



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

Forever young



By Hannel Ham

June is earmarked as the month for the youth. Youth is defined as young, freshness, beauty, vigour, young mind set, immaturity, an early life or early stage of development. The most prominent definition is the period between childhood and adult age. So, what is the age to be a 'legal youth'? In general, people assume it is between the ages of 14 and 21. However, the United Nations defines it as between 15 and 24, but it may vary without prejudice to between 18 and 32. In Africa, we consider youth as between the ages of 15 and 32. Nevertheless, one can certainly feel beautiful at the age of 60, have fresh ideas at 40, or be immature at 55, which brings us to June.

Named after Juno (goddess of marriage), it is the month with the shortest daylight hours of the year and its birthstones (alexandrite, moonstone and pearl) represent health, longevity, new beginning, purity of heart and faith. Roses are the birth flower representing love, secrecy, desire, gratitude, joy, innocence, hope, beauty etc. All things youthful! No wonder the month of June is synonym to youth. Franz Kafka said: "Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old."

So, no matter your age (actually you are just as old as you feel), may this June bring you what Bob Dylan wrote in Forever Young (November 1973).

May God bless and keep you always
May your wishes all come true
May you always do for others
And let others do for you
May you build a ladder to the stars
And climb on every rung
May you stay forever young!

May you grow up to be righteous
May you grow up to be true
May you always know the truth
And see the lights surrounding you
May you always be courageous
Stand upright and be strong
May you stay forever young!

May your hands always be busy
May your feet always be swift
May you have a strong foundation
When the winds of changes shift
May your heart always be joyful
And may your song always be sung
May you stay forever young!

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The SAIF mourns the passing of Dr Fred Kruger

Dr Fred Kruger passed away tragically in Stellenbosch. He became a member of the SAIF in 1968 and was a founder member of the Institute. The SAIF, through Prof Brian van Wilgen, pay tribute to this prominent member. Read the tribute on page 6.



Fun Facts: Special Gems of Forestry: June 2017

Senegalia burkei (previously *Acacia burkei*): Family Fabaceae (SA no. 161)

Common name: black monkey thorn, swartapiesdoring, umKhaya wehlalahlathi umBabampala

The genus *Acacia* has been retypified and split, therefore all the African *Acacia*'s now fall into the recently defined genera: *Vachellia* or *Senegalia*. The genus *Senegalia* means 'referring to Senegal' in Africa. The name was first published by Rafinesque in 1838. The species name *burkei*, refers to the naturalist and collector, Joseph Burke (1812–1873), who catalogued this tree in the 1840s. It is difficult to distinguish between *Senegalia burkei*, *S. welwitschii* and *S. nigrescens* because of small differences such as more slender thorns.

Habitat: it is found in southeastern Botswana and southeastern Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu–Natal. *Senegalia burkei* can grow on a variety of soil types and rocky slopes in dry river valley scrub, thornveld or in mixed woodland. It can occur at an altitude of up to 400m.a.s.l.

Allergies: Unknown

Growth rate: 12 to 25m tall with a slow growth rate.

Pollinator: insects, birds and bees.

Wood characteristics: thin yellowish sapwood with a golden to dark brown heartwood. The heartwood is strong, hard and heavy (air-dry 910kg/m³).

Uses: gum is eaten by people, monkeys and bushbabies. The bark and roots can be used in traditional medicine to treat eye and back pain, while the roots are used as a yellow dye. The wood is used to make furniture, tool handles and to make long-lasting fence posts, as it is termite-resistant. The heartwood makes a good quality fuel with coals that burn for a long time. Leaves and dry pods are edible and browsed by black rhino, giraffe, kudu, nyala and impala. The dry pods have a high nutritional value as fodder for cattle.

General: Folktales state that the leaves can attract lightning. *Senegalia burkei* is popular for bonsai's, ornamental and shade trees. However, the root system can grow aggressively and should not be planted close to paving or buildings. It can withstand low temperatures, but not cold wind. *Senegalia burkei* is also a host to the Van Sons Playboy butterfly, attracts woodpeckers and Red Billed Wood Hoopoe's. In different provenances, the size of the leaflet can vary.



Eucalyptus gomphocephala: Family Myrtaceae

Common name: Tuart, gomphocephala

Eucalyptus gomphocephala is a hardwood that occurs in a narrow limestone belt along the coastal plain north and south of Perth in Western Australia. It was introduced into South Africa around 1895.

