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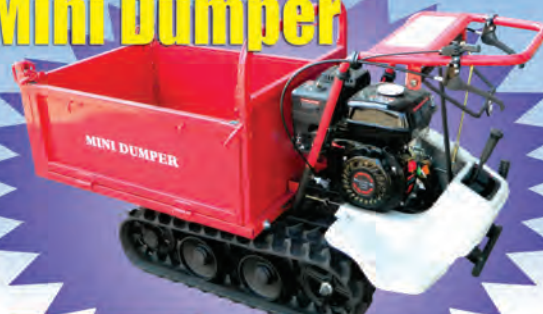
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Fax: 086 602-3882

e-mail: gautengsmallholder@gmail.com
website:

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Pete Bower

RESEARCH EDITOR

Vanessa Bower

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Michelle Urquhart

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FRONT COVER

Marco Tijssen of Genius Landbou in
Tarlton aboard a 37kW Kioti NX5010,
the largest tractor in this South Korean
manufacturer's line-up in SA.

COMMENT, by Pete Bower —

The national discourse



Adolph Hitler's spin-doctor, Joseph Goebbels, is reported to have said, in relation to some aspect of World War 2, the Holocaust or Nazism, "tell a story often enough and make it fantastic enough, and eventually it'll be believed."

Looking at the national discourse in present-day South Africa one can't help but wonder whether we are not being assailed by similar Goebbellian tales and other self-fulfilling prophesies.

Are we talking ourselves into a depression? As Parliament resumes its business, if you can call it that, we may well wonder.

Certainly, the economy is tanking. All the usual economic indicators show this, the situation not having been helped by Jacob Zuma's inexplicable pre-Christmas game of musical chairs in the finance ministry.

That little episode knocked a R500 billion hole in the South African economy, simultaneously resulting in the value of our currency cementing its 40% decline against international currencies in one year. Small wonder foreign investors are putting their money elsewhere.

Unemployment is at an unprecedented level. This is not surprising, really, because South African labour laws are onerous and wages are higher than those in other producing countries, and productivity is lower, which means that we have become an importing, rather than manufacturing, nation.

On the subject of manufacturing there's another interesting observation. In years past, when the value of the Rand dropped against other currencies some economists would loudly say "Rather than being bad news it benefits South African exporters by making their products more competitive." You don't hear that any more, or at least not from serious economists, because they know that we manufacture and export so little.

And the argument is spurious anyway because if a low exchange rate makes exports cheaper it also makes imports more expensive, notably the imported machinery and components one needs to manufacture stuff to consume locally, let alone export.

The drought has the country in a steely grip, although some rain in late December and January has brought a little relief in parts of the country, resulting in a few farmers still being able to plant maize, and in turn resulting in estimates of the amount of maize needing to be imported having dropped from seven million tons to four million.

International events aren't helping, of course: commodity prices remaining low are also having an effect on our mining sector.

So notice how easily the national discourse has become about the likelihood of a credit agency downgrade to junk status and the effect this will have on South Africa-Inc's ability to borrow money.

To older economic observers this is all quite new. It's only in the past decade or so that the focus of international economics has been on the ratings published by research companies such as Moody's and Standard & Poor. And what does it mean to you and me? Simply put, it means the treasury and banks will have to pay more interest on the money they borrow internationally which down the line means that our money won't buy us as much in the future than it does today. We will all be a little poorer. And those who are already poor will be poorer still.)

Notice, also, the national conversation around corruption. Not a day goes by without another report of somebody in high office benefiting irregularly from some deal or larceny. Less frequent, however, are the stories about the justice meted out to those caught with their fingers in the cookie jar.

And notice, too, how it has now become openly fashionable to call for the President to resign or be recalled.

That Mr Zuma is allowing us to venture (because he certainly isn't leading us) down a disastrous path which no thinking South African of any colour wishes to venture ~ economically, politically or socially ~ is not in question. It is also unlikely that he will resign of his own volition. Whether, however, the leadership of the very organisation that thrust him into the top job in the first place realises the error of its ways and pushes to remove him is another matter.

Pundits who know the workings of the ANC say that's not very likely.

So, while the chattering classes may ponder upon what Madiba would have done in the current situation we must just live in hope. On two scores. Firstly, that Zuma goes into retirement sooner rather than later. And secondly that whoever replaces him has a practical plan to end this rot.

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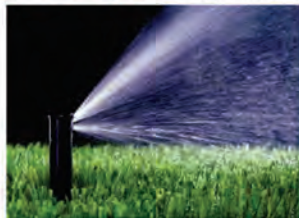
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Sir ~ I have been very busy trying to acquire land (veld grass) for a crowd called "Boere in Nood"

who are ostensibly seeking large tracts of land where they can send in a team of tractors complete with rakes, balers

and transport so as to provide fodder relief for farmers of all kinds in need throughout South Africa.

The drought has hit us Gautengers hard, but not half as hard as it has hit other provinces and let's face it, we in Gauteng are hardly the bread basket of the country. My neighbour, (whose vacant property I care for) has a reasonable stand of eragrostis that could yield 150 bales. I would normally just cut this grass and leave it but this year I thought it would be better if it could be baled and sent to farmers in need. So, I got hold of Afgri who put me in

Continued on page 6

Agri Dept funds rural township mini-parks

Sir ~ I was appalled to read recently that the Gauteng Dept of Agriculture & Rural Development (GDARD) has funded mini-parks for disadvantaged communities in rural areas and townships. There is a department of sport and recreation: why aren't they funding recreational areas? The agriculture department would do better to spend its money on greater support for smallholders, small scale farmers and commercial operatives throughout the province. Where are the extension officers when we need them?

What happened to the West Rand Agricultural training institute that your magazine wrote about years ago – has GDARD helped to make it a reality?

Instead the department proudly trumpets the fact it is spending money on parks, which should be being provided by municipalities

anyway.

At a push it can be justified as rural development if it is happening in rural areas. But townships cannot be categorised as rural areas. Their priorities need to be read-dressed!

Ramona Vos
East Rand

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E Rand plots get dedicated water tanker

A dedicated four-ton water tanker complete with a high-pressure pump and two hoses has been donated to residents of the East Rand smallholding suburbs of Marister and Benoni Agricultural Holdings by septic tank pumping firm Suck Well.

According to Suck Well director Alet Potgieter the

vehicle, a Toyota Dyna with a 4 000 litre capacity tank named Monica, was the company's first honeysucker and had become surplus to requirements.

After a comprehensive clean-out, service and respray, and the fitting

Right: Monica, Marister's dedicated water tanker

of pumps, the vehicle was made ready for use in combating veld and forest



blazes on the plots, as well as to assist when residents elect to burn firebreaks. All these renovations were donated by the residents. Those who

Continued on page 8

DROUGHT

From page 5

touch with Mr N C Schoombie of "Boere in Nood" who has a data base with all farmers in need and those they have to date helped. From my side I have arranged approximately 250 Ha of veld available to them in Midrand to cut and bale. Schoombie said this evening that he has acquired another 800 or so hectares of available veldgrass in Midrand. There are probably thousands of hectares of veld grass available where farmers do not graze cattle or developers sit on land, that could be utilized for harvesting, on the East Rand alone.

'tis now the time for all who hold Mother Earth and that which She delivers so abundantly, to join forces and stand together to deliver grazing for starving livestock! This is where your readers would fit in. Anybody with land that is not used for grazing, and which is usually cut, or burnt during the fire season, can help farmers in need of fodder by having their fields cut now, thereby saving the lives of thousands of head of livestock country-wide.

To discuss having your land cut by Boere in Nood, contact NC Schoombie on cell 072-358-9734.

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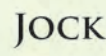
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Upheavals in E Rand agri-trade

As one door closes, another opens: that's the old adage currently playing itself out on the East Rand with two well-known agricultural dealerships.

In Boksburg East Reapers Agri has risen out of the ashes of the Pietermaritzburg-based company of similar name that was liquidated in October last year.

Restarted by former managers Pieter Visagie senior and his son, also Pieter, the "new"

Reapers re-opens in Boksburg, while 104-year-old Benoni Farmers Supply closes down

Reapers will sell an expanded stock of agricultural equipment and spares, garden equipment, turf equipment and tractors.

In addition, the company has opened a workshop capable of repairs and maintenance on all tractors and agricultural

machinery, as well as small power equipment such as mowers, brushcutters and chainsaws.

Reapers has bought over much of the liquidated parent company's stock of slashers and mowers, as well as its popular PTO-driven power

sprayers.

And, while it will also continue to represent the popular Matabi backpack sprayers and Supaturf grass marking equipment, it has added the Monosem range of implements, Tandem garden equipment, Major paddock equipment, and Landini, McCormick and Kioti tractors and ATVs, as well as Fuchs industrial lubricants, to its line

Continued on page 9

WATER TRUCK

From page 6

could not assist in helping of services or manufacturing items needed for the purpose, donated money that was then used to procure the needed items.

In addition, Marister residents in need of water may make use of the truck at a small fee to cover diesel.

Currently based at Suck Well's premises, it is expected that before the next fire season the vehicle will be fitted with a two-way radio for instant communication with the suburb's security and fire protection network.

Potgieter stresses that the vehicle is not a fire truck. "At times the Fire Brigade takes a

while to get to Marister. By then the fire could be out of control. The truck will therefore be there with volunteers to keep things under control till the professionals arrive and take over," she says.

