Kirstenbosch Branch
OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY

“Friends of Kirstenbosch”
Newsletter

No. 1 Stone Cottage
Kirstenbosch Drive
Newlands 7700
021 671-5468

June 2012

Photo: Alice Notten
Kirstenbosch Garden Fair

The 37th annual Kirstenbosch Garden Fair and Plant Sale, held over the weekend of 5 and 6 May, was yet again a busy affair. Held in May for the first time on a trial basis, it brought with it cooler temperatures that seemed to suit both people and plants alike! The weekend itself dawned sunny, and while the early mornings were cool, the sunshine soon cheered and warmed both sellers and visitors.
The set-up week preceding the sale weekend was the usual bustle of activity, but this year, instead of the searing heat which the army of volunteers and Kirstenbosch staff have dealt with in the past, we were treated to some very wet days. Kirstenbosch volunteers are not easily put off, however, and were out there in full force—rainsuits, wellies and all, but still awaited is the invention of the rainproof printed list on which deliveries can be ticked off—drying out of soggy paperwork with a hairdryer certainly provided some amusement during tea and lunch breaks! A special mention should be made of the two ladies who insisted on going out to label plants in the heaviest of rain and kept returning to the cottage with huge smiles for more labels before going back undaunted to their task outside! It is this spirit and commitment, which is demonstrated by all the volunteers, that really makes the Garden Fair work.
A hearty thank you to all volunteers who turned out to help with this annual fundraising event, a big thank you also to Kirstenbosch horticulturists and staff, and Branch staff, all of whom so willingly put their weight behind this event as well. It is indeed pleasing to report that the resulting income does everyone proud in ongoing support for Kirstenbosch Garden projects.

Special thanks to Sandy Munro and learners from Westerford High School and Wynberg Girls’ High School. Last but not least, many thanks to Janette Yeats (see photo below), Convener of the Garden Fair, whose hard work and organisational skills are invaluable!

A dedicated volunteer with Rupert Koopman, Chairman of Kirstenbosch Branch.

Our youngest volunteer, Eryn van Rooyen, with her Dad, BotSoc staff member, Leon.
Free guided walks in Kirstenbosch

Did you know that the Kirstenbosch Branch’s wonderful team of volunteer Garden Guides lead walks around the Garden on a daily basis? These walks are absolutely free and open to everyone. There are currently 27 experienced Garden Guides (with another six in training), all of whom are brimming with amazing knowledge and insights into the Garden that are guaranteed to fascinate and enhance your appreciation of Kirstenbosch. Each walk is slightly different as the guides have their individual styles and adapt their walks to meet the needs of the group and seasonal interest in the Garden.

Walks depart at 10h00 and 11h00, Monday to Friday and 10h00 on Saturday. There is no walk on the first Monday of the month. The walks are usually around two hours in duration. If it rains a shorter tour will take place in the Kirstenbosch Conservatory.

Appeal for books

Do you have any botanical or natural history books on your bookshelf at home for which you no longer have a use? If so, would you consider donating them to the Kirstenbosch Branch’s library?

The library is a valuable resource for our volunteer Garden Guides and we are hoping to expand and upgrade it. Contact Kate Steyn or Catherine Gribble in the Branch office on 021 671-5468.

Now is a fantastic time of the year to visit Kirstenbosch to see the Garden ablaze with the colours of aloes in bloom! Pictured on the front cover is krantz aloe, Aloe arborescens.

NOTICE OF THE 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE KIRSTENBOSCH BRANCH OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SA

On: Tuesday 21 August 2012 at 12h00
Venue: The Middle Stone Cottage, corner of Kirstenbosch and Rhodes Drives, Newlands

We are pleased to announce that Dr Guy Midgley, Chief Director of SANBI’s Climate Change and BioAdaptation Division and Professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, is our guest speaker and will give a talk entitled Cape Town’s special place in the context of a changing climate.

In terms of the Constitution, serving member Mr Peter Ryan has completed his term of office but is eligible for re-election. Nomination forms are available from the Branch office and must be submitted not less than seven days before the meeting. Notice of motions for consideration at the AGM must reach the Branch office 30 days before the meeting. Audited accounts will be available.
Introducing Rupert Koopman

Rupert is the Chairman of the Kirstenbosch branch of the Botanical Society. He has been a BotSoc member since October 2003, and joined the Committee in August 2010 before being elected as Chairman in August 2011.

