BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

KWAZULU-NATAL COASTAL BRANCH

Know, Grow, Protect & Enjoy South Africa's Indigenous Flora

July 2023

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Office hours: Monday & Thursday 10:00-16:00
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www.botanicalsociety.org.za
Journal: *PlantLife SA*
Reg. No. 003-394

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1. CITY NATURE CHALLENGE GLOBAL EVENT

1.1 City Nature Challenge: KwaZulu-Natal Coastal by Suvarna Parbhoo Mohan

The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is a nature filled 4-day weekend whereby residents record any plants, animals, or fungi within the city boundaries. This involves taking photos and uploading the observations onto the iNaturalist platform. Started in the USA in 2016, South African cities joined in 2019 and have consistently increased the number of cities participating as well as have had cities annually featured in the top 10 category of the global leader board for most observations made and most species observed. CNC participation has also increased in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province over the past 5 years, from eThekwini to KZN South Coast, iLembe, Zululand, and Pietermaritzburg.

Table 1: Shows the results of the CNC 2023 in KZN province

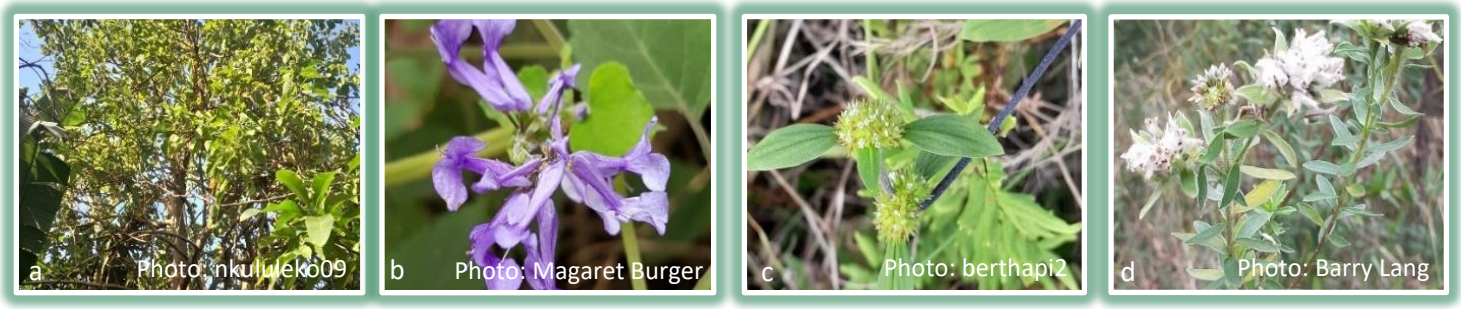
City	Number of observations	Number of Species	Number of participants	Number of invasive alien species	Number of species of conservation concern
KZN South Coast	679	355	12	13	21
eThekwini	15 099	2 178	190	720	91
iLembe	24	21	9	1	0
Zululand	517	381	18	15	8
Pietermaritzburg	382	228	24	46	2

While it is apparent that the number of observations will be higher in cities with more participation, the remarkable contribution made by cities with low participation is praiseworthy. We have set up a variety of data collection projects on iNaturalist that run on an ongoing basis. It is interesting to see the number of both invasive alien species and species of conservation concern that were recorded during the CNC, bearing in mind that the Challenge ran at the tail-end of the summer-rainfall flowering season.

Let's look at the favourite observations for KZN: These were decided upon by observers voting/ liking

observations. Despite plants being the most observed taxonomic group during the CNC, none were selected as KZN favourite observations!

The most popular plants for KZN were:



Continued…

Figure 8: **a.** Toadtree (*Tabernaemontana elegans*) **b.** Zulu Spurflower (*Plectranthus* zuluensis) **c.** Tropical Girdlepod (*Mitracarpus hirtus*) **d.** Pincushion Curryflower (*Lasiosiphon calocephalus*) **e.** Common Lantana (*Lantana camara*) **f.** Scarlet Creeper (*Ipomoea herderifolia*) **g.** Natal Giant Cycad (*Encepharlartos natalensis*) **h.** Skyflower (*Duranta erecta*).