For more information: Allan Mallinick 079 505-8348 or Alet Potgieter 083 469-4387

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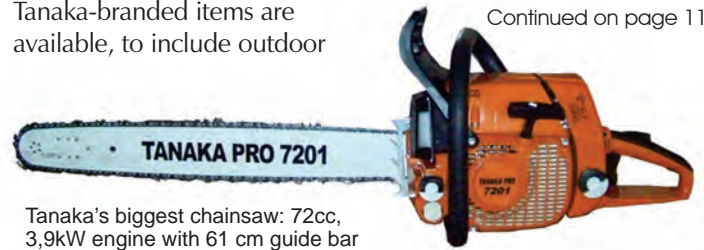
Having spent about ten years evaluating the various machines to ensure that they perform satisfactorily in South African conditions, Turfmaster has launched a full range of power products under its

own Tanaka brand name. According to Turfmaster director Ruben Smart the machines are not intended for professional use or by contractors, but are more suited to the needs of householders, hobbyists, smallholders and farmers, and are competitively-priced as a result.

With this in mind, Turfmaster has expanded the number of dealers through which Tanaka-branded items are available, to include outdoor

product specialist shops around South Africa, as well as selected Essential Hardware

Continued on page 11



Tanaka's biggest chainsaw: 72cc, 3,9kW engine with 61 cm guide bar

SHOPS

From page 8

up. Kioti tractors and ATVs are a relatively new range in South Africa manufactured and well-known in South Korea. The range includes a 20kW model with mid-mounted grass mowing deck that will prove popular with parks departments, golf courses etc, as well as conventional small tractors suitable for smallholders looking for reliable efficient power. For more information: Reapers Agri, tel 011 914-1922

Meanwhile, a little further east in Benoni, a landmark among farmers and smallholders for more than a century has closed its doors. Having served the farming community, industry, schools and local authorities of the eastern highveld since 1912, Benoni Farmers Supply has found changed trading conditions overwhelming and has ceased operations. Owned by the Jankelowitz family since it started, the business developed into two streams, one concentrating on agricultural implements, tractors, spares and repairs, and the other a retail store selling power machinery such as mowers, brushcutters, water pumps and the like, as well as tools, seeds, fertilizers, safety gear and hardware. The retail store, in Prince's Avenue, was housed in the same premises in which the business started as a livery stable in 1912.



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From page 9
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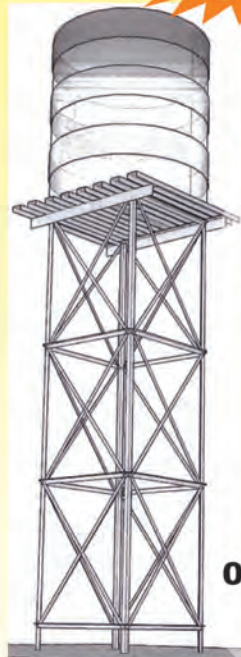
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Feedback on pompom weed thrips

The Agricultural Research Council has announced that, since the initial release of the stem- and leaf-deforming thrips (*Liothrips tractabilis*) on pompom weed (*Campuloclinium macrocephalum*) in October 2013 at Rietvlei Nature Reserve, an estimated 200 000 thrips have been released in Gauteng, North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, with proportionally, the most releases in Gauteng (56%) and Mpumalanga (21%).

Both pompom thrips nymphs and adults feed on the stems and leaf tissue at the apical shoot tips of pompom weed. This causes deformities in plant growth, which reduces its height, biomass and flower production. Although damage to the stem tips may encourage the plants to send out lateral branches in response, the rapid population increase of the agent ensures that the new shoot tips are also attacked, and these display similar damage. The thrips has greatest impact on seedlings, or on new spring regrowth

The ARC says it is still too early to confirm establishment at all sites where the thrips were released, but preliminary data indicate an establishment rate of 48%. Dispersal of the thrips after release is slow, but steady, with the impact on infected plants becoming more noticeable over a period of three to five seasons following the initial release.

Establishment on mature and reproductive plants is less successful. Therefore the window period at the start of the growing season should be targeted.

Liamé van der Westhuizen of the ARC-Plant Protection Research Institute, suggests that landowners should try to familiarise themselves with the very young, vegetative growth form of the pompom weed.

To do this use a metal marker to mark where the plants are when you see them in full flower. Then you will be able to find them again in the following season when they are at the young stage of regrowth.

Through planned mass-rearing it is hoped that a large number of insects will be made available early in the season to drastically increase the distribution and optimise establishment of the biological control agent.



Pompom weed regrowth before flowering stage.



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Mature spekbook tree showing evidence of having been grazed by small stock (note lack of leaves close to the ground).

INVASIVE ALIENS

Three further plants to look out for ... and eradicate

The Plant Protection Research Institute of the ARC has highlighted the fact that this summer's late rains and record high temperatures are

exacerbating the negative impacts of invasive alien plants, particularly in water

catchments and river systems. Three more invasives that Gauteng smallholders should

be on the lookout for are Chilean Inkberry (also known as green cestrum) (*Cestrum parqui*), Sword Fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia*) and

Continued on page 17

CO₂ EMISSION

From page 16

called photosynthesis, whereby the plant, using daylight as a stimulus, absorbs carbon dioxide (CO₂) through its leaves. It then separates the carbon atom from the two oxygen atoms in the molecule, releases the oxygen atoms back into the atmosphere and "sequesters," or uses, the carbon to grow. Trees are, after all, mostly comprised of carbon.

If one hectare of spekboom can sequester 4,2 tons of carbon annually, one square metre can sequester 20kg of

CO₂. That's roughly the amount of carbon dioxide generated by burning ten litres of petrol. If every South African household planted just one spekboom bush of 1m² in the garden, millions of kilograms of CO₂ would be removed from the atmosphere.

Indigenous as it is to the arid Eastern Cape, spekboom can survive on just 250 – 300mm of rainfall a year.

It is easy to grow and can be propagated by simply cutting or breaking off a piece and sticking it in the ground.

Spekboom is also edible for humans and livestock. Its fleshy leaves, which have a slight lemony taste, are suitable for use in salads. The Spekboom is rich in manganese, cobalt and especially magnesium. It also contains large quantities of iodine and selenium.

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SM313	100 x 50	4	9
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INVASIVE ALIENS

From page 14

(*Phytolacca dioica*).

Although all three were originally brought into South Africa for use as garden ornamentals, they have escaped cultivation and spread through a few provinces.

The entire Chilean Inkberry plant is poisonous and has been known to kill livestock, and even humans who ate parts of it. However, the ripe berries are readily consumed by birds that aid in seed dispersal. This fact is evident even in suburban gardens, especially in Gauteng, where

Chilean inkberry plants seem to appear from nowhere and are difficult to eradicate, because they merely sucker from the roots when cut down. In natural environments, dense infestations of Chilean inkberry may outcompete indigenous vegetation and eventually transform natural habitats. Some parts of the Belhambra tree - the sap, the roots, and the green fruit, are also poisonous. In addition, they have the ability to outcompete and displace indigenous vegetation in virtually any frost-free habitat.

Although sword fern may not yet be widespread throughout the country, it has the potential to spread rapidly and to form dense infestations that outcompete and replace indigenous vegetation, thereby transforming natural habitats. Registered herbicides are not available for use against these particular alien invasives, and



Sword fern

infestations are difficult to eradicate. Unfortunately, since no biological control agents have been released, mechanical control remains the best option. However, this is time-consuming, and regular follow-ups are required.



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Despite the heatwave and dry November and December, Gauteng's bees survived and the honey was of good quality, with an average "flow" for this time of year. Then the rains came and the hives were soon bursting with

Another in our series of articles on beekeeping for beginners by Peter Clark, chairman of the Eastern Highveld Beekeepers Association

young bees, new queens, and many swarms came forth. The heat brought out the best in the Acacia Karoo, (sweet thorn or soet doring) with a great and magnificent

abundance of yellow pom-pom flowers, loaded with nectar and pollen, the best in years, and the bees took full advantage.

The bloom of the pink, red, white and purple Pride of India trees, although later this year, was the best in years. Gauteng's Jacarandas put down their purple carpet, and from these fallen flowers the bees gather the nectar (so be wary when walking on this carpet as one can pick up a sting or two).

Because of the drought some farmers had not ploughed their lands and the abundance of weeds that have sprung up after the rains, are more goodies for the bees. One must not underestimate the nectar and pollen that

flows from these weedy lands.

In driving around we notice more patches and even fields of the weed pink Pom-pom spreading rather rapidly in some places and the bees are busy gathering the nectar and pollinating the flowers to produce more pink Pom-pom plants next year, the Khakibos, and blackjacks are looking good, promising more feed for the bees and honey in the bottles.

