

# Southern African Institute of Forestry



Delivering a professional service to forestry

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Photograph from the cover of the 2020 SAIF Calendar showing Pine Emperor Moth Larvae  
**Deadline for submission of Photos for 2021 Calendar : 30 September 2020**

## From the President's desk

### Trees of the Year

South Africa celebrates National Arbor Week, a campaign run by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), in the first week of September every year. As September is also heritage month the focus is also on the country's champion trees, which includes some of the oldest, largest and culturally significant trees. Arbor Week is an opportune time to call on all South African's to plant indigenous trees as a practical and symbolic gesture of sustainable environmental management.

For 2020, the common tree of the year is *Ekebergia capensis*, Cape Ash, *Essenhout* and the rare, uncommon tree of the year is *Adansonia digitata*, Baobab, *Kremetart*.

*Ekebergia capensis* is a large, attractive, evergreen tree belonging to the Mahogany family (Meliaceae). This is a tropical and subtropical family of trees and shrubs. Members include; Red Mahogany (*Khaya anothoteca*), African Mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*) and Mahogany (*Swietenia mahogany*). This is a well-represented family with 51 genera and 800 species worldwide. It grows from the Western Cape, along the east coast and through the Eastern Cape. The range then extends more inland and northwards through KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces in South Africa. The species extends beyond South Africa into Swaziland, southern Mozambique and into Zimbabwe.



It also occurs as far north as Uganda, Ethiopia and the D.R.C.

This species provides adequate shade in gardens and is a stunning street tree. The light straw-coloured timber is easily worked into attractive furniture. The bark, roots and leaves have medicinal properties and are commonly used for treating various conditions including headaches, heartburn and chronic coughs.



*Ekebergia capensis*, Cape Ash, Essenhout

Baobabs are some of the oldest and most fascinating trees in the world. These angiosperms from the family *Malvaceae* and the genus *Adansonia* made up of eight species of medium to large deciduous trees, known as baobabs, which are native to Africa, Madagascar and Australia. The mainland African species (*Adansonia digitata*) also occurs in Madagascar, but it is not a native of the island. Baobabs were introduced in ancient times to south Asia and during the colonial era to the Caribbean. A ninth species was described in 2012 (*Adansonia kilima*) but is no longer recognized as a distinct species.

The African and Australian baobabs are almost identical despite having separated more than 100 million years ago, probably getting to Australia from Africa by [oceanic dispersal](#). The generic name honours Michel Adanson, the French naturalist and explorer who described *Adansonia digitata* as one of the largest species of baobab. *Adansonia digitata*, can grow to 25 metres high with a circumference of 25 metres.

Also known as the “upside-down tree” or the “tree of life” it inhabits the African savannas, which are low

lying, arid regions that receive very little rainfall. Similarly, baobabs found in Australia and Madagascar occupy regions with a similar climate profile to the African species. Australia is home to one species, while Madagascar is home to six species. The largest and most threatened of the Madagascar baobabs is *Adansonia grandidieri*.

**Table listing the eight Baobab species and their natural ranges.**

Species	Common names	Range
<i>Adansonia digitata</i> (also includes <i>Adansonia kilima</i> )	African baobab, dead-rat-tree, monkey-bread-tree, montane African baobab	Western, north eastern, central & southern Africa
<i>Adansonia grandidieri</i>	Grandidier's baobab, giant baobab	West central Madagascar
<i>Adansonia gregorii</i>	Boab, Australian baobab, bottletree, cream-of-tartar-tree, gouty-stem	North western Australia
<i>Adansonia madagascariensis</i>	Madagascar baobab	Northwest and north Madagascar
<i>Adansonia perrieri</i>	Perrier's baobab	Northern Madagascar
<i>Adansonia rubrostipa</i>	Fony baobab	Central to south part of western Madagascar
<i>Adansonia suarezensis</i>	Suarez baobab	Northern Madagascar
<i>Adansonia za</i>	Za baobab	West and southwest Madagascar





Sagole Baobab, Limpopo (Louise de Waal)



The Avenue of Baobabs, Madagascar (Gavin Evans)

The Sagole Baobab (*A. digitata*), found in Limpopo, is the largest baobab in South Africa and has been carbon dated as 1200 years old.

