

Touch Wood

Seasonal News from Platbos

Africa's Southernmost Forest

Platbos, located between Stanford and Gansbaai, is an ancient forest at the foot of Africa. Visit our website at www.platbos.co.za or contact us at info@platbos.co.za to book a forest walk, donate a tree or to find out more about our varied activities at the forest.

Autumn 2010

With the passing of the equinox on the 20th March, the nights are growing longer and the days cooler. In autumn the sunlight takes on a golden quality and the forest air is a pot pourie of scents – the sweet perfume of asparagus creeper mingled with the earthy notes of moss and leaf mould. With so many of the trees still bearing fruit – the white stinkwoods, milkwoods, hard pear and rock alders – the forest is full of bird song and the bark of the baboons is never far off.



March has been a busy month for Platbos and the forest has featured in a number of publications: the Sunday Independent, The Weekend Argus, the Constantia Chronicle and of course SABC's Pasella. As a result we have many new Forest Friends and to you we bid a warm welcome. Blommie, our pet pig was in the lime light and for any of you who fell in love with her, you will be pleased to know that she is pregnant and soon there will be lots of little piglets looking for a happy home. Their dad, Baldrick, is a handsome fellow and like Blommie he is small in stature (if not appetite), so let us know if you would like to adopt a forest piggie.

Platbos and the Freewheeling Festival at Stanford Valley



Freewheeling is a 3 day 'pushing-the-edge' future-thinking festival held annually in March at the beautiful Stanford Valley farm and caters for all ages and interests. The festival is a highly enjoyable and stimulating experience for everyone in the most vibrant atmosphere of learning and community, with a special Children's Programme running in parallel with the adults' activities.

Francois and I held a combined workshop entitled Tree Talk. This was an experiential, outdoor workshop, where Francois shared some of his considerable knowledge and passion for trees and forests and their interrelationship with people. I concluded the workshop with a short, introductory exercise where participants learnt how to attune energetically to a tree of their choice and by so doing, open the pathway for communicating with the plant kingdom.

It was a most enjoyable experience and we have plans to offer extended versions of the workshop at Platbos which will combine my Trees for Transformation workshops with Francois' broad and fascinating knowledge and insights into the world of trees. Watch this space for more information ...



On the last morning of Freewheeling, about 30 festival goers gathered at first light to plant 100 Platbos trees. The trees were sponsored by visitors to the festival as well as My T Chai - purveyors of delicious spiced African and Indian teas who kept everyone refreshed with their wonderful array of teas over the course of the long weekend. This simple act of planting trees – without fanfare or ceremony – was beautiful and moving, a shared moment of deep connection with the Earth. It planted a new idea in our minds too: Tree Planting Parties: you provide the place and the party and Platbos provides the trees. This could be at schools, community centres, farms or business parks – the main idea is that everyone gets their hands dirty and participates in the planting. We all need to be planting trees, not just one or two, but lots of them and often. Planting trees is not only good for the Earth, it's good for our souls too. Please be in touch if you would like to explore this idea further.

African Tree Essences



Living in the forest has been an incredible experience on so many levels. My personal discovery of the healing powers of the forest has been especially meaningful and for the past five years I have been exploring the spiritual heart of the forest. The *African Tree Essences* are the physical result of this process. Made from the tree flowers, spring water and the African sun, they hold the unique vibrational blueprint of the 13 major tree species of the forest. Unlike essential oils that are distilled from plant matter, flower essences are not aromatic. Vibrational in nature, tree flower essences address negative states of mind by encouraging subtle shifts in consciousness as the flower energies gently realign mental, emotional and spiritual imbalances. Flower essences are safe and effective for adults, children, animals and plants and can be used on their own or as a support to other forms of healing. Read more about the African Tree Essences on our website.

You can order the essences directly through our website or you can purchase them at: **Organic Touch**, Belvedere Park, Claremont, Cape Town (tel: 021 674 0062).

Overseas purchases contact:
Bloesem Remedies Nederland
bram@bloesem-remedies.com



Platbos Tree Planting Partner: Peridot Wines

Peridot Wines are our newest Tree Planting Partners. Peridot wines are hand-made as naturally as possible with an emphasis on quality, whilst carefully considering the environmental impact of each step of the wine-making process. The bottles are previously used glass bottles, washed and prepared by a local company – 100% recycled. All labeling, cardboard cartons, brochures and business cards are made from recycled materials. The water and electricity consumption in the cellar is minimal and far below the industry norm and the carbon emissions created are calculated regularly and counterbalanced by the planting of trees at Platbos. We are proud to be associated with Peridot's fine wines that are truly accountable on an environmental level.



Bantamsklip Nuclear Power Station

Incredibly, ESKOM's Environmental Impact Assessment has concluded that Bantamsklip at Pearly Beach - regarded as the "hottest hot spot" of biodiversity in the world - is a suitable site for a future nuclear power station! They even imagine that it will be a positive development for the region. Although Bantamsklip is not currently earmarked as the most popular of the three proposed sites, it will remain an ominous likelihood for the region unless their findings are challenged. The Save Bantamsklip organization is doing sterling work to do exactly this but they are in need of financial assist. Please contact them if you are able to assist them in any way www.bantamsklip.co.za.



If you have not yet had the pleasure of visiting Platbos, we hope to welcome you here soon. The cooler winter months are when the forest really is at its most magical.

With seasonal greetings,

Melissa Krige

Famous Last Words

"To be truly green we have to rid ourselves of the illusion that we are separate from Gaia in any way. We are as much part of her as anything alive and we should feel tied, as in a good and loving marriage, until death us do part."

- James Lovelock, A Final Warning: the Vanishing face of Gaia.