Continued on page 21



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Galvanised AFTER welding

Block size in mm	Wire dia.	QTY
6.4mm x 6.4mm	0.7mm	30m roll / per metre
9.6mm x 9.6mm	0.9mm	30m roll / per metre
13mm x 13mm	1mm	30m roll / per metre
13mm x 13mm	1.6mm	30m roll / per metre
13mm x 25mm	1mm	30m roll / per metre
13mm x 25mm	1.25mm	30m roll / per metre
13mm x 25mm	1.5mm	30m roll / per metre
13mm x 25mm	1.6mm	30m roll / per metre
13mm x 25mm	2mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 25mm	1mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 25mm	1.5mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 25mm	1.6mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 25mm	2mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 25mm	2.5mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 25mm	3mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 50mm	1.5mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 50mm	1.6mm	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 50mm	2mm	30m roll / per metre

Galvanised BEFORE welding

Block size in mm	Wire dia.	QTY
25mm x 25mm	2.5	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 50mm	2.50	30m roll / per metre
25mm x 50mm	3.00	30m roll / per metre
50mm x 50mm	1.60	30m roll / per metre
50mm x 50mm	2.00	30m roll / per metre
50mm x 50mm	2.50	30m roll / per metre
50mm x 50mm	3.00	30m roll / per metre
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Block size in mm	Wire dia.	QTY
13mm x 13mm	1.25mm	30m roll / per metre
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HEXAGONAL MESH

AVAILABLE WIDTHS: 915mm
1220mm
1830mm

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width available	600mm	600mm	--	--	50m roll / per metre
width available	900mm	900mm	900mm	900mm	50m roll / per metre
width available	1220mm	1220mm	1220mm	1220mm	50m roll / per metre
width available	1500mm	1500mm	--	--	50m roll / per metre
width available	1830mm	1830mm	1830mm	1830mm	50m roll / per metre

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845ml, 15cm, R41



Coop cup with nut clamp

130ml, 7.5cm, R18
290ml, 9.5cm, R25
5250ml, 12.5cm, R32
845ml, 15cm, R42



From page 21

Then there is the farmer who, in faith, planted kidney beans at the fall of a few drops of rain during the drought time, and this rainy season of regular falls of rain and hot humid days and warm nights will make this year the "The year of the kidney bean." Therefore those beekeepers who have some spare swarms for the pollination will increase the bean yield by 20% and reap at least 25 kg of honey per hive.

Eastwards of Devon and Leslie, down Greylingstad way, you will notice beautiful purple vetch that the bees relish.

The thickly planted lands of soya beans appear the best ever and the shaded soil under the plants remains damp and cool, that prevents bean drop and longer flowering duration periods, all good for the bees. After the soya beans have been reaped,

there follows the low growing yellow flowering weed in April, May and June we beekeepers call "salvation" that gives that late bonus crop of honey for the season.

Despite this natural abundance there are times when beekeepers actually need to provide feed for their hives, particularly those that have very recently received swarms removed from other places. The true saying among beekeepers, "a swarm in the fall is no swarm at all" applies. In such cases the bees do not have time to gather in sufficient food for the barren winter months and supplementary feeding may be necessary.

For such swarms, therefore, from mid-April feed pollen, the protein feed of the swarm, and honey.

A substitute for pollen is crushed yellow maize-meal, as fed by the dairy farmers to their cows. It is the cheapest

and is readily obtainable.

Feed by placing the maize-meal in a shallow lid under the hive lid and on top of the brood frames. (As this only a newly hived catch swarm there will not be a super chamber at this stage.)

The bees will collect the meal and store in the cells of their bread basket, which is that select frame to the extreme outer edge of the brood nest where they store the pollen, so essential for their diet.

Honey is best fed rather than sugar water (which gives the bees diarrhoea). Remove the two outer frames in the brood area and replace with two frames of honey from another hive.

If this framed honey is not available, one will have to feed sugar water.

Make a syrup by mixing equal quantities of good quality white sugar and hot water. Allow the mixture to cool and

place in plastic bottles that can stand in the brood chamber in place of the two outer frames. Prick the smallest possible hole near the very bottom of the bottle to allow only one drop at a time to form. The bees will suck these drops up until the bottle is dry. This winter feeding of the autumn will produce a bumper return when spring returns in August.

Winter maize-meal feeding of an apiary of ten or twelve swarms is excellent to

Continued on page 23

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Keep it clean, prevent death & injury

A heartbreaking post on Facebook recently about a prize Boer goat that died after ingesting a plastic bag highlights the need by every livestock-keeping smallholder to clean up his boundaries and pastures. Because of the close proximity of smallholdings to each other, and because many South Africans are lax about litter, fences and corners of

fields are great collecting points for wind-borne and carelessly discarded rubbish. And while the number of plastic bags littering the countryside has diminished greatly in recent years following the introduction of pay-per-bag laws, there are still plenty attaching themselves to trees and fences, along with other litter, such as bottles, cans, disposable

nappies and other unmentionables. A regular stroll around one's fields, armed with a rubbish disposal bag, is thus a useful exercise, for apart from the rubbish one will collect it gives one the opportunity to check on the state of one's pasture. (How heavily grazed is it? What grass species are being eaten and what left behind? What weeds are emerging among the grass tufts?).

Plus, of course, it allows one to check one's fences, both for broken strands as well as strands that have become loosened from their uprights. Indeed, apart from plastic bags and other litter, bits of rusty wire are an equally lethal waste item in the field. Like nails, wire can become lodged in livestock's hooves,

at best rendering them lame but also possibly infecting them with tetanus. Plus, small bits of wire ingested while grazing can cause very serious intestinal damage.

Continued on page 25

BEEKEEPING

From page 21

produce good strong swarms in the early spring. Hang the feed, spread 20mm thick in a large plastic lid under cover of an inverted refuse bin lid to protect it from the rain in a tree off the ground a short distance away from the hives and up from rats and mice, and watch the

bees roll around in the meal to their delight! Article by Peter Clark at 011 362-2904, author of *Tales of an African Beekeeper* and chairman for 2016 of the Eastern Highveld Beekeeper's Association, assisted by secretary Mike Alter at 011 965-6040.

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Tips on buying an old used tractor

Money, we all know, is tight and the exchange rate makes the cost of shiny new imported machinery out of the reach of many. As a result, if you are looking for a tractor for your plot, chances are you'll be looking for a used, rather than a new, machine. And, to be sure, "bargains" abound in the second-hand tractor market. The trick is to know what to look for to ensure that you don't finish up with an expensive, immovable, rusty roosting spot for your chickens rather than a working plot machine. The state in which you find the second-hand tractor of your dreams will tell you more about the care lavished on it by its current owner than on its overall past. For, if the machine sports a shiny coat of paint and new oil and fuel



"Don't finish up with an expensive, immovable, rusty roosting spot for your chickens."

filters, all that tells you is that, at best, the seller has taken reasonable care of it or, at worst, that he's tried to cover a whole list of internal problems.

Before even starting the engine, have a look at the overall condition, particularly of the wiring and hoses. Look

in nooks and crannies for rat droppings, which could be evidence of chewed wires or piping.

If you intend using your tractor on a public road it must be licensed. To be licensed it must have lights, indicators and reflectors fitted. Look for oil leaks, both from

the sump and tappet cover, but also from the steering mechanism, gearbox and hydraulics.

Similarly, look for rust streaks around all components of the cooling system – evidence of water leaks.

The steering mechanism of a tractor takes particular strain as it pounds over rough ground, so it is important to check the linkages and front wheels for play. Play in the front wheels is likely also to indicate worn wheel

Continued on page 26

ON THE PLOT

From page 23

For this reason it is wise to keep a sharp lookout for wire scraps, picking them up for disposal elsewhere.

If you do not want to walk about with a pocket full of wire scrap a good trick is to twist the scraps firmly on to existing fence wires. This ruse can also be taught to children and workers so that it becomes second-nature for them to pick up and hang

wire scrap on one's fences.

It goes without saying that short pieces cut off when erecting or mending fences, such as excess binding wire or barbs removed from end-pieces, should religiously be collected for proper disposal.

A regular walkabout also enables you to identify (and remove) noxious weeds which, even if they are not poisonous to your livestock, will degrade your pasture.

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MACHINERY

From page 25

bearings. If nothing else, loose steering and wobbly front wheels will prevent you from ploughing or cutting in a straight line.

If your proposed purchase, for example a Vaaljapie, has a single front axle pivoting on a short shaft under the radiator, check both the axle and shaft for wear. With hard wear and abuse the axle can crack under the shaft. Check for evidence of welding repairs. Check the wheels, particularly where the rims make contact with the tyres. They should be smooth. If they are bent inwards they will place unnecessary stress upon the tyre walls. Check the condition of the tyres. They may be worn, but are they cracked and perished?

Remember that all the torque that your tractor generates is transferred from the tractor to the ground through the tyres, and effectively through the side-walls of the tyres so it is

imperative to have a decent pair of rear tyres at least. With tractor rear tyres costing upwards of R2 000 apiece, and with some front tyres difficult to obtain, having to

cylinder block or head.

Similarly, check the gearbox and diff oil (there is often a dipstick for these compartments, too). Old oil is likely to have absorbed some moisture

All the torque that your tractor generates is transferred from the tractor to the ground through the tyres, and effectively through the side-walls

replace them just after you've bought the tractor can become a costly affair.

Check the engine, gearbox and diff housing and wheels for missing bolts and broken stubs. The older the tractor the more likely that nuts and bolts with the correct threads will be difficult to purchase. Remove the dipstick and check the oil. It may be black, and is likely to be so if the tractor is a diesel model, but is there any evidence of water in the oil? This could result in the oil/water mixture being white – evidence of a cracked

and may thus be opaque, rather than clear and golden. Check the coolant fluid also. How brown is it?