Baobabs are easily recognizable by their bottle-like trunk and root-like branches. Baobabs are deciduous and drop their leaves for most of the dry season in an effort to conserve water. Water can be stored in man-made hollows in the baobab's trunk, which supports all forms of life during the driest seasons. These natural water tanks are essential for the survival of Madagascan villagers, however, due to the ongoing effects of climate change, the dry season is becoming longer and rainfall patterns are becoming less predictable. In addition to water, baobabs play a key role in the ecosystem, by maintaining humid soil conditions, nutrient cycling, preventing soil erosion, as well as being a source of food and shelter.

The fruit of the baobabs is one of their most distinguishing features. They are large, oval to round, and berry-like. The fruit also have a dry, hard outer shell of variable thickness. In most species, the shell is indehiscent, which means it does not break open very easily.

The Baobab tree has large whitish flowers, which open at night and are pollinated by nocturnal mammals, such as fruit bats. The fruit, which grows up to a foot long, contains tartaric acid and vitamin C that can either be removed by sucking the fruit directly, or soaking the fruit in water to make a refreshing drink. They can also be roasted and ground up to make a coffee-like drink. The fruit is not the only part of the Baobab that can be used. The bark is pounded to make rope, mats, baskets, paper and cloth; the leaves can be boiled and eaten, and glue can be made from the pollen. Baobabs are amongst some of the world's oldest trees, well over 2000 years and have become seriously threatened by climate change and the rapid development of human settlements. Global warming and shifting rainfall patterns make it impossible for baobabs to store water at critical times in their annual reproductive cycle, leading to their decline. Even protected trees within agricultural zones have lost seed dispersal mechanisms due to ecosystem disruption and effectively no longer contribute to the seed banks. Essentially baobabs are threatened worldwide and will require assisted migration to more suitable environments using climate change models, ecological features and stakeholder engagement to ensure long-term survival of this genus.

Baobabs received their name, "the tree of life", for their ability to provide essential resources to humans, animals and the ecosystem in some of the harshest environments in the world. Now it has become essential to protect baobabs in order to ensure their continued survival. It is now our responsibility to give "life" to these spectacular trees. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adansonia>  
[https://www.gov.za/ArborWeek2020?gclid=EAlaI\\_QobChMI99mB-\\_bM6wIVFeDtCh2GIgBTEAAYAiAAEgLO9\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.gov.za/ArborWeek2020?gclid=EAlaI_QobChMI99mB-_bM6wIVFeDtCh2GIgBTEAAYAiAAEgLO9_D_BwE)  
<http://pza.sanbi.org/ekebergia-capensis>



## Rob Thompson's Column:

### Listen the questions asked by 2020!

There are currently all sorts of memes doing the rounds casting disparaging comments about the disastrous year that we are living...2020. A year of full of frustrations, change and tragedy which no-one expected and for which we are still trying to find solutions and the reasons for the occurrence of such disruption on our lives.

Does 2020 really deserve the disparaging tone or conversely has this year not opened our eyes to the course and direction of the world's set and unassailable trajectory?

There appears to be no end to the questions that 2020 is asking of us. An end to the salvo of discomfort appears unlikely, even as we start to near 2021.

2020 often asks questions of us, cloaked in weird and mysterious ways. Only recently have we been permitted to travel across provincial boundaries. Absolute freedom compared to the total lockdown of the not so distant past and being forced to make intimate acquaintance with the outer reaches of one's garden during extreme adventure outings. As our freedoms slowly return and an underlying sense of normality tries to replace previous frustrations, we find we are able to do so much more and achieve so much more...until...load-shedding!