South Africa is said to be the innovator in residential estate living globally, with more lifestyle estates than any other country in the world. Behind Western Cape and Gauteng, KZN estate properties (especially along the North Coast) are growing the fastest. Many estates promote the surrounding natural assets and it's this interest that we are 'piggybacking' on to create interest in nature. We have engaged with 17 estates across the KZN coast and created projects so that residents may record biodiversity observed on the estate. While many of these observations may be of cultivated plants, residents will observe the variety of wildlife, including pollinators who thrive on indigenous flora. If you live on an estate or know of people who would be interested to have their estate's biodiversity recorded, please do connect with us.

Remarkably, 21 observers from 2 of our listed estates participated in the CNC 2023 and have contributed 611 observations of 357 species. The Top 3 observers were Nkululeko Mkhize representing Mount Edgecombe Country Club estate 2 (CNC 2023: eThekwini), Bridget, and Rob Walters, both representing Widenham Retirement Village (CNC 2023: KZN south coast).

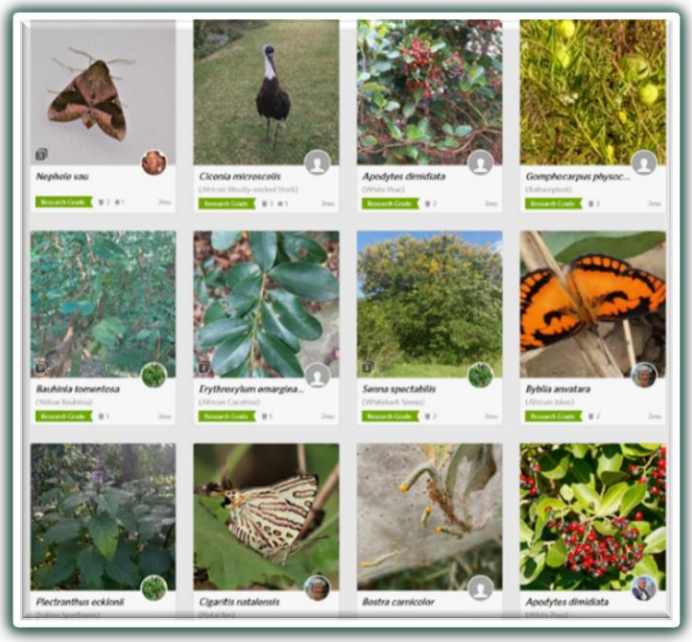


Figure 9: A snapshot of some of the observations made by the 2 participating estates in KZN coastal during CNC 2023.

Thank you to all who have participated and made the City Nature Challenge 2023 a success. The time and effort

put into organising teams and outings by each of the City champions are commendable. It's almost time to do it all over again as the Great Southern Bioblitz (GSB) is approaching, please diarise 24-27 November. We would like to see more.... It's a time to de-stress from exams before heading into year-end preparations. We would like to see more participation – conservancies, friend's groups, nature clubs, scouts, eco-estates, farms, small holdings, private nature reserves, church groups, schools, neighbourhoods.

Both the CNC and GSB are opportunities to explore nature while contributing crucial foundational biodiversity data. If you are looking for new areas to explore, outside of your city, please do take the time to participate in the other cities across our beautiful province.

1.2 City Nature Challenge: eThekwini by Steve Woodhall

How great teamwork allowed eThekwini to move up the City Nature Challenge leaderboard.

iNaturalist is a modern-day phenomenon. I have been involved in Citizen Science since its earliest inception in South Africa with the Animal Demography Unit (ADU) of the University of Cape Town and its Virtual Museums. These gathered data that allowed SANBI to produce its 2018 Biodiversity Summary Report, upon which much of the new NEMBA legislation rests. Eventually SANBI teamed up with iNaturalist, which grew out of iSpot, and is the only truly global Citizen Science project that covers all living creatures.

iNaturalist is going from strength to strength. It is addressing the statistical problems of mass identifications and is moving into the measurements of whole ecosystems via its 'Interactions' projects. It is a major supplier of data to the Global Biodiversity Information Framework (GBIF). In turn, this forms the basis for some of the biodiversity management strategies being developed because of the COP17 agreements made in Montreal late last year. This is seriously important stuff, as will be obvious to anyone who has watched the TV news or read a newspaper recently!

iNaturalist has various mechanisms to promote its use and encourage people to gather more data on their local biodiversity. One of these is regular 'bioblitzes' carried out around the world. Two of these have been managed locally by SANBI – the annual 'Great Southern Bioblitz' (GSB) held in October or November, and 'City Nature Challenge' (CNC) held at the end of April. This way, biodiversity data is collected around the early summer/ autumn periods, when living creatures tend to be more visible.

