



Southern African Institute of Forestry, Postnet Suite 329, Private Bag X4, Menlopark, 0102  
www.saif.org.za, saif@mweb.co.za

## Full moon and trees

By Hannel Ham

I recently read an interesting article that stated February is the only month that can pass with no full moon and this will happen in February 2018. However, on 11 February 2017 there will be a Penumbral Lunar Eclipse when the moon will appear partially or a full eclipsed during this event. This might be difficult to see, as the shadowed part is only a little bit fainter than the rest of the moon. However, on 26 February 2017 there will be an Annular Solar Eclipse, which will look like a partial solar eclipse in South Africa.

As a child, I was fascinated with the farming by full moon stories my grandmother told us. Farmers used the moon phases to align farming practices to natural cycles, for example:

- Moonrise occurring in the evening brings fair weather, however, the waning moon (full and last quarter), which rises in the evening brings dry weather.
- New Moon and first quarter are fertile and wet.
- New and first-quarter phases are good for planting aboveground crops, grafting and transplanting trees.
- Full moon through the last quarter, is the best time for weeding, thinning, pruning, mowing, harvesting and planting belowground crops.
- The time just before full moon is particularly wet. This is best for planting during drought conditions.

There were more stories about the blood moons, circles of wind etc. As foresters, we are also working close with Mother Nature and might consider ourselves a bit "moonstruck!". Although there is limited scientific information available that can back up these theories, it made for interesting stories. Enjoy the month of love and look out for the moon and sun eclipses.

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### Special Gems of Forestry 2017

February 2017:

- Indigenous: *Euclea pseudebenus*
- Commercial: *Eucalyptus benthamii*

March 2017:

- Indigenous: *Vachellia xanthophloea* (*Acacia xanthophloea*)
- Commercial: *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*



## Fun Facts: Special Gems of Forestry: February 2017

*Euclea pseudebenus*: Family Ebenaceae (SA no. 598)

**Common name:** ebony tree, Cape ebony, Ebony guarri, Ebbehout-ghwarrie, ebbeboom

*Euclea pseudebenus* is the 2017 rare or uncommon tree of the year. The family Ebenaceae consists of two genera, namely *Euclea* and *Diospyros*. The genus name (*Euclea*) means 'to be of good report' or 'to be famous', from the Greek word *eucleia*. This might refer to the good wood quality of some *Euclea* species, like *E. pseudebenus*. The species name *pseudebenus* means 'false ebony' and refers to the resemblance of the wood to the true ebony (*Diospyros ebenus*). *Euclea pseudebenus* is one of a few species that can survive harsh desert conditions. People in the Nama province of Namibia call it *tsawib*, referring to the ebony-like wood. Tsawisis in Namibia was named after the numerous ebony guarri trees that grow there.

**Habitat:** grows in harsh, stony and sandy desert to semi-desert areas in low-lying areas along watercourses. *Euclea pseudebenus* can grow in both summer and winter rainfall areas in arid and semi-arid regions, with hot, long summers. It has been spotted in northern Namaqualand, Bushmanland and southern Angola.

**Allergies:** unknown

**Growth rate:** slow grower of 3 to 10m in height depending on the climate. Some specimens are a 100 years old.

**Pollinator:** insects (flies and bees)

**Wood characteristics:** heartwood is fine grained, dark brown to pitch black, very hard and durable although only small pieces due to the size of the trees.

**Uses:** fruits are edible and relished by birds, baboons and antelope. The leaves are browsed by antelope and livestock (goats and sheep), while providing ample shade for insects, birds and mammals in hot summer months. The wood is good for fire wood and as a general timber (building, carving and inlay work in chessboards). Roots and twigs can be used as chewing sticks to clean teeth, while an infusion of the roots can help for headaches and toothaches.

**General:** old trees may appear untidy with a mushroom appearance, as many branches (without leaves) can be broken or separated from the main stem. It is a perfect tree for water wise gardens as it provided ample shade with low water requirements.



