



**BGCI**

*Plants for the Planet*



## **AFRICAN BOTANIC GARDENS NETWORK BULLETIN**

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Dear Members

Welcome to the 2005 edition of our Bulletin. Many thanks to those of you who contributed, and expressed your interest and support – this is much appreciated. The good news is that the Steering Committee Meeting in Kenya was a great success and much was achieved and the future of the Network looks good.

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### **African Botanic Gardens Network**

#### **Steering Committee Report - November 2005**

The Steering Committee of the African Botanic Gardens Network met at Brachenhurst Baptist International Convention Centre, Limuru, Kenya, 28-29 November 2005. During the meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed activities since the 2004 Steering Committee Meeting, held in Barcelona, Spain. At Limuru, the Committee developed the 2006 Network Workplan and created the new level of management by developing position of National Coordinators to support the work of the Network at a more local level. Through the creation of National Coordinators it is hoped that the ABGN will be able to work more efficiently, support and respond better to different national conditions. National Coordinators for each country will be identified during the first half of 2006.

Present at the meeting were: George Owusu-Afryie (Ghana) Chair and West African Network, Christopher Willis (South Africa) Southern African Network, Christopher Fominyam (Cameroon) Central African Network, William Wambugu (Kenya) East African Network, Walter Mangroo (Seychelles) Representative for the Indian Ocean Islands, Taleb Mohammad Sghir

(Morocco) representing North African Network, Christopher Dalzell, (South Africa) Secretariat and ABGN Coordinator, Douglas Gibbs (UK) BGCI, Mark Nicholson (Kenya) observer, Roy Gereau (U.S.A.) observer and Mafanny Julie Mbome (Cameroon) observer.

Due to the creation of National Coordinators and postponement of the Assembly to 2007, minor changes to the Network Management Structure are required. Any comments on the new Network Management Structure (see attached) should be sent to the ABGN Secretariat by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006. Following this consultation period, the new Network Management Structure will guide the operation of the Network until the next ABGN Assembly. The next Assembly is proposed to be held prior to the World Botanic Gardens 3 Congress, Wuhan, China in early 2007.

Any comments on the 2005 Steering Committee Report should be sent to George Owusu Afryie (ABGN Chair [georgeoa@idngh.com]) and Chris Dalzell (ABGN Coordinator [dalzellc@durban.gov.za]). Full contact details for the Steering Committee are given on the BGCI-Africa/ABGN website [www.bgci.org/africa](http://www.bgci.org/africa)

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## Annual Report to the African Botanic Gardens Network

A one-page report to be submitted by each botanical garden to the Regional Coordinator by 31 January. The report is to include bullet points indicating highlights achieved in the botanical garden through the previous calendar year, and challenges that the garden faces.

Latest contact details  
Curator's name  
Postal address  
Physical address  
Tel  
Fax  
Cell  
E-mail address  
Highlights  
Challenges

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## Arusha Botanic Gardens.

Review 1 December 2005. Arusha, Tanzania

Chris Dalzell Curator – Durban Botanic Garden

A meeting was held in Arusha, Tanzania on 1 December 2005 to discuss the feasibility study for the establishment of the proposed Arusha Botanic Gardens. Those present at the meeting were:

Christopher Dalzell, Durban Botanic Gardens, South Africa  
Christopher Willis, South African National Biodiversity Institute, South Africa  
Mark Nicholson, Brackenhurst, Kenya  
Roy Gereau, Missouri Botanic Gardens. USA  
Felista, National Museum, Tanzania

The task team read through the proposal and felt that it needed to be simplified as it was too complex and too ambitious. The following was agreed on:

- Peter Raven would be contacted by the Secretariat of the ABGN and asked if he knew of a landscape Architect in the USA who could assist draw conceptual plans for the establishment of the Arusha Botanic Garden. CD
- Bruce Hobson from Nairobi would also be spoken to about assisting draw plans. Landscape architect. MN
- It was felt that the basics should be done first such as the removal of alien vegetation, clearing the rubbish and the planting of a selected list of trees from the region. A list of trees would be chosen and material sourced. Fencing To be looked at. MN\RG
- Such issues as access control, toilets, benches, pathways, security, Environmental education needed to be discussed. This would be included into the master plan and drawings.
- Certain Foundations would be looked at. Peace Corps, Rotary International, Lions International, Unilever Company, Hotels, Schools, NGO'S. All these organizations could form partnerships with the Botanic Gardens. RG\FM

- Information from the MOSS system of open spaces in Durban will be looked at. Deborah Roberts to be contacted. CD
- Permission from the local authorities would be obtained for the removal of all the alien trees and plants on the site. FM
- Colin Clubb from Kew would be contacted about the next course for Botanic Gardens Management and to look for funding to send Felista on the next course. CD
- Forestry Training School at Olmotoyi would be contacted. RG
- John Salehe to be contacted about helping to grow trees for the Botanic Gardens. RG
- Check with the different schools of Horticulture and landscaping who maybe interested in helping draw plans as a project. CD.
- Felista to be invited to the East African Network regional meeting to be held at Brackenhurst at the end of Jan 2006. MN

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## News from South Africa's National Botanical Gardens: December 2004 to November 2005

By Christopher Willis

- SANBI's national botanical gardens received 1,219,757 visitors during the 2004/5 financial year, a 7.5% increase on the previous financial year, and the highest annual number of visitors received in the history of the organisation. Kirstenbosch received 750,466 visitors during the 2004/5 financial year, a 9% increase over the previous year and the highest annual visitor number ever received by this garden since its establishment in 1913. Another record high was received by the Walter Sisulu NBG with 171,697 visitors received, an 8% increase on the previous year, and the highest annual visitor number since its establishment in 1982.
- The total income from South Africa's NBGs for the 2004/5 financial year (April 2004 to March 2005) comprised R20,918,887, compared with the previous financial year's total income of R18,875,486. This represents an overall increase in income generated by the various national botanical gardens of 10.8% on the previous financial year. 90% of this income was generated by Kirstenbosch (79%) and the Walter Sisulu NBGs (11%) combined.
- During the month of October 2005, Kirstenbosch NBG received 71,978 visitors and generated an income of more than R1,100,000. This represents visitor and income records for any month in the history of Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden.
- The Forest Braille Trail in Kirstenbosch was upgraded with sponsorship received from the Kirstenbosch Rotary Club. The renovated trail was launched on 20 April 2005. The trail is being promoted as a self-guiding trail where blind persons can move through the trail without any physical assistance. The trail has both Braille signs and visual signs. Not all blind persons read Braille, and thus the only assistance that may be needed is for

someone to read the text for those users that cannot read Braille. Guidance from the Lighthouse Association for the Blind was received in the designing of the trail and its associated interpretation.