On dual-fuel (petrol-paraffin) tractors, there will be a fuel changeover tap. These are invariably sealed with a cork gasket, which often leaks when old. While this is neither difficult nor expensive to replace, far more serious are the leaks along the fuel line to the carburettor.

Tractors that run on power paraffin will have some system for heating the fuel before carburetion. On

Vaaljapies, for example, this takes the form of a thin metal plate hot box bolted onto the manifold, and covering the carburettor.

If you find your tractor without a hot box you should not run it using power paraffin, but should stick to petrol (which is cheaper anyway). However, if run on power paraffin (if you can find the stuff ... remember it's not the same as illuminating paraffin) your tractor will give you up to 20% more power. Start the tractor. All diesels smoke a bit on startup, so don't be put off if you are enveloped in a cloud of exhaust smoke. As the engine warms up, however, the smoke should clear. If it doesn't, it could be evidence of a worn engine, although it might be something less serious such as dirty injectors. A smoky petrol engine is evidence of wear or maladjustment of the fuel mixture.

Continued on page 27



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The importance of winter cover crops

As your summer crops and vegetables wind down it's time to turn your attention to planning for planting a winter cover crop.

Cover crops are crops (grasses or legumes) planted between, or sometimes with, regular crops primarily to protect and improve the soil.

Planting a winter cover crop is a great way to store solar energy through the off-season in your soil and build fertility for the following year.

Depending on the type of cover crop and how it is used, benefits can include improved

Planting a winter cover crop is a great way to store solar energy through the off-season in your soil and build fertility for the following year.

soil fertility and soil structure, support of the soil community including decomposers, flowers to attract pollinating insects and provide winter forage for them, moisture conservation, winter fodder for livestock, decreased soil erosion and control of weeds, pests and diseases.

If the cover crop is incorporated into the soil while green

or soon after flowering it is termed a green manure. The purpose of a green manure is soil improvement through the addition of organic matter. Green manure crops are commonly nitrogen-fixing legumes that reduce the artificially-applied nitrogen required for the following crop.

"Catch crops" are cover crops planted to retain and recycle plant nutrients following a main crop, thus preventing leaching, while a living mulch is a cover crop that is inter-planted with an annual or perennial cash crop in order to suppress weeds, reduce soil erosion, improve soil fertility

and improve water infiltration.

It is important to identify what is required from a cover crop in order to determine the best cover species.

Certain cover crops, such as fodder radish, have roots that are able to penetrate and break up compacted layers in the soil.

Some cover crops are used as so-called "trap crops" to attract pests away for the crop of value and toward what the pest sees as a more favourable habitat.

Cover crops take up space and light, thereby shading the soil and reducing the opportunity for weeds to establish themselves.

In addition to competition-based weed suppression, allelopathic plants, such as rye and sorghum, release

Continued on page 30

MACHINERY

From page 26

If possible, test the tractor by ploughing or drawing a heavy implement. This will give an indication of how well the engine responds automatically to the changes in load, and also how quickly the engine heats up and/or overheats.

Finally, attach a heavy implement to the hydraulic linkages and raise it to the full extent of the hydraulics. Then switch off the tractor and rest it awhile. After a time check how far, if at all, the implement has dropped, which will give you an indication of wear in the hydraulic system.

Some of the points above will prove critical in your choice. For example, a hopelessly worn engine or cracked cylinder block may lead you to decide to look elsewhere, while cracked or perished tyres or leaky hydraulics, while not terminal, may enable you to bargain a couple of thousand rands off the price.

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IN THE FIELD

From page 27

natural toxins that inhibit or slow the growth of other nearby plants.

Some cover crops, such as canola (*Brassica napus*) may be incorporated into soil as a biofumigant for control of pathogens.

It should be emphasised that the cover crops are dug in a month before sowing any new vegetable, to ensure that they have broken down and will not burn the following crop. There are a few crops that can be grown in Gauteng in winter.

❑ **Serradella** provides fodder for livestock and is used as a cover crop for nitrogen fixing. It is planted in March and April. It is a pretty, feathery leaved pasture legume.

Because it is deeply rooted, it is able to extract and bring deep sourced minerals and trace elements to the surface. Just before the seed pods set, be sure to fold the foliage over onto the beds and then chop the roots to allow it to



Field peas

break down.

❑ **Field pea** is closely related to the garden pea. It is a climbing annual legume with weak, viny, and relatively succulent stems. The tender young shoots can be used in salads ~ just pick off the tips. The pods can be harvested and shelled, to be used for either human or livestock food. The rest of the plant can be left on the surface as mulch or chopped into the soil for nitrogen fixing.

❑ **Hairy vetch** can be planted in March and April. It produces a great deal of plant matter. The seed pods are poisonous to humans, but can

be fed to cattle and sheep.

When the first flowers appear, cut the root system to

prevent reseeding. The above ground vegetation can be left on the surface as mulch or can be turned under, adding organic matter, but also boosting nitrogen.

Ensure that you cut the root system once the first flowers appear as you do not want it to re-seed in place. Another trait of vetch is that it lowers the ratio of carbon to nitrogen in mixes with cereal

Continued on page 31



Hairy vetch is a bee-friendly cover crop when in flower



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From page 30

grains. This quickens the process of decomposition. Hairy vetch flowers are much enjoyed by bees.

❑ **Lupins** show a range of soil tolerances. Both Blue Lupins and White Lupins provide cover in the form of mulch, they are used as human and animal food and are effective in nitrogen fixing.

❑ **Fava beans** can be allowed to crop, providing human and animal food. The plant is also used as soil cover and for nitrogen fixing.

❑ **Black oats** has the advantage of increasing the organic and carbon content of the soil. It produces a great deal of biomass both above and below the soil. It is best to plant oats at least six weeks before the first frost, ie, February to March.

It has high quality forage potential and has exceptional allelopathic activity for weed control. This means it releases

Many winter cover crops become an important source of bee forage when they flower

into the environment a substance that inhibits the germination or growth of other potential competitor plants.

It is recommended that in early spring before the seeds set, you use a sharp spade

and sever the plant just below the soil line. You will then have an above ground mulch and the decomposing roots will provide pathways to allow the soil to absorb water.

❑ **White Mustard** (*Sinapis alba*) has biofumigation effect



White mustard being used as a cover crop in an orchard.

on soils and suppresses nematodes and soil borne pathogens. In Gauteng it will need to be irrigated. It can be cut before flowering and then dug back into the soil for high organic matter and compost. It could be applied as mulch as well.

❑ **Fodder radish**, previously referred to as Japanese radish (*Raphanus sativus*), belongs to the Brassicaceae or mustard family. The use of fodder radish as a fodder crop has big potential and can provide quick and abundant feed for livestock. The root component of the crop comprises approximately 50% of the total production, with moisture content as high as 90%. Both the leaf and root material of this crop can be used as young fresh material in winter or carried over to late winter or early spring for fodder. This species is both cold- and drought-resistant.

Continued on page 33

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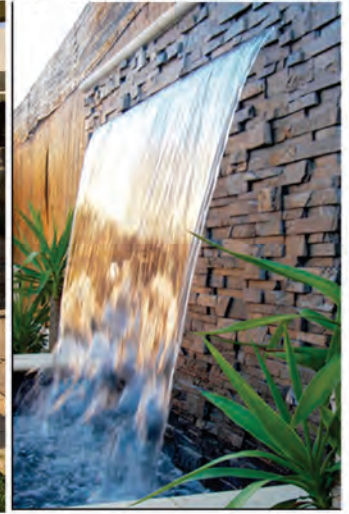
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From page 28

he most common cultivar is Nooitgedacht. The leaves can be cut and the tubers left in the ground so that regrowth takes place.

Radish is a good crop for rotational cropping systems, especially after a few years of pasture just prior to planting a grain crop. Fodder radish can be grazed but, to optimally use most of the plant material, it can be removed from the soil and fed to livestock.

It has already been noted that the radish is particularly useful

in breaking up soil that has become compressed. This improves drainage and air movement in the soil. This radish also helps combat nematodes. Many producers and researchers are experimenting with cover crop mixtures that combine radish with legume cover crops that fix nitrogen (eg grazing vetch) and temperate grasses (eg, black oats), hence providing more persistent residues.

❑ **Lucerne** is often described as the king of fodder and is well known as a winter fodder

crop. The planting time is September to March. Lucerne averages around 15% protein, and is a preferred choice of feed for a

wide variety of animals including equines, cattle, sheep, goats and game. Normally the lower dormancy varieties (dormancy 4/5) are used for grazing, medium dormancy (dormancy 6/7) can be used for grazing and haymaking, and high dormancy (dormancy 9/10) are used mainly for haymaking - they're a lot less dormant and therefore still grow throughout winter. (source: Bulkseeds.co.za).

Lucerne's deep root system is a great compaction-buster. Lucerne has a very deep rooting system and the plant can grow to 4-9 m in total length. After the formation of its crown, it can withstand continuous grazing. It is a perennial that can live for up to eight years and the flowers are very attractive to bees.

❑ **Annual ryegrass** is a quick-growing, non-spreading bunch grass, and is a reliable, versatile performer almost anywhere, assuming adequate moisture and fertility. It does a

fine job of holding soil, taking up excess nitrogen and outcompeting weeds. Ryegrass has an extensive, soil-holding root system, so it is useful in combating soil erosion. Its dense yet shallow root system improves water infiltration and enhances soil tilth. Rapid aboveground growth helps to supply organic matter. It makes palatable forage.



