

## *Celtis africana*

Sterkfontein Country Estates July 2016/Julie 2016

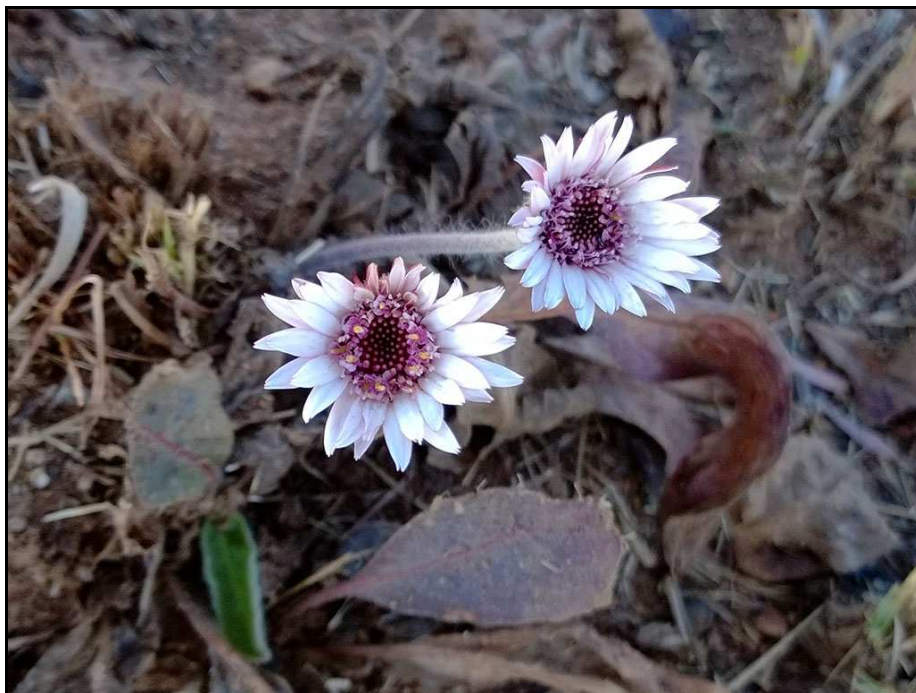
Good day all!

Time certainly flies, here we are in the middle of winter and yet, just the other day I read in the newspaper that 2016 will be j-u-ust a little longer, as on New Year's Eve a leap second (yep, a whole second!) will be added to the earth's time. So 31 December as well as 2016 will be one second longer! This is done to get the earth's official time in step with the earth's rotation. Earth's rotation sometimes changes due to extreme geological and weather occurrences.

What is interesting is the part that technology plays in all of this. In 2014 the atomic clock NIST-F2 was introduced, which is 3 times more accurate than it's predecessor and will in 300 million years not lose or gain a second! All very interesting although I don't think any of us can really comprehend something like 300 million years!

I wonder if the party animals realize they have one whole second longer this year to get ready for 2017!

Just when I thought nothing much is happening in our veld, on one of my walks yesterday, I noticed a little *Gerbera piloselloides* with two flowers! This is our pretty, white, indigenous Gerbera and I was so happy to see it as we don't see it all that often! On the website (under Flora – Other Wild Flowers of Sterkfontein) are two more photos.



*Gerbera piloselloides* (Photo Elmarie Krige)

I have often seen one of our eagles windsurfing above our Estate looking for prey. And, as always, a gang of noisy lapwings in hot pursuit - trying their best to scare it away! And just today on our way to town, we noticed they were busy at a previous nesting site in Nick's property! So happy about that! At least they have chosen "eagle-friendly" people's property and the youngster will hatch when there is more food around and the weather definitely warmer!

Normally one associates summer with insects like butterflies, yet we have found that we see a lot more in the early stages of winter. It is as if they want to do a last beautiful dance around our garden before it gets too cold. Although I have added photos before of butterflies, we have noticed so many different species and they fulfil such an important role in nature, that we decided we will, when we have a chance, open a page just on butterflies on my website.

**All photos of butterflies by Garfield Krige**



Brown Playboy (*Deudorix antalus*) Bruin-spelertjie - Playboy? Hugh Hefner, eat your heart out!

