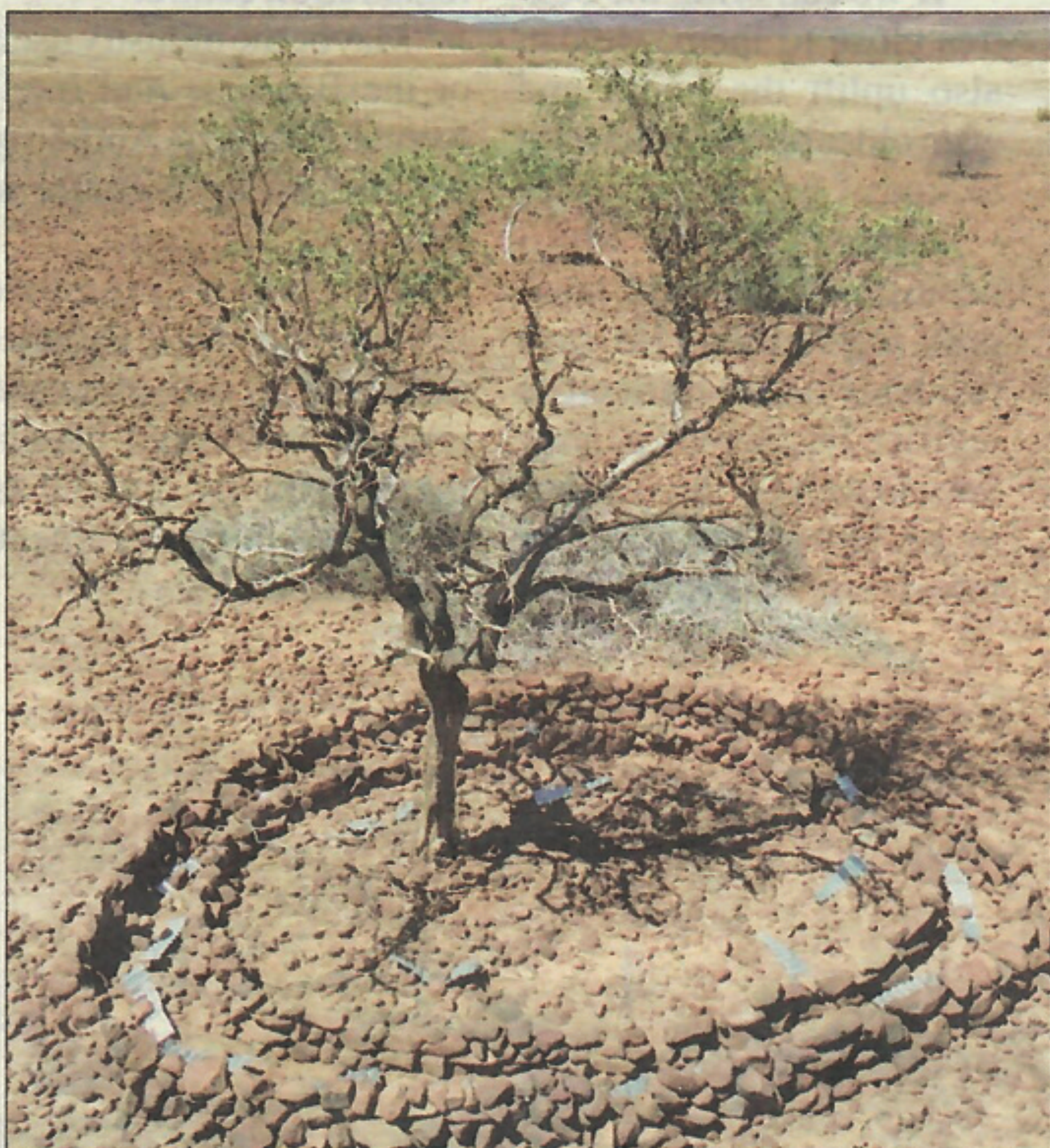




TREE PROTECTION ... Pieces of corrugated iron are placed around Maerua and Boscia trees at Etendeka Mountain Camp in the Kunene region to prevent over-browsing by large herbivores.



TREE RESCUE ... A Windhoek aloe is being rescued from a road development.

Photos: Dennis Liebenberg & Ivor Powell

Celebrating those who protect Namibia's indigenous flora

• **LUISE HOFFMANN**

IN NAMIBIA, ARBOUR Day is celebrated annually on the second Friday of October – falling on 9 October this year – as the month is the most favourable time of the year to plant trees.

The Botanical Society of Namibia (Botsoc) often receives frantic calls from the public trying to prevent the senseless destruction of trees in their neighbourhood.

Usually, as soon as one hears the first screech of a chainsaw attacking a tree, so much damage has already been done that it is hardly possible to save that tree. Based on that experience, in 2007 Botsoc decided upon a counter-measure: to publicly recognise individuals, companies and organisations that have made an effort to save and protect Namibia's indigenous trees, to plant indigenous trees and to create awareness about Namibia's indigenous flora.

This is not a competition – there are no first prizes. Everyone who cares about trees is a winner.

People from all over Namibia are encouraged to nominate deserving candidates.

Usually only three tree awards are allocated each year, as well as certificates of recognition for individuals or organisations that have, for instance, started an indigenous tree nursery or similar tree-related operation and have been at it for more than three years.

The purpose of the awards is to make people aware of the value of indigenous trees and of trees in general, and to discourage them from senselessly chopping down existing trees.

People are also discouraged from planting alien trees that do not belong to Namibia. We have a wealth of beautiful indigenous trees in our country to choose from.

Namib Trees at Klein Windhoek



Photo: Ngepi Tree Project

NGEPI TREES ... Villagers near Ngepi on the Kavango River are sponsored to tend and protect indigenous trees.

offers a variety of indigenous tree saplings, along with advice on how to plant and care for them.

Last year's tree award recipients were Etendeka Mountain Camp in the Kunene region, for protecting trees from browsing giraffes; Ivor Powell, for rescuing trees

from development projects and founding both Namib Trees and the Desert Botanic Garden near the Gamsberg; and the Ngepi tree planting project and Deutscher Pfadfinderbund, for protecting indigenous trees on their property and planting new ones.

Other past award recipients include the Boomhuis Coffee Shop, which built its premises around an old camelthorn tree; Agnes Shivute of Okafitu village, Theo Ikua of the Green Earth Project and the Intelligence Support Against Poaching Camelthorn Tree Project for establishing indigenous nurseries and promoting indigenous trees; and the Camelthorn Pod Mall and the Omuramba Medical Centre for protecting trees during the construction of new buildings.

If you know of someone who has gone out of their way to protect and promote indigenous trees, please send a nomination to nambotsoc@gmail.com or visit the society's website for more information at www.botsoc.org.na.

– *The Botanical Society of Namibia*



Photo: Contributed

PROTECTION DURING CONSTRUCTION ... A camelthorn tree is protected during the construction of a new shopping mall.