Lucerne, the king of fodder crops

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IN THE KITCHEN

How to preserve your surplus veg

Now is the time for smallholders to be laying down vegetable supplies for winter. Certain vegetables lend themselves to being kept, sometimes for months, the

Tips for harvesting and storing common summer vegetables for use in winter

trick being to find methods that convince the crops that they are enjoying a natural period of dormancy in

unusually comfortable conditions.

This typically involves slowing physiology by controlling respiration (usually by lowering temperature) and/or providing moisture so crisp root vegetables sense they are still in the ground. Some staple storage crops, such as garlic and onions, need dry conditions to support prolonged dormancy. Gauteng houses, sadly, are not often built with a cellar or basement.

So we need to look for alternative storage facilities. If your garage is cool, you could install shelves – although exhaust fumes are not great – or if you have a shed that is built of materials that do not heat up in our glorious winter sunshine, you can lay down your harvest there.

Or, if you're flush, you can build a small coolroom. Most storage crops need to be cured to enhance their storage potential. Curing is the process of drying the vegetable to help increase storage life by minimizing microbial and fungal infection and water loss. During the curing process, potatoes and sweet potatoes heal over small wounds to the skin,

garlic and onions form a dry seal over the openings at their necks, and dry beans and mielies let go of excess moisture that could otherwise cause them to rot.

Harvesting, curing and storage requirements vary with each crop.

☐ **Onions** should be pulled when at least half of the tops are dead or have fallen over. Avoid harvesting in wet weather. Allow them to dry in the sun for 24 hours, and then tie them in batches of about ten with lengths of string. Tie the first one, then leave a few centimetres and tie the next one and so on. Then hang up the strings in a cool place sheltered from the elements and well-ventilated. If you do not want to use this method, cure in a warm (26°C or warmer), shady, well-

Continued on page 35



Strings of brown onions in individual net compartments. Simply snip off bulbs as you require them.

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IN THE KITCHEN

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well-ventilated place for a week. Trim back tops, and then cure for more two weeks. Trim again before



Garlic (and onions) can be stored in hanging net bags.

storing. Store in boxes or mesh bags in a cool place with moderate humidity. Ventilation of onions in storage is absolutely vital as they give off copious amounts of carbon dioxide which, if not removed, hastens their deterioration. The length of time you can store onions will depend on variety and site conditions. Some bulbs can be stored for several months.

☐ **Garlic** can be harvested when 30%-50% of the leaves have died back.

Drying your garlic before storing allows the flavour to develop and become more concentrated. Brush off the garlic bulbs and allow it to dry in a dark, but moisture-free, place for about a week. Many people make the mistake of storing garlic in the refrigerator, but garlic actually does best at a cool room temperature of around 16°C. Storing your garlic bulbs in a well-ventilated spot allows the garlic to "breathe" and will extend its shelf-life. Garlic bulbs can be kept in a mesh or wire basket, a small bowl with ventilation holes or a paper bag.

You can also keep the bulbs in old pantyhose, tying a knot after each one so that you can cut one off as needed. Do not store fresh garlic bulbs in plastic bags or sealed containers. This can cause mould and sprouting. Store in a dark, dry spot. Garlic stored under suitable conditions will



Pumpkins ready for use in winter.

last for six to seven months depending on the strain of garlic.

☐ **Potatoes** are harvested once the foliage has died back, although you can leave them in the soil for a couple of weeks before pulling them up, as this toughens up the

Continued on page 36

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IN THE KITCHEN

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skins. Cure potatoes in a cool and dark area by spreading the tubers out into seedling trays lined with newspaper. Cover the trays with a dark towel to eliminate light but allow air to circulate and let them cure for several weeks. They can be stored in cardboard boxes with holes cut in the sides and layered in shredded paper or damp sawdust or sand. Another option is to place a tarpaulin on the ground in a shady spot

and cover it with a few centimetres of loose straw outdoors. Pile on potatoes and cover with more straw, a second tarp, and a thick blanket of leaves or straw. You will need to ensure that the potatoes are safe from vermin though. Essential oils of clove, spearmint and peppermint can control potato sprouting organically.

☐ **Pumpkins** are ready to be harvested when the skin is no longer shiny and

the stem is beginning to go brown. Cut ripe fruits from the vine, leaving a short stub of stem attached. Wipe with a damp cloth to remove soil. Cure in a well-ventilated place with warm room temperatures for one to two weeks. For long term storage, wash the pumpkins in a mild disinfectant solution. Use one cup of chlorine to three litres of water. This will



Dried beans in glass jars

destroy bacteria which may cause the fruit to rot.

Store the pumpkin in a cool, dry and dark place. Avoid hot and humid places, even if storing for only a couple of weeks. Pumpkins are best stored on a board or piece of cardboard. Do not store the fruit on a cement floor, as they tend to rot. If you do not have a storeroom, pumpkins can be stacked on their sides in a single layer next to each other under a tree with a fairly dense leaf canopy but which is open at the sides. Air movement under a tree must be free. If you can raise them from the ground it would be better.

☐ **Beans** of certain varieties can be dried for long-term use. Gather pods as they dry and plants turn yellow, but before pods shatter. Dry whole pods in a warm, dry place until crisp. Shell beans and continue drying in open containers at room temperature for two weeks.

Store in airtight jars in a cool, dark place. Place a bayleaf in each jar to deter insects.

☐ **Butternut** can be stored the longest of all the squashes. Their smooth, hard rinds help give them the longest storage life - often six months or more - so butternuts should be eaten last. They are ready to harvest when the skin is too hard to pierce it with fingernails. Carefully cut them from the vine with a knife leaving 5cm of stalk attached to the butternut to

Continued on page 37



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IN THE KITCHEN

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attached to the butternut to avoid bacterial infection. They can be cured either by leaving them in small piles in the field for ten days to two weeks when the weather is warm and dry, or by keeping them inside at room temperature for a month. Unlike most other vegetables, squashes and butternuts require warm, fairly dry storage conditions. After the curing period,

carefully place the fruit in a single layer on shelves, leaving a small space between each fruit. Maintain a temperature of 10°C and a relative humidity of 70% to 75%. Temperatures above 15°C promote high respiration and shrinkage. Do not allow the temperature to fall below 5°C and this will be the challenge in Gauteng winters, and they will need to be stored indoors.

❑ **Sweet potatoes** are harvested once the leaves start to yellow, usually four to five months after planting. Leaving the tubers in the soil after the plant has died ensures that the starch content increases and the tubers become sweeter, but the tubers must be harvested before the first frost. They will still need curing before storing – keep them in a warm and humid, well ventilated room for five to ten days.

Store at cool room temperature and moderate humidity. Avoid chilling, as this will cause the roots to harden. Some ventilation should be provided to prevent carbon dioxide build-up. Post-harvest storage rots such as *Rhizopus* fungi can infect damaged areas on roots and can spread to other roots on contact. The best control is preventive by avoiding skin

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Sweet potato wrapped in newsprint

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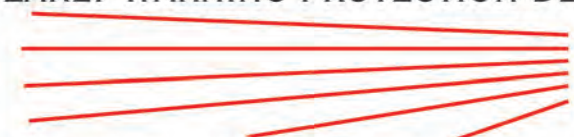
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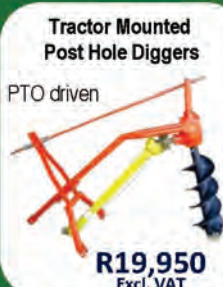


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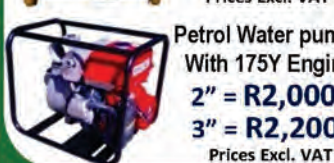


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What to do with a tomato bounty

The late summer bounty of tomatoes brings joy, but often there is too much to use at once, so why not preserve some of it for use in winter?

People often prefer to work with skinned tomatoes, which is quick and easy to do. Cut a small slot in the bottom of each tomato and drop them into a pot of boiling water..

Drying, freezing, bottling, paste or powder ... just some of your alternatives for storing your surplus

You will notice that the skins begin to split once the water starts to boil. When this happens, just remove them from the boiling water and drop them in cold water to stop them from cooking any further. The skins will simply

slide off.

Drying tomatoes can be done very simply in an oven or it can be done in a dehydrator. For oven-dried tomatoes, try to get similar sized fruit so that they will take the same

amount of time to dry. Cut them in half or in quarters if they are large and use a paper towel to wipe-dry the cut surface. You may remove the seeds if you wish. Brush the cut surface with olive oil and sprinkle the top with some salt. Place the tomatoes

Continued on page 40

PRESERVING

From page 37

preventive by avoiding skin damage and not storing damaged roots.

Alternatively you can individually wrap the sweet potatoes in sheets of newsprint or in brown paper bags.

Newspaper and brown paper bags are both fairly breathable, providing just enough air circulation to prevent the

sweet potatoes from rotting too quickly. Store the individually-wrapped sweet potatoes in a cardboard box, wooden box, or wooden basket. Do not use an airtight storage container. Place an apple in the box, as it is thought that the apple will help prevent the sweet potatoes from budding.