Rupert is a botanist employed at CapeNature Scientific Services working in fynbos from the Cederberg to De Hoop Nature Reserve. His first position after finishing his studies was with Doug Jeffery Environmental Consultants (the company of the eponymous former BotSoc Council Chairman).

He has worked in association with CREW since 2003 as a student intern and volunteer, which has in turn germinated an interest in threatened species (species of conservation concern) and endangered habitats, which has been very useful professionally.

His hobbies – reading and being Chairman of Kirstenbosch Branch!

Rupert says:

“I am an avid lover of fynbos and it should thus come as no surprise that I view BotSoc as a powerful vehicle for civil society to learn about, love, protect and use our flora. At a time when, ironically, society at large is losing touch with our floral heritage, there is an amazing store of knowledge in BotSoc. We need to nurture, curate and disseminate this knowledge so that it is not lost.

BotSoc also has the potential for getting people to interact across boundaries through a shared appreciation of plants, their usefulness and their beauty in all communities. The primary aim of my tenure as Chairman is to unleash that potential while retaining what makes the Society great. It is our role to share our knowledge, experiences and access to beautiful places as widely as possible as relationships do not grow without familiarity.”

Who’s who at Kirstenbosch Branch

Meet Jane McKenzie, our Branch’s Bookkeeper and champion office coffee-maker! Jane has been with the Branch since June 2008 and before that worked at the Society’s Head Office from 1999 to 2002. Before BotSoc, she worked for many years in the hospitality industry.

In her spare time, she is Treasurer of the Save the Children Fund, President of the Western Province Hockey Union as well as serving on the committees of the SA Masters Hockey, WP Masters Hockey and WP Grand Masters Hockey Unions! She has been appointed Manager of one of the four SA sides attending the World Games for Grand Masters in the UK in August.

Somewhat she still finds time to knit baby jerseys for charity and organise Christmas hampers for underprivileged families.
South Africa Strikes Gold at Chelsea

South Africa strikes gold! For the 32nd time, the South African National Biodiversity Institute’s (SANBI’s) 2012 Kirstenbosch — SA entry at the prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show in London was awarded a gold medal.

The theme of the exhibit was Gateways—a botanical journey combining nature and our cultural diversity to create an intriguing combination of rich botanical biodiversity and iconic architectural elements.

The 2012 Kirstenbosch-SA exhibit took visitors on a journey through changing botanical and cultural landscapes showing our unique flora against the backdrop of watercolour paintings of picturesque locations. The Madiba protea was exhibited for the first time adding additional interest.

This innovative display was designed by David Davidson and Ray Hudson who have created marvelous designs for 19 of the 37 years that Kirstenbosch-SA has exhibited at Chelsea.

Members of the Chelsea team pictured above are David Davidson (designer), Mandisa Kondlo (Horticulturist at Walter Sisulu Garden), Kuphumla Zenze (Seed Room Manager at Kirstenbosch), Alison Pekeur (Events Co-ordinator at Kirstenbosch) and Ray Hudson (designer). Below are scenes from the exhibit.

The exhibit invited visitors to experience the many fascinating species that thrive within the varying climates of the south-western Cape coast and interior (Fynbos biome), extending into Namaqualand and the semi-arid Karoo (Succulent Karoo biome), and onward to the northern provinces of Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal (Grassland biome).

The Cape Floristic Region includes proteas and a wide array of fynbos, perennial and annual species.

The Succulent Karoo biome includes many aloe and succulent species, the diversity of which is unparalleled anywhere else in the world for an arid area of this size.

The Grassland biome includes rivers and wetlands, where only one in six plant species are actually grasses, with the bulk being bulbous plants such as arum lilies, orchids, red-hot pokers, watsonias, gladioli and ground orchids. It has an extremely high biodiversity, second only to the Fynbos Biome in South Africa.
In May, some of us volunteer Garden Guides from Kirstenbosch organised a trip to the Richtersveld—the Mountain Desert National Park which is now a World Heritage Site. It has more succulent plants than any other place in the world, and a good many of them endemic, growing nowhere else in the whole world.

An unforgettable sight was Aloe pearsonii—entire mountainsides covered with this special aloe with its characteristic red leaves.

