

September 2015



Botanical Society of Namibia



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Sow everything
that can come up:
new attitudes,
compassion,
tenderness.
Now is not the
time for
despondency
at the sight
of a
grey morning.
It is time to sow
new seeds.

Maretha Maartens

Dear Members,

We have been blessed with a little rain and hopefully more will fall in the coming days. We are refreshed and invigorated and hold out some hope for at least part of our gardens surviving the water restrictions.

2015 has been a roller coaster of a year with many achievements but also some unfulfilled aims. We look to the New Year with anticipation, with some new, good ideas and with confidence that our Society will grow and have a greater impact on the environmental issues of our country.

We thank you all for your support, your questions, your comments, your help when called upon and your suggestions. 2016 promises to be exciting and challenging and with your continued support it will all happen.

We wish you, your families and your friends a Blessed Christmas with love, laughter and inner peace. May you travel safely have a New Year with fulfilment in many areas and good health to sustain you to the year's end.

Diana , Hildegard, Andy , Silvelyn, Jaco, Ellen, Luise, Fransiska, Ezekeil, Coleen, Leevi, Hille, Christo, Carol

Diana Thompson



Alien Watch

A dangerously invasive species that out competes and smothers almost all other plants in the vicinity. Declared a noxious weed in Australia, we need to see to its eradication as soon as possible.

Harrisia martinii

Common names: Moon cactus, Torch cactus (E);
Kabelkaktus (A)

by Coleen Mannheimer

Origin: South America

Description:

Untidy, spiny, sprawling, leafless succulent shrub with long, much branched, often arching, weakly ridged stems up to 4cm across and several metres long that root where they touch the ground. Spines in groups, with one or two central spines much longer than the others. Central spines up to three, 1-3.5 cm long; radial spines up to seven, generally 1- 6mm long. Flowers showy, white, nocturnal, up to 18 cm across. Fruit fleshy, almost spherical, bright pink to red with white pulp containing numerous blackish seeds.

Discussion:

This **dangerously invasive species** can form impenetrable mats that cover many hectares, out-competing and smothering virtually all other plants in the vicinity. Dispersal is mainly by seed—the fruit pulp, which contains the seeds, is eaten by birds and mammals and spread in their faeces.

This cactus is set to become a major problem in Namibia. It has been declared a noxious weed in Australia, where biological control using the mealybug *Hypogeococcus festerianus* has proven to be successful.

Eradication of this species is of the utmost importance because of its fast growing propensities.



Photos: Coleen Mannheimer

Saturday 8 August - Cactus Clean-up in the Botanic Garden

On 8 August a crew of determined anti-alien warriors tackled the prickly issue of the cactus infestation in our Botanic Garden. Their determination and muscle-power meant that 5 bakkie loads of the offending alien plants were removed. The spirit of community and unity in this common-cause were tangible on the day, everyone sincerely determined to rid the garden of the pest which steals our biodiversity, and enjoying the opportunity to do something about it. Thanks to all who were involved: not only to the members of the Botanical Society, but to the students, Scouts, members of the public and NBRI staff who joined in. Cactus infestation remains a problem in the garden and more clearing will need to be done, but this effort has shown that the problem is not insurmountable. Indigenous vegetation will prevail.

Andy Callesen



Photos: Frances Chase



Coming up...

Thursday	Sept 17	19h00	Illustrated presentation at the NBRI Dr Renate Hans “Medicinal Compounds from Plants”
Saturday	Oct 10	08h00	Guided Walk in the Botanic Garden Continuing the Cactus clean-up
Thursday	Oct 15	18h00	Tree Awards at the NBRI There is still time to make a nomination for this Award
		19h00	Illustrated presentations Lorenttha Haraes: “The impacts of off road vehicle track intensities on lichen communities and associated invertebrates in the Central Namib.”
			Abel Nehemia: “Understanding the spatial patterns of reproductive output and herbivory of <i>Welwitschia mirabilis</i> in the Central Namib Desert.”
Saturday	Nov 14	08h00	Guided Walk in the Botanic Garden with the Bird Club
Saturday	Dec 5	08h00	Guided Walk in the Botanic Garden

Please note: The first Saturday of December because of the holidays

TREE AWARDS

Nominations for the **Tree Awards of 2015** are invited!

The Tree Award is a Certificate of Recognition given to any person, company, organisation, school or establishment who goes out of the ordinary way to save and protect our indigenous trees.

Any of the above are eligible for this Award and anyone may make a nomination.

We require the name of the person / company etc; contact details, the locality of the site and one or more pictures if possible.

Nominations to be sent to: nambotsoc@gmail.com.

For any further information required contact

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GREEN INK