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IN THE KITCHEN

From page 39

on a wire rack over a tray, with the cut side facing up. Do not allow the tomatoes to touch each other, make sure there is space all around each half for the hot air to circulate. Place the tray in an oven with a low temperature of 100 – 120°C, and leave them for six to ten hours. It all depends on how dry you want your tomatoes to be and on the varieties you are using. They can be stored in jars. You might want to layer with dried herbs and fill the jar with olive oil.

If you are using a dehydrator you can dry cherry and large tomatoes. Cut cherry tomatoes in half – this way you can monitor how they are drying. If they are whole you won't know if they are still moist inside. Bigger tomatoes are best

sliced 8-9mm thick. Skinning and seeding the tomatoes is optional.

Blot extra juice on the slices with a paper towel. Spray the dehydrator trays with a very light coating of vegetable oil spray or rub them with just a touch of olive oil to prevent tomatoes from sticking. Place tomatoes cut-side up on dehydrator trays, about 1cm apart. Do not allow tomatoes to touch. Sprinkle tomatoes with salt, garlic powder, or fresh herbs.

Dry the tomatoes, checking them regularly.

If necessary, rotate racks to allow tomatoes to dry evenly. Remove pieces that dry before others to prevent them from scorching. Average dry time in a dehydrator is eight to twelve hours. Dried tomatoes will be reduced in size, shrivelled and leathery, but not sticky. Remove tomatoes from the dehydrator and allow them to cool thoroughly. Pack tightly in freezer bags, vacuum sealed

bags, plastic containers or jars.

You can take one step further with dehydrated tomatoes – you can powder them. Store the dried tomatoes in a freezer bag in the freezer for about a week.

Set up the blender.

Remove the tomatoes from the freezer and transfer immediately to the blender. If you have more than one blender full, do this in batches.

The idea is to grind up the tomatoes when they are



Tomato powder

frozen and fragile as glass. This approach gives you the finest powder. Transfer the tomato powder to a glass container with a tightfitting lid. Store in a cool place, away from direct sunlight. The powder can be used like stock powder and to add tang to a variety of dishes. Tomatoes freeze very well. Skin and remove seeds if you want to, cut them in half or quarters or slice and then simply put them into freezer bags. If you are freezing cherry tomatoes, don't bother to peel them, but it is worth taking the time to squeeze out the fluid and most of the pips, otherwise when you defrost them they are too watery.

You can cook the tomatoes first and this is a good idea if you are using large heritage tomatoes, which produce a great deal of fluid. This you can drain off and set aside to be drunk as tomato juice. If you are cooking them add

Continued on page 41

IN THE KITCHEN



Freezing cubes of tomato paste
From page 40

fresh or dried herbs to taste. Cool the pulp thoroughly before adding to your freezer bags.

You can bottle tomatoes in the same way that you would fruit or other vegetables. You can also pickle them, on their



Bottled tomatoes

own or with other vegetables. Tomato paste is easy to make and can be frozen for up to six months or so before the taste begins to change. Chop the tomatoes

into relatively small pieces so that they will break down easier. If you want a rich tomato flavour, you can actually leave the seeds and peelings intact although you will need to strain them through a sieve before you freeze. Cook the tomatoes

over medium to low heat and add a half a teaspoon of salt for every five or so tomatoes that you are going to cook. You just have to continue cooking until you get a pasty consistency. Once achieved, cool the paste and fill ice cube trays for

freezing. Once they are frozen, simply remove from the trays and store in a freezer bag.

Sometimes at the end of the season the tomato plants begin to die off before all the tomatoes have ripened. You can pick the green tomatoes and store them on a shelf, preferably in a cool room. They will gradually ripen. Or there are many recipes that use green tomatoes. You can make fried green tomatoes or simply roast them. There are many recipes

for chutney using the green produce. If you still have tomato plants but are anxious that the frost will hammer them, uproot



Fried green tomatoes

the whole tomato vine, shake off the dirt and hang the plants upside down indoors. The fruit will then ripen in its own time.

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A host of books of use to smallholders

Think of these as belated Christmas presents, if you like, and treat yourself to these smallholder-friendly books, published recently.

□ **Veld Management – Principles and Practices** is by Frits van Oudtshoorn and is

the companion book to his *Guide to Grasses of Southern Africa*.

Veld Management – Principles and Practices, attempts to simplify a rather technical subject by including more than 380 photographs and illustrations and using easy, understandable language.

Topics include important legislation, the natural resources we are managing during veld and land management, such as soil, vegetation and water, ecological principles processes, the role of plants and animals, and land degradation, important practices such as property planning, grazing systems, fire management, the control of unwanted plants and many more.

The lists include declared weeds and invader plants, as well as the herbicides commonly used to control unwanted plants during veld and environmental management.

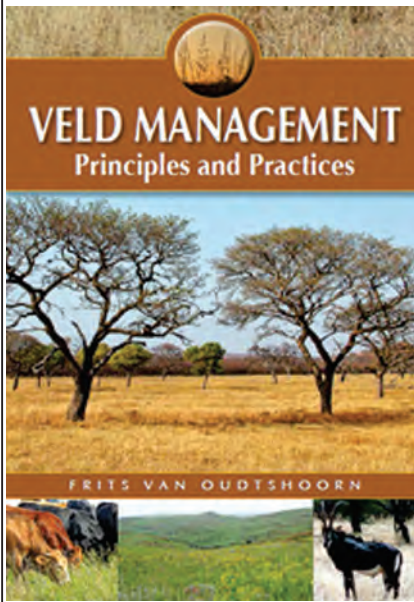
The publisher is Briza Publications and the recommended retail price is R295.

Call 012 329-3896 for the nearest stockist.

Struik has two useful new additions to its series of pocket guides.

□ **Pocket Guide: Insects of South Africa** is written by

Continued on page 44



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BOOKSHELF

From page 43

Charles Griffiths and Mike Picker. Some 260 insects are featured, many of which we may have spotted in our houses and gardens. Each is described with its key identification features, a colour photograph and distribution map. A very useful feature is the illustrated quick reference guide on the inside front and back covers, which makes it quick and easy to navigate to the right insect group.

Recommended price is R150.

☐ **Pocket Guide: Wild Flowers of South Africa** is

written by well-known botanist Braam van Wyk and the recommended price is R140.

All of the region's major vegetation types are represented through the 260 featured flowers. The book covers common and conspicuous plants as well as some alien species that are naturalized in the region.

The descriptions are conveniently organised by flower colour.

Key identification features are supplied for each flower, as well as interesting facts.

A photograph and distribution map accompanies each

species.

This book showcases some of the region's diverse, strikingly beautiful floral splendours.

☐ Struik Nature joins forces with the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa to publish **Sky Guide Africa South 2016**. This annual guide is now in its 64th year of publication and has been prepared by a team of

contributors, all specialists in their fields.

Sky Guide Africa South 2016 is a practical resource for astronomers, whether they be novice, amateur or professional.

Enhanced by many photos, diagrams, charts and images, it features:

~ The upcoming year's planetary movements,

predicted eclipses, meteor showers – any events and facets of the night sky that change annually.

~ Star charts that plot the evening sky for each season, facilitating the identification of stars and constellations.

~ A wealth of information about the Sun, Moon, planets, comets, meteors and bright stars.

~ An excellent list of useful websites and a comprehensive glossary.

This annual publication is an invaluable resource for

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BRAAM VAN WYK

Continued on page 47

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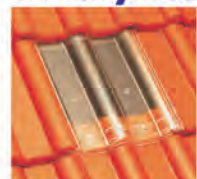


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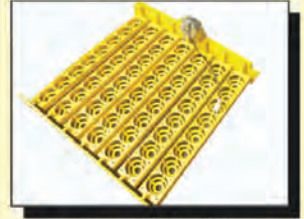


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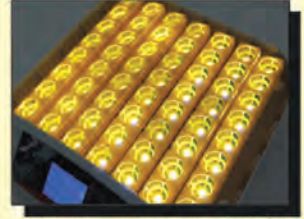
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BOOKSHELF

From page 43

anyone who has even a passing interest in the night skies of southern Africa and is '... an absolute must for first-time star-gazers and professional astronomers alike'.

□ Margaret Roberts fans will be thrilled to hear that she has another herb book out - **100 New Herbs** - also

published by Struik, selling for R270.

The author, a resident of De Wildt, is a well-known proponent of the use of natural products to enhance health and wellbeing. In **100 New Herbs** she introduces an exciting range of new plants that can be used in the kitchen, and medicinally.