Eucalyptus gomphocephala is well adapted to the coastal districts in the Western, Southern and Eastern Cape. Along the Zululand coast, the species can grow rapid on infertile, sandy soil but the trees have a poor form. Some scattered trees are visible in the Free State Province.

Native: prefers winter rainfall areas with dry summers, narrow sandy coastal plains and sand dunes from 0 to 30m.a.s.l. It occurs in woodlands or open forest with peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*) as a common understory species.

Growing conditions: grows naturally on neutral yellow or brown sand over limestone, but also on coarse, well-drained sands. Is a long-lived species.

Allergies: unknown

Growth rate: up to 50m tall, occasionally with multi stems and a moderate to fast growth rate.

Wood colour: heartwood is pale yellow-brown, with an interlocked grain, fine-textured and even timber.

Wood odour: unknown

Uses: tolerates strong coastal winds and sandy, alkaline soils derived from limestone. *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* produces hard, dense, durable wood that is relatively termite-resistant. Wood can be used for stern posts, bridge supports, shafts and wheelwright work, but burns well and also preferred as firewood. The flowers produce an excellent honey.

General: is moderately drought tolerant or known to be tolerant of extended droughts. *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* does not sprout after fire, but can tolerate frosts (between 0 to -5°C). It is a preferred windbreak and can tolerate salt-laden coastal winds. Leaves contain only 0.03% essential oil which is rich in α -phellandrene and α -pinene, while the bark and kino contain tannin.



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Please mail any suggestions to Hannél Ham (hamh@basicr.co.za).

SAIF KZN Branch AGM and Quiz evening

By Wayne Jones

On the 25th May the SAIF KZN Branch held their Annual General Meeting at the ICFR in Pietermaritzburg. The event was attended by over 40 very enthusiastic members of the SAIF. The event was also well supported by industry partners and sponsors. The evening started with a welcome by the current KZN Branch Chairman, Wayne Jones, with report backs on various events of the year and the financial report by branch treasurer, Mmoledi Mphahlele.

The focus for the year was Inclusive Participation across the industry to ensure that both the Professional Forester and Contractor join and interact with Forest Scientist and Technologists as members of the SAIF. Dr Andrew Morris gave a brief update on the Forestry Journal, referring to its content and relevance. This was also an opportunity to advertise the SAIF web-site and books available for sale.

More specifically, the SAIF KZN Branch was involved in various activities during the year, none of which would be possible without valuable sponsorship, both as in-kind contributions and in monetary terms. The Chairman expressed his appreciation and thanks to the ICFR, NCT, Mondi, Sappi, SAFIRE, Husqvarna, LRI and STIHL for their generous contributions. Activities included the NCT Night Ride held at Baynesfield, tree planting at two schools, the Esigodini Education Centre and Mountain Home School, where over thirty indigenous trees were planted this year.

Together with the ICFR, two seminars were held, which included the Boys from Brazil given by Rob Thompson and Craig Norris of their trip to Brazil, followed by 150 Years of Forestry by Dr Fred Kruger. The SAIF also participated in the ICFR Research Meeting and Focus on Forestry events by displaying banners, selling books and SAIF clothing at the events (see picture below).



Mmoledi Mphahlele presented the Treasurers Report and showed that the April 2017 opening balance was R 51 113.28. Revenue has shown steady growth due to sponsorship support. Branch membership has remained stable at 168, which is 43% of the national membership. The Chairman thanked the current committee, Mmoledi Mphahlele (Mondi), Lelethu Sinuka (Sappi),

Simon Ackerman (ICFR) and Sally Upfold (ICFR), for their hard work and contributions during the year. The new committee will be constituted from current volunteers and nominations and portfolios will be allocated at the next branch meeting.

With official business over it was time for the Quiz Evening made up of two parts of thirty questions with a light supper and drinks in between (sponsored by the SAIF KZN Branch). Eight teams were entered into the bruising affair. With two teams each from ICFR/FSA, Sappi and NCT and one each from LRI and Mondi / students. The Quiz Master (Sally Upfold) was true to form, having no mercy and not making it any easier than in previous years nor giving in to any forms of bribery and corruption. After a titanic first round, The "Butt Ends" (ICFR/FSA mix) took an early lead and did not look back, leaving the rest of the teams in their wake. Well done to the "Butt Ends" who have successfully defended their title. Great prizes were handed out to all teams, once again thanks to the sponsors (Mondi, NCT, Husqvarna, SAFIRE, LRI, Sappi, ICFR and Stihl). The picture below shows stunned members of the NCT Quiz Teams wondering what went wrong.