We had many stops to examine and try to identify incredibly interesting plants and collected close on 100 species of plants on our list, some of them known to us from the Conservatory or the Mathews Rockery at Kirstenbosch, many others completely new to most of us. The iconic plants of the Richtersveld like the three tree Aloe, the Pachypodium namaquensis and the lovely Tylecodons are always a joy to see, especially in their natural setting.
**Red List of South African Plants**

The Red List of South African Plants Online provides up to date information on the national conservation status of South Africa's indigenous plants. In one of the continent's largest collaborative conservation projects to date, South Africa has become the first megadiverse country to fully assess the status of its entire flora.

The Red List of South African plants version 2012.1 is now available at [http://redlist.sanbi.org/](http://redlist.sanbi.org/). In this edition, 57 species were added to the list for the first time, and 223 assessments were updated. This update includes the rediscovery of another nine species thought to be extinct (they were listed as Critically Endangered – Possibly Extinct). However, six new CR PEs were added to the list. More information has been added to 98 species, and 278 new photos were added and 11 genera were completely reassessed to reflect latest taxonomic revisions and changes.

A Red List mailing list has been introduced for communicating updates to the website – see the link at the bottom of the home page. You may subscribe if you would like to stay informed of the latest Red List news.

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**iSpot**

by Tony Rebelo

On 31 May 2012 iSpot reached **15 000 observations** (species records), **20 000 agreements** (confirmations of ID) and **30 000 pictures** in the Virtual Museum.

If you are not yet logged onto SANBI’s latest public participation programme, why not?

It’s fun. Although a Virtual Museum and public participation tool, it was designed by the Open University as an education tool for distance learning in taxonomy and biodiversity.

It’s simple. Use it to get your IDs of unknown plants, animals and fungi done! Use it to learn how to identify plants and animals! Use it to hone your identification skills! Use it to teach others how to identify and enjoy our biodiversity!

It’s useful. It is already linked to SANBI’s Red List as a source of illustrations. We have already discovered presumed Extinct species, and useful range extensions. It’s a great place to meet other like-minded biodiversity ambassadors.

Go to [www.ispot.org.za](http://www.ispot.org.za). Whether you are into daisies, or snakes, or beetles or lichens, iSpot is your one stop shop for sharing biodiversity. This is a SANBI project. iSpot is great for organizing photographic competitions, surveys, bioblitzes ([http://www.ispot.org.za/taxonomy/terms/6994](http://www.ispot.org.za/taxonomy/terms/6994)), courses, or even for running a public participation side to your own project. Look at the forums for ideas and options ([http://www.ispot.org.za/forum/6691](http://www.ispot.org.za/forum/6691)). At last SANBI has a tool for engaging the public in participatory programmes online. Feel free to make use of it. Beware: it is addictive!

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We are sad to announce that Tim Attwell has resigned from the Kirstenbosch Branch Committee as he has moved to Bettys Bay. We shall miss him very much and wish him well in his new home. No doubt he will become involved in the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society!

We welcome Amanda Younge Hayes who has been co-opted onto the Committee in his place.
Eco-project:
How to make self-watering planters from plastic bottles

Upcycle old plastic bottles into self-watering planters—it’s easy, inexpensive and eco-friendly! Made from plastic water, milk or cooldrink bottles, these planters are a great way to keep your plants happy without overwatering them.

Step 1
Remove the label from a plastic bottle, put the cap in the recycling, and wash the bottle in warm soapy water.

Step 2
Draw a line around the bottle 10cm from the bottom. This is your cutting line. Make a small hole on the line with the point of a pair of scissors or knife. Cut along the line to remove the top of the bottle. Set the bottom aside to make the water reservoir later.

Step 3
Puncture three to four holes around the neck of the bottle with a small nail, about 5cm from the cap. These form drainage holes for your planter.

Step 4
Put a cotton wool ball in the mouth of the bottle to prevent soil from falling out of the planter, and to work as a wick to draw moisture up from the reservoir of water. Turn the top upside down and fill it about three quarters full with potting soil.

Step 5
Plant seedlings in the soil. Fill in around the roots with soil and firm it down gently with your hands.

Step 6
Add 5cm of water to the bottom piece of the bottle. This is the water reservoir for your planter. Place the planter inside the bottom so the neck faces downward. The mouth of the bottle should touch, or nearly touch, the bottom of the reservoir. Add fresh water to the reservoir when it drops below the drainage holes.

