



Newsletter / Nuusbriëf

STARTING THE NEW YEAR WITH A BRAAI

The new tradition of starting the year with a social braai seems to be quite popular. This year on 19 January it was once again well attended by Friends; the company, weather and sunset were great! Since nature seems dormant at this dry, hot time, there is not much activity in the reserve itself. However, as the rains approach, let us make an effort to go exploring. Who knows, we might just stumble upon a lovely plant we need to know better! Please also get involved with our plantings, hacks and if possible, with propagation of our own species.
Thea Weyers, FoB chairperson



NEW STAFF MEMBERS

At our first committee meeting this year Bracken's Reserve Manager Tshepo (we can't imagine the reserve without her!) introduced us to her two new interns for 2009. Khumbudzo Ramasunzi will be working at Bracken, and Perdekop will be the responsibility of Myrna Scholtz – an appointment long overdue! We were also delighted to welcome back Elzette (now Klue) for a further 4 months. What a pity it couldn't be longer. Elzette is already full of ideas for the YES Environmental Education programme in May.

EDUCATIONAL GARDEN

One more project which will occupy Elzette's remaining time with us is the completion of the educational garden at the reserve entrance. That is, if a garden can ever be "complete" as of course it is always a work in progress. FoB member Edward Allen will be assisting with the installation of a pond and pump to provide a water feature, and further planting will continue as soon as the autumn rains have set in.

PLANT PROPAGATION WITH LOCAL NURSERY

The FoB has come to an arrangement with a local nursery, Just Plants, who are acting on our behalf to collect seeds and take cuttings for the propagation of indigenous plants from the reserve. These are being brought on and cared for on their premises. It is hoped that the first plants will be ready towards the end of April or early May, depending on the weather, and these will initially be planted in the educational garden near the main entrance. Once the garden is complete, planting will take place throughout the reserve.

WHAT IS FYNBOS?

Perdekop is rather special in that it represents three different vegetation types. It has been only since the second half of the previous century that the term "Fynbos" has been internationally accepted for what is usually seen as vegetation that includes restios, proteas and heather, usually growing on nutrient poor sandy soils. We also have "Renosterveld", which generally lacks these plants, but is characterised by the renosterbos (*Elytropappus rhinocerotis*) and a rich variety of bulbs. These grow on richer granitic soils most of which has been lost to farming. We need to preserve and value our little patch!

MORE 'FRIENDS' NEEDED!

This is an appeal to all our old Friends of Bracken to try to recruit some new Friends for 2009. Our membership fees are very modest (and have never increased!) and we do need support – practical, financial, even moral support with advice and suggestions – so that we can help to make Bracken a place we can be proud of. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please make use of the attached form (or hand it to a friend who would like to join).

CORPORATE NEWS

We have three Corporate Members so far, and would like to have more. Our thanks go to **JBT Corporation**, **Crammix Bricks** and **Cape Boards** for their support in 2008. In our next newsletter we make a special space for their news.

FENCING AND FIRES

If you have visited the reserve lately you will have seen the rolls of fencing material lying near the office. The good news is that the northern and western boundaries of the reserve are in the process of being secured – a total of 1,7 km in all – and work is due to be completed by the end of June. Some controlled burning has also been undertaken. In due course a 3 metre wide firebreak will be constructed around the perimeter – essential in the long hot summer weather with the constant threat of fires.

RECYCLING

Our recycling efforts are continuing and your contributions are welcome. Please keep a separate black bag for paper, glass, tins and plastic and bring it to the reserve. The staff will show you where to leave it. There is no need to sort the items, but we do ask that tins and bottles should be washed – to avoid attracting rodents etc. while in storage. When a load has been accumulated, it is collected for sorting and processing in Bellville South, with the funds going to the support of a local soup kitchen, so it is a good cause as well as leaving lots of space in your wheeliebin each week. Another important reminder concerns spent CFC bulbs. You will remember that we were all issued with “free” bulbs that were supposed to last at least 2 years and save lots of electricity? Well they don't last for ever, but they must NEVER be discarded with the rest of the household rubbish because of their mercury content. Please take them to Pick n Pay or Woolies, who have special containers for their disposal.

HACKING & PLANTING

Our regular Saturday morning hacks will recommence shortly and volunteers are always most welcome to assist. Please contact Edward Allen if you would like more details (see programme below). We are expecting a delivery of over 100 plants (sugarbush, leucodendrons, leucospermums and ericas) shortly, and when the weather is suitable we will arrange a Planting Morning – details later. Watch the weather and watch the *Tygerburger*.