Now occurring twice a day, and at the most inconvenient of times, these outages seem to have been purposefully placed to test the last vestiges of resilience that we have. Are we being prepared for a greater purpose? Is this test of our mettle a precursor of even worse things to come?

Absolutely!

With regular outages interrupting my ability to make coffee, my obscenely pervasive caffeine habit takes a huge hit and the resultant withdrawals are not a pretty sight. I am not alone in this. Informal surveys conducted amongst knowledgeable colleagues provide conclusive evidence that coffee was one of

the most consumed substances during lockdown which habit continues unabated. Interruption of such habitual practice is regarded tantamount to assault. A basic extrapolation of local increased coffee consumption would appear to point towards the likelihood of a global increase in demand for the "happy bean" which ought to place coffee producers in a good space. Or does it?

Apart from the current outages, at least we will always have our choice substance of abuse on hand...right? Nope! That ominous precursor of doom tapped me gently on the shoulder and had me watch a documentary video on the state of affairs of the global coffee industry. Coffee is both produced commercially and occurs in the wild, across a relatively restricted band stretching from Columbia, parts of Brazil, higher lying parts of central Africa and onto SE Asia.

The rest of the globe is not suited for coffee, either commercial or wild, given its specific temperature and altitude requirements. Already there are disturbing signs that global temperature increases are reducing coffee areas significantly. Vast areas of the Columbian coffee fields have been converted into banana or plantain plantations with coffee migrating to cooler albeit very restricted higher lying areas where the crop just does not perform as well.

A 2 to 3 degree temperature increase can potentially all but do away with up to 70% of the world's coffee producing areas with no alternative go-to areas. Can you imagine arriving at the office and peeling your first banana of the day? It will just not be the same...misery and gnashing of teeth will certainly prevail across the globe! Will we pay these 2020 warnings any heed? We see the signs, hear the questions but will we seek a solution?

Back to the outages. That situation will surely be resolved soon? Don't hold your breath. Do you see any major inroads into solving the train wreck otherwise known as Eskom and the band of law breakers - correction - makers, that prevail? With the questions asked by 2020, we have to decide how to answer them.



Do we continue to bash our head repeatedly in the dark or do we undertake to do things differently? Do we seek alternative power sources? Do we aim towards replacing or reforming the current regime?

The previously mentioned global temperature increases are also likely to affect the tree species that we choose to plant within our own industry. But wait a sec...its not only the prevailing temperature that will guide our choices, but, as we have learned during these long months of 2020, the type of overall timber product consumption will have the final say. Most of you reading this article would have had insight into the current overstocked and mute global timber market. With limited consumption of product thanks to the ravages of 2020, raw material demand has plummeted, with timber producers experiencing unprecedented market hardship. An astute colleague, from one of the large paper and pulp corporates, predicted recently, that only once there is a recovery in "global recreational shopping" will there be commensurate recovery in raw material flow. The envisaged period for a return to normal product consumption is 18 months away and even that is not a given. There are too many unknowns to make anything but a considered guess. So what do we do now? What do we plant? What should we be producing? Where do we pitch our current raw material? 2020 questioning us yet again!

With pulp and paper products under economic siege, pulpwood producers are looking hard at alternative opportunities such as biomass and selections for pole material. A regular comfortable market for successive rotations no longer exists and we are called upon to be creative with our material and the marketing thereof. If we don't answer the questions that 2020 is asking we will simply lose our competitive edge and wind up on the figurative upper reaches of the slippery slope in much the same way as coffee is seemingly headed. Significantly reduced buying power of consumers has also ensured that saw timber producers have not escaped the array of 2020 questions. How do we deal with long term rotations? Are there any alternatives to sawn timber and just how viable are these? Again, not easy but very necessary questions.

"Do we really need an office?" was the question posed to our management team the other day. Yet another clever 2020 question given that only around a third of the personnel team currently continues to operate from the office. Remote operating has become the order of the day with huge inroads having been made into remote connectivity. "Will it always be like this or will there come a time when we revert back to full staff contingents?". 2020 asking questions again...many of which are extremely difficult to answer but they certainly need to be heard, understood and considered.