- Interesting demonstration gardens recently developed in Kirstenbosch NGB include 'Weeds South Africa gave the World' and the 'Garden of Extinction' which illustrates those South African plants threatened with extinction in their natural habitats. The benefit of these demonstration gardens and other traditional structures is that they can be used to share information first-hand with learners and other visitors to the gardens.
- The Harold Porter NGB suffered damaging effects of floods in April 2005 (over 200 mm (20% of the garden's annual total) rain fell within 24 hours). Damage to the garden (pathways, roads, garden irrigation) impacted negatively on the visitor numbers to the garden during April and May 2005. Support was received from the local community, Kirstenbosch NGB and the Botanical Society of South Africa for remedial work in the garden. Thanks to the efforts of all the garden staff and volunteers from the local branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa, both the Disa Kloof and Leopard's Kloof were re-opened to the public soon after the floods occurred.
- The 27<sup>th</sup> Gold Medal (from 30 exhibitions) was received by SANBI at the Chelsea Flower Show in London, UK, May 2005. The Kirstenbosch, South Africa exhibit, titled 'African Dream', was made possible by a partnership between First National Bank, Cape Town Routes Unlimited and South African Airways. Thanks to the generous sponsorship, the show was attended by three of SANBI's young horticulturists – Siphwe Magodongo (Free State NGB), Elliot Lithudza (Pretoria NGB) and Cherise Viljoen (Kirstenbosch NGB).
- Trevor Adams, a young horticulturist in the Kirstenbosch NGB, was invited as a speaker/trainer at a BGCI training course in Queen Sirikit Botanic Gardens in Chiang Mai, Thailand, SE Asia, in August 2005. The workshop, planned for staff of southeast Asian botanic gardens, focussed on horticultural practices in botanic gardens, generally in developing countries in SE Asia.
- A R737,000 sponsorship was received from Sappi for the construction of a new elevated boardwalk in the Lowveld NGB. The elevated boardwalk, designed to minimise the damaging effects caused by hippos that walk through the garden at night, is scheduled for completion by the end of December 2005.
- Since March 2001, SANBI has received R45,194,000 from the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's (DEAT) Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP; commonly referred to as the Poverty Relief Programme) for tourism infrastructure developments in SANBI's gardens. In addition, R17,064,000 has been allocated towards upgrading the Grahamstown Botanical Garden. 1,325 people have thus far been employed (temporary jobs) through funded poverty relief projects, more than 113,000 temporary job days, 35,000 temporary job days by women, more than 300 people trained in various skills and 27 permanent jobs created. New Environmental Education centres have recently become operational in the Free State and Lowveld NGBs. The Lowveld NGB Environmental Education Centre received sponsorships from both Sappi and the Botanical Society for furniture and other needed equipment.
- A new permanent concert stage was completed in the Walter Sisulu NGB in July 2005. The Sappi-sponsored Sunday Picnic concerts in the Walter Sisulu NGB for 2005 (May to September) attracted 21,886 visitors paying the concert surcharge. 30,495 visitors were recorded in the Garden on the concert days. This is a record number for the Walter Sisulu NGB, and certainly justifies the construction of the new concert stage.
- A very successful summer concert season ended in Kirstenbosch NGB in March 2005 with a total of 121,999 concert goers attending a variety of concerts which included international artists such as Josh Groban and Katie Melua. Revenue generated from all concerts in Kirstenbosch (November 2004 to April 2005) amounted to R2,988,849. This compared with R2,389,525 generated from concerts in the previous financial year.
- A new Rycroft Gate viewing deck was recently completed in Kirstenbosch NGB. The deck provides the starting point for a new Heritage Trail currently being developed in Kirstenbosch. The Heritage Trail, a self-guided, 2 km trail, will include numerous interpretive storyboards that showcase the history and development of Kirstenbosch, combining natural and cultural heritage elements.
- Permission was granted by DEAT to the SANBI Board to extend the existing Ball Agreement (between SANBI and the Ball Horticultural Company, Chicago, U.S.) to 31 August 2006 to allow sufficient time for negotiation with stakeholders and ensure that re-negotiation meets the requirements of South Africa's new Biodiversity Act. Two of SANBI's staff members visited the Ball Horticultural Company in Chicago, USA, as part of the Ball Agreement internship programme from May to July 2005 (Shireen Harris from the Karoo Desert NGB and Tovhowani Mukoma from the Lowveld NGB).
- Horticulturists and other relevant staff from all of South Africa's NGBs attended two Seed Conservation Techniques Workshops (Pretoria/Kirstenbosch) hosted and presented by the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB), UK (July 2005). In collaboration with Millennium Seed Bank, Cape Nature and City of Cape Town conservationists, Kirstenbosch NGB staff participated in the restoration of the threatened plants *Erica verticillata* and *Erica turgida* to the Kenilworth Race Course, Cape Town. An open day to Kenilworth, with good media exposure in local newspapers, was held on 15 September 2005.

