



Working for Water

E-News

Welcome to the *Working for Water* electronic newsletter. This publication is aimed at keeping staff and stakeholders informed on the progress made towards controlling invasive alien plants (IAPs), the challenges encountered during implementation and the achievements of *Working for Water* nationally.

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March/April 2010

National Water Week was commemorated from 15 – 21 March 2010 under the theme:
“Working Together: We can save more water”

National Water Week is commemorated annually during the first week in March but was postponed this year due to the Minister of Water Affairs being out of the country. Various events took place nationally – in the Western Cape the Deputy Minister launched the Adopt-A-River Campaign in Moyo, Stellenbosch on 17 March and we saw the official opening of the Bitterfontein Desalination Plant and Water Scheme by the Minister of Water Affairs on 19 March 2010.

Part of the Water Week commemoration was the De Hoop Edu-Tour Competition which was open to all offices of the Department of Water Affairs Nationally. The competition targeted staff from salary levels 1 – 6 and the prize was a tour of the dam in Limpopo.

At WfW National Office, the winner of the De Hoop Edu-Tour competition was Mrs Theresa Hendricks. Congratulations Theresa! Well done!! We look forward to seeing the pictures of the tour when you get back.

- WfW E-News Team

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Janine Turner



Rhodes University Workshop on Rearing the Water Hyacinth Weevils

By Kagiso Letsebe

A delegation of school teachers and subject advisers from the Northern Cape descended on Grahamstown for a workshop at the Rhodes University on the 08 of March 2010. The three session workshop was hosted by Professor Martin Hill and Dr. Julie Coetzee, and was aimed at giving a brief but unfathomable comprehension on the techniques for mass rearing the water hyacinth weevils from our rivers.

These sessions were not treated as normal lectures but as interactive information sharing sessions between the experts, teachers and subject advisers tasked with taking this information to the young and highly inquisitive minds of our learners.

The first segment of the workshop or presentation was an in depth discussion on the techniques of rearing the water hyacinth weevils (*Neochetina eichhorniae* and *N. bruchi*) from our aquatic systems. This is said to be achieved by using an integrated management approach of combining water quality control, coordinated herbicide operations, and mass release of biocontrol agents at key times during the year.

The techniques were later practically demonstrated to the teachers by both Professor Hill and Dr. Coetzee in their biocontrol agents' laboratory in what was the second part of the workshop, as part of an interactive approach to information sharing, the delegates were given tea strainers and asked to strain out the biocontrol agents from the artificial water pools for a lab inspection.

In the third session microscopes were handed to the delegates and they were asked to differentiate between the adult *Neochetina bruchi* and *N. eichhorniae* biocontrol agents they were introduced to in the first session of the workshop. The workshop concluded with a commitment made by Professor Martin Hill to assist in the erection of biocontrol agent laboratories in schools in the Northern Cape.



Red Alert for discovery of Pompom Weed in Mpumalanga

By Kasigo Letsebe

The Mpumalanga Region has been alerted of a recent discovery of the Pompom Weed (*Campuloclinium macrocephalum*), a South American herb belonging to the daisy family known as the Asteraceae. The Pom Pom Weed has been deemed a serious threat to the conservation of the South African grasslands.

This plant is most noticeable during its flowering period which is between December and March when it transforms the veld from green to pink. It produces enormous quantities of wind-dispersed seeds every summer and has underground tubers that enable it to survive fires and the dry season. This, in addition to its tolerance of a wide range of soil and moisture conditions, makes it the perfect invasive weed. Its beautiful flowers are leading members of the public to collect and unintentionally spread it into more places.

The infested areas in the Mpumalanga Region are Barberton, White River, Badplaas, Nelspruit, Hazyview and Piet Retief. People are advised to be vigilant of the presence of this plant and to deal with it with extreme urgency and diligence. Ignoring it will only spell disaster for grasslands and bushland areas as, once established, it spreads fast and easily, causing serious degradation to the veld.

People are requested to report any signs of the Pompom Weed to Working for Water by contacting Jan Brink on 082 805 7519 or

Bongani Mashele at Sanbi on 072 771 1635

for further information regarding the eradication of the Pompom Weed



PLANT/WEED MANAGEMENT IN MY GARDEN

Bugweed (*Solanum mauritianum* Scop.)

By Debbie Sharp

The Bugweed plant belongs to the family Solanaceae. Bugweed originates from South America, more precisely NE Argentina, Southern Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. It is an aggressive invader that invades forest margins, plantations, savanna, roadsides, watercourses and open space in urban areas (Henderson, 2001). This species has invaded all the provinces excluding the Northern Cape and Freestate.

The leaves are dull green and velvety above with a white fleecy underside. The leaves emit a strong odour when crushed. The flowers are purple and are found in compact clusters on densely felted stalks. It flowers year round. Birds, particularly the Rameron pigeon, disperse it by eating the yellow ripe fruits that are found in compact terminal clusters. The unripe green fruit is poisonous. The hairy stems and leaves are an irritant to the respiratory tract and skin.

Bugweed was initially brought into the country as an ornamental plant.

Bugweed is a declared weed; the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act 43 of 1983 governs the control of this species. It is a category 1 plant in terms of regulation 15 of CARA. **This means that this plant cannot be grown, propagated or sold. It must be removed and destroyed.**

Control methods

Chemical – The mature Bugweed plants are cut at ankle height above the ground and treated with a registered herbicide. The regrowth is sprayed with a foliar application of a registered herbicide. A list of registered herbicides is obtainable from the Department of Agriculture.