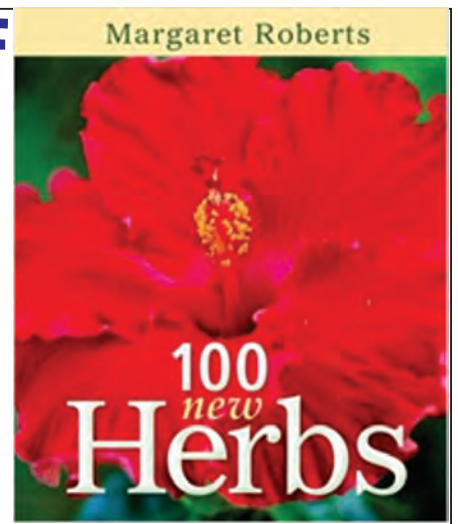
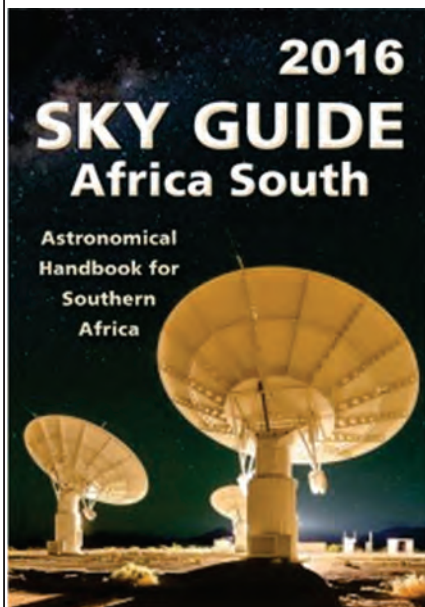
There is practical advice on how and when to plant, grow and harvest the featured herbs, and includes recipes that harness the medicinal, cosmetic and edible nature of these plants. The accessible, down-to-earth text is laced with personal anecdotes and historical information about the use of herbs. Colourful photographs aid identification in this beautifully designed

book.

An indispensable guide for anyone interested in health, wellness, organic gardening and the use of herbs to enhance cooking.

□ **Freshwater Life** - the first illustrated field guide of its kind for the wider southern African region - describes a vast range of plant and

Continued on page 48



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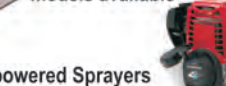
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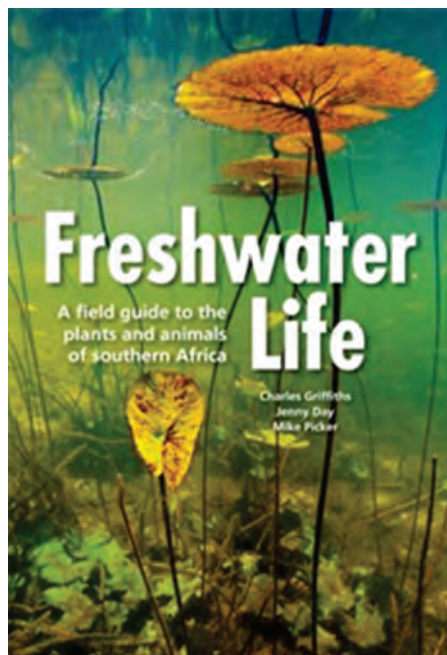
BOOKSHELF

From page 47

region – describes a vast range of plant and animal groups in a single volume. The publishers are Struik and the authors are Charles Griffiths, Jenny Day and Mike Picker.

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that encompasses diverse groups from the large and conspicuous vertebrates to the diverse microscopic taxa, the book facilitates identification and describes the ecology of more than 1 000 freshwater organisms.



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1. Liberals, and
2. Conservatives.

Once beer was discovered, it required grain, and that was the beginning of agriculture. Neither the glass bottle nor aluminium can were invented

yet, so while our early humans were sitting around waiting for them to be invented, they just stayed close to the brewery. That's how villages were formed. Some men spent their days tracking and killing animals to braai at night while they were drinking beer. This was the beginning of what is known as the Conservative movement... Other men who were weaker and less skilled at hunting learned to live off the Conservatives by showing up for the nightly braai and doing the sewing, fetching, and hair dressing. This was the beginning of the Liberal movement.

Some of these Liberal men eventually evolved into women. They became known as girlie-men. Some noteworthy Liberal achievements include the

domestication of cats, the invention of group therapy, group hugs, and the concept of democratic voting to decide how to divide the meat and beer that Conservatives provided. Over the years Conservatives came to be symbolised by the largest, most powerful land animal on earth, the elephant. Liberals are symbolised by the jackass for obvious reasons. Modern Liberals like imported beer (with lime added), but most prefer white wine or imported bottled water. They eat raw fish but like their beef well done. Sushi, tofu, and French food are standard Liberal fare.. Another interesting evolutionary side note: most of their women have higher testosterone levels than their men. Most social workers, personal injury attorneys, journalists,

dreamers in Hollywood and group therapists are Liberals. Liberals invented the Duckworth-Lewis system of deciding the outcome of a cricket match. Conservatives drink domestic beer. They eat red meat and still provide for their women. Conservatives are big game hunters, stunt riders, construction workers, firemen, medical doctors, police officers, engineers, corporate executives, athletes, members of the military, airline pilots and generally anyone who works productively. Conservatives who own companies hire other Conservatives who want to work for a living. Liberals produce little or nothing. They like to govern the producers and decide what to do with the production.

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5. Placement maximum of 3 months

SUPERSMALLS

Entries in this yellow-shaded section cost R120 VAT included for 25 words, plus R1/word thereafter.

WANTED

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Antique drop leaf table 900mm wide, open 1.2m, closed 600mm R2 000. Contact Rae 082 634-0851 Meyerton.

Outdoor window patio blinds 2 x 2 500 wide x 1 950 long. 1 x 800 wide x 1 950 long. Contact Gunter 073 321-0959 Meyerton.

Ek het n krag meter en n water meter vir R1 000 elk. Pieter 082 808-5946.

2 Goodyear bande 215 55R16 vir R1 000 rand elk. Pieter 082 808-5946.

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DIARY

ATTENTION CRAFT MARKETS, CLUBS ETC: If you would like details of your events included in the Diary, please fax or email your information to the Editor. For non-commercial enterprises this service is FREE.

NOTE: FARMERS' & CRAFT MARKETS. For a listing of REGULARLY HELD markets and fairs please see the separate section on page 51. Only markets that are held infrequently are now listed in this calendar section.

Every Sunday
Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast, Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Cullinan. Call Rudan on 082 410-3180
horses@diamondxrancho.co.za,
www.diamondx.co.za., R400 per person.

Mnandi Methodist Church, 09:00, Mnandi Centre, cnr Tulip and Short Streets, Jen 012 651-5509. Gail 072 477-0708., A small community who worship together. We have a Youth and Children's church.

Premier Mine Presbyterian Church, Lower Oak Ave, Cullinan. Garden of Remembrance (Columbarium), 079 060-9990 or 012 734-1640, Worship and Sunday school. Holy Communion for all on the 1st Sunday of every month.

Every Monday
Alcoholics Anonymous. 'Courage to Change' Group meeting, 19:30, Benoni Agricultural Holdings, Marcus 082 042-

7730. Warren 082 335-0049. Glen 072 239-3024., If you want to drink – that's your problem! If you want to stop – that's our problem! No fees; no dues; just concerned fellowship.

23: World Meteorological Day
31: Last Quarter

April

7: New Moon
9-10: Walkerville Agricultural Show, 09:00 till late. Contact Pauline 072 146-9176 or email show@walkervillesa.co.za.
11-13: Artificial Insemination for Cattle course. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.
14: Pregnancy Awareness for Cattle course. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.
15: Calf Rearing course. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.
14: First Quarter
17: Leopards of the Magaliesburg with Paul Bartels at the The Sheds, Gemstone Road, Crocodile River Reserve from 09:00 until mid/late morning. Cost: R60 pp (kids R30); Refreshments included. Info and booking: Jenny Cornish, jcornish@mweb.co.za or 082 570 4798. Bring: Water, walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, camera! www.crocodilerverreserve.co.za
22: Earth Day
22: Full Moon
30: Last Quarter

May

1: The 20th Annual Tour de Walkerville. Contact Helen 082 553 7700 or go to www.walkervillesa.co.za.
6: New Moon
7: Mother's Day Country Market at Groenvoer, 410 Olifantsfontein Road, Midrand. Contact Cathy on 011 314-1211.
3-6: Introductory Course in Beef Cattle Management at the ARC Irene. Contact Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.
9-13: Introductory Course in Small Stock Management at the ARC Irene. Contact Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.
13: First Quarter
15: Foraging in the Veld with Carol Martin at the The Sheds, Gemstone Road, Crocodile River Reserve from 09:00 until mid/late morning. Cost: R60 pp (kids R30); Refreshments included. Info and booking: Jenny Cornish, jcornish@mweb.co.za or 082 570 4798. Bring: Water, walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, camera! www.crocodilerverreserve.co.za
16-18: Artificial Insemination for Cattle course. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.
17-20: Nampo Harvest Day agricultural exhibition, Bothaville. Call 086 004-7246
19: Pregnancy Awareness for Cattle course. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.
20: Calf Rearing course. Rothman

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time job. Qualified in the field of electrical power engineering at certificate level and trade tested. Skilled worker. Contact 078 414-6802.

Reliable married man seeks live in position on farm as caretaker. Has experience in livestock and vegetables. Has own bakkie and tools for maintenance. Let me turn your farm around. Anywhere in southern Africa. Nick 084 627-6129.

Bookkeeping position wanted. Full/part time, Contract or half day position. Preferably West Rand areas. 30+ years' experience. Books to balance sheet. Management accounts. Contact Clair 082 974-8542.

EMPLOYMENT OFFERED/WANTED

Qualified welder seeks premises for tools, or work. Gates, farm sheds, steel doors and frames, steel structures. Prepared to work anywhere and/or relocate. Thomas 082 967-6018.

Electrician looking for a full-time or part-

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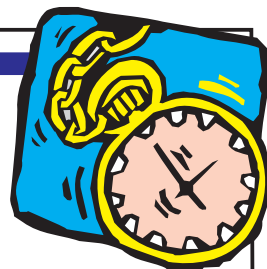
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WISSENTRAAL



DIARY, cont'd

Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

21: Full Moon

24-27: Meat Processing Course at the ARC Irene. Contact Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.