- The 19th SANBI Garden Curators' Week was held in the Karoo Desert NBG, Worcester, Western Cape, from 5-9 September 2005. A new glasshouse (named the Ashwell Mtetwa Glasshouse in recognition of all the construction work done by Ashwell Mtetwa in the Karoo Desert NBG), funded by the Kirstenbosch branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa, was officially opened during the week.
- SANBI was represented at the popular Getaway Show in Johannesburg (September 2005), organised by staff from the Pretoria Campus and the Walter Sisulu NBG. The Walter Sisulu NBG also participated in the Krugersdorp Show (September 2005) and the Garden World Spring Show (August 2005).
- The Greening of the Nation project is a new R75 million SANBI-coordinated EPWP programme that has been rolled out in various provinces of South Africa, for community and school greening projects. Activities within this project include the greening of towns (road islands and entrances), schools, crèches, day care centres, community parks, cemeteries, police stations, cultural villages, as well as the development of community nurseries. Many projects include the development of indigenous gardens as well as vegetable gardens. The programme works in close association with Food & Trees for Africa (FTFA), the first national non-government, non-profit, greening organisation in South Africa, established in 1990.
- Ms Tlale Tlhothlhemaje was appointed as the new Marketing Officer in the Walter Sisulu NBG. Tlale, who started her career in SANBI working in the Pretoria NBG, was responsible for implementing the recent Visitors Survey conducted in the Walter Sisulu NBG.
- A Rock dassie (*Procavia capensis*) relocation programme, in cooperation with Tshwane Nature Conservation, has been initiated in the Pretoria NBG in an attempt to reduce the numbers of these mammals in the garden. To date, 21 dassies have been captured and relocated to the Groenkloof Nature Reserve in Pretoria. Dassies will also be relocated to Wonderboom Nature Reserve.
- The Curator of the Walter Sisulu NBG was married on 20 August 2005 and is now Sharon Willcock (née Turner).
- The final SABONET Steering Committee meeting was held in Kirstenbosch on 1 September 2005. The SABONET Project, a regional capacity-building programme funded by the GEF/UNDP and USAID/IUCN-ROSA that started in 1996, has made a significant impact in building capacity amongst southern Africa's plant biodiversity specialists, plant taxonomists and horticulturists. All that is left for the project is to publish a few outstanding numbers in the *SABONET Report Series* (estimated to be over 40 numbers) and the final edition of the project newsletter *SABONET News*. Thanks to all those people worldwide that have contributed towards making this project such a success. A dedicated SABONET project website archive has been established ([www.sabonet.org.za](http://www.sabonet.org.za)), that features relevant background information about the Project, including information on its activities and achievements, profiles of the people that were most intimately involved in the project, information on the countries and institutions that were involved. It also includes details of the capacity-building activities that SABONET supported, for example plant collecting trips, regional expeditions, Red Listing, computerisation of herbarium collections, training courses and workshops, the internship programme, and support of postgraduate students. All of the SABONET publications, including reports and newsletter issues, are also available on this site in a PDF format.
- A new regular newsletter (published in April and September each year) entitled *The Conservation Leaflet* is currently being published by SANBI and includes updates on SANBI's Threatened Species Programme (TSP), the TSP's Custodians for Rare and Endangered Wildflowers (CREW) project, the MSB, the South African Plant DNA Banking Facility and the National Botanical Gardens' Threatened Plants Programmes. People wanting to receive the newsletter should contact Wendy Foden at the address [foden@sanbi.org](mailto:foden@sanbi.org). The South African Plant DNA Banking Facility (a -80°C freezer used to store extracts of DNA) is a collaborative project between SANBI and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, funded by the UK Darwin Initiative. Based in the Leslie Hill Molecular Systematics Laboratory in Kirstenbosch, one of the DNA bank's objectives is to archive in the DNA bank at least one representative from each genus of plants indigenous to South Africa (there are an estimated 2,200 flowering plant genera known in South Africa). Another one of the objectives is to produce a phylogenetic 'tree of life' of South African plant genera and identify areas of endemism and high priority for conservation.
- The new Rufford Maurice Laing Centre for Biodiversity Conservation in Kirstenbosch was officially opened by the DEAT Minister on 1 September 2005. This new building is the result of a £1 million donation received by SANBI from the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation in the UK. The 50th anniversary of the Edith Stephens Wetland Park on the Cape Flats was also celebrated on 1 September 2005, under the banner of SANBI's Urban Conservation Programme and the Cape Action for People and the Environment (C.A.P.E.) programme.
- New DEAT-sponsored infrastructural developments (restaurant, education centre, visitors' centre and retail plant sales nursery) were officially opened by the Free State Provincial Premier, Ms Beatrice Frances Marshoff, in the Free State National Botanical Garden, Bloemfontein, on 9 November 2005.
- Latest contact details of the Curators of South Africa's eight national botanical gardens:
  1. Free State NBG – Mr Peter Gavhi ([gavhi@sanbi.org](mailto:gavhi@sanbi.org))
  2. Harold Porter NBG – Mrs Toni Xaba ([xabaA@sanbi.org](mailto:xabaA@sanbi.org))