These events are enormously popular. When they began in 2018, 68 cities in 17 countries took part. This year it was 482 cities in 46 countries.

On the 10th of January 2023, Sandra Dell let us know that Suvarna Parbhoo's SANBI responsibilities had increased to the point where she needed to hand over the coordination of the 2023 edition of City Nature Challenge: eThekwini. She needed to provide support to participants, across southern Africa, and did not feel she could fairly devote so much of her time to her home city. After some deliberation I put my hand up. I was fortunate to have a strong team in support. My fellow lepidopterist, Suncana Bradley, who runs the Lepidopterists' Society of Africa's Caterpillar Rearing group, was already an iNaturalist user and has great social media and marketing skills.

Margaret Burger of WESSA, Botsoc's Sandra Dell and Muhammad Adamjee came on board, and eThekwini's Biodiversity Management Department, through Errol Douwes, provided some more youthful energy in the form of Monica Ndlovu and Nomzamo Ncube. Not to mention Suvarna, who was able to provide a lot of vital SANBI support.

We set out to update and expand the contacts list Suvarna had been using. We reached out to as many nature-centred organisations as we could – the Conservancies, LepSoc Africa, BotSoc members, housing Eco-Estates

(iNaturalist is great for their EESG reporting), local private nature reserves, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's Honorary Officers, BirdLife, the scuba diving fraternity – the net was cast very wide. Having the Biodiversity Management Department on our side helped with local parks and nature reserves. We set two targets: one was to beat last year's stats. The other was to give the local 'Manchester City' of iNaturalist bioblitzes some meaningful competition – the City of Cape Town. A bit of 'Sharks vs Stormers' rivalry was allowed to creep in!

Figure 10: *Gladiolus dalenii* is one of the most spectacular plants of the eThekwini grasslands.

Figure 11: *Leonotis ocymifolia* is also known as the Minaret Flower and is closely related to Wild Dagga, *Leonotis leonurus*. The plant is beloved of Sunbirds and the larger butterflies.

It's important to realize that eThekwini is a big place.

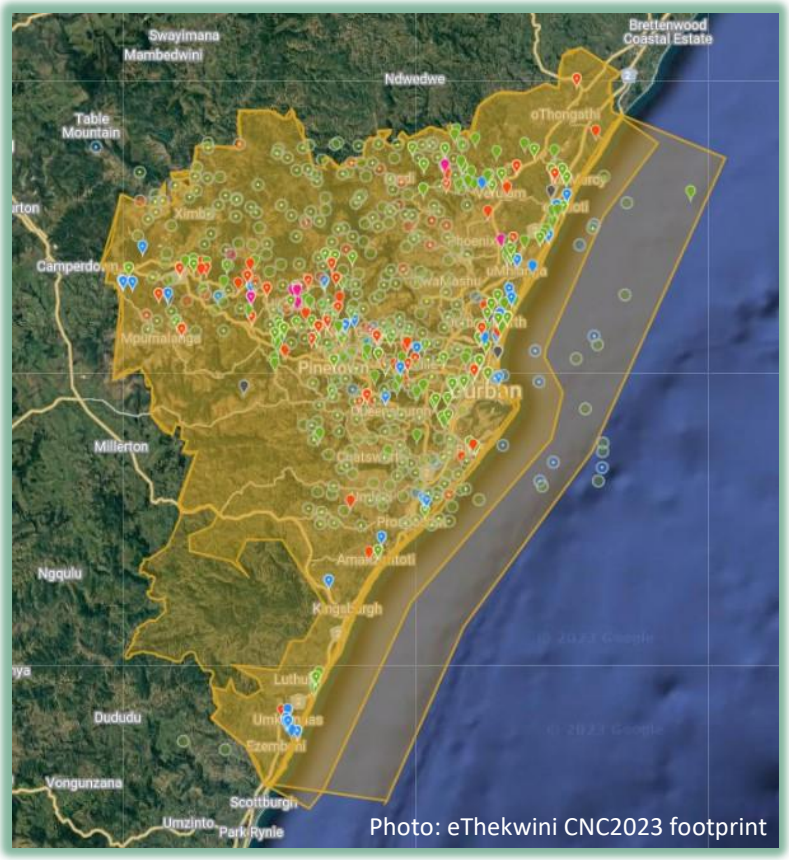


Figure 12: Heatmap of CNC2023 observations laid over the Google Earth polygon for eThekwini.

