

The slow drive

by **Simisha Pather-Elias**, BotSoc

While driving to work a few months ago I heard an advert on the radio about slow driving - the magic solution to saving fuel. How absurd I thought as I bounced the idea around in my head. We may have indeed hit 'peak fuel', but time is also non-renewable – hence the conundrum. After much thought, I decided to give the slow drive concept a try for a few weeks nevertheless. Well, the sacrifice was harder than I thought it would be. Having been accustomed to a particular way of driving, the new driving culture came with a big behavioural change. The slowness was quite foreign and unnerving at first but after a week or two, my attitude began to change. I started paying less attention to speeding to the next traffic light and instead started to notice and appreciate things around me, some of which I had never seen before.

Doing a cost benefit analysis on the slow drive, I realised it made a lot of sense. I was saving money in my pocket, my fuel gauge was looking happier, there was less wear and tear on my car, my carbon and pollution emissions were reduced, I was less likely to cause or meet an accident and I was generally a lot happier and less stressed. My initial conundrum turned into win-win situation for all. Maybe I'm living in my Utopian world, thinking that people will follow suit, so if the thought of slow driving is too much for you to bear, here are some other measures you can adopt to save on petrol:

- Maintain your vehicle by servicing it regularly. A dirty air filter and old spark plugs can reduce efficiency by up to 20%.
- Switch to low resistance tyres which can reduce fuel consumption up to 5% depending on the vehicle size, and maintain correct tyre pressures – under-inflated tyres can increase consumption by up to 25%.
- Unload unnecessary weight from your vehicle and reduce the weight of the vehicles by using lighter weight materials for frames, suspension and wheels, all which uses of hefty amounts of energy to make the car move.
- Switch off the car when not in use rather than letting the engine idle.
- Educate yourself on eco-driving techniques. Efficient driving techniques like maintaining a constant speed can save up to 20% of fuel consumption.
- Install telematics devices in your car. Some motor insurers will do this for you free of charge. Telematics logs all events in vehicles which will assist with identifying areas for improvement in driver behaviour, route and speed optimization, and maintenance planning.



ABOVE: 'You're only here for a short visit. Don't hurry. Don't worry. And be sure to smell the flowers along the way.' Quote attributed to Walter Hagen, an American golfer.

- Optimize your routes. Sometimes the shortest route might not be the best route due to traffic, stops, slope, etc. A GPS can help with plotting the most efficient routes.
- Switch to alternative fuels such as biofuels made from waste material, ethanol blended fuels or CNG or LNG fuels which are available in some parts of South Africa. These fuels have a lower overall carbon footprint.
- Replace old vehicles with fuel efficient ones. The key is to choose the right sized vehicle that is fuel efficient and meets your personal needs. For example, if you mainly drive in the city or need a car for short distances, consider a smaller engine size or an electric vehicle for which you do not require top speeds.

Consider these wild ideas

- Adopt a 5 km car limitation. Walk, cycle, skateboard for distances that are within 5 km. It's good for your mental and physical health and you will get to know your neighbours.
- Embrace the idea of lift sharing.
- Use public transport where available and safe.
- Work for a progressive company that allows flexible hours.

So here's to slow driving and smelling the flowers.

READING

- <http://www.ecodriving.co.za/>
- <https://www.liftshare.com/za/>

Oops

The identification of *Mesembryanthemum hypertrophicum* on page 116 of the previous issue of *Veld & Flora* is wrong. This species is only known from Namibia and Namaqualand and is an annual, not a shrub as pictured. The picture almost certainly represents *M. noctiflorum*. The second picture on page 117 does not strike me as a *Zygophyllum*, but rather as *Rhigozum obovatum*.

Frans Noltee, Calitzdorp

Living Latin

People may have not got the right or the full picture regarding the use of Botanical Latin for plant names after reading the article on page 119 of the September issue of *Veld & Flora*. The Code still stipulates that a genus or species name must be in Latin (or Latinized Greek or any language that has been Latinized). Linnaeus also Latinized many Sanskrit names; *Carissa* comes to mind. This is one of the main Guiding

Principles of the code viz. 'Principle V: Scientific names of taxonomic groups are treated as Latin regardless of their derivation'. What has changed is that the 'Type description' or 'Protologue' (i.e. description of a new species) can now be in English – the name however remains Latinized.

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