



MONTHLY NEWS BULLETIN

Any comments and / or suggestions and / or recommendations would be most welcome

CURRENT PROJECTS:

EDUCATIONAL GARDENS AT IMPITHI BEACH KIOSK: Impithi Park is the Municipality's name for the Kiosk grounds, hence the project name. The initial task was the removal of rubbish & IAPs. To date, 2 skips have been filled. Concrete, from various places on the site, had to be broken into rubble to make it easier for transporting to a skip. There was about half a skip load of concrete rubble and stones. The increase in workload necessitated the recruitment of another labourer. Victor Zolani joined the project team at the beginning of February. The 'shade educational garden' on the left hand side of the path as you leave the Kiosk was designed and planted by Gordon and Colleen Lennox. The garden is planted with indigenous plants and is intended to not only attract butterflies and buck, but also show visitors and residents that indigenous plants can make an attractive garden. It is planned to have a data sheet to name the plants and their locations. The compost and the plants sourced from Yellow Wood Nursery were paid for by funds allocated by the Municipality. The paving around the braais and tables (phase 1) is complete using recycled paving blocks. This is thanks to donations by Evelyn Heunis & Lennart Eriksson and the Turners. The bakkie for transporting the blocks, laying them out, and the provision and supervision of the labour is being provided by Patrick Clarke. General site preparation is being provided by the Conservancy. The need for a handrail at the entrance to Impithi Park has been identified and installation of a rail on the right hand side of the path will begin shortly.

MAKAMATI TRAIL: The lack of rain in February has held back the re-growth of the Isoglossa so the forest is still open and this makes the Impithi and ground birds easier to see. The dry weather seems to have affected the Quinine trees as a few of the mature trees have dropped branches. One fell across the Trail but was cleared the next working day. The flower display is also disappointing - there are a few of the orange Falling Stars (*Crocoshmia aurea*), but the promising show of the small Red Iris (*Fresia laxa*) were all eaten. Over a period of a few days they were pulled out of the ground leaving nothing but a lot of small holes with the plant having been eaten. A large patch of Morning Glory, the IAP of the month, was removed. Fortunately it was the common annual species *Ipomoea purpurea* that had not seeded. The culvert contractor has finally finished the "rehabilitation" and rubbish removal but the site office has yet to be removed.

NKOMBA BIRD SANCTUARY: Perhaps some progress is in the pipeline after last month's report but nothing is evident as yet, however, we continue to work with those who need to set things in motion. The extremely dry period since December has put a halt to all attempts to plant in areas which have been cleared of weeds and debris and David continues to manage the weed re-growth in these areas only. The extent of the Madeira Vine problem hit home when it began to set flower and additional labour was called in to help with a particularly bad patch. The Nkomba site extends to the mouth of the stream and ends just before the Nkomba beach buildings in the south. This area has been neglected for many years and the small floodplain on the southern bank gradually became a thriving vegetable garden planted up by various folk living and working in the area. Other vegetation along the old railway embankment has also been removed over time and with rubble and other garden refuse strewn about the area had become degraded. However, it is looking up after the Umdoni Municipality had the vegetables removed and several suitable trees planted, although alien plant clearing should be more vigorous and ongoing. Added to that is the enthusiasm of a resident whose eagerness to restore the area has been taken up by her employee, Emmanuel Mkhize, who with some early guidance from David Duma is working hard to replace all the exotic plants along the old railway embankment with indigenous dune vegetation, while keeping an eye on the invasive plants as well. They are to be commended for their dedication and hard work.

RECYCLING: Pennington Conservancy's Team Recycling of Averil & Ivan Bennewith, Evelyn Heunis and Joan van Greunen, with Shirley Crocket as our coordinator, have been busy. Phase 1 was officially launched at the Pennington Christian Centre on 10/03, with representatives from the Municipality, the major generators of waste, and the Pennington Conservancy present, as well as Robynne from 'Recycling on the Move'. The press covered the event. The Municipality has supplied different coloured bags for the various items, free of charge. We are trying to smooth out the process of collection from the phase 1 venues, and hope to soon include the Umdoni Retirement Village. Once we have this running properly we will start with Phase 2 involving households.

UMDONI FOREST: Entering another period of drought since late January, the forest trails have not grown closed to any marked extent, although the ground cover & forest edges could do with some mowing & trimming. Weed infestations of Triffid and Pereskia are a concern especially over the trails up near Lynton Hall. Along the eastern boundaries adjoining the Hyslop grounds & the new extensions to the Umdoni Retirement Village, clearing operations & a lack of boundary fences have imparted a ragged, untidy appearance along the skirting trail. A big contributing factor to the state of the trails is the policy of not replacing staff of the weed-clearing gang. From \pm 8 workers, the numbers have dwindled to less than 3 which of course is grossly inadequate for an area topping 200 hectares. The resident pair of Crowned Eagles in the gorge are in breeding recess with the mobile immature bird hanging about the nesting site while the parents put in an occasional appearance.

WEBSITE NEWS: Support the Conservancy by promoting your business from our website - advertise for as little as R150 per month. Contact Felicity on 039 978 3340 or send an e-mail to penningtonconservancy@gmail.com

CREATING AWARENESS: The 5th edition in our Alien Invasive Plant series has just been distributed. If you receive this series in the post it does sometimes make it difficult to identify the plant - visit our website on www.penningtonconservancy.org.za and view the series in colour or you can of course see the colour posters of the complete series on the wall at the Kiosk. Paddy Norman (WESSA / Southport Geology & Natural History Society) took us through our paces at Umdoni Point in terms of coastal geology and how our rock formations evolved. The 'Talk & Walk' was extremely interesting & informative. We have posted Paddy's notes on our website. However, if you would like a copy posted or e-mailed to you, please call 039 978 3340 or send your request to penningtonconservancy@gmail.com

IMPITHI BEACH KIOSK: Once again our local Pennington regulars proved to be the backbone of the Kiosk in the relatively quiet month of February. As always, our Friday evening curry nights and the Sunday lunch proved to be hugely popular and almost always fully booked. It is heartening to see some regulars booking every Friday evening or Sunday. This clearly shows we've got it right. To avoid disappointment, try to book as early during the week as you can. We also hosted a few special group bookings as our venue with its spectacular sea view and great food is always appreciated. Big changes in the Impithi Park Gardens can already be seen as a dedicated team of Pennington residents with the guidance of the Conservancy in collaboration with the Umdoni Municipality have started to rehabilitate the dune forest and work on butterfly and bird gardens. Come and see the exciting changes that are taking place to make the Kiosk an even more inviting place for all to visit.

IMPITHI RANGERS (KIDS' CLUB): Impithi Rangers started again on 04/02 with a registration day. The Rangers learnt about the Fig-Tree Blue butterfly (*Myrina silenus*). They then created their own of art work of this beautiful butterfly. The Fig-Tree Blue is found in this area near fig trees. At our second meeting, Ian, Liesel and Nico, from Croc World, brought 3 slithery friends to introduce to the Rangers. "Mr Burmese Python" was an instant success with all the kids wanting to hold him. Ian told them what "not to do" when you come across a snake. Last week we confronted the Rangers with blood and gore and asked them to treat a bleeding wound. After a lot of "oohs" and "aahs", the artificial wounds were all successfully treated - pressure, elevation and a bandage to stop any serious bleeding.

AREA OPPOSITE THE PENNINGTON SUPERETTE: The dry weather has slowed the growth of the Bamboo which is being cut and removed from site at regular intervals. Due to the work on the Impithi Park project the follow up work on the removal of IAPs inside the plot has been put on hold