The iNaturalist footprint is about 2580km^2 and stretches from just west of Ballito in the north to Freeland Park in the south, and as far west as Camperdown. It also stretches offshore as far as the edge of the continental shelf.

So how did we do? Well, we beat our own figures for CNC2022! Slightly more species, nearly 17% more observations, and a big jump (40%) in the number of observers.

Table 2: Difference in overall performance between the year's 2022 and 2023 for the City Nature Challenge eThekwini

Year	2022	2023
Observations	12,974	15,152
Species	2165	2184
Observers	136	190
'Research Grade' Observations	6005 (46.26%)	7886 (52.24%)
Southern Africa league place - Observations	4th	2nd
Observers	4th	4th
Species	4th	3rd

What's important is that the number of 'Research Grade' observations – those suitable for inclusion in GBIF and therefore counting towards world biodiversity stats – grew by over 30%. Those numbers may slowly grow over the next few months as more identifiers get to grips with some of the more difficult observations.

In terms of number of observations, we climbed up the local league table from 4th to 2nd. Not enough to knock Cape Town off its perch (they had fewer observations than last year - 53000 vs 66500) but moving in the right direction.

One hundred and ninety observers were a big increase over 2022, but still not enough to move out of 4th place.

That increase was likely due to a greater involvement by Conservancies. If we can grow that and get more 'Eco-Estates' to join up, for the GSB2023, we should be able to climb the table. Population density is 1605 persons per square km, so our latest tally of 190 people is only about 0.005% of the population! We also have the highest number of Eco-Estates in the country, so when they come on board it would vastly improve our performance. City of Cape Town had nearly seven times as many observers, which probably explains why their number of observations are so high. The average number of observations in CNC2023 per observer in eThekwini was a whisker under 80, which is impressive!

Red List species

We found species of conservation concern – 30 in 2023 vs 26 in 2022. Here are a couple of examples:

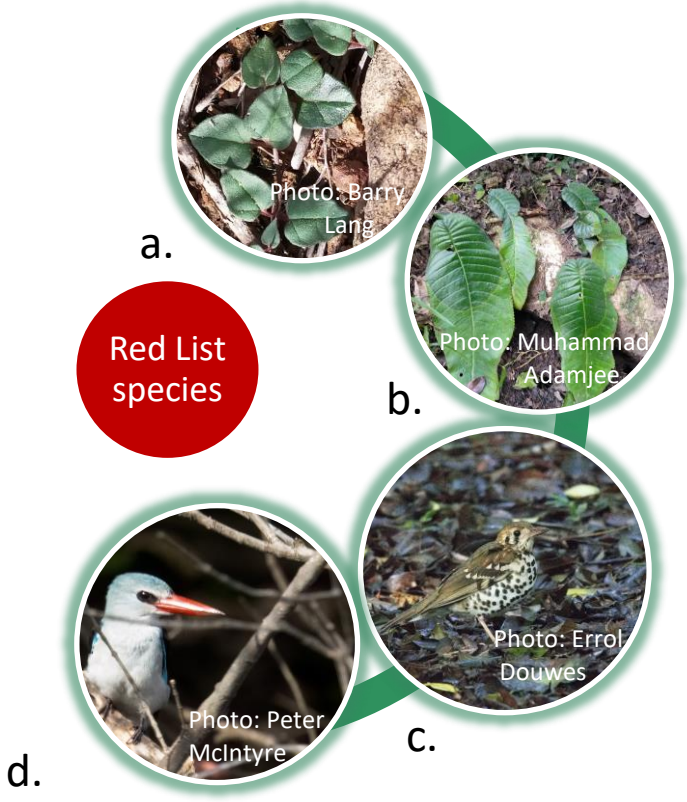


Figure 13: **a.** *Brachystelma pulchellum*, a KZN coastal hinterland endemic. A Near Threatened species found in the rocky grasslands to the west of eThekwini. **b.** *Streptocarpus molweniensis molweniensis* is a Vulnerable species of Cape Primrose found only in the Kloof area. **c.** *Geokichla guttata guttata*, the Spotted Ground-thrush, is an IUCN Red Listed bird - Vulnerable – that is very hard to spot because it skulks on the forest floor hunting for insects. Remnant coastal forests like the

one in Pigeon Valley Nature reserve are its winter habitat.
d. *Halcyon senegaloides*, the Mangrove Kingfisher, is listed as Least Concern but with a decreasing population – it's flagged as a species of conservation concern by iNaturalist. It can be found in Durban's Mangrove Swamps.