BELLADONNA BREAKFAST

On Saturday 21 March (a public holiday) the Friends arranged a Breakfast Picnic as a social event and an opportunity to view the March lilies (*Amaryllis belladonna*) which normally put on a good show near the “Piempiemie” picnic site at this time of year. Unfortunately, probably due to the extreme heat wave in the weeks before, there were only a few flowers to be seen. However, we enjoyed our picnic and the walk afterwards and the chance to chat and exchange ideas. Our programme to the end of August appears below.

FoB PROGRAMME for April – August 2009

Monday 6 April	Annual General Meeting
Monday 25 May	Cheese & Wine Evening – Tielman Roos of Mooi Plaas will speak on the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative
Monday 27 July	Soup & Rolls Evening – Myrna Scholtz will speak on her work at Perdekop Nature Reserve
Saturday 8 August	First Spring Walk in Bracken
Monday 17 August	Planning Meeting to discuss Spring Event (Saturday 5 September)
Saturday 22 August	Spring Walk in Bracken

Regular hacks and planting mornings will also be arranged. You can contact Edward Allen at 021 982 4548 (h) or cell 072 837 0886 for dates and starting times. Please note that we have a Treepopper, which turns work into pleasure!

OTHER 'FRIENDS' EVENTS -

Tygerberg NR walks

Friends of Bracken are reminded that they are always welcome to attend activities arranged by other friends groups as well as our own. Our near neighbours, the **Friends of Tygerberg Hills**, arrange regular Saturday morning or afternoon walks in the Tygerberg Nature Reserve. Look for details in the Diary section of the *Tygerburger* or phone Jurg on 083 701 8496 or via e-mail at jurgz@mweb.co.za for more details.

Rondevlei - bird ringing

Anyone who would like to see bird ringers in action is invited by the **Friends of the Vlei** to come to the picnic site at Rondevlei Nature Reserve on Saturdays 11 April, 9 May and 13 June at 8 am.

Die Oog Arbor Day

And anyone free during the week is warmly invited by the **Friends of Die Oog** in Bergvliet to attend their Arbor Day on Thursday 30 April at 17h30. They will be planting Silver Trees, Protea Repens and other shrubs and Clifford Dorse will be speaking on “Conserving the Nature Reserves & Greenbelts of the City”. Refreshments will be served. If you would like more information you can contact Dennis Davey at 021 712 1314 or e-mail profdad@eject.co.za

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL SOON!



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Friends of Bracken Nature Reserve (FoB)

(FRN 01 1000 78 000 3)

Who are the Friends?

FoB was established to assist management of Bracken Nature Reserve in promoting awareness and assist in attaining their goals of conservation in the Reserve. We are affiliated to WESSA.

Application for membership

Full name: Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms

Address (physical): Code:

Address (postal - if different) Code:

Telephone (home): (work): (cell):

Fax: E-mail:

Membership category (please tick):

- Individual – R30 p.a. Family – R50 p.a. Student/Pensioner – R15 p.a.
 Corporate – R350 p.a. I also enclose a donation: R.....

My interests are in: Plant propagation / environmental education / walks / clearing alien vegetation / other practical assistance (please specify)

I have expertise/knowledge in the following fields: Botany / education / natural history / marketing / public relations / computer skills / artwork and design / other areas
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Waiver: In respect of attendance at any club meeting, outing or event I undertake to participate entirely at my own risk. I agree that I shall have no claim whatsoever against the organizing body, any individual organiser or official, marshal, assistant helper or agent, the sponsors or any local authority or their employees in respect of any loss or damage whatsoever which I may suffer arising from any injury to my person or loss or damage to property as a result of, or arising out of, whether directly or indirectly, my participation in this event, including my arrival thereat and departure therefrom and attendance at any ceremony or function thereof however such loss or damage may arise and regardless of whether or not same shall have been caused directly or indirectly by negligence, albeit gross, of one or more or all of the aforementioned parties. In the event of my signing this form as a guardian of a minor I hereby consent to such minor being bound by the foregoing and further, I indemnify the aforementioned parties to the extent, if any, to which such minor is not capable of waiving his right as stipulated above.

Signature: **Date:**

Cheques should be made payable to **Friends of Bracken Nature Reserve** and posted to P O Box 8, Brackenfell 7561, or paid direct to Savings Account 9179197783 with ABSA Bank, Brackenfell. Enquiries: Jo Hobbs: 021 981 1275 or Thea Weyers: 021 982 3654