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## Love your forest

By Hannel Ham

Traditionally, February is considered the month of love, resulting in a bombardment of red hearts wherever you go. Whether you share the 14th of February sentiment or not, as foresters we can agree that trees are remarkable and should be loved without limits.

Recently I stumbled upon a number of interesting stories about why we should love and respect trees.

- The oldest living tree is about 4 700 years old and still actively growing in the USA, while some redwood trees are so big that miniature forests grow on their upper branches.
- There is also a 157 ha tract of virgin-old growth forest in central Pennsylvania. It features ancient hemlock trees and 6.1 m Rhododendrons. This area was conserved because of a land dispute between logging companies in the 1900's.
- There is an ancient old growth forest bordering Poland called Białowieża Forest. It resembles what most of Europe looked like before the 14th century.
- Another story reports that a man called Jadav Payeng single-handedly planted a forest bigger than Central Park to save Majuli Island in Northern India from erosion. The forest is now home to large amounts of stray wildlife.
- A formation of larch trees in the shape of a swastika was discovered in Germany in 1992. The formation, only visible in the fall, went unnoticed for 60 years. After that discovery, other forest swastikas were found in Germany and beyond.



### Inside This Issue

Love your forest	1
Coppice Forests in Europe	2
Handover of Stihl prizes for photo comp.	2
Managing Alien and Invasive Plant Species	3
Pest update from FABI	4
We cannot waste a good crisis!	4
Gauteng Branch meets at Wonderboom	5
SAIF contact details	6
February 2018 birthdays	6

- There is a tree named Pando that is technically an entire forest. It is a clonal colony of 4700 Aspens in Utah that all share the same root system.
- Hurricane Katrina uncovered an underwater forest off Alabama Coast that is 50,000 years old.
- There is a 2400 year old giant "honey mushroom" in Oregon, covering 890.3 ha, slowly killing off the trees in the forest. It is the largest living organism on the planet.
- Hang Son Doong in Vietnam is the largest cave in the world. It houses a rain forest in its largest chamber. The cave was not discovered until 1991, and not explored until 2009.
- China has planted the biggest artificial forest in the world to stop the spread of the Gobi desert, and plans to expand it to 4 506 km<sup>2</sup> by 2074.

As I am particularly fond of pine trees and walking through old pine compartments. One of the reasons our lungs feel refreshed when walking through a pine forest, is because of an anti-inflammatory compound called  $\alpha$ -Pinene, found in conifers. It is used as a bronchodilator in the treatment of asthma and abundantly present in marijuana. May February 2018 be filled with love and 'green marijuana'!

## A reminder to all members!

If any of your contact details have changed – please send a quick email to Corine so that we can remain in contact with you!! saif@mweb.co.za

## EuroCoppice Reports Published on Coppice Forests in Europe

Coppice forests develop from a specific and traditional type of management. They form a significant share of European forests and provide valuable, unique products and services. In spite of this, they are hardly recognized or addressed in EU policy, as well as many national policies, and are often neglected in research and practice.

For the past 4 years, over 150 researchers and experts and from 35 countries have collaborated in the EU COST Action FP1301 "EuroCoppice" to collect information, conduct studies and elaborate best practices on a wide-range of coppice topics, from policy, terminology, silviculture and utilization, to protection services, community management and governance. Representatives from Nelson Mandela University and Stellenbosch University took part in the Cost Action programme.

Selected findings were presented during Session 82 on Traditional Coppice at the IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress in Freiburg on September 19th, 2017.

The extensive reports compiled by the Action are now available in digital format:

<http://www.eurocoppice.uni-freiburg.de/reports>

These results and others will also be published mid-2018 in a book format. For related inquiries please contact: [eurocoppice@fobawi.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:eurocoppice@fobawi.uni-freiburg.de)



## Handover of Stihl prizes for SAIF photo competition winners

Stihl generously sponsored the first three places in the SAIF 2017 photo competition. Over 50 entries were received. Each branch nominated an independent judge to select the top photos. The top photos were announced in the December newsletter. The first three photos have won prizes from Stihl, while the other top photos were used for the SAIF 2018 calendar (which you should have received by now). The 2018 calendar was made possible with additional support from Forestry South Africa, Mondi, MTO Lowveld and ANCO Engineering.

The photo below shows the prize handover which took place recently in Gauteng. Both first and third places were from Gauteng – in fact both are from FABI! The other branches will need to mobilise their layman photographers to try and bring down the Gauteng ego's a bit! Second from left is our winner, Brett Hurley, while second from right is a third placed winner – Zette Greyling. Well done and thanks again to Stihl!



