



Green Ink

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*You are the notes,
and we are the
flute,
We are the
mountains, you
are the sounds
running down.
We are the pawns
and kings and
rooks
you set out on a
board:
We win or we lose.
We are lions rolling
and unrolling on
flags.
Your invisible wind
carries us
through the
world.*

Jelaluddin Rumi

Dear members of the Botanical Society and all other plant lovers,

The first month of the year is well on its way! However, I think there is always time to wish you, on behalf of CAPP (committee,) good health and prosperity and many happy botanical encounters for 2023!

Nature is a good teacher! Though always present there is constant and inevitable change - sometimes the changes are happy and usher in good times, such as the current rains in many parts of the country have done; sometimes there is drastic and sad change, which leaves us with only a fond memory, such as the “fall” of an icon, a “Living Legend” tree, a tourist attraction: the old camelthorn tree (*Acacia erioloba*) that stood the test of times for countless years, but lost the battle to the waters of the Aba Huab River this year. May her remains still serve a purpose in the harsh environment! The lesson is: enjoy the moments – they will change – and nothing is forever (good or bad)!!

The Society is starting the year on a high! A presentation at the coast, a guided walk in the Botanic Garden, a talk at NBRI, an outing together with the Bird Club and a “guided” drive along one of the most beautiful roads of Namibia are planned for the next few weeks. There is something for everyone! Please consult this Green Ink and the media for more information!

The Botanical Society will continue to focus attention on informing you about invasive alien plants and the eradication thereof, as well as on the outrageous and relentless poaching of our desert plants. Eyes, ears and action are crucial! his first issue of “Green Ink” in 2023.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at the first walk at the Botanical Garden on 11 February.

With kind regards

Ellen Gudde

Pancratium tenuifolium
Photo: Liz Komen



Question . . . Why was *Welwitschia mirabilis* not included in the Living Legends presentation?

Answer . . . Is it a tree? It was not nominated.

Demise of a tree . . .



This beautiful *Acacia erioloba* * that could have been one of our Living Legends, sadly died of natural causes.

It stood in the Aba Huab River for who knows how many years, providing shelter, shade and food to all and every creature that came by. The pods, bark, gum and roots have medicinal uses, the roasted seeds can be used as a substitute for coffee and the root bark is used to make quivers by the San people.

An ancient tree falling over



(as sad as it is) is more easily acceptable than the wilful destruction of so many of our precious trees that we see too often. ***“Destroy a camelthorn tree and you destroy a self-supporting fertilizer and seed factory.”*** *Luise Hoffmann*

A dead tree is almost as important as a living one, especially one with as many nooks and crannies in the bark as the camelthorn. It provides a home to many small animals such as insects, spiders and lizards, and the decaying wood is food to isopods (commonly called woodlice or pillbugs) and termites, which in turn provide food to other animals. It is thus very important to leave fallen trees where they fall. Or standing dead.

Belonging to the Fabaceae family, it is both a protected tree and the national tree of Namibia.

*Namibia has not adopted the new Australian taxonomy for the genus *Acacia*.

Not Maltahohe . . . instead

the flood plain on Fish Farm next to Kaisosie Lodge, Okavango River – 10km east of Rundu.

Nerine laticoma, the vlei lily or gifbol, is endemic to southern Africa, stretching from northern Namibia southwards to the northern Cape and eastwards through Botswana to the Limpopo region of RSA and Lesotho. It occurs in large colonies on deep sandy soils, producing mass displays of white to pink flower heads after the first rains. It is a geophyte (bulbous plant) of the Amaryllis family, and like most members of the family, the bulb contains poisonous alkaloids. These flowers, on the banks of Okavango River, are probably a form of *Nerine laticoma* that was previously a separate species called *Nerine duparquetiana* (CM pers comm).



Photos: Len van Zyl

Text: Barb Curtis

Ref: <https://nza.sanbi.org/nerine-laticoma#>

Go and see for yourself...

It seems to be a morning glory super-year!

We have all noticed how in some years some plant species flourish, and in others you hardly see them. Species such as *Ipomoea* can usually be seen, but this year members of the family Convolvulaceae are super-abundant around Windhoek, with the most common being *Convolvulus sagittatus*, *Merremia palmata*, *Ipomoea obscura*, *I. holubii*, and even *Ipomoea oenotheroides*, which is far less commonly seen than the others



If you go out of town on the red sand roads around Rehoboth you are likely to see *Convolvulus argillicola*, an endemic species, and in sandy areas of the country *Ipomoea sinensis*, *I. oblongata*, *I. magnusiana* and *I. verbascoidea*, not to mention the delicate and delightful *Evolvulus alsinoides*. These are only a few of the glorious species that are indigenous to our country.



In the more arid areas, such as the pro-Namib and Damaraland, the shrubby *Ipomoea adenioides* is a delightful sight in the morning, the flowers aging with the day. In northern pans and rivers *Ipomoea aquatica* and *I. rubens* offer a beautiful array too.



Get to know your indigenous morning glories – you won't be sorry!

Text and photos: Coleen Mannheimer

Coming up . . .

Tuesday	January	31	18h00	Talk in Swakopmund by Coleen Mannheimer
Saturday	February	11	08h00	Guided Walk in the Botanic Garden
Thursday		16	19h00	Illustrated presentation by Coleen Mannheimer
Sunday		26	Tba	Outing to Dreikrone with the Bird Club
Saturday	March	4	08h00	Plant Sales Day at Namib Trees
Saturday		11	08h00	Guided Walk in the Botanic Garden
Thursday		30	18h00	Annual General Meeting
			19h00	Illustrated presentation at the NBRI
Sat / Sun	April	1/2	Tba	Visit to ISAP Camelthorn Tree Project
Saturday		15	08h00	Guided Walk in the Botanic Garden
Thursday		27	19h00	Illustrated talk: Diana Rodriguez Cala (<i>4th Thurs</i>)

Special Membership Categories

Welwitschia	ISAP Camelthorn Tree Project
Moringa	Nina Maritz Architects
Lithops	Norman & Avril Green



Vigna frutescens

This is one of many purple flowers in the Fabaceae (pea family) to be seen in the veld around Windhoek. Best distinguished from the others by the leaves, which are trifoliolate (with 3 leaflets). Each leaflet is deeply 3-lobed, with the central lobe longest.

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