Most Observed Species
The Most Observed Species of all was, perhaps unsurprisingly, an iconic Durban plant, *Strelitzia nicolai* (Natal Wild Banana). 97 observations were made by 50 observers.

Figure 14 **a.**& **b.**: *Strelitzia nicolai*.

The second most observed species was, for the first time, a butterfly. *Telchinia serena,* the Dancing Telchinia or Small Orange Acraea (iNat's taxonomy is out of date here!) had one of its periodic swarm periods over the weeks before and after CNC2023. They were all over the northern half of the country. Its host plants, *Triumfetta* spp., were covered in its larvae and the silken webs they spin to avoid predators.

Figure 15 **a** & **b:** *Acraea/Telchinia serena* by Suncana Bradley (male) and Steve Woodhall (female) was recorded 85 times by 35 observers. The males all look the same, but the females are bewilderingly variable in appearance – they can be all orange like a male, or any combination of orange, red, black, cream, white or transparent.

Most observations made and the number of species contributed
The winner in this category was Muhammad Adamjee, with 1678 observations of which 1165 were Research Grade. In this he did the unthinkable and pipped Tony Rebelo, the SANBI iNat honcho, into second place on the southern African leader board! He recorded 478 species, being pipped for first spot in that category by Errol Douwes.

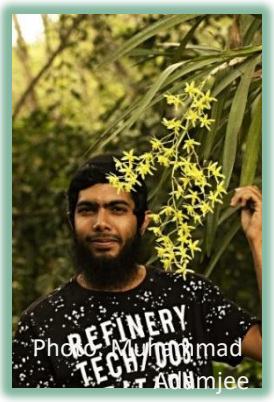


Figure 16: Muhammad Adamjee winner with the most observations.

Figure 17: Errol Douwes eThekwini City Nature Challenge observer with the most number of species.

Runner up for observations was Suncana Bradley with 1526 observations (she was third overall nationally as well). She was just behind Muhammad on number of species (474).

Figure 18 **a** & **b**: **a.** Suncana Bradley runner up for the most number of observations. **b.**True to form, 'Sun', as we call her, got some caterpillar photos as well, like this Dark Blue Pansy *Junonia oenone* ssp. *oenone*).

There are 20 short of 8000 observations in the 'Research Grade' category from CNC 2023 eThekwini. I was trawling through them, trying to separate some of the best to post in this article. Then Sandra told me it was online. You can see them here .

Most identifications

Barry Lang was way out in front here with 2768 identifications! This was more than double the count of Sun Bradley and Traian Bertau – who were almost tied on just above 1200 identifications. I know how much midnight oil is needed to get even a modest number of identifications done – Barry must have it by the barrel load!

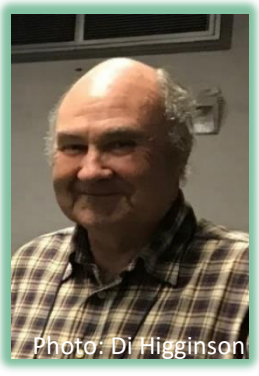


Figure 19: Barry Lang winner with the most number of identifications.

There were some challenges. We need to keep updating the contacts list and start early on engaging with the Conservancies, Eco-Estates, and Nature Reserves to hold events at the upcoming Great Southern Bioblitz in November 2023. And there are huge gaps to the southwest of eThekwini. How best to get people to do iNatting there? Through schools, churches etc.? Suggestions would be welcome!

As a last word, Sandra got one of our loveliest butterflies on record in CNC2023:

Figure 20: The female form trophonius of the Mocker Swallowtail or Flying Handkerchief, as the male *Papilio Dardanus cenea* is known, mimics the common African Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus orientis*, but she is more beautiful.

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2. BRANCH PROJECTS

2.1 Open Gardens

2.1.1 Gorgeous Green House by Denese Koch

Have you ever woken up in the morning feeling a desperation about what is happening to the natural world? Or felt the elation of standing in the centre of a fully flowering indigenous garden, alive with birds, butterflies, and bees? Felt helpless and small facing an unjust world, or empowered to make a difference and give it your all? That's the difference that PASSION makes.

On the 17th of June 2023, the Botanical Society of SA, KZN Coastal Branch held its Indigenous Garden Tour at Jane Troughton and Greg Courtney's Gorgeous Green House in Durban North. I was privileged to be one of the visitors and found myself revelling in every detail of their tremendous success story.