SAIF and other upcoming events

- SAIF AGM: 17 July 2017, Pietermaritzburg, KZN. Exact venue TBC. For more information contact Corine at saif@mweb.co.za.
- An Introduction to Modern Tree Breeding Course. 28 August – 1 September 2017. Pretoria. Contact SVerryn@CreationBreeding.co.za
- IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress. 18–22 September 2017, Freiburg, Germany. <http://iufro2017.com/registration/>
- SE Asia Tree Health Conference 2017. 1 – 2 November 2017, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. 2017SEATH@gmail.com.

Finding insights at primary level

By Rob Thompson

Annually, NCT, a co-operative of private timber growers, conducts a road show across the KZN Province in order to interact with timber farmers on own turf, better understand the issues of the day and identify challenges being experienced.

It has been my privilege to have been part of this road show for many years and to have witnessed the success, fortitude and resilience of private growers. Our timber farmers are under immense (and often unfair) pressure, both politically and economically and whilst escalating crime adds to their already heavy burden, they generally persevere and continue to contribute positively, regardless.

The private timber growers approach to timber growing, literally at primary production level, holds many lessons that forestry practitioners in large corporates or consultancies would do well to internalise and emulate.

At our timber farmer meetings, initial polite greetings are inevitably followed by an animated discussion about recent rainfall. Those that have had rain voice their thanks and gratitude openly whilst those who have not, stoically maintain faith that they are soon to be in line for showers. Whilst this conversation is routine, it is by no means trivial. It is a clear indication of our farmers reliance on nature to survive. Given our prevailing water crisis it is sad that not more people value natural processes so intrinsically as do our farmers.

Conversation then turns to economics and the state of the “bottom line”. At this juncture, the khaki clad individual facing you, destroys any stereo-typical views that you might have harboured about farming folk. Knowledge of prevailing timber price levels compared to other farmed commodities is current and kept up to date. Keen interest is shown in currency exchange rates and the Consumer Price Index translated into a farm price index as counter reference. Net standing values of planted timber is frequently calculated given the regular fluctuations in transport and growing costs. Here are people who watch the bottom line with an eagle eye and are constantly searching for ways and means to improve cost efficiencies.

Such insights and interests are not limited to commercial timber farmers. Our small-scale growers within the tribal communal landscape demonstrate an amazing aptitude towards financial jurisprudence over their farming operations albeit that these are micro-scale in comparison. The amount of privately owned motor vehicles transporting small growers to our meetings has steadily increased each year, bearing testimony to the importance and relevance of private timber growing in marginal agricultural areas. Small growers discuss with vigour the challenges of timber growing, lament the rising costs being experienced and slate the opportunist rogues preying on their reliance on short and long haul transport services. Despite this, you will not find more enthusiastic supporters of private timber growing anywhere! These are people intent on improving their circumstances using timber as the vehicle to do so. It is indeed a privilege to be able to serve and support such industrious farmers.

When farmers get together, no matter the scale, race, focus, commodity or location of those assembled, a high degree of commonality prevails:

The first common element is that these are people directly reliant on what their land can produce, for a livelihood. They have made a decision to persevere and make it work. Seldom do I encounter a farmer with a “half pregnant” approach to farming. Most are farmers with a will to be there regardless of what challenges come their way and they will stay there come what may!

The second commonality is one of community. Contrary to the often politically contrived negative news media allegations of farmer abuses, our timber farmers, both commercial and small scale, are some of the most interactive and caring people that you can find. Innovative land title approaches for employees are being explored through to mentorships, improved housing, profit sharing and ergonomic improvements in field operations. Farmers are well aware of the reality of farming within the South African context and are keen to be contributors.