*Eucalyptus benthamii*: Family: Myrtaceae  
Common name: Camden white gum or Nepean River gum

*Eucalyptus benthamii* is endemic to eastern Australia and first described by Joseph Maiden and Richard Hind Cabbage in 1915. It was named after George Bentham, an English botanist considered as the premier systematic botanist of the nineteenth century. *Eucalyptus benthamii* has two major subpopulations and is related to *E. viminalis*, also native to Australia. The construction of the Warragamba Dam (Australia) in 1933 resulted in a large loss of its natural habitat. The commonwealth conservation status consider this species as vulnerable.

**Native:** grows in wet open forests on sandy alluvial soils along valley floors. It can occur with other *Eucalyptus* species, such as mountain blue gum (*E. deanei*), river peppermint (*E. elata*), grey box (*E. moluccana*), forest red gum (*E. tereticornis*), grey gum (*E. punctata*), cabbage gum (*E. amplifolia*) and narrow-leaved ironbark (*E. crebra*). It also grows alongside non *Eucalyptus* species such as the broad-leaved apple (*Angophora subvelutina*), blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*), bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), tautoon (*Leptospermum polygalifolium*) and fern-leaved wattle (*Acacia filicifolia*).

**Growing conditions:** it grows at 30 to 750m.a.s.l. but most trees are found between 60 to 300m.a.s.l. *Eucalyptus benthamii* prefers well-drained soils with some degree of clay content for water retention.

**Allergies:** unknown

**Growth rate:** fast grower of up to 40m high with a trunk diameter attaining 1.5m.

**Uses:** mainly used for pulp and biofuel.

**General:** frost tolerance and thus suitable in certain areas of the USA. *Eucalyptus benthamii* can adapt to fire intensity and frequency. Increased inbreeding and interspecies gene flow in remnant populations have been identified and are being researched.



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Please mail any suggestions to Hannél Ham ([hamh@basacr.co.za](mailto:hamh@basacr.co.za)).

## The Distinguished Forestry Award of the Southern African Institute of Forestry Awarded to: Dr Andrew Morris

The award is made due to his significant contributions to the Southern African Forestry sector. He has made significant contributions to the sector as a researcher, research manager and as editor-in chief of Southern Forests journal.

In his early years at the Usutu Forests, he conceptualised, implemented and reported on a number of unique research trials whose results and outcomes still influence forestry research today, in South Africa and around the world. As part of a small technical function in Swaziland, he ensured he understood all aspects of the tree growing business and built a solid research foundation through his own work and through a strong sense of collaboration. A trait that made him so successful as a researcher and research manager then (and still today) is his desire to extend personal and company knowledge boundaries by seeking out experts in their fields and ensuring, through active engagement, that he builds learning into the research that he conducts.

At the Sappi Shaw Research Centre, he was able to build onto the foundation laid by Mike Shaw and developed the research centre into world-class group. His understanding of the workings of the business and the value and need for research in contributing to this, made him an invaluable asset to the company. At the same time, he recognized the need for wider collaboration, with the CAMCORE programme, the TPCP and FMG at the University of Pretoria and with the ICFR (to name just a few). In all of these he was one of the industry members who could remove his company hat and focus on the collaboration at hand. He played a leading role in the CAMCORE programme and was the chair of the advisory committee for some time. This further enhanced his international standing and South African forestry's role and influence in the programme.

In the short time that he has been the research manager at the ICFR, he has added significant value to the Institute through his understanding of the importance of research to the private sector. He has led a process of reshaping the research focus areas of

the ICFR and helped highlight the importance of relevance of research outcomes. He constantly pushes innovation and creative thinking in all aspects of the Institute's work, serving as a mentor and advisor to many of the staff, in research but also in management and administration aspects where his experience, wisdom and good humour are greatly appreciated and valued.

He led the South African Pitch Canker Control Programme for its duration, bringing together the key stakeholders affected by this pathogen and developing an applied research programme to address key issues. This was done in a strong collaborative framework with partnerships between the industry, the nurseries and the research institutions. The outcome was an excellent and relevant body of applied research that has been published and provides practical recommendations for practitioners.