3. Karoo Desert NBG – Mr Ian Oliver (oliver@sanbi.org)
4. Kirstenbosch NBG – Mr Philip le Roux (leroux@sanbi.org)
5. KwaZulu-Natal NBG – Mr Brian Tarr (tarr@sanbi.org)
6. Lowveld NBG – Mr Rudi Britz (britz@sanbi.org)
7. Pretoria NBG – Ms Karin Behr (behr@sanbi.org)
8. Walter Sisulu NBG – Mrs Sharon Willcock (willcock@sanbi.org)

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## Development of an Ethnobotanical garden at the University of Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal

By Helene de Wet

Department of Botany, University of Zululand

Mrs. Anne Hutchings, a well known ethnobotanist from Zululand, initiated a Zulu Medicinal Garden in 1990. She was previously a staff member in the Botany Department of the University of Zululand. During her period as a researcher in the department, she collected, in collaboration with Traditional Healers from the Zululand region, a number of important ethnobotanical plant species. Presently, although on retirement, she still uses plant material from the garden for the preparation of creams to treat secondary infections in HIV/Aids patients. Since her retirement the garden has been managed for exhibition purposes. Since 2002 it was further developed as an ethnobotanical garden and presently ± 160 species are grown. These species were identified and a database is currently being developed to document their most important morphological characteristics, including pictures of flowers and their ethnobotanical uses. Each specimen in the garden has a nameplate exhibiting its scientific, English and Zulu names.

Recently the Botany Department obtained a second site on campus, approximately three hectares in area, which will become part of the future development of the garden. Both sites are already used for pre- and postgraduate student training and research, as well as for demonstrations to visiting Secondary School learners. The vision of the Botany Department is to develop the garden for the future use of researchers, staff, students and the community, but also to cultivate rare ethnobotanically important plant species from the Zululand region for *ex-situ* conservation purposes.

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## Cycad crisis in Limbe Botanic Garden

By Neba Gladys and Chris Fominyam

Cycads are amongst the oldest plants families, with a lot of similarities to Palms. Cycads are amongst the oldest plants species of the Limbe Botanic Garden Living Collections. Early this year, a yellow coloration of the leaves of the one of the cycad species with accession number 19950317 was observed, after some time the infected leaves started drying up. We suspected a viral or fungi infection. The management of the garden contacted the chairman of the Friends of

the Garden, who is a retired plant pathologist; he then called for the attention of some renowned phytopathologists from the Botany Department of the University of Buea for advice.

The phytopathologists visited the Garden to study the situation. During their visit, samples were collected from the infected tree for investigation and isolation of the pathogens, in the laboratory using professional techniques. During isolation and investigation by the phytopathologists, the diseased specimens were cultured on PDA and the fungus Fusarium oxysporum was isolated from the specimen of the cycad. It was also observed that the organism Fusarium oxysporum is also pathogenic to oil palms, but was not known whether the organism isolated from cycad is the same as Fusarium oxysporum specific to oil palms.