The third major commonality is that farmers know inherently that, that which they produce, is critically important to the populace of South Africa, either directly or indirectly. Timber farmers certainly do not take a back seat when it comes to commodity importance and overall contribution to South African GDP. With the exciting developments in the ever extending array of timber applications, modern farmers tend to remain informed about product application and alternatives and are often directly involved in alternative product development. Who knows? It may not be too long before our small growers are driving their new cars to meetings fuelled with home grown biofuel?

A timber farmers meeting, a basic affair comprising individuals reliant on basic natural processes, bolstered by scientific advancements. A group of people who out of necessity have to be resilient and tough but can never lose touch with the ability to compromise appropriately. A grouping reliant on each other for support and shared ideas and innovations. People who know the risks yet have decided consciously to pursue farming regardless. Knowledgeable people who never stop asking questions and seeking answers. Failure to these folk is not an option, as there is nowhere else to go. People often misunderstood by those not close to the land, but who never renege on what needs to be done.

We as forestry practitioners, often positioned well away from the primary production level and safely ensconced within a corporate or similar protected structure, should take a moment to ponder the lot of the private timber farmer and borrow from their challenges and solutions. Such borrowings will certainly be applicable in whatever your professional situation. We are all after all pursuing the production of timber albeit at differing levels.

Reaching out to primary level every now and then may just provide some clear insights and certainly place perspective on the importance of the task that we perform and the attitude with which we should approach such.

SAIF 2017 photo competition

A reminder of the SAIF photo competition which is again taking place in 2017. The top 13 photos will be used to compile the 2018 SAIF calendar. The prizes are being sponsored by Stihl and are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. STIHL RE 88 High Pressure Washer | R2435.40 |
| 2. STIHL HSA 25 Cordless Shrub Shears | R2145.00 |
| 3. STIHL SE 62 Vacuum | R2079.00 |

The rules of the competition are as follows:

- Entry is only to paid up SAIF members.
- A maximum of three photos may be submitted per SAIF member, of which only one can be in the top three positions. The other photos may still be selected for the calendar.
- If more than one photo is submitted, each photo must be different (not variations of the same subject).
- Any forestry related photo can be entered. The photo must have some evidence of forestry (natural or plantation) in it.
- The photo must be taken in Southern Africa.
- Previously entered photos may not be used and photos may not be older than 3 years (taken before 2015).
- During judging, very low pixel resolution photos will not be selected if they cannot be used for the calendar.
- Photos must be submitted through the branches (see contact details on the website and at the end of the SAIF newsletter).
- All photos submitted to the branches will be used for the national competition. It could occur that the winning national photo did not make the top three list of the branch.
- The SAIF reserves the right to use the photographs in their marketing material and on the SAIF website.
- The closing date for the competition is 30 September 2017.
- Judging is at a national level. Each branch will select a forestry related person that has good photographic skills. These five people will each select their top 13



Tribute to Fred Kruger

By Brian van Wilgen

Dr Fred Kruger, former director of the South African Forestry Research Institute and later the CSIR's Division of Forest Science and Technology, passed away on the 20th of May 2017 at the age of 73. Fred Kruger was a 5th generation forester who conducted ground-breaking research in the fields of fynbos ecology, forest hydrology, and the ecology and management of invasive alien plants. His career began as a research officer based at the Jonkershoek Forestry Research Centre outside of Stellenbosch, where he worked under the guidance of Prof. C.L. Wicht. Following his move to Pretoria in 1979, he was responsible for leading the Department of Forestry's conservation research programme. He was promoted to Director the South African Forestry Research Institute in 1983, and in 1990 became the Director of the CSIR's new Division of Forest Science and Technology, a post he held until 1995. Following his departure from the CSIR, Fred became active in the forest policy arena, and played a leading role in drafting the new National Forests Act, the Veld and Forest Fire Act, and the National Action Programme on Desertification, among other things. Fred also became an accomplished historian, publishing several papers on the topic, as well as a book entitled "Forestry and Water Conservation in South Africa: History, Science and Policy". At the time of his passing, Fred was still actively involved in teaching through the post-graduate ecology programme of the Organization of Tropical Studies and ecological history programme with Western Sydney University. Still very active in field research, he was researching demographic dynamics of savanna trees and had embarked on a re-survey of fynbos vegetation plots to assess the effects of climate change.