Literally everything that we were used to 6 months ago has been turned on its head. We blame this on COVID-19. My theory is that had COVID not occurred, change would have occurred in any event albeit that we would have become attuned to it at a much slower pace.

If there has to be a positive from this pandemic, then it must be the window that we have been gifted through which to get a rare and valuable glimpse into, and feel of, the future.

We can see where we are headed. We can see what is in store. We have felt the trauma. We are hearing the questions posed.

Are we now going to take heed or take the easy route and ignore?



## African violin sounds - The making of the African violin and its sound can be seen / heard here:



OR <https://youtu.be/tKvrhbl04wk>

Wood used for musical instrument needs to meet certain physical and acoustical properties and not all wood species are suitable as tonewoods. While guitars are often made from various (indigenous) wood species, violins worldwide are made from imported Spruce for the front plate and Maple for the back plate. This wood tends to be slow grown, very old and is typically dried naturally for up to 50 years. In a research project of the past two years we characterised various indigenous (South) African wood species and determined how they fit into different classification schemes to determine the suitability of the wood to be used as tonewood.

Four species gave promising results: Yellowwood and Blackwood for the front and Sapele and Hardpear for the back. None of these were, however, several decades old, or dried. The wood was carefully handpicked and kiln dried to obtain the best possible raw material. The first violin was made from Yellowwood and Sapele by Hannes Jacobs in Pretoria - one of the best luthiers in South Africa - and the sound compares very well with his traditional instruments.

The second violin will be made in our Department as part of various student projects and a local luthier will assist with the final finetuning and the assembly. For more information contact Prof. Martina Meincken at [mmein@sun.ac.za](mailto:mmein@sun.ac.za) at the Department of Forest and Wood Science or visit: [www.sun.ac.za/forestry](http://www.sun.ac.za/forestry)

Author and Images: Martina Meincken

## Afrika viool klanke

Hout wat vir musiekinstrumente gebruik word, moet aan sekere fisiese en akoestiese eienskappe voldoen, en nie alle houtsoorte is geskik as toonhout nie. Terwyl kitare dikwels van verskillende (inheemse) houtsoorte vervaardig word, word viole wêreldwyd gemaak van ingevoerde Spruce vir die voorplaat en Maple vir die agterste plaat. Hierdie hout is geneig om stadig te groei, baie oud te wees en word gewoonlik tot 50 jaar lank natuurlik gedroog. In 'n navorsingsprojek van die afgelope twee jaar het ons verskillende inheemse (Suid) Afrikaanse houtsoorte gekarakteriseer en bepaal hoe dit in verskillende klassifikasiesistelsels pas om die geskiktheid van die hout om as toonhout te gebruik, te bepaal.

Vier spesies het belowende resultate gelever: Geelhout en Swarthout aan die voorkant en Sapele en Hardepeer vir die agterkant. Nie een hiervan was 'n paar dekades oud of droog nie. Die hout is versigtig met die hand ge-oes en oond gedroog om die beste moontlike rou materiaal te verkry. Die eerste viool is van Geelhout en Sapele gemaak deur Hannes Jacobs in Pretoria - een van die beste luthiers in Suid-Afrika - en die klank vergelyk baie goed met sy tradisionele instrumente.

Die proses om die Afrika-viool en die klank daarvan te maak, kan **gesien / gehoor word onder:** <https://youtu.be/tKvrhbl04wk>

Die tweede viool word in ons departement gemaak as deel van verskillende studenteprojekte, en 'n plaaslike luthier sal help met die finale afronding en montering. Vir meer inligting kontak Prof. Martina Meincken by [mmein@sun.ac.za](mailto:mmein@sun.ac.za) by Departement Bos en Houtkunde of besoek gerus: [www.sun.ac.za/forestry](http://www.sun.ac.za/forestry)



## FAO Invasive Species Webinar

by Idea Makowe (FABI, University of Pretoria)

The FAO forestry division is tasked with the responsibility of giving advice, support and assistance to countries on how best to combat forest invasive species, an issue across the globe, as well as the facilitation of regional forest invasive species networks. On 29 July 2020, an online webinar series "Forest Invasive Species-the next global pandemic?" was held through the direction of the FAO. A total of 706 people registered for the webinar and these were across 87 countries. Of the 706 registered, 482 managed to be in attendance of the live session.