The pathologists are still to confirm the pathogenicity of Fusarium oxysporum to cycad within the coming months

Paul Blackmore on his part suggested that the cycads spp becomes vulnerable to pathogenic attack due to stress following the drastic variation of the extreme draught condition of the previous dry session and an extreme wet condition in the raining season that followed, thus causing the plants to be susceptible to this fungi attack by Fusarium oxysporum.

This cycad species finally died and three other accession of the same cycad species are under severe threat, needing immediate action to rescue them before all the cycad species in the garden are lost. We would appreciate your action toward the cycad crisis in LBG, and will be grateful if any cycad expert could please advise us on how to go about controlling the cycad crisis in LBG, so as to save the remaining cycad species in the Garden and also how to replace the already lost accession

Please contact us at [lbzg@bifunde.com](mailto:lbzg@bifunde.com)

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## Osunpoly Botanic Garden takes off 2005

By Adeniyi A. Jayeola

(Institutional Adviser to OSUNPOLY Botanic Garden)

C/o Department of Botany and Microbiology

University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

There is now a sustained interest in plant conservation at the global level after decades of unsustainable practices during which man inflicted incalculable damage on tropical biodiversity. The Osun State Polytechnic, (OSUNPOLY), Iree, Nigeria, is concerned about the current status of biodiversity in its immediate environment in particular and in Nigeria in general.

In Nigeria, FEPA (1993) reported that, between 1950 - 1992, two spp. of animals and 20 spp. of plants became extinct; 48 spp. of animals, 143 spp. of plants were in endangered; 16 spp. of animals and 45 spp. plants were categorized as rare; 30 spp. of animals and 20 spp. of plants were vulnerable, 422 spp. of animals and 305 spp. of plants were endemic. This result was obtained by the application of the IUCN Red List

categories for classifying species at high risk of global extinction (Version 1.0, Mace and Lamde, 1991). Similarly, 127 tree spp. endemism to Nigeria are globally threatened (Oldfield et al, Jayeola, 2004). All efforts to find six endemic orchid spp of Nigeria throughout their historic range proved abortive.

One way to reduce threats of plant extinction is to protect their germplasms *in situ* and/or *ex situ* as live collections in botanic gardens for maintenance, propagation and re-introduction purposes. This is in line with Targets 7 and 8 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

Unfortunately, there are only five botanic gardens in Nigeria, in spite of the huge endemism and well documented threat indices. Besides, most eco-floristic zones are not significantly represented in the existing botanic gardens.

A number of factors favour the establishment of a botanic garden in OSUNPOLY, Nigeria. The factors are as follows:

- Strong institutional commitment to plant conservation, through collection, propagation and re-introduction.
- Presence of endemic and globally threatened spp.
- Substantial land area available.
- Varied topography, geology and flora.
- Natural forest is represented.
- Arable land available for nursery development.
- A growing herbarium to assist plant taxonomic work.

It is estimated that 600 - 700 species of indigenous plants, with special focus on the threatened flora of Nigeria, will be protected and managed in the botanic garden as its nucleus material.

OSUNPOLY realizes the importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into education, communication and public awareness programmes.

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## **Medicinal Plant Mound, KhoiSan Maze & Rock Art Shelter**

**By Yvette van Wijk,**

### **Garden Route Botanical Garden & Southern Cape Herbarium**

Although we have been busy with a host of projects and the day to day running and developing of the GRBG, our main focus has been on these three structures. With very much appreciated funding from Billiton International and especially the S A Lottery Board, these projects have been ongoing since 2003. The mound, 40 metres in diameter and 5 metres high, was made by dumping building rubble, then shaping it and covering with a layer of top-soil. Two concentric spiral pathways were built one going up and one down, a source of great fascination to visitors! The Mound is now almost completely planted up with some 3000

plants which are all commonly used traditional medicinal plants in the southern Cape.

