



FRIENDS OF FAERIE GLEN NATURE RESERVE (FFGNR) VRIENDE VAN FAERIE GLEN NATUURRESERVAAT (VFGNR)

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Autumn Newsletter 2016

South Africa has had the hottest and driest summer on record, with autumn bringing relief from the extreme maximum temperatures experienced this past season. South Africa is in fact the 30th driest country in the world. We are facing a deepening water crisis, with 40% of the country's freshwater systems in a critical condition and the greater part of remaining water being threatened. Existing water resources are no longer able to dilute pollutants to a level where they are fit for use, which exacerbates the situation for all water users. This directly affects the provisioning of clean water, food and electricity, which are the basics of our livelihoods.

The reality is that 98% of the country's water is already allocated for use. Water scientist, Dr Anthony Turton, explains that South Africa would have to almost double its water supply by 2030 from its current 38 billion cubic metres of water per year for the economy to grow. Rivers and streams also need clean water for ecological systems to remain functional. The only possibility for growth lies in the recycling of our national resource.

Currently municipal waste water treatment works (WWTWs) across the county are collectively producing 5 128 million litres of effluent a day that is discharged back into our rivers and dams. Therefore municipalities with defective WWTW's are the single biggest polluter of water in the country.

As consumers of water and the products produced with water, we need to be far more critical of our own actions and lifestyles impacting the national water resource, directly and indirectly. We urgently need to alter the use of water in our homes. We also need to recognise the functions of our catchments and prioritise their health by protecting them from pollution.



Proudly affiliated to the Wildlife
and Environment Society of
South Africa and Adopt
Moreletaspruit Forum



Herfs Nuusbrieff 2016

Alhoewel Pretoria nie so erg deur die afgelope somer se droogte getref is in vergelyking met ander dele van die land nie, het ons beslis nie skotvry daarvan afgekam nie. Die Faerie Glen Natuurreservaat (FGNR) lyk ooglopend groen, maar gras wat skouerhoogte of hoër was die vorige somer, het skaars gegroei. 'n Moeilike winter lê vir beide dier en boer voor.

Die onus rus op ons om nie hierdie winter ons damvlakke drasties te laat daal deur onverantwoordelike watergebruik nie, veral nie vir tuinbesproeiing nie. Grasperke hoef beslis nie grasgroen in die winter te wees nie. Plante rus gedurende wintermaande, wat beteken hulle het nie 'n hoë waterbehoefte nie. Inheemse tuine het byna geen water nodig nie. In plaas daarvan om herfsblare op te hark en weg te gooi, gebruik dit eerder as 'n blaarmolm/bedekker in beddings. Dit sal as 'n kombersie dien gedurende die winter en ook keer dat grondvog onnodiglik verlore gaan.



Although the reserve looks green, this state is referred to as a 'green drought', as the amount of rainfall has not been enough to replenish water sources.

The following tips can be followed to live responsibly this winter:

- Reduce food waste, which also wastes the water and energy used to grow, process and transport it. A loaf of bread represents 1600 litres of water in the supply chain.
- Grow your own vegetables – it cuts out the packaging and transportation footprint.
- Harvest grey water from household use and rainwater from the roof to irrigate your garden.
- Pave less – hard surfaces speed up run-off, often causing erosion and pollution.
- Think before you throw anything down the drain and minimise the amount of water going into the drain, as it will end up in the Roodeplaat Dam, which can't cope with the current volume of sewage at its WWTW.
- Stop using harmful chemicals and pesticides – these only accumulate in our environment and water and we end up ingesting them through water, food and air. It is just as effective, if not more so, to pour boiling water on weeds as using a herbicide.
- Use environmentally friendly household cleaning products. While popular household brands contain harsh chemicals and heavy metals, lemon juice, sodium bicarbonate and vinegar can be just as effective without the harmful substances.
- Less is more – stop buying things you don't need, re-use them and recycle them – this saves massive amounts of 'invisible' water.
- Stop buying bottled water – producing it uses up far more water and resources than the amount in the bottle. We are fortunate that our tap water is still potable.



Jemma Reinecke (left), Vincent van de Wiel (middle) and David Reinecke (right) busy sampling for MiniSASS.

Die Vriende van die Faerie Glen Natuurresewaat (VFGNR), wat ook geaffilieer is met die Neem Moreletaspruit Aan Forum, is baie bekommerd oor die toestand van die Moreletaspruit wat deur die resewaat loop. Op Saterdag 19 Maart, het lede van die VFGNR en Neem Moreletaspruit Aan Forum, 'n MiniSASS (Stream Assessment Scoring System) assessering gedoen op die spruit ter viering van Nasionale Waterweek.

MiniSASS is 'n biomonitoringstegniek waar ongewerwede diertjies wat uit die spruit versamel word, gebruik word om die gesondheid van 'n rivier aan te dui. Die teenwoordigheid van sekere tipes ongewerweldes dui aan hoe besoedel die water is, aangesien sekere diertjies baie sensitief is vir besoedeling, terwyl ander meer gehard is. Die telling was ongelukkig baie laag en dui op 'n hoogs versteurde en besoedelde toestand. Omdat daar nie industriële stroom-op is nie, beteken dit dat al die besoedeling afkomstig is van stormwaterkanale vanaf paaie in huishoudelike areas, asook winkelsentrums en besighede. Enige riool wat uit 'n mangat loop, sal uiteinde in die naaste stormwaterkanaal beland. Geute wat onwettig gekoppel word aan rioolsisteme veroorsaak dat die rioolnetwerk oorlaai word tydens swaar reën, wat dan veroorsaak dat mangate oorloop.