He has also been the editor in chief for the SAIF's journal Southern Forests for a number of years. In this role, he has taken the journal to new levels of excellence and relevance. His focus on quality is paying off through an increasing impact factor for the journal and a general appreciation for the quality and diversity of articles published in the journal. He continues to author and co-author publications adding much valued expertise and knowledge to forestry research understanding.

Although this nomination could have been made for any one of the aspects above, it is the sum of the parts that make his contribution to Southern African forestry extraordinary and worthy of recognition by the SAIF. He is consulted widely by the forestry community and many who work in the forest profession for his expertise, wisdom and knowledge. We firmly believe that the foundations that he has built and contributed to building will enable the next generation of forestry scientists to advance far in meeting current and new challenges and opportunities.

## Change....It's happening!

By Rob Thompson

I'm sure that we all have – especially on a Monday – experienced the feeling that this is just another day, along a succession of days, offering the same old drudgery and little by way of change or excitement.

It is easy to allow this sentiment to become overbearing and provide room for doubt as to the efficacy or importance of our everyday individual contributions. My guess is that this is due to the fact that change from day to day is barely noticeable, however, the collective effect over months or years is really quite awesome and worthy of some contemplation. Take some time with me now, to think back on the changes that you have witnessed and contributed towards during your time in this remarkable forestry industry.

From a professional perspective, think back to when you started your career in forestry. The journey from then to now has most certainly revealed enormous advances. In my own experience, I tentatively entered a forestry sector comprising largely *Eucalyptus* seedling material and pine saw timber, controlled largely by a robust State enterprise, believing that this status quo was here to stay...forever. How wrong could anyone be?

Looking back now, over not that long a period, the change that has occurred is abundantly clear. Global movement of pests and disease and overriding climate change saw forestry nurseries and tree breeders swing towards select clonal and hybrid material better able to withstand the ravages of nature. Shorter rotations of hardwood pulpwood became the norm with long rotation softwood saw-timber demand experiencing a roller coaster marketing ride. The unfolding political arena, along with associated socio-economic dynamics, drove the forestry industry through a changing landscape, moving away from primary state ownership through a succession of corporate, contractual and community interest.

Manual or motor manual harvesting operations were rapidly overtaken (on acceptable sites) by total mechanised operations with mechanisation even venturing into the silviculture and nursery arenas. Timber transport transitioned away from log trucks loaded at depot to integrated extended chain of supply logistics technology.

Basic conservation took on an exponential environmental awareness development curve. Some forced, and other voluntary protocols, took forestry from the early days of merely protecting areas of interest and deemed sensitivity, to the adoption of FSC certification, water catchment management, water licensing, all-encompassing landscape management, retraction of commercial areas from sensitive sites, permanent monitoring plots and a multitude of other environmental protection requirements.

Forestry practitioners themselves have changed. No longer do they join the industry with romantic notions of riding through

the hillsides on horseback doing cursory field inspections. Today's practitioner is a dynamic and skilled individual with a huge repository of knowledge attained via formal tuition and general work experience. Daily workloads are high with employers placing ever more output demand on fewer employees. Occupying a post within the industry is a constant learning experience. Tertiary forestry training institutions producing practitioners are required to annually address their syllabi to keep abreast of the basic industry skill set requirement. With social skills becoming a core requirement, on top of the scientific, economic and marketing skills sought after, the attributes of the modern forestry practitioner are far different to those once presented by past practitioners.

Even the forestry environment has changed significantly. Site species matching, rapid mechanisation of forestry operations, risk amelioration measures and land reform are a few key factors that have led to the rationalization of forestry planted areas. The focus is now on doing much more with less as opposed to repeating exactly that which we did previously.