## Code of Good Practice for Managing Alien and Invasive Plant Species in the South African Forest Industry

The spread of Alien and Invasive Plant Species (AIP's) is of worldwide concern. In South Africa, it is claimed that these introduced plant species are causing millions of Rands of damage to the economy every year and is the single biggest threat to the country's biodiversity. Few countries have attempted to control or eradicate them more in than South Africa. ([www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/wfw](http://www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/wfw))

The Working for Water (WfW) programme, a government initiative of the Department of Environmental Affairs, employs upward of 25,000 people each year in an attempt to eradicate and control these AIPs. The objective of the WfW to reduce the density of established terrestrial AIPs through labour intensive, mechanical and chemical control by 22% per annum. The costs and benefits of AIP control has indicated gains in water yields in a number of catchments and the reported recovery of insects, specifically dragonflies as a result of the reduction in density of wattle ([www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/docs/Marais&Wannenburgh,2008.pdf](http://www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/docs/Marais&Wannenburgh,2008.pdf)).

By 2005/6, the programme had spent R3.2 billion since its inception in 1995. By extrapolation, this figure was likely to be in the region of R6 billion up until 2017. Forestry companies and growers spend an estimated R100 million annually in the control of AIPs on their land outside the planted area.

Most commercial forest species in South Africa are listed as AIS within regulations published under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004, (Act 10 No.2004), and as weeds within regulations published under the Conservation of Agricultural Act, 1998 (Act No.1989). Under these Acts, all landowners are legally responsible for controlling the listed AIP and invasive plants and weeds in their own land.

### Legal requirements for the control of AIS

Two pieces of legislation require the removal of commercial forestry species from areas where they are regarded as unlawful. Unlawful presence of AIPs are areas of land owned by a landowner outside the area planted to trees (recognised as the demarcated area under the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (CARA Regulations) {Act No. 43 of 1983} and outside the planted area permitted as an existing lawful water use for a Stream Flow Reduction Activity {SFRA} as regulated under the National Water Act. The legal requirements are included in **Appendix A and B** respectively.

### Voluntary collaborative actions with neighbours and interested organisations

In the interest of controlling or reducing current infestations outside the forestry plantation estate boundary, voluntary information sharing systems and collaboration is promoted by Forestry South Africa and may be undertaken in conjunction (partnership) with:

- adjoining land owners/s
- government, provincial or municipal alien and invasive species control programmes, such as the Working on Fire (WoF) , WfW and other Expanded Public Works Programs (EPWP) managed by national government, and/or
- the establishment of small business operations with communities to assist in the control of AIPs.

### Good land management, fire and grazing practices

Good land management practices involve the use of controlled fires at regular intervals and/or correct livestock grazing (stocking rates and rotational grazing). Land owners should ensure:

- reduction in density of AIPs such as a controlled fire programme at the correct time of the year (late winter to spring) and at an intensity that enables hot fires with the prevailing wind to burn off the above ground AIPs
- grazing practices that are in accordance with accepted grazing intensity and rotational grazing practices.

Excerpt taken from FSA Document compiled by John Scotcher (FSA), Karen Kirkman (FSA), Colin Summersgill (FSA) and Vaughan Koopman (WWF-SA). Part 2 is to follow.

### References

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- Forestry South Africa Environmental Guidelines for Plantation Forestry in South Africa. 2017. (<http://www.forestry.co.za>)
- Guidelines for Monitoring, Control and Eradication Plans as Required by Section 76 of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) NEMBA for Species Listed as Invasive in Terms of Section 70 of the Act: 2015. Biosecurity: Department of Environment Affairs, Cape Town.14pp.

## We cannot waste a good crisis!

By Rob Thompson

I have previously made mention of my fascination with TV series such as "The Walking Dead" and movies like "Contagion" which explore the spread of a dread affliction from a point source into the greater community and the terrifying ramifications to the human condition as it progresses. My contention that one day insights gleaned from such cinematic offerings may come in useful, are lost on my long suffering wife.

Well now is the time! An apocalypse is upon us.

I recently heard word that the global price of wine of all variants is likely to sky rocket in the wake of a world-wide shortage of the nectar. Horror upon horror! Would we not rather deal with more manageable Zombies? And the cause of this terrifying looming affliction? Widespread wild fires within the wine regions of South Africa, USA and Portugal largely due to changed climatic conditions. A prolonged drought in the Western Cape is also not doing favours to our local replanted vines.

As one considers the imminent and expensive tipple-reduced future, ones thoughts automatically drift to the drought stressed Cape Town Region. There is certainly nothing to celebrate there as Day Zero rapidly approaches...Or is there?

Just as experienced in "The Walking Dead" the Cape Town drought contagion is causing friction on political, State, racial, class and neighbourhood levels as attempts are made to apportion blame. The drought remains resilient however and the blame game will soon count for naught as people face the stark reality of dry taps and the need to cooperate and support one another regardless of the cause or causes.

Communities further afield are waking up to the fact that the drought contagion is creeping insidiously across the country. Towns such as Hankey and Patensie in the Gamtoos Valley are facing their own imminent drought induced Day Zero. Similarly in the northern reaches of the country, the Crocodile River catchment is rapidly being rendered toxic due to pollution and maladministration within various water authorities. The Hartebeespoort Dam lies stagnant under a blanket of hyacinth and so the list goes on and on.

