



BOTSOC NEWS

November / December 2008

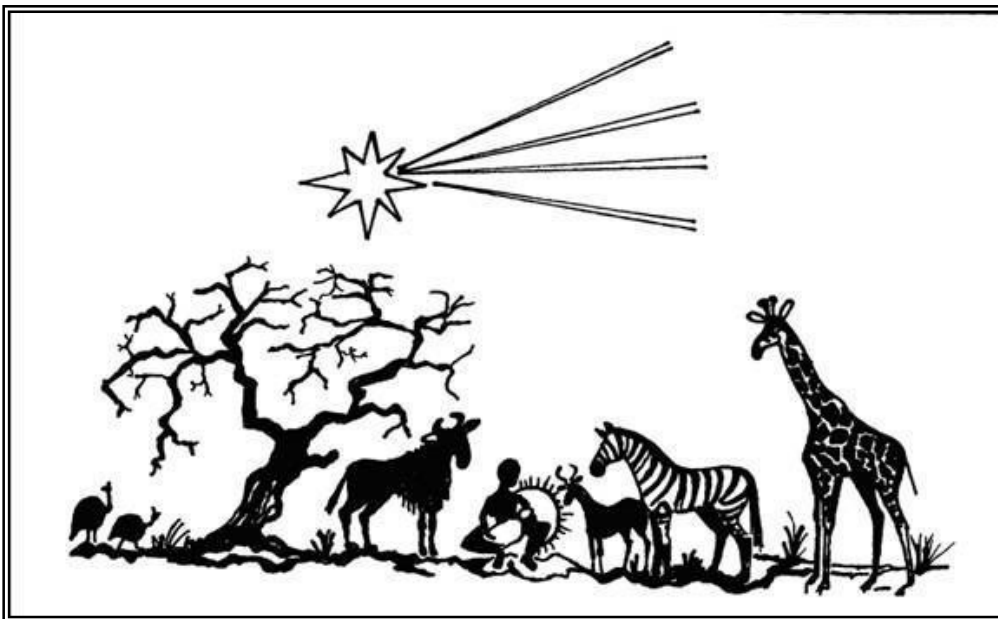
Dear Botsoc Members

November comes to an end and already the frenetic end-of-the-year almost overwhelms us. For me this signifies piles of and the smell of cut cypress green that is used for the Advent wreath and decoration in the Cathedral. We can look back on an interesting year with quite a learning curve for both myself and Botsoc. Our too few human resources caught up with us in the latter months when we struggled to find guides for the monthly guided walks in the garden. Our faithful stalwarts rescued us but this must be a priority for next year, to find and if necessary train more people to guide in the Botanic Gardens on the first Saturday of each month. The interest in these walks grows and grows while more and more people are becoming aware of the fascination of the ever-changing nature of the flora.

We decided not to have a year-end function for members as, for most people, this just becomes overload. Instead, we have plans for next year – an outing with NEWS and an inviting Members' Evening. Also, we postponed the talk planned for November as again, there was just too much going on. We are aware that not everyone has school activities but again, our human resources are limited.

But we had a good year, an excellent Open Day and I look forward to the New Year with anticipation. I wish you all a Blessed Christmas Season, safe travel for those who are travelling and restorative holidays for all who have that luxury. Look to the heavens for the wonder of the Lord, look to the earth for the beauty of the Creation and seek goodness in the soul of humankind.

Diana Thompson



“There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendour of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendour of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendour, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendour.”

1 Corinthians 15: 40,41

UPCOMING WALKS AND TALKS OF INTEREST

WALKS:

The next guided walk in the National Botanic Garden will take place on **Saturday, 6 December 2008 at 08:00**
Entrance for non-members is N\$10. Muffins and tea/coffee will be on sale.
In **2009** Guided Garden Walks will start **Saturday 7 February at 08:00**

TALKS:

The next talk will be **19 February 2009 at the NBRI, 8 Orban Street**
Please watch the notices to members and the media for information.

PLANTS FROM THE BONTANIC GARDEN***Dichrostachys cinerea subsp. Africana*** (E: Sickie-bush)

by Salomé Kruger

Also known as the **Kalahari Christmas tree**, this shrub sometimes grows into a tree of up to 3 m. People doing “bundu-bashing” have great respect for this shrub, as its long hard spines cause flat tyres. These spines are single and also carry leaves. Branches are long and give this shrub an untidy look. The attractive flower spikes appear from October to April, with the main flowering period during December. These flowers resembles small lanterns, hence the common name that refers to Kalahari Christmas tree. The upper pink flowers are sterile, while the bottom yellow flowers are fertile. Clustered, curly, sickle-shaped pods can be seen during winter.

Distribution: Widespread from central to northern Namibia, but not common in the south or Namib Desert. These shrubs can be found throughout the garden.

Uses: The leaves are browsed by giraffe, rhino and various species of antelope. Because the pods are high in protein, they make a good livestock feed. Snake bites or scorpion stings are believed to be treatable by placing chewed leaves on the wound. As it also acts as an anaesthetic, leaves can be placed on wounds, or to treat tooth - and ear-ache. Chewing fresh leaves can also cure diarrhoea. A blocked nose or chest ailments can be cured by inhaling the smoke of dried leaves and roots, while nose bleeds are treated by sniffing powdered roots. Because the wood is so durable, branches are used as digging sticks, or to carve handles for tools. It is very good firewood. Roots are taken as an aphrodisiac or as a contraceptive in women. Blood poisoning may occur when one is wounded by the thorns.



Conservation status: Not recorded. It causes severe bush encroachment when allowed to grow in disturbed areas.

REGULAR INFORMATION & CONTACT NUMBERS**Botanical Society of Namibia - THE CORE OF ACTIVE PLANT PEOPLE (CAPP)**

Diana Thompson	Tel. 226871	rafthom@mweb.com.na	Chairperson Treasurer & Membership
Ellen Gudde	Tel. 227783	stpc.ge@iway.na	Secretary and Publicity
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National Botanical Research Institute)	Web: www.nbri.org.na
National Herbarium (8 Orban Street, Windhoek, Tel 202 2111
Botanic Garden)	open to visitors Monday – Friday 8h00 – 17h00, no charge



Some CAPP Members from left to right: Carol Steenkamp, Ellen Gudde, Silke Rügheimer, Ezekeil Kwembeya, Diana Thompson, Luise Hoffmann, Salomé Kruger, Uschi Kirchner

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and we wish you a wonderful and peaceful Christmas and a great New Year!

See you all again in 2009

Your Botsoc CAPP

Diana, Ellen, Gillian, Coleen, Luise, Silke, Christa, Salomé, Carol, Marilyn, Hildegard, Ezekeil, Percy and Uschi