The webinar had the objective of raising awareness of forest invasive species in the region and ensure preparedness for future invasive forest pests and disease outbreaks as well as the implementation of preventative measures and coordinated international action in the management of trans-boundary pests. 2020 is the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020 and the webinar focused on contributing towards the goals of the IYPH (2020) whose aim is to raise awareness on the benefits of plant protection. The webinar was jointly organised by the FAO forestry division, the Secretariat of the IYPH 2020, and four regional active forestry invasive species networks; and moderated by Dr Shiroma Sathyapala of the FAO.

Prof. Mike WIngfield from FABI, University of Pretoria, was the guest speaker at the webinar. He compared the current pandemic, SARS-CoV-2 to tree health, explaining that most tree health issues arise from accidental introduction of pests or pathogens into the environment. Presentations from the regional networks discussed different issues associated with health of forests. The importance of informing and involving the broader community and the need for structured surveillance was emphasized. This includes through coordinating awareness raising activities, training and sharing information regionally. The coordination of research between regions, capacity building and the role of biodiversity in increasing resilience of forests was also emphasized.

In addition, Prof. Brett Hurley of FABI, University of Pretoria and the current coordinator of the Forestry Invasive Species Network for Africa (FISNA), gave a talk on the importance of biological control as a successful environmentally friendly way of controlling invasive species. FISNA, which was one of four regional networks that participated in the network, was formed in 2004 and currently has 10 member countries. Its objectives are to coordinate gathering and dissemination of information relating to forest invasive species in sub-Saharan Africa for sustainable forest management.

A summary of the webinar, as well as the presentations and video recording can be accessed via <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fisna/26060/en/>

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## The 2020 SAIF Forester of the Year award winner.

It is with pleasure that we can formally announce that the 2020 SAIF Forester of the Year award goes to Pete Odell of NCT.

This award recognises the forestry practitioner who goes beyond the call of duty and illustrates a dedication level above the norm. Pete certainly fits this mould and as his forestry peers, we celebrate his prestigious achievement.

Those of you who know Pete, will know of his unerring dedication towards finding and maintaining that fine balance between conservation and production forestry. Long hours, standoffs with illegal dog hunters, community interaction, teaching, liaison, knowledge, empathy, diplomacy, concern, and plenty of good humour are all statements and words that fall into an apt description of this remarkable man.

Anita Nicholson and Rob Thompson of NCT interviewed Pete after the result had been announced and herewith follows a summary thereof, as penned by Anita:-

Congratulations to Pete Odell, estate forester at Baynesfield, who received this year's SAIF (Southern African Institute of Forestry) forester of the year accolade.

"NCT is very proud that the award went to one of its own," says Jacob Kotze, NCT's Tree Farming general manager. "This certainly is a showcase of the calibre of forester that we have within the organisation." The prestigious award acknowledges Pete's dedication to service operationally and beyond the call of duty. It recognises his service rendered to forestry, community and conservation. This is an honour awarded by forestry peers to a colleague in service to forestry. Past winners from NCT are Ed Hayter and Lunga Tshangisa.

### Background

Pete grew up on Baynesfield, having a forester father who developed the estate's timber area in the early days. After a working holiday overseas, he returned home and followed in his family footsteps to become a schoolteacher but that ended after a year; thereafter a job at the local bank also didn't last. Uncertain of exactly what he wanted to pursue Pete opted for Saasveld after inspiration from a Saasveld student doing his six-month practical under his father's wing at Baynesfield.