Back to my point of celebration...Have you by any chance noticed the recent tangible change in thinking amongst people across the country pertaining to water? Water, or rather the lack of it, is now fully exposed and in the limelight.

After decades of complacency, water has suddenly attained a significant and very high value.

The pressure that citizens are placing on authorities to do their jobs and account for their maladministration is

increasing daily. People, even those in more water rich parts of the country, are far more conscious of water saving protocols. Water harvesting is becoming the domestic norm if the amount of Jo-Jo tanks for sale in hardware stores is anything to go by. Innovative water saving ideas are being shared daily on public media. Showering using pressurised herbicide applicators, harvesting water from vegetation cuttings using the old boy scout plastic funnel method, triple use of water in food preparation, water-less hand sanitising, etc. At far higher technology levels, desalination plants, waste-water purification and water-from-air condensers are being developed and deployed strategically. Perhaps measures that should have been developed and applied many years ago but nevertheless essential now.

In the TV series, harbouring of Zombie-virus infected humans is a capital crime and miscreants are reported and dealt with ruthlessly. In similar fashion, water-wasters are now being reported by neighbours and water saving awareness and citizen policing thereof is becoming the norm.

Soon to become part of our lives as forestry practitioners, is the increased pressure we will face pertaining to the trees planted within deemed dry catchments. I heard mooted over the radio today that instead of the Western Cape conservation initiative of planting a million trees within a year, a million (exotic) trees ought to be removed! That sort of says it all...

Whilst this article focusses only on the water crisis, it is common cause that the many stresses suffered first hand by citizens (dry taps, high cost of education, fuel costs, lack of service delivery et al) require high levels of funding in order to ameliorate such. Wriggle room for wasteful and corrupt politicians is shrinking daily under the watch of angry and afflicted citizens and signs of a new positive and accountable dispensation are starting to show.

The months to come are certainly not going to be comfortable. I do believe however that they will lead to positive outcomes and refreshed thought processes and awareness. Environmental services will start to become recognised as being critical to human wellbeing. We will start seeing Zombies in wasteful practice and seek to eliminate.

We can certainly look forward to raising our glass of (very expensive and rare) wine to toast an improved collective attitude towards matters environmental and the dawning of a new age of positive innovation and accountability.

Whilst the crisis was not averted...it was certainly not wasted!  
Salut!

## Gauteng Branch meets at Wonderboom

By Brett Hurley

Although far removed from the majority of native and plantation forests, Gauteng is nevertheless home to some of South Africa's most incredible trees. One very well known and spectacular tree is the Wonderboom tree, situated in the Wonderboom Nature Reserve of Pretoria. The tree is a specimen of the wild fig, *Ficus salicifolia*. It is 25 meters high with a main trunk diameter of 5.5 meters, and consists of three circles of daughter trees surrounding the original tree. It is estimated to be older than 1000 years. In addition to its incredible physical attributes, the tree is also the focus of many legends, and some believe that the magnificent growth of the tree is due to the burial of an indigenous chief beneath its roots!

To enjoy the incredible Wonderboom and learn more about one of South Africa's 'Big Trees', the Gauteng Branch of the South African Institute of Forestry hosted an event at the Wonderboom Nature Reserve on 3 November 2017. The event aimed to bring together members of the branch in a social but informative setting. The afternoon started with two presentations. The first presentation was by Izak van der Merwe from Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) who provided an intriguing history of the Wonderboom. The second was presented jointly by Vukosi Baloyi and Johan Bester of DAFF who discussed the complexities and challenges of urban forestry. The afternoon finished with wors rolls and drinks, and time to socialize and network with forestry colleagues.

One of the most successful parts of the event was the great diversity in the people that attended, including retired forest managers and researchers, policy makers and regulators, academics and students – a truly great opportunity for all attendees to broaden our understanding of trees and forests in South Africa.



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## February 2018 birthdays

02-Feb	MAKATU A.I.	14-Feb	FERREIRA R.W.
02-Feb	ZHANGAZHA F.P.	14-Feb	ROUX J.
03-Feb	ACKERMAN P.	16-Feb	EGGERS E.E.E
03-Feb	DAUGHERTY A.E.	16-Feb	JONES W.R.
03-Feb	DYER C.	17-Feb	SCHAFER G.N.
04-Feb	JONES N.B.	20-Feb	RANCE W.B.
04-Feb	MACGREGOR S.	21-Feb	PAYNE N.A.
04-Feb	REEVES D.C.	21-Feb	ROSS T.I.
05-Feb	HARRISON G.	21-Feb	SMITH C.W.
05-Feb	HULL R.J.	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.	24-Feb	SCHUTZ C.J.
12-Feb	CUARANHUA C.J.	25-Feb	CARR J.C.M.
12-Feb	KEYWORTH P.J.	28-Feb	METELERKAMP
13-Feb	CRAFFORD S.	28-Feb	NIXON P.R.H.
13-Feb	McEWAN A.M.		

Newsletter compiled by Andrew McEwan