Elkeen kan 'n verskil maak om die rivier se gesondheid te verbeter deur rioollekke te rapporteer, gemors van sypaadjies in jou woonbuurt te verwyder en veral nie sigaretstompies by vensters uit te gooi wanneer 'n mens op die pad bestuur nie. Indien jou motor 'n olielek het, herstel dit so vinnig moontlik. Een druppel motorolie is genoeg om 1000 liter water te besoedel.



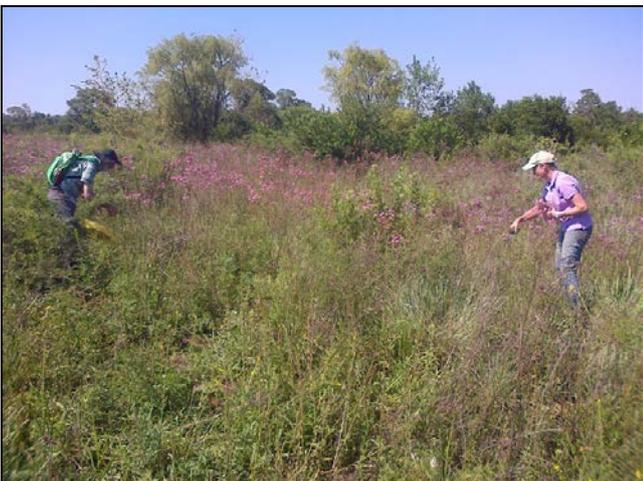
Enthusiastic members gathering around the sample trays to identify the different invertebrates.



A minnow mayfly found in the MiniSASS sample. Minnow mayflies are hardy invertebrates known as the impalas of our rivers. Photograph taken by Diana van de Wiel.

As mentioned in the Summer Newsletter, the Friends of the Faerie Glen Nature Reserve (FFGNR) started the campaign against pompom weed (*Campuloclinium macrocephalum*) early in November last year. It is the third consecutive season that we have been working on this category 1 invasive plant and significant progress have been made against this number one threat to our grasslands.

Two hacks were held with members, while the pompom ladies, Magdaleen and Engela, and regulars, Vincent and Edwin, continued their good work in their own time. Simon (partially sponsored by Tony and Beverley Moore) worked on the pompoms three days of the week until the end of March, along with an extra helper (Nathi), sponsored by the FFGNR for a three-month period.



FFGNR members, Mike Silberbauer and Lyndsay Finney, hard at work collecting the pompom heads and spraying the leaves with herbicide in the flood plain during one of our pompom hacks.



Members and volunteers posing with their collection of bagged pompom heads after a successful hack in the floodplain.



Nathi (left) and Simon (right), collecting pompom heads to prevent the seeds from spreading.



David Fourie, his daughter, Page (left), and wife, Nicky (right), combating pompom weed in the north-eastern corner of the reserve.

Members, David Fourie and his family, who live next to the reserve, contributed again this year by tackling the north-eastern corner of the reserve. This area is difficult to access. Without the devoted team effort and the slight advantage of the drought, progress would not have been so evident.



A volunteer from the US Embassy, chopping up *Lantana* branches, while other members of the team remove the roots with the Friends' tree-poppers.

The other priority weed, as readers would know, is *Lantana camara*. A *Lantana* hack was held on Saturday 9 April with members, and another hack was held on 7 May with employees from the United States Embassy who wanted to contribute by doing something for Earth Day. We would like to thank this enthusiastic team of 12 foreigners who took time out of their schedule to remove a plant indigenous to their own continent.

We would like to thank the team of workers from the Wildlands Conservation Trust who worked in the reserve for a few days. The focus was on invader tree species next to the Moreletaspruit, such as bugweed, privet, syringa, mulberry, honey locust, Chinese elm and inkberry. Unfortunately their progress was hampered by the heavy rains that fell during the second week of March. We hope that there will be funding in future for these teams to return to the Moreletaspruit.



The team from the Wildlands Conservation Trust working on invader trees in the riparian area along the Moreletaspruit in the reserve.



Vincent (left) and Edwin (right) van de Wiel with one of the Friends' tree-poppers. Tree-poppers can remove small trees with the entire root system using leverage.

Lastly, we would like to thank our two most committed members, who have selflessly given their time and effort to combat invasive vegetation in FGNR. Edwin and Vincent van de Wiel have decided to make alien eradication with the Friends' tree-poppers part of their weekly exercise regime, while at the same time contributing to conservation.

We urge members of the FFGNR to please help us with our campaign to combat invasive plants in the FGNR. If each member only attends one hack during the year, we can really make a big difference in our precious 120-hectare reserve, which is in urgent need of restoration from invader plant species.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Invasive plant hacks:

- When:**
- Saturday 28 May at 08:30
 - Saturday 11 June at 08:30
 - Sunday 10 July at 08:30

Where: Meet on the lawn in front of the entrance building.

Bring along: Lopper/pruning shears, hand-saw, gloves, hat, working shoes, water.

*Please e-mail or sms if you plan on helping.

Geology walk with Prof Adam Bumby:

When: Saturday 23 July at 9:00.

Where: Meet on the lawn in front of the entrance building.

Bring along: Hat and water.

- R50 payable for non-members

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