Fred was an exceptional ecologist and mentor. He was a knowledgeable and innovative naturalist, uncompromising in his pursuit of answers, and with a love of the outdoors, fly-fishing and hiking. Above all, he was a man of impeccable integrity, setting an example to all of his collaborators. Anyone who engaged with Fred could expect to be fully supported, provided with stretching targets and held to high standards, all features that helped those who worked with him to go on to become achievers themselves. Fred's guidance had a profound influence on the careers of many of today's leaders of terrestrial ecology, including William Bond, Dave Richardson, Pat Manders, Bob Scholes, Sue Milton, Coert Geldenhuys, Jeremy Midgley, David Le Maitre, Jan Bosch, Colin Everson and Peter Dye. His passing is a loss to forestry and ecology in South Africa and beyond. Fred is survived by his ex-wife Glaudin, and his children Alexandra, Laurence, Oliver and Elizabeth.

Youth in Forestry Exposition – Hazyview, Mpumalanga

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will host the Youth in Forestry Exposition at Hazyview in the Mpumalanga Province. The adopted theme for this year’s youth month commemoration is “Harnessing investment for youth empowerment towards South Africa’s economic development and future prosperity”. This forestry exposition forms part of the departments scheduled outreach programmes for agriculture, forestry and fisheries respectively, which will be undertaken in the spirit of celebrating youth month. The purpose of this forestry expo is to inform and unlock various opportunities available for emerging foresters to take advantage of and be the drivers of sustainable economic growth in the country. Forestry contributes in numerous ways to sustainable production and employment creation which are vital for socio-economic development.

The Forestry Expo will be held in Hazyview on June 15 2017, mainly targeting youth. DAFF is calling for forestry exhibitors on the day. They are trying to attract youth from the area as there will also be a career guidance desk. Youth will be bussed in and out. Accommodation will only be arranged for exhibitors who cannot pay for themselves and others from distant provinces. DAFF is targeting 200–300 people to attend. Exhibitors do not necessarily have to be youth only. Please contact NokuthulaNC@daff.gov.za

SAIF contact details

President:	Hannel Ham	president@saif.org.za	021 808 3301
Vice-president:	Sally Upfold	vice-president@saif.org.za	033 386 2314
Past-president:	Andrew McEwan	past-president@saif.org.za	083 676 5668
National secretary:	Corine Viljoen	admin@saif.org.za	082 523 8733
SF Journal Editor:	Andrew Morris	journal@saif.org.za	033 386 2314
KwaZulu-Natal:	Wayne Jones	kzn@saif.org.za	033 330 2455
Gauteng:	Steve Verryn	gauteng@saif.org.za	083 652 5719
Mpumalanga:	Schalk Jacobs	mpumalanga@saif.org.za	082 329 7088
Southern Cape:	Hannes van Zyl	southern-cape@saif.org.za	044 801 5022
Western Cape:	Dave Drew	western-cape@saif.org.za	021 808 3301

June 2017 birthdays

01-Jun	MEYER W.K.	16-Jun	BUCHLER M.
01-Jun	GERMISHUIZEN I.	16-Jun	MICHEL H.
03-Jun	WILLIAMS L.A.	16-Jun	MBOKANE S.
04-Jun	BOAKE J.B.	17-Jun	SILBERBAUER L.C.
04-Jun	MITCHELL R.G.	17-Jun	RAMANTSWANA M.
05-Jun	VHERIWA P.	17-Jun	BOTHMA J.C.
06-Jun	FEELY J.E.	19-Jun	NIXON K.M.
06-Jun	ENGELBRECHT H.J.	19-Jun	THOMPSON R.
06-Jun	LUBALA D.	20-Jun	RAMSAMY R.
07-Jun	MABASO F.S.	23-Jun	HARRISON I.
08-Jun	MORRIS A.R.	24-Jun	KLOPPER H.C.
08-Jun	CRAWFORD-BRUNT R.J.	25-Jun	GARDINER P.J.B.
10-Jun	MEINCKEN M.	25-Jun	VAN RENSBURG T.
11-Jun	LAWRIE D.G.	26-Jun	DEMBURE T.P.
14-Jun	GEVERS W.K.E.	30-Jun	KANYEMBA I.
14-Jun	MAKHATHINI M.M.C.	30-Jun	CHAMBERS I.K.
15-Jun	HENDERSON C.S.	30-Jun	JANSEN J.F.
15-Jun	KOTZE H.		