Having achieved legendary status for its green features, the Troughton-Courtney home has won awards and been featured on TV programmes such as *Top Billing*, and in numerous magazines including *House and Leisure, Garden and Home.*

Their dream had been to find a property on which to live out the ethos of what they were already championing in environmental circles. That was realised when they found this large property, with a traditional 1940s house, and huge garden potential. Keeping the original house footprint, the same, they went upwards. Choosing contemporary design over aesthetics, the house has strong vertical lines, incorporating a plethora of sustainable technologies.

As I write this I realise that the challenge that I'm finding is whether to focus on house or garden first is the same compartmentalized thinking that stifles our approach to many of our environmental problems. Jane and Greg have found the wonderful fusion recipe which has resulted in the profusion of biodiversity all around them, while they enjoy the euphoria of really living, and not just camping, in the very heart of it.

Starting out with an ethos of reusing available materials on site, Jane didn't have to look far for landscaping materials. Almost every part of the property had buried bricks, rocks, and boulders. All have been put to very effective use, creating rock features, lining planted beds, or laying out of slasto pathways. What could not be used was sold or used as fill in the floorspace of the house.

The centrepiece of the front garden, in full sun, is a striking display of *Aloe arborescens* in sheer winter glory, flanked by flowering *Leonotis lenorus*, and surprisingly, a vibrant community of *Bulbine natalensis*. A medley of *Crassula sarmentosa* prove to be butterfly magnets. Holding its own in pride of place is a magnificent rock feature, utilizing the aforementioned boulders. Jane is particularly proud of her *Bulbine* having pushed the seed into crevices in the rocks and watered them into life. Normally shade loving, they put on a wonderful show here.

From the driveway, one steps onto the high path which meanders through the unbroken span of sun-loving specimens, covering most of the slope that is the “front garden”, warm and dry. *Polygala, Kniphofia, Gerbera* to name a few. On the far end, snaking back down towards the house, now affected by double storey walls, a pathway takes one down through dapple shaded *Dietes*, and then rounds a corner into an alleyway of deep shade. Voluptuously planted with ferns, the climate is immediately transformed to be cool and moist. Making our way past the “powerhouse” housing the inverters and batteries for the 20 solar panels on the roof, we step onto the front porch.

Figure 21: **a.** The Gorgeous Green House **b.** Pretty garden path **c.** The lush living green wall.

On our left is a long, fairly wide tilapia pond, with a walkway over it which completes the circuit to the driveway. On our right, the famous 7 metre tall Green Wall. It is east facing, but entirely shaded by the high walls of the house. An experimental design of aluminium frame, perspex board and two layers of cloth, pockets in the cloth have been planted with indigenous moist-cliff-dwelling plants: Selaginella, Maidenhair, mosses, Haemanthus, Plectranthus, Clivias, Bulbines and Orchids. The plants self-seed into the cloth, so even if some die back, it makes a diverse thriving show. A Mother-of-Pearl butterfly flits about, entirely at home. Jane says they flock to that wall.

Every two minutes, a fine spray of water mists the planted wall from pipework at the top. This is fed from the pond, being an aquaponically-nutrified system. Jane explained how many of their ideas had to be tested over time and, in hindsight, their pond hadn't been dug deep enough to support a large tilapia population. The knock-on effect from this was that the water to the green wall needed to be supplemented with additional organic nutrients to get the balance right.

Over the pond, narrow horizontally opening windows draw cool air into the house, and extraction fans on the roof, powered only by heat exchange, draw the now warmed air outside again. This cross-ventilation is a very effective natural air conditioning system. These iconic extraction fans are only visible from the road, confirming

that you have arrived at the right address. The outside of the house is clad with a composite of recycled plastic and sawdust, aiding the temperature control of the interior.

Making our way down the side of the house, we are introduced to the wormery of simple but robust design by their son, and the visible portion of the complex filtration system which is an essential element of the water-harvesting system. This system has achieved legendary status. The tour included BotSoc members from as far afield as Pennington who are undertaking their own "green-build" and were eager to compare notes and seek advice.

Jane informed us that we were standing on top of their 20 000-litre underground water reserve. A grid system resembling stacked crates had been made up from recycled plastic into small “fins” which served to aerate the stored water. This was wrapped up in strong plastic sheeting like a big parcel and buried in the huge hole excavated for it. It supplied all their household needs and was further re-used onto the vegetable garden as grey water from showers and the washing machine. The indigenous garden doesn't need watering.