Biological control – Is the use of natural enemies to suppress the growth of the alien plants thereby making other control options viable.

The biocontrol agent for Bugweed is a leaf sap sucking tingid called, *Gargaphia decoris*.

Extensive feeding causes the leaves to discolour, dry out and drop off the plants prematurely. It is anticipated that the stress of high levels of feeding will slow down the very rapid growth rates of Bugweed plants and reduce the massive amounts of seeds produced.

References. Henderson, L. 2001. Alien weeds and Invasive plants. Paarl Printers, Cape Town.

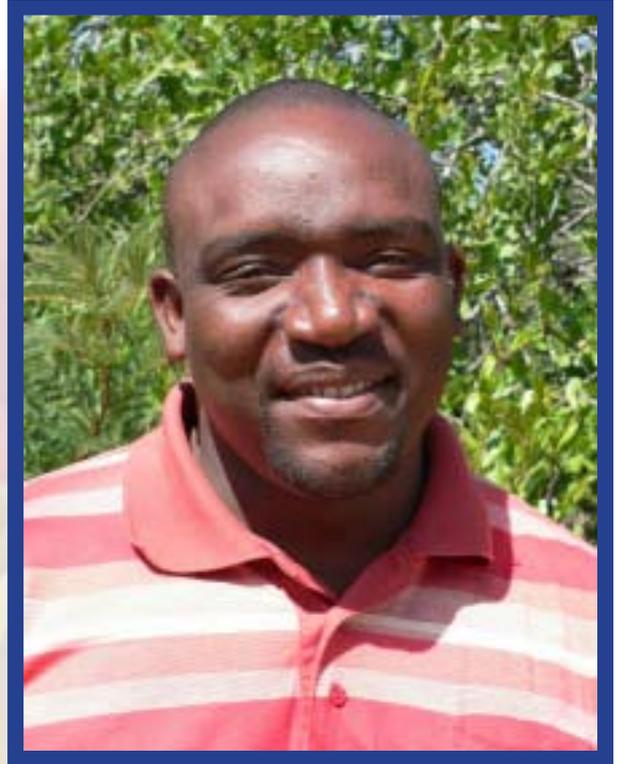


Humble Trevor Rises High

By Kagiso Letsebe

Humility has rarely characterised a prosperous businessperson, however the norm changes with the introduction of Trevor Homu. Born 34 years ago in Tzaneen in the Limpopo Province, and raised in Phalaborwa, Trevor matriculated at the Grootfontein College of Agriculture in Mid-delburg in the heart of the Karoo in 1999. Like any other young South African he struggled to find work, until he joined the Working for Water Programme as a Contractor in October 2000.

Through his sense of duty and perseverance, Trevor was appointed as an Assistant Project Manager at Skukuza in Kruger National Park. It took him two years to earn himself a position as Working for Water Project Manager based at Foskor Mine, where he worked until 2005, when he realized that there were opportunities for growth laying dormant for him to tap into, he then decided to register his own company, Homu's Environmental cc.



Trevor started tendering, and was later awarded tenders at Foskor, Timbavati, Eskom, ASA Metals and Phalaborwa Mining Company. Although his main business is Alien Plant Control and Bush Clearing, he also manages a dumping site and waste removal at Foskor Mine. He also does weed, pest and Alien Plant Control at ASA Metals in Burgersfort and supplies cleaning materials and other supplies to Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality. He widened his business interests and entered the property market investing in leasing property in Phalaborwa, Durban and Cape Town.

Through one man's vision and diligence, 46 people have permanent employment and 20 are temporary workers. Trevor's goal is to help the people and alleviate poverty, with a big focus on the unemployed youth. Trevor also supports the Akanani Youth Shelter where he donates food and other essentials that the centre needs. He is a firm believer in skills development and training, investing in the future of his employees.

He enrolled for a BA degree in Environmental Management at the University of South Africa. His advice to upcoming contractors is that they must be industrious and remember that success does not come easy. They must save money to invest in their businesses.

Trevor attributes a major part of his success to the training and experience he received while contracted at Working for Water. He says it played a role as a preparatory process for the work that he is doing now. It is commendable to see Trevor rise to be an astute businessman and yet remain humble and willing develop other people.

News from WfW Gauteng

Birthdays at our Gauteng office are very special occasions. The person celebrating his/her birthday buys cake and ensures that each person at the office gets a piece. Everybody joins in singing a special birthday song.



WfW Gauteng Birthday Song . . .

We wish you a happy birthday
May your future days be bright
May the love of god's sweet sunshine
Fill your life with heavenly light
May his presence cheer you
And his blessings be your store
Happy birthday greetings to you
And we wish you many more



News from WfW National Office

Bandile Nayo has been appointed as the Chairperson for the Provincial PSA Committee representing the Western Cape for DWA. Bandile's passionate input and interest in staff wellness has been recognised through this appointment.

Well done Bandile – Congratulations!

Please forward contributions to

FaredT@dwa.gov.za or JohnsoN@dwa.gov.za

For more information contact the *Working for Water* toll free information line on 0800-005-376

or visit our website www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/ or send your queries to: wfw@dwaf.gov.za

To see pictures of invasive alien plants go to <http://www.agis.agric.za/wip/>