You now have a self-watering planter!
Colouring-in Competition!

Print and colour-in the picture and drop it in the Colouring-in Competition Box at the Botanical Society Bookshop in the Visitors’ Centre at Kirstenbosch by 1 August. The winner will receive a Gift Voucher to spend in the Bookshop!
Don’t forget to write your name, age and telephone number on your entry.

Cape Sugarbird (Promerops cafer) on King Protea (Protea cynaroides) by Claire Sadie

The Cape Sugarbird is almost entirely dependent on proteas and ericas for its nectar-rich diet, and is one of the six bird species endemic to the Fynbos Biome.
Winter Wonders at Kirstenbosch

If you are looking for ideas to entertain the kids during the winter school holidays, look no further. The annual Winter Wonders programme at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden gets underway from 25 June until 14 July with a host of unusual and creative activities—and free entry to the Garden for children up to 17 for the duration of the school holidays. For more information call 021 799 8783 or www.sanbi.org.

The Kirstenbosch Branch is delighted to be participating in the Winter Wonders campaign with guided walks in the Garden three times a week and story time in the Bookshop every week day.

Botanical Society Winter Wonders Guided Walks

These free guided themed walks have been especially arranged by the Kirstenbosch Branch Garden Guides for children and families and are approximately two hours in duration.

Tuesday 26 June: **Meet the King: The Protea Story** — 11h00 Gate 1
Thursday 28 June: **All Creatures, Great and Small**: fun in the Garden — 10h30 Gate 2
Thursday 28 June: **Aloes: Hot Favourites for Cool Weather** — 11h00 Gate 1
Saturday 30 June: **Grandparents and Grandchildren** — 11h00 Gate 1
Tuesday 3 July: **Adventure Walk for ages 4 to 10**. Bring a picnic tea — 10h30-12h00 Gate 2
Thursday 5 July: **Aloes: Hot Favourites for Cool Weather** — 11h00 Gate 1
Saturday 7 July: **Yellowwoods** — 11h00 Gate 1
Tuesday 10 July: **All Creatures, Great and Small**: fun in the Garden — 10h30 Gate 2
Tuesday 10 July: **Protea Walk** — 11h00 Gate 1
Thursday 12 July: **Medicinal Plants** — 11h00 Gate 1
Saturday 14 July: **All Creatures, Great and Small**: fun in the Garden — 10h30 Gate 2
Saturday 14 July: **Useful Plants** — 11h00 Gate 1
Tuesday 17 July: **A Ramble through the Restios** — 11h00 Gate 1
Thursday 19 July: **Survival Tactics of Succulents** — 11h00 Gate 1
Saturday 21 July: **Trees with a Story** — 11h00 Gate 1

**Puppet Shows** in the Conservatory every Tuesday and Thursday using delightful animal characters. R30 per learner, no booking required.

**Craft workshops** for children in Grades 1 to 6, 09h00-12h00, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays throughout the holidays. R150 per child per workshop.
Contact Nicolette Lotter by email molonix@gmail.com by Friday 15 June to book.

**Art workshops** for teens in Grades 7 to 12, 09h00-12h00. R200-R500.
Contact Inge Semple on iicjsemple@mweb.co.za by Friday 15 June to book.

**Workshops at Gold Fields Environmental Education Centre**

**Biodiversity & Waste Art holiday workshops**
26 June and 11 July: 09h00-13h00 for Grade 4 to 6 learners. R40.00 per learner.

**Nature’s Treasure Box holiday workshops**
27 June and 10 July: 09h00-12h30 for children from 6 to 9. R35.00 per participant.

**Frog Awareness workshops**
2 and 4 July: 10h00-12h00 for children from 7 to 13.
Booking is essential. Contact Michelle September on 021 799-8670 or Chanelle Naidoo on 021 799-8696 to book or for more information about these workshops.
Botanical Society Winter Wonders Story Time in the Kirstenbosch Bookshop

Join the Botanical Society for Story Time in the Kirstenbosch Bookshop at the Visitors’ Centre, every week day morning at 10h00, from Tuesday 26 June to Friday 13 July!

We are delighted to be launching Claerwen Howie’s new book Vumile and the Dragon on Monday 2 July, with Claerwen doing the reading herself at 10h00.