29: Last Quarter

June

5: World Environment Day

5: New Moon

7-10: Introductory Course in Pig Production at the ARC Irene. Contact Annetjie Loubser

012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.

8: World Oceans Day

12: First Quarter

12: Astronomy with Claire Flanagan at the The Sheds, Gemstone Road, Crocodile River Reserve from 09:00 until mid/late morning. Cost: R60 pp (kids R30); Refreshments included.

Info and booking: Jenny Cornish, jcornish@mweb.co.za or 082 570 4798. Bring water, walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, camera! www.crocodilerverreserve.co.za

17: World Desertification Day

20: Full Moon

20-24: Introductory Course in Poultry

Production at the ARC Irene. Contact

Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or

aloubser@arc.agric.za.

21: Solstice

27: Last Quarter

July

4: New Moon

4: Aphelion

12: First Quarter

19: Full Moon

26: Last Quarter

August

2: New Moon

10: First Quarter

15-19: Introductory Course in Small Stock Management at the ARC Irene. Contact Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.



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Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

NOTE: This is a listing ONLY of markets held to a regular weekly or monthly schedule. Markets held less frequently are listed in the DIARY section of the magazine and we urge readers to check each month for dates and events of interest.

We would like this list of food markets to be as comprehensive as possible. If you know of farmers' food markets that are not listed here, please email us the contact details of the organisers, and details of the market. Only FOOD markets are included.

Similarly, if you know of markets in this list that have CLOSED please inform us so that we can delete incorrect or outdated information.

We invite you to tell us of your experiences when visiting these markets so that we can better inform our readers. Were they as advertised? Was the produce on sale plentiful, well-priced, well-presented and fresh? Email your comments to gautengsmallholder@gmail.com

DAY	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	WHO TO CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT
Thursday					
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston.	Konrad or Glenda 011 706-3671 or glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
Friday					
1st Friday	The Shed Night Market	18:00 to 22:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
Saturday					
Every Saturday	Wholefood Country Market	09:00 to 14:00	Sawasdee Exotic Nursery, cnr Main & Zinnia Roads, Kyalami	Robyn 083 311-4768 wholefoodmarket@gmail.com	Variety of organic & homemade foods.
Every Saturday	The Shed Food & Craft Market	08:00 to 15:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
Every Saturday	Pretoria Boeremark	05:30 to 09:30	Pioneer Open Air Museum, Silverton.	012 804-8031 or 082 416-3900 blingsa@lantic.net	Fresh produce and traditional bazaar treats like jaffles, kailings with pap and boerewors rolls.
Every Saturday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston	Konrad or Glenda on 011 706-3671 glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
Every Saturday	The Hazel Food Market	08:00 to 14:00	Greenlyn Village Centre, cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie Sts, Menlo Park, Pta	Rietha 083 554-5636. www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za	Fresh produce straight from the producer. Coffee, eats on sale
Every Saturday	Walkerville Farmers Market	09:00 to 15:00	112 Main Road (R82), Walkerville.	079 076-7680 info@wfmmarket.co.za	Organic produce and Crafter's Market. www.wfmmarket.co.za .
Every Saturday	Bosheuvel Fresh Produce	09:00 to 15:00	54 Glory Road, Muldersdrift	Mitch 082 553-2846	Meats and vegetables, delicacies, honey, cheese, brewery, crafter's market and children's entertainment.
Every Saturday	Josi Real Food Market	08:30 to 13:00	Pirates Sports Club, Braeside Avenue, Greenside	083 532 2992 whitespace@mweb.co.za	Arts & crafts, music & entertainment, inspired cuisine organic vegetables & coffee, pet products
1st Saturday	The Green Market	09:00 to 12:00	Pretoria Botanical Gardens 2 Cussonia Avenue, Brummeria, Pretoria	Melissa 083 562-5249	Products ranging from solar equipment to organic food
1st Saturday	Victus Christi Arts & Crafts Market	08:00 to 14:00	24b Miles Sharp Street, Rynfield, Benoni (north side of Bunny Park)	Schalk 082 561-9409 info@victuschristi.org.za	Arts & crafts, fine art, food, fresh meat & produce and home industry
2nd Saturday	Brakpan Boeremark	09:00 to 14:00	cnr van der Walt and Dirk van der Hoff Brakpan	Marius 011 744-2322 082 904-8852	Over 50 stalls. Food, arts, crafts, etc.
Last Saturday	Rynoue Plaas Mark/ Rynoue Country Market	07:00 to 14:00	Cnr Moloto Road (R573) and Protea Road Opposite Roodeplaat Spar	Bruce 083 442-2552 Sue 082 891-7546 waydack@worldonline.co.za	Fresh vegetables, fruit in season, preserves, flower and plants, homemade food and cakes, arts and crafts.
Last Saturday	Fresh2U Farmers Market	08:00 to 14:00	Corner Main Street and High Street Modderfontein (behind 33 High Street)	Jane 083 376 5567 Chantelle 082 338 7818 wardek@iafrica.com	Over 50 stalls. Fresh produce, home made goods, plants, food and more.
Last Saturday	Fresh Produce Market	08:00 to 13:00	Lakeside Mall Boathouse	Alma 079 940-0201 realfood4realpeople@gmail.com	Local fresh produce direct to the public
Sunday					
Every Sunday	Fourways Farmers Market	10:00 to 15:00	Corner Montecasino Boulevard and William Nicol Drive, Fourways	011 465 0827 www.ffmarket.co.za	Get your groceries...In the garden!
Every Sunday	Josi Real Food Market	09:00 to 14:00	Northcliff Country Club, Fir Avenue, Northcliff	083 532 2992 whitespace@mweb.co.za	Arts & crafts, music & entertainment, inspired cuisine organic vegetables & coffee, pet products
Last Sunday	Aloe Valley Food, Arts & Craft Market	10:00 to 14:00	48, R511 Doornrandjies	012 669-3043 info@serendipitycafe.co.za www.serendipitycafe.co.za	Community market to promote local business



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The changing landscape

How different must South Africa have looked when our forebears first set foot here? Apart from the building of towns, cities, roads, railways, dams and other infrastructure, and the settlement and cultivation of land, how must it have looked to see herds of innumerable quagga and wildebeest, impala and elephant roaming free. And across what kind of landscape did they roam?

For there's no doubt that our meanderings about the subcontinent have rendered it very different to what it was before we all arrived here. Certainly, our forebears weren't very adept at acting as custodians of their environment for future generations and we may wonder if we, in fact, are any better. And a changing climate has probably done its bit, too, to alter the landscape.

A number of developments recently make this subject worth pondering on.

We all know that the quagga has been extinct for at least a century. This zebra-donkey lookalike was wiped out by hunters long before anybody cared about nature conservation or species loss, thereby joining the dodo and countless other species driven to extinction, (and possibly, soon, to be joined by the rhino and elephant.)

The good news is that the quagga is back! Geneticists in the Western Cape have been feverishly breeding away over the past few years and have now arrived at a point where they have a number of animals which closely resemble, in all physical features, the original.

Nineteenth-century scientists also weren't much focussed on the effects of invasive aliens and southern Africa received its full share of these. In this, it must be said, southern Africa was no different to anywhere else with gardeners and horticulturists worldwide swapping plants with gay abandon. London's Kew Gardens, with its hot houses full of exotic plants from all over the globe, is living testament to this wanton trade.

Back home, the Boer War saw to it that our grasslands and roadsides would forever be infested with cosmos, khakibos and blackjack which arrived from South America in the fodder imported to feed the British Army's horses during the conflict, while the mining industry saw to it that vast forests of Australian wattle or bluegum trees would be planted for pit-props and other uses.

These fast-growing, deep-rooted trees have been a feature of

our roadsides for generations, even having songs written about them. But they have one problem: thirst. A big bluegum tree sucks up literally thousands of litres of water, and has therefore been declared a threat to our groundwater resources.

The jacaranda tree, first planted in Pretoria in the late 1800s, is a South American import, as is the less-desirable bugweed.

Maize, now the staple foodstuff of most of the population, was yet another American import, and gardens throughout the country are adorned with exotic shrubs and trees from faraway places.

Nobody seems to worry much any more about the effects of blackjack and khakibos on grazing and fodder (hell, khakibos has even been found to be useful as a natural pyrethrin) while cosmos, growing alongside the roads at Easter has become a source of wonderment and joy to flower lovers.

In recent years Highveld residents have noticed the spread eastwards through Gauteng of the pink-flowered pompom weed (another South American) and the slightly darker blue heliotrope (yet another South American) and some have become vociferous in pointing out the dangers of letting these plants spread unchecked. (Others, of course, either through pig-ignorance or laziness, just let the blooms spread unchecked.)

How long will it be, therefore, before people say "oh, how lovely all that pink looks!" in the same way that they exclaim admiringly over fields of cosmos?

If you look carefully in the valleys west of Pretoria you will see the next invader slowly making its way eastwards. It's a tall dark green plant with a pretty orange flower. The Mexican poppy. With a bit of luck the fact that the eastern highveld is colder than the west may limit its migration. Otherwise it, too, may soon be altering the landscape we are supposed to be custodians of for our kids.



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