Harvesting is carried out whenever possible which keeps the plants bushy and low, while also providing material for drying and packaging. Bagged plants, dried or fresh material, or the prepared remedies, are sold and also made available to needy groups such as Hospice, Aids Help Groups or Child Welfare. The erection of a small wooden Wendy house in which to dry the plants has greatly improved the quality and speed of drying.

In 2004 we were able to complete the fencing and planting of the Maze using approximately 3000 plants for the hedging, only very few had to be replaced due to die back or else grazing by the Bushbuck that frequent the garden early every morning! The hedges are just about ready to start clipping and shaping and hopefully in a few years time the Maze will be complete, and visitors will be able to get "lost" within the Nested U's" and the "Swift Nest" hedges which are inspired by local Rock art images. All the plant species used for the Maze hedging are those found most often at Rock Art Sites in the Southern Cape which is another project we are busy with.

We have been in constant discussion with local traditional healers and attended meetings and workshops with them for a number of their projects such as growing medicinal plants for their own use etc. They regularly buy the dried herbs from our mound. Workshops with community groups and clinics have continued. They have had a cumulative ripple effect into the extended communities which is apparent from feedback received.

The Cave or Rock Shelter has just been completed and has exceeded all our expectations. We are very excited about getting the Rock Art painted inside it - we hope to persuade a well known Rock Art expert on reproducing images in authentic natural paints, to come and do this. We are busy with the interpretive signage and a large "rock surface" on which school children can produce their very own Rock Art, using natural Ochres etc and fat or plant juices to mix it!

Schools, and in particular those with disabled pupils, make much use of the garden and find that they can reach every section of it by wheelchair and find something to learn about or enjoy. But schools in general are making more and more use of the garden as an outdoor classroom for Environmental studies as well as a cultural / historical experience and the Maze and Mound are becoming a favourite section during their visits.

There is tremendous value to the younger generation in seeing these plants, and hearing and reading about their traditional uses, this fosters an appreciation of the value of their Indigenous Knowledge heritage and a respect for the elders who hold this knowledge. With completion of the Rock art shelter this extends the scope to an increased appreciation and pride in the Art Works and talent exhibited by these "Old People" so long ago, who are the ancestors of so many people in the southern Cape.

More teams from "Working for Water" have been given talks centred around the Maze & Mound at their own

request – they are so excited to discover that their traditional knowledge is being applied and valued, they recognise most of the plants and offer additional information. Watching the restoring of their pride in, and thirst for knowledge about, their own history and culture, is very rewarding and exciting. The Rock art shelter allows an awareness raising among the Working for Water teams of what they might find in inaccessible areas, and affords an opportunity to stress the importance of preserving these art works and to only tell people who will responsibly look after the information and not allow the works to be defaced.

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## Nairobi Arboretum moves forward

Article by James Birnie

### Nairobi Arboretum

Friends of Nairobi Arboretum – FONA – have been active since 1993 in the restoration of this 1907 Arboretum. Managed by the Forestry Department of Kenya, funds have always been a limiting factor with improvements.

Now we are heading for a vibrant biodiversity centre using new funds from BCP/EU.

It has enabled us to modernize the 1920's house, formerly used by the Chief Conservator of Kenya. The upper floor of this stone house can now house several offices, including FONA. Three large rooms below can be hired out for workshops, meetings or educational functions etc. We have made a beginning on furniture with a donation for one office and some curtaining.

An Education Officer, Nicholas Gatheru has been working since February and several schools have made official visits. Funds have also provided for an Administrative Officer.

We are delighted that two major commercial companies selected the capacious grounds of the old house as a venue for celebrations. Both events gave FONA publicity and the Vice-President of Kenya attended the first Safaricom event. Another commercial event is planned for December. The two evening sessions were beautifully lit up and highlighted the surrounding trees adding much to the atmosphere of nature right in the heart of the city. Over 600 people enjoyed high class catered meals in huge tents as well as entertainment on stage. Safaricom Mobile company and Total Petrol will make substantial donations for further developments in the Arboretum.