The modern forestry practitioner has become attuned, albeit instinctively, to working cleverer and doing the best with that which is available. Science has become our irrevocable partner providing routes around restrictions and obstacles that impede our progress. Social skills and intuition provide us with the means to further our forestry interests within a world that is rapidly becoming more constricted and providing little by way of expansion opportunity. The global economy along with its attendant reduction in demand for paper and pulp, long a mainstay of our industry, provides us with the challenge of discovering and producing alternative timber based products. To date, as an industry, we have risen to this challenge admirably well and arguably we are on the threshold of benefiting from a high-tech timber derivative production revolution.

You may argue that you have personally contributed very little individually to the major changes over the years. You cannot be further from the truth. Just as change, day to day, is barely perceptible over the short term, yet massive over a longer period, your daily contribution, has been immense. The fact that you are in your post day in and day out and contributing towards the greater forestry industry means that you are integral to the working parts of the industry. Providing that your head and heart are in the right place and your contributions are positive, the industry grows therefrom. You may not be recognized regularly as the true contributor that you are but realistically no one can really expect that.

It is up to you to take a step back every now and again and reflect on the industries trajectory and to recognize and acknowledge unashamedly to yourself, your contribution to its overall success. Such reflection will be well worth the effort.

## ICFR Annual Research Meeting – 2017

The ICFR Annual Research Meeting which will be held on 7 & 8 March 2017 in the John Fischer Auditorium at Cedara Agricultural College outside Pietermaritzburg. The draft programme has now also been published.

As always, this event provides an opportunity for the ICFR staff and postgraduate student to present progress and highlights from our research over the last year, as well as to network and engage with our funders, collaborators, partners and the wider forestry sector. There is no cost to attend the meeting. However, for catering and planning purposes, please complete and return the registration form. This can be done as one form per company or individually. Deadline for replies is 24 February 2017. For more information, the registration form or the programme, please contact Sally Upfold at [sally.upfold@icfr.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:sally.upfold@icfr.ukzn.ac.za).

## Focus on Forestry – April 2017

Planning is well underway for Focus on Forestry 2017, organised by CMO, NMMU and the ICFR. The event is being held from 19 to 21 April at Cedara, (close to Pietermaritzburg), South Africa.

Focus on Forestry will now be presented every second year – alternating between KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga, South Africa. Hosting Focus every second year will allow the organisers to offer the industry an event that will add more value from South Africa in particular and Africa in general, and allow equipment manufacturers and service providers to invest in good exhibitions and field demonstrations.

Focus on Forestry now has a wider scope of including silviculture, fire management and forest engineering. The 2017 theme is: “Harvesting, silviculture and fire management systems for a restructured forest industry”. Focus on Forestry 2017 is a larger and improved conference, exhibition and demo, aimed at the entire forestry value chain and caters for forestry role-players from across the Africa. Our target market remains primarily for the forestry manager, contractor, equipment supplier and related role-players.

For any sponsorship queries, please contact Andrew Mc Ewan at [Andrew@cmo.co.za](mailto:Andrew@cmo.co.za). For any registration queries, please contact Nontethelelo Ramantswana at [nontethelelo@cmo.co.za](mailto:nontethelelo@cmo.co.za). Early bird discounted registrations close on 15 March. For more information or to register, please see <http://www.cmo.co.za/cmo-conferencing/>.

## Sappi Limited launches new website

Sappi Limited announced the launch of its new website with updates benefitting customers, investors, employees and other stakeholders. This newly redesigned website is one of the many steps Sappi is taking to unite its global divisions as part of its groundbreaking 2020Vision strategy, which seeks to pursue growth opportunities in the woodfibre industry.

The new [www.sappi.com](http://www.sappi.com) features full descriptions of products and services offered; comprehensive award-winning educational materials for customers; in-depth sustainability reporting; easy access to corporate social responsibility efforts like Ideas That Matter; dynamic portals for customers and investors and a prominent social media presence. The site will also feature user personalisation, ensuring that the most relevant information is provided first to frequent visitors.

“A dedicated team of Sappi employees across the world has been working tirelessly over the last year to create a website that not only encapsulates our global 2020Vision, but that serves each of our key stakeholders in a way that is both informative, actionable and personalised,” said André Oberholzer, Group Head Corporate Affairs of Sappi Limited. “Sappi.com is now an essential source of information for all our stakeholders. We’re proud and excited by this launch, but our work is far from done. We’ve laid a solid foundation and will remain dedicated to quality. The team at Sappi will be making continuous improvements for each of our unique stakeholders.”