After Story Time each day, children are invited to do some colouring-in in the Video-rama (next to Caffe Botanica).

Look for the discounts and special offers on these titles on the day of reading

Please note that this programme is subject to change
Congratulations to our March colouring-in Competition winner, Tegan Duke age 9, who won a gift voucher to spend in the Bookshop!

A selection of the best entries will be on our Facebook page.
The ever popular walks programme continues with regular half and full day walks of varying intensity led by members. Always take wind and waterproof clothing, adequate water and sunscreen, particularly in summer, when participating in walks.

Saturday 9 June: Glencairn
Meet at 09h00 at the Jonkersdam parking spot midway between Sun Valley and Glencairn. Easy walk. Duration 3 hours.

Wednesday 15 August: Koeberg Nature Reserve
Easy morning walk to see the spring flowers. Meet at 09h00 at the Koeberg Information Centre parking area.
Leaders: Teresa Raposo 021 674-2874; Sheila Robinson 021 782-0773; Liz Barnett 021 531-8605; Jane von Witt 021 683-9822.

Saturday 25 August: Botanical Ramble
Please contact walk leaders for details; Jenny and Peter Ryan 021 783-2868; Liz Barnett 021 531-8605.

Sunday 9 September: Devils Peak to Platteklip
Meet at the parking area in Van Riebeeck Park just above Herzlia School at 08h30. Interesting walk to see spring flowers on the lower slopes of Devils Peak and then up to Tafelberg along the contour path past Silverstream and Platteklip Stream back to the cars. Reasonably strenuous. Duration 4 hours.
Leaders: Dirk Muller 021 762-2473; Pat and Tony Rebelo 021 712-7816; Margaret Kahle 021 762-3170; Moiragh Girdwood 021 671-6890; Ann MacGregor 021 785-7276; Jill Blignaut 021 794-4836.

The Kirstenbosch Craft Market is closed for winter break in June, July and August. The market re-opens on Sunday 30 September.
Exciting new developments at Kirstenbosch’s food outlets

Kirstenbosch has three separate food outlets, which are all independently owned. Some exciting new developments are taking place this year.

The former Silver Tree Restaurant, near Gate 1, went out on public tender earlier this year. moyo Kirstenbosch started operating on 1 May and is currently open daily from 09h00 to 17h00.

Kirstenbosch is delighted to have a moyo restaurant on its premises with its warm, friendly and relaxed African charm, Afro entertainment and cuisine created from the best African produce. For more information contact moyo on 021 762-9585 www.moyo.co.za.

The Kirstenbosch Tea Room, near Gate 2, has been a tremendous success for the past eight years. This popular award winning restaurant continues to run with the usual devoted care of Pamela Shippel-Granoth and her team. For more information contact the Tea Room on 021 797-4883 www.ktr.co.za.

Caffe Botanica, the coffee shop in the Visitors Centre at Kirstenbosch is closed until a new operator is appointed. Watch this space!

Wednesday Talks

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<td>Christina Moseley, Project Officer</td>
<td>African Penguin Species Champion Programme, BirdLife South Africa: Not just black and white: conserving the African penguin <em>change to previously advertised talk</em></td>
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<td>27 June</td>
<td>David Davidson, Exhibition Designer</td>
<td>Chelsea 2012</td>
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<td>11 July</td>
<td>Adam Harrower, K’bosch Horticulturist</td>
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<td>25 July</td>
<td>Xavier Zylstra, Environmental Educator</td>
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<td>22 August</td>
<td>Otto Schmidt, Bird Lover and Photographer</td>
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<td>5 September</td>
<td>Linda Dolan, Plant Lover/ R.H.S. Retiree</td>
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<td>19 September</td>
<td>Karen Watkins, Journalist/ Guide</td>
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All talks are from 10h30-11h30 in the Sanlam Hall.
For enquiries please contact Cathy Abbott on 021 465-6440 or email cathya@wol.co.za.

Kirstenbosch Branch Committee is:
Rupert Koopman (Chairman)
Peter Ryan (Treasurer)
Dirk Muller
Melissa Stander
Janette Yeats
Amanda Younge Hayes

Contributions to the quarterly newsletter are welcome. Please contact Catherine Gribble in the Branch office: gribblec@botanicalsociety.org.za tel: 021 671-5468 fax: 021 671-7146