The soil excavated from the hole was put on a conveyer to the roof, to create a 10cm layer of soil. This was sufficient to plant a roof garden, which is now also lush with vibrant winter-flowering aloes and crassulas.

Continuing to the far end of the property, we noted the chicken coop for the three free-range hens, Jane’s. propagation bed for cuttings, the vegetable garden, composting areas, and herb gardens. A skyscraper of a paw-paw tree towers over this area, providing food for the monkeys daring enough to ascend the dizzying heights. We are told the biggest challenges in the garden are monkeys, mole[rats] and chickens.

The lowest section of the garden is shadier, being planted with more forest species. Again, the temperature drop from sunny space to shaded space is marked. A *Gardenia thunbergia* has pride of place, giving off a scent when it flowers that even the neighbours appreciate. Across from it is a Tasselberry, which is a bird-magnet, and provides delicious fruit that can be made into jam. In the semi-shade, there is *Aloe dyeri* and *Strelitzia reginae*. In the furthest recesses, two beehives nestle, ensuring happy pollinators abound. A robin drops in. According to Geoff Nichols, if you have a robin in your garden, you have “arrived” ecologically.

Turning back towards the house, an embankment planted with *Aloe chabaudii* and *Aloe vanbalenii* leave one breathless, with the gorgeous *Polygala virgata* showing off its tresses. From this vantage point, the edges of the roof garden are visible high above – a riot of colour.

Stepping up onto the deck, we round out the tour overlooking the Eco-pool. This is a system, not an aesthetic. A ratio of subaquatics, floaters such as water lilies, and reeds and grasses provide the reticulation and filtration systems needed for the chemical-free, algae-free water in the swimming pool. An equal surface area of planted ponds to swimming area creates the correct water quality. But it’s the bird life that come in their droves to this feature that is the most rewarding of all.

Figure 22: **a.** Frances Roberts admires the tilapia pond **b.** A glimpse of the roof garden **c.** A filtration pond.

Finishing up the tour with a sumptuous tea on the deck, a few more details emerge. Jane is the proud champion of their bold undertaking, and her famous blog, has drawn many followers. The intention is to inspire others to embrace Sustainable Technologies and Indigenous Gardening, showcasing their own experience, to provide a "How To" guide.

Greg has managed the technical side of their project. He has worked with various stakeholders to create suitable recycled materials and products such as the cladding. He told me how approval of different steps was blocked time and again, but with persistence, the municipality has been convinced to change some of its regulations to be more in line with sustainable environmental practices. Bravo!

Jean Senogles summed up the morning's delights on the BotSoc WhatsApp group: "Wonderful visit to Jane's beautiful garden with all its biodiversity. Good to see old friends, it fills the heart and mind with happy memories. "If I may add my own comment: "Passion speaks its own language, raises a banner, and sets a standard. Thank you, Jane, and Greg, for the inspiration and motivation."

2.2. Greening the Hood

2.2.1 The Kloof Project by Anne Ward

About fifteen years ago, certain champions living in Kloof decided to do something about beautifying the area in their community. The Kloof Project was envisioned, and work began in earnest in what was known then as "The Keep Kloof Beautiful Association." They have now become "The Kloof Project". Today they boast 16 beautiful "Adopt-a-Spot" sites across Kloof but focussing on the entrance and exit points.

The committee have landscaped areas, planted indigenous gardens in the centre islands, verges and in Field's Centre. Many of these are adorned with *Aloe arborescens*, *Crassula multicava*, *Portulacaria afra*, *Cotyledon orbiculata* which are a delight to see (especially at this time of the year), and what's more very low maintenance gardens.

They have made such a positive impact that the community have chosen to get on board and sponsor this project wholeheartedly. To single out just two examples: a double cab vehicle has been sponsored by Kloof Car Sales, and grass cutting is done by GrassChopper Garden Maintenance. On certain days, the Project raises awareness at the shopping centres and recruits new members.

What is fantastic is that they have not had to buy in plants at all since the inception of the project. Trees and plants have been donated, by local nurseries as well as from cuttings from members' gardens etc.