While the entire website was redesigned, there are two features with increased functionality that offer additional benefits to users. First, the Sappi&You Online portal for European customers offers a personalised online experience for printers, publishers and brand owners. Supported by eCommerce, it provides increased functionality to support our customers. Information is tailored to the customers’ specific needs allowing fast access to transactional information, local specialists, detailed product information, sample ordering or benefit from Sappi’s in depth technical knowledge and support areas. It is not only customers who benefit from Sappi&You Online, companies who would like to learn more about how Sappi&You can support their businesses will find useful information about our co-development approach as well as putting them in touch with our local specialists.

Second, a new hub dedicated to investors will provide background information on Sappi and the industry, as well as regularly updated share pricing, financial results, upcoming financial events, financial presentations and information on the 2020Vision.

### SAIF contact details

|                            |                |                            |              |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| <b>President:</b>          | Hannel Ham     | president@saif.org.za      | 021 808 3301 |
| <b>Vice-president:</b>     | Sally Upfold   | vice-president@saif.org.za | 033 386 2314 |
| <b>Past-president:</b>     | Andrew McEwan  | past-president@saif.org.za | 083 676 5668 |
| <b>National secretary:</b> | Corine Viljoen | admin@saif.org.za          | 082 523 8733 |
| <b>SF Journal Editor:</b>  | Andrew Morris  | journal@saif.org.za        | 033 386 2314 |
| <b>KwaZulu-Natal:</b>      | Wayne Jones    | kzn@saif.org.za            | 033 330 2455 |
| <b>Gauteng:</b>            | Steve Verryn   | gauteng@saif.org.za        | 083 652 5719 |
| <b>Mpumalanga:</b>         | Nico Monnig    | mpumalanga@saif.org.za     | 013 764 9200 |
| <b>Southern Cape:</b>      | Hannes van Zyl | southern-cape@saif.org.za  | 044 801 5022 |
| <b>Western Cape:</b>       | Dave Drew      | western-cape@saif.org.za   | 021 808 3301 |

### February 2017 birthdays

|        |                 |        |                  |
|--------|-----------------|--------|------------------|
| 02-Feb | ZHANGAZHA F.P.  | 14-Feb | FERREIRA R.W.    |
| 03-Feb | DAUGHERTY A.E.  | 16-Feb | JONES W.R.       |
| 03-Feb | DYER C.         | 16-Feb | EGGERS E.E.      |
| 03-Feb | HOLLESTEIN W.P. | 17-Feb | SCHAFFER G.N.    |
| 03-Feb | ACKERMAN P.     | 20-Feb | GALLOWAY G.      |
| 04-Feb | JONES N.B.      | 20-Feb | RANCE W.B.       |
| 04-Feb | REEVES D.C.     | 21-Feb | PAYNE N.A.       |
| 04-Feb | MACGREGOR S.    | 21-Feb | SMITH C.W.       |
| 05-Feb | HULL R.J.       | 21-Feb | ROSS T.I.        |
| 05-Feb | HARRISON G.     | 22-Feb | CHARLTON S.K.    |
| 06-Feb | KOTZÈ J.        | 22-Feb | DAY P.B.B.       |
| 08-Feb | NEL J.          | 23-Feb | HARDY P.H.       |
| 09-Feb | MAPETO T.       | 23-Feb | BOEHNKE D.E.     |
| 11-Feb | RORICH T.C.     | 24-Feb | SCHUTZ C.J.      |
| 12-Feb | KEYWORTH P.     | 25-Feb | CARR J.C.M.      |
| 13-Feb | McEWAN A.M.     | 28-Feb | METELERKAMP D.P. |
| 13-Feb | CRAFFORD S.     | 28-Feb | NIXON P.H.R.     |
| 14-Feb | ROUX J.         |        |                  |