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## New Website for BGCI

[www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org) has been upgraded to incorporate a range of new features and content. The new system allows us to display more information in more languages and from more sources, so the site is richer and more dynamic. We have a new look to tie in with our publications, and we've updated the structure so it's easier to navigate.

*New features include:*

- **Improved Garden Pages Editing** - login and update your garden's pages on [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org) - add pictures and an introductory text, tell us about your activities and link to related resources on our site;
- **Improved Site, Garden and Plant Searches** - we've improved the technology behind our search engines so it's easier to find the content you are looking for;
- **Journal Archives** - we are indexing back issues of BGJournal, Roots and our email bulletin Cultivate in a year-by-year archive of journals;
- **Improved Language Support** - we have more features than ever before in more languages - including a home page greeting in multiple languages;
- **Improved Accessibility** - the site has been built and tested to work in more browsers and a text-only version of the site is made available through Loband;
- **Dynamic Content** - allowing us to instantly update pages throughout the site with the latest information and news;

and much more. All our key resources are still there for download and we are continually developing and improving the site. We always welcome your feedback.

Visit [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org) and find out everything you want to know about botanic gardens and plant conservation.

All gardens are invited to login and update the information relating to your garden. Simply find your garden on the Garden Search and apply to edit your details. Please contact [webmaster@bgci.org](mailto:webmaster@bgci.org) for help and assistance.

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## Up and coming meetings

### The Nature of Success: Success for Nature

10 -14 September 2006

#### Oxford, England

You are invited to join BGCI at the 6th International congress on Education in Botanic Gardens - The Nature of Success: Success for Nature". Hosted by the University of Oxford Botanic Gardens, simultaneous translation into Spanish will be available throughout for all keynote speeches.

For further details: [www.bgci.org/educationcongress](http://www.bgci.org/educationcongress)

### 3GBGC: Building a Sustainable Future - the Role of Botanic Gardens

15th - 20th April 2007

#### Wuhan, China

The 3rd Global Botanic Gardens Congress is being hosted by the Wuhan Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences in conjunction with BGCI. The first circular will be available at the beginning of 2006.

For further details on this meeting and others, please visit [www.bgci.org](http://www.bgci.org)

## Logo Competition

The African Botanic Gardens Network (ABGN) needs a logo to promote its identity in Africa and worldwide. It therefore calls on all interested parties, botanic gardens and the general public, to submit logo designs. Further details on the ABGN, its history and its mission can be found at [www.bgci.org/africa/abgn](http://www.bgci.org/africa/abgn)

Entrants are limited to submitting a maximum of 2 logos and the winning logo will remain the property of the ABGN. The logos should:

- reflect the mission of the ABGN and Africa as a whole
- include the text "ABGN" or "African Botanic Gardens Network"
- be original, and the work and property of the entrant,
- be unique and easily recognisable,
- be simple and clear, preferably in a maximum of 2 colours

Logos should be submitted in digital format, preferably in colour and monochrome versions with supporting text or explanations to [africa@bgci.org](mailto:africa@bgci.org)

The winning designer will receive a copy of the excellent book - *Plant - The ultimate visual reference to plants and flowers of the world* by Janet Marinelli.

## African Botanic Gardens Network Bulletin

The African Botanic Garden Bulletin has a revolving editorship. This means that your garden can have the opportunity to produce the Bulletin should you be interested. Please contact BGCI at Descanso House, 199 Kew Road, Richmond Surrey TW9 3BW, UK Fax: 0044 020 8332 5956 Email: [africa@bgci.org](mailto:africa@bgci.org), or express your interest to the current Editor Anne Evans: Durban Botanic Gardens, P.O. Box 3740, Durban 4000, South Africa Tel: +27 (031) 201 1303 Fax: +27 (031) 201 7382 Email: [evansa@durban.gov.za](mailto:evansa@durban.gov.za)

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