Railway Action Group (R.A.G.) was established by the then Keep Kloof Beautiful Association to clear invasive alien plants and improve visibility thus improving safety as the raliway line was used by criminals as escape route. BotSoc committee member Barry Lang is also a committed, active member of RAG since its inception by working through the site weekly. Hundreds of indigenous trees have been planted along the railway line up to Bothas Hill, interspersed with lush green patches for pollinators- butterflies, bees, beetles, and birds. A cycle track was established for a safer cycling route. When Chris Dalzell turned 60, he and his friends planted 60 trees along the Elizabeth Bridge stretch of the railway line. A great way to celebrate a milestone birthday, in support of neighbourhood rewilding.

Figure 23: **a.** & **b.** Centre islands with indigenous gardens **c.** Trees planted along the railway line.

It has been very effective having a Zapper code on strategically placed boards to support the maintenance of this area, including eradication of invasive alien plants. The funds are used for ongoing eradication of invasive alien plants. Railway lines are notoriously dead areas which promote petty crime. Worldwide, there is a move by communities to buy back these areas. It is great to see the community taking ownership of this area and occupying the space for exercise and enjoyment.

There is tremendous excitement for the youth Skate Park which the Kloof Project envisions for the areas under the bridge. Giffy and friends' street artwork around Kloof and under the bridges is fantastic. and encapsulates the theme of rewilding the area.

Figure 24: **a.** & **b.** Giffy and friend's street artwork **c.** Branch Chair Suvarna Parbhoo Mohan thanks Chris Dalzell at the end of an enjoyable morning.

Thank you to The Kloof Project champions who have worked hard and continue working tirelessly to make Kloof a "Village in a Garden". Thank you, too, to Chris Dalzell for making the time to show us around some of the projects just days before moving to Singapore to take up a Director post at Gardens by the Bay.

3.The BotSoc KZN Coastal Branch Winter Holiday Programme – A success story! by Christine Sole

The comments of the children and their carers or parents that attended the recently held Winter Holiday

Programme which by all accounts was a resounding success include calls for it to be repeated in the December school vacation.

Thanks to the generous support from our Branch, members, and a member of our BotSoc Network group, thirty-five spaces for children from places of safety and care homes were made available to attend the holiday programme between the three days. This, in addition to a number of paying participants, made for a wonderful mix where privileged and disadvantaged children bonded during the 'in the field walks and the environmentally themed activities and tasks set for them, besides having a fun-filled day in some of the wonderful green spaces that we have in our city.

Compiled and co-ordinated by Christine Sole, a BotSoc committee member and long-time environmental education guide, the event took place at three different venues during the week 10 - 14 July: on the Monday, at Burman Bush, Wednesday at the Durban Botanic Gardens and Friday in the Beachwood Mangroves. Assisting, were guides Lulu Richmond, Sim Cele, and BotSoc members, Di Higginson, Megan Goschen and Sandra Dell in addition to Burman Bush Field Officers, Musa Mfeka and Zama Zulu.

Here are some photographs from the BotSoc Winter Holiday Programme

Figure 26: **a.** In the Garden of the Senses (DBG), strange looking plants, aromatic herbs, and the central brick, metal and water feature, drew a great deal of interest **b.** The group that attended the day at the Durban Botanic Gardens (DBG) was amazed by one of the non-indigenous trees - the Kauri Pine (*Agathis australis*) from New Zealand **c.** Feeding crabs in the Beachwood Mangroves with Black Mangrove leaves along the boardwalk **d.** 'Giving back' was an activity the children enjoyed at Burman Bush by pulling out piles of invasive sword ferns at the old reservoir

A note from Sheena Carnie, one of the organisers of the group that came from the care centre, Lungisani Indela,

states "There is desperate need all around, so thank you for including our safe house children. We have access to many more during school terms. Please do let us know about your December programme because we try to expose the kids to as much as possible to open their minds to the world and especially the natural world. Many thanks again."

Clearly the overwhelming response to our offer to sponsor children less fortunate to participate indicates how popular our Winter Holiday Programme was, amongst those in this sector. Our branch extends sincere thanks to the generous sponsors, the volunteers, and partners of the programme, including our hosts at the Education Centres of Burman Bush, Durban Botanic Gardens, and the Beachwood Mangroves; and appreciates the support and staff of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and the Parks Department of eThekwini in providing the wonderful open, green spaces where the event was held.

Please note, no names are given nor faces shown because most of the children came from places of safety or care homes where they are wards of the court, which prohibit them from being identified in public, social media, and in the press.

Watch this space for our next upcoming holiday programme.

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4. UPCOMING EVENTS


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