



BOTSOC NEWSLETTER

July 2009

Dear Botsoc Member

The months of June and July are always difficult months when events are being planned. Attendance at any event is partially governed by the weather and the time, as well of course, by the interest of the would-be participant. The Garden Walk in June was well attended, nearly 30 people altogether while in July, there were only 4 visitors plus the guides and hospitality team. The first advertised date in June for the talk by Wessel Swanepoel brought only 6 visitors – there was a clash with the Nedbank talk we know, but when this talk took place the following week, the lecture room of the NBRI was overflowing with 36 folk present!

We happily continue with our Walks and Talks as part of our mission to raise awareness and knowledge of the ecological diversity and beauty of this land. If you have anything to share or to pass on to us, we'd love to hear from you.

The Botanic Garden is in need of benches to be placed at various places, where visitors can either rest or take in their surroundings or perhaps quietly study the life around them. The benches are outdoor type and similar to those at the Windhoek Golf Club. You are invited to sponsor a bench that would have your name and date on a plaque on the bench. The cost – approximately N\$1 700,00 all included. We'll pass on a picture of the bench with exact cost soon but if you are willing to participate in this venture, please contact any member of CAPP. A list of sponsors will be in our notice board and I am happy to report that we do have sponsorship for one bench already.

Best wishes to you all in whatever venture you are engaged in

Diana

UPCOMING WALKS AND TALKS OF INTEREST

WALK:

The next guided walk in the National Botanic Garden will take place on **Saturday, 1 August 2009 at 08:00**. Meet at 08h00 at the National Botanical Research Institute, 8 Orban Street, Windhoek. Entrance for non-members is N\$10. Tea/coffee and muffins are available for a small donation.

TALK:

Thursday 16 July 2009 at 18h30 at the National Botanical Research Institute, 8 Orban Street
Collaborative Expedition to Angola – The breaking of a new day

Illustrated talk by: **Dr. Ezekiel Kwembeya**

Please find more details at the end of this newsletter!

All are welcome. Refreshments will be available.

GARDEN NEWS FLASH

by Silke Rügheimer

The display cabinets in the **DESERT HOUSE** have finally been decorated. We have selected a variety of interesting fruits, seeds, stems and bark pieces of various indigenous plant species, and added some photos plus bits and pieces of information. Feel free to view the display during your next visit to the garden. Comments, suggestions and queries are welcome.

I would like to thank the Botanical Society for their generous payment towards the manufacturing of these cupboards. A big thank you also goes to Olga Jones, who spent many hours compiling the information and putting together the display.



To celebrate **Arbour Day** on Friday 9 October, the National Botanical Research Institute, supported by the Botanical Society of Namibia, will have a Plant Sale Day on **Saturday 10 October 2009**, starting at **08:30 to 13:00**. Various sought-after and rare plant species will be on sale as well as various new releases. Make sure you come early to avoid any disappointments. Eats and drinks will be available.

PLANTS FROM THE BOTANIC GARDEN

by Salomé Kruger

Croton gratissimus* var. *gratissimus Lavender bush

A very attractive shrub or tree with its most catching features being its leaves which makes this plant look good throughout the year. The colouring of the leaves turns from green in the summer to a rusty orange then dark brown to black during autumn and winter. An inspiration to all artists! The underside of the leaves is silver looking with brownish scales, while the upper surface is a beautiful dark green. Young branches also have the silvery appearance of the leaf. Peak flowering period is from December to May when yellow-cream spikes droop from the ends of branches.

Distribution: Widespread from Windhoek to the north, being very common in the north-central and north-eastern regions of Namibia. This species was introduced to the Garden, and can be seen just before going down the stairs leading to the Garden proper.

Uses: Because of their aromatic scent, crushed leaves and fruits are mixed with animal fat and applied to the body as a perfume. The leaves can also be used as a soap when boiled. Dried powdered bark is used as tobacco or to treat bleeding gums. Wood is seldom used in the building of huts. Game and livestock browse on this plant. A beautiful plant to have in all gardens.

Conservation status: No status recorded.




Tiny flowers carried on drooping spikes



Silver underside of leaves with scales



The leaves in autumn and winter



BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF NAMIBIA

THURSDAY 16 JULY 2009
National Botanical Research Institute
8 Orban Street

ILLUSTRATED TALK: 18:30

Collaborative Expedition to Angola— The breaking of a new day

As part of a broader strategy to collaborate with biodiversity specialists throughout Africa, a pilot expedition to Southern Angola was undertaken as a first step towards long term engagement with Angola. Dr Ezekiel G. Kwembeya, a plant taxonomist with the NBRI will be presenting highlights of this expedition which was undertaken by international experts in a wide range of animal and plant taxa. New species and records were discovered as a result of this initiative.

All are welcome. Refreshments will be available.

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
Hildegard Becker		beckerkj@mweb.com.na	Member, Guide
Dr Ezekeil Kwembeya	Tel. 202 2021	kwembeya@nbri.org.na	Acting head of NBRI
Silke Rügheimer	Tel. 202-2014	silker@nbri.org.na	NBRI, Botanic Garden, Desert House
Uschi Kirchner Walter	Tel. 234 610	uschi@safarisuk.ch	Newsletter co-ordinator

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

Kind regards

Diana Thompson and CAPP