



Vet Brief

June 2017

Next meeting Sunday, 11 June 2017 at Jako Voges Building 2:00 PM

Save The Date:

**June Meeting 11
June at 2:00 PM**

**Winter Festival
see the Society's
Table**

Vetplantfees
25- 27 Sept.

Meeting Dates

11 June
9 July
13 August
10 September
23 – 25 September
“Vetplantfees”
8 October
12 November
10 December
21 January 2018

Message from the Chair

We all had a great time in the Veld during our last meeting. Everyone, including our expert guide, Kevin Koen, saw new plants at the fabulous Jakkalskop. Just hope that we have enough places for people who want to take that walk during **Vetplantfees**.

Planning for **Vetplantfees** is coming along. There will be a meeting of the planning committee on Monday, 12 June at the Hemenways' at 5:00 PM. All members are invited to attend and pitch in.

Our June meeting will feature a photo memory of the trip enjoyed by Buck Hemenway, George Hatting, Franz Noltee and Neil Curry to Namaqualand in May. It is amazing to see plants that we know in their full springtime glory looking mostly terrible at the end of a long and particularly dry summer. Against all human concept, they are doing their normal thing. Blooming, getting ready for the coming months of cooler and (we hope) wetter weather.

We are well started with the demonstration garden at the Calitzdorp Station. We are moving some heavy stuff on Monday, 5 June and will announce the next general work party soon. I would like to see some plants in the garden at the Winter Festival.

Our web site is functioning nicely. You are all invited to look at it and make suggestions on how it might be improved. The site's URL address is:

WWW.VETPLANT.CO.ZA

Just for fun, we are getting requests to join the club from all over South Africa and so far one international request from Belgium

See you at the meeting.

Buck

June Meeting :

We will discuss Vetplantfees and how individual members can help. We will see a photo show on plants in Namaqualand at this time of year..

Leadership Team

Chairman – Buck Hemenway 076-298-7337

Vice Chairman – Mike Horan

Secretary – Jako Voges

Treasurer – Yvonne Hemenway

Director – Irma Welman

Plant of the Month: *Aloe ferox*

Aloe ferox (Miller 1768) (AKA: **Cape Aloe**, **Capealvyn**, **Bitter Aloe**, **Red Aloe**, and **Tap Aloe**), is a species of arborescent aloe indigenous to southern Africa. It is one of several *Aloe* species used to make bitter aloes, a purgative medication, and also yields a non-bitter gel that is used in cosmetics and topical medicines

Aloe ferox is indigenous to South Africa's Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, and Lesotho. Its large natural range forms a near-continuous band across the southern Cape, from almost as far as Cape Town, eastwards as far as southern KwaZulu-Natal.



Aloe ferox at the Huntington Botanical Gardens

The plants are single stemmed (non-branched) and as such do not fit in the current definition of “tree”. A plant will normally have only one flower stalk (inflorescence) in each season. The leaves are broad and thick, containing a gel which is harvested for the production of many “Bitter Aloe” products. The leaves have prickles on them and, depending upon from which population the seed is harvested, the prickles can be completely covering the leaf top and bottom surfaces or simply a small line of prickles on the bottom of the leaf. Almost all have strong teeth (prickles) on the leaf edges. Flowers, born on branched spikes (racemes,) are



normally a bright orange/red color that adds beauty to the parched lands at the end of autumn/beginning of winter. The flower color can range from red to pure white in some small populations in the Eastern Cape.

Aloe ferox is a wonderful garden plant. It adds structure and height to a garden as it will grow to a height of 5 meters or more. As it grows, the dried leaves which are no longer useful to the plant are carried on the stalk. In nature, these dead leaves serve as protection against sunburn to the stem and as habitat for many wild creatures. It is up

Aloe ferox in our California back yard

to the gardener as to whether to take the dead leaves off or not.

This plant tends to be pest free and quite easy to grow in any semi-desert climate. It requires some water in the hottest periods. As with all succulents, keep watch for mealy bug and scale.

We are fortunate to have this Aloe growing throughout the Klein Karoo, usually in kloofs and at slightly higher elevations than other indigenous aloes such as *Aloe microstigma*. . At the coast, near Swellendam which is reported to be the most westerly population *Aloe ferox* grows near sea level.



Aloe ferox in our Calitzdorp front yard



Aloe ferox flowers

Botanical Term of the Month;

Indigenous

Indigenous originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native (often followed by to): the plants **indigenous** to Canada; the **indigenous** peoples of southern Africa.

Vetplantfees 2017

Demonstration Garden The garden is beginning to take shape. More on this later in the month.

The club has offered to install a demonstration garden at the Calitzdorp Station, in part to thank Cheryl and Mike for hosting the event. We are looking for donations now.. Rocks, many and fairly large to define the garden space. Irrigation equipment, 15mm pipe, sprinkling apparatus, valves, etc., and the finally, plants. You can help in several ways. After we have the donated material, we will have several work parties to get the garden put together. We can use cash donations that are earmarked specifically for this garden. We can use donated materials, call Buck to find out what is needed (076-298-7337).

Distribution of advertising material If you are planning a driving trip anywhere in the Western Cape, you can help by taking our brochures to Botanical Gardens, Nurseries and the like. Call Buck to find out more.

ON THE ROAD

Take a look! What a beautiful place to shop. Rooiklip Nursery in Swellendam. Without a doubt the nicest succulent nursery anywhere!