At Saasveld, he was offered a bursary from a timber company. On qualification, he obtained extensive experience in sugar cane and wattle growing and in 2000, joined NCT Tree Farming as estate forester at Baynesfield and hasn't looked back.

"It wasn't easy managing the leased timber area at Baynesfield but I think we've turned the corner," says Pete. "Credit is due to NCT's management for allowing foresters flexibility to make decisions at ground level," he continues.

### Communities, cattle and conservation

Regarding relationships with neighbouring communities, he confirms that dialogue is critical. "We've had our fair share of timber theft and cattle grazing but hopefully our proactive conversations have led to a better understanding of issues on both sides." He does however admit that illegal dog hunting remains a big challenge.

Pete enjoys the interaction with people and delights in hosting school groups at the estate, educating them on fire fighting and forestry techniques. As a keen outdoors person, he has initiated and helped developed a mountain bike trail on the estate for the public to enjoy and see forestry for its worth.

Pete also has a passion for the environment. He includes conservation management practices in timber farming activities especially related to prescribed burning around sensitive areas. He also believes that forestry needs to move away from the use of chemicals and other environmental pollutants.

### Leaving a legacy

For Pete, the SAIF award was a BIG achievement and a welcome surprise. "I would like to know that I have set a benchmark at Baynesfield and whoever takes over from me one day will maintain the standards and follow in my dreams.

"Forestry is a tough profession to be in having to deal with legislation, safety, social and all issues related to timber farming but I wouldn't change it. I have a job that takes me outdoors almost all day – what more could one ask for?" concludes Pete.





Forester of the Year: Pete Odell with a number of his peers and colleagues

**COVID 19 NEWS :Strange behaviour : People changing or hiding their identity**



These three masked men were recently seen in George. Do you have any idea who they could be . No foul play suspected though !



Who could this person be who apparently has an obsession with hats/ headgear and constantly changes his identity ?

**FABI Pest and Disease profiles**

The Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI) at the University of Pretoria has recently completed profiles on the main pathogens and insect pests of plantation trees in South Africa. The profiles are for over 25 of the most relevant bacterial diseases, fungal diseases and insect pests in South Africa, and contain information on the biology, description and symptoms of the pest / pathogen, including relevant photos.

The objectives of the profiles are to provide basic information on these pests and pathogens to assist with field diagnosis and to inform management responses. Information on host species in South Africa and management will soon be included. A direct link to research papers relevant to the specific pest / pathogen will also be provided at a later stage.

The profiles are available on the FABI website:

[www.fabinet.up.ac.za/tpcp/forest-threats](http://www.fabinet.up.ac.za/tpcp/forest-threats)



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BIRTHDAYS : SEPTEMBER 2020			
POOL C.F.	Sep-01	FULLER G.M	Sep-19
DUSTAN D.B.	Sep-05	POLLARD B.	Sep-19
STEENKAMP J.C.	Sep-07	KRAAMWINKEL E.	Sep-20
JAMES D.B.	Sep-07	MAPLANKA N.	Sep-20
CLEGG P.A.	Sep-11	RIJKENBERG N.H.	Sep-22
BUSHS.J.	Sep-12	SCHÜTTE C.	Sep-23
CHIMPHANGO A.F	Sep-14	MWAROZVA M.	Sep-23
NADEL R.	Sep-15	DLADLA V.	Sep-25
DE SWARDT W.	Sep-16	MORLEY R.	Sep-25
CROFT P.	Sep-17	VAN VUUREN M.C.	Sep-26
HILL M.	Sep-18	WEIR F.	Sep-26
GODSMARK R.C.	Sep-18	MARAIS G.V.R.	Sep-30



# The Southern African Institute of Forestry

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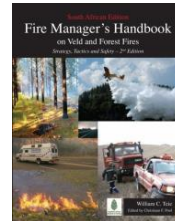
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### Fire Manager's Handbook on Veld and Forest Fires

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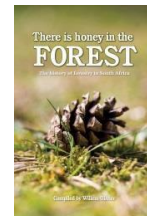
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