rourke and Mrs Liz Ashton. Eight accompanied Messrs Barrie Low and Hugh Taylor to Cape Point and 8 joined Mr Don Bands on an excursion to Jonkershoek.

Mesdames Nunn, Smitheman & Attwell - lead a party of 7 delegates to the Harold Porter National Botanic Garden at Betty's Bay.

The tour leaders were a mine of information and participants found the excursions worthwhile from both a scientific and recreational viewpoint. Several delegates were able to collect plant material relevant to their research.

Gill Scott: Organising Secretary

HERBARIUM CABINETS FOR SALE AT U.C.T.

In April 1988 the University of Cape Town will be selling about 150 16-shelf, wooden herbarium cabinets which are being replaced with steel units. Private persons and research or teaching organizations may offer to buy cabinets through the University's Purchasing Office. The remainder after these sales will be sold by auction. The price of the cabinets will average about R50-00, the best quality cabinets being about R150-00, those in poor condition R30-00.

Purchasers are invited to view the cabinets at the Bolus Herbarium at the UCT Hiddingh Hall campus, Orange Street, Cape Town, Tel. (021) 23-1216, and to identify with labels those they wish to purchase. Purchasers are requested to give their name and address so that they can be contacted by the Purchasing Office when the cabinets are available.

Prof. A.V. Hall, Curator, Bolus Herbarium
University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7700

REDAKTRISE/EDITOR

Mej. W.G. Welman Sci. Nat.
p/a/ N.I. Plantkunde
Privaatsak X101
PRETORIA
0001