Butterflies are not just pretty things flitting around to try and brighten our days. They fulfil a very important role in the pollination of plants and in the worldwide decline in the bee population; this is necessary for things like food production.

Butterflies also provide assistance for genetic variation in the plant species they that they collect nectar from. Many species of butterfly migrate over long distances. This allows pollen to be shared across groups of plants that are far apart from one

another. This helps plants to be more resilient against disease and gives them a better chance at survival.



Yes, this is the same butterfly! Left the underside and right the upper side, which reflects in the Afrikaans and English names. Mocker Bronze (*Cacyreus virilis*) Na-aper-malvabloutjie

Did you know that nearly two-thirds of all invertebrates could be connected in some way back to the butterfly on its food chain? So if this, seemingly insignificant insect, is lost to the ecosystem it could, potentially, cause the collapse of entire such systems that rely heavily on them.

Some other interesting things about butterflies:

- There are more than 17,500 recorded butterfly species in the world.
- Many butterflies migrate to warmer climates; some migrate an average of just over 4000 kilometres!
- An adult butterfly has a very short life - only around three to four weeks. However, the entire life cycle of a butterfly can range between 2 and 8 months, depending on the species. Some migratory butterflies, such as the North American Monarch, can live as long as 7 to 8 months in one generation.
- The Giant Swallowtail Butterfly, as its name implies, is one of the biggest butterflies, with a wing spread of 10 to just over 17.78 cm. This butterfly hails from the Florida area in the USA – where everything is always bigger – or so they say!
- Butterflies have been widely used by ecologists as model organisms to study the impact of habitat loss and climate change.



Once again, the same butterfly - left the underside and right the upper side. Cupreous Blue (*Eichochrysops messapus*) Koperbloutjie



African babul blue (*Azanus jesous*) Hemels-bloutjie

**And, as always, just for fun:**

If time is money – are ATM's time machines?

I could be a morning person – if morning started around noon!

Today someone knocked on the door asking for a small donation for the school's new swimming pool. I gave him a glass of water.

That's it from me for this month folks. Remember to plant flowering plants (especially indigenous wherever you can) in your garden, butterflies are not just there for their beauty, let us keep the ecosystem going!

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Goeie dag almal!

Terwyl ons nog bibber en bewe in die winterkoue is daar al wetenskaplikes wat hul beplanning vir die einde van die jaar regkry! Jip, onlangs lees ek dat 2016 een hele sekonde langer gaan wees! Op Oujaarsaand gaan 'n hele skrikkelsekonde by die aarde se tyd gevoeg word, so daardie dag, sowel as hierdie jaar, is dus een sekonde langer!

Met die byvoeging van die skrikkelsekonde, gaan die aarde se amptelike tyd weer in pas kom met die werklike rotasie van die aarde. Die rotasie van die aarde wissel soms as gevolg van ekstreme geologiese en weerkundige gebeure.

Tegnologie speel ook 'n groot rol hierin – in 2014 is die atoomhorlosie, die sogenaamde NIST-F2 in werking gestel, wat glo drie keer meer akkuraat as sy voorganger is. Hierdie horlosie sal in 300 miljoen jaar glo nie 'n sekonde wen of verloor nie. Nou-ja, ek sal nie oor 300 miljoen jaar hier wees om te weet of die ouens vir ons gelieg het of nie!

Nou wonder ek net of die ouens wat die nuwe jaar se koms altyd so woes vier besef hulle het een hele sekonde langer die jaar om alles reg te kry vir 2017!

Ek het begin dink daar is nou regtig niks snaaks in die veld aan die gang toe ek gisteroggend uit die bloute een van ons inheemse wit Gerberas met twee blommetjies aan in die veld raakloop! Die *Gerbera piloselloides* - ook bekend as die Swartteebossie, sien mens nie aldag in die veld nie, so ek was sommer woes bly toe ek dit raakloop! Loer gerus na ons webwerf onder Flora – Other Wildflowers of Sterkfontein, waar daar nog twee mooi foto's van die blommetjie is.



*Gerbera piloselloides* Swartteebossie (foto: Elmarie Krige)

Ek sien gereeld een van ons arende wat bietjie windsweef bo die Estate op soek na prooi. Met 'n alewige kavalkade van rasende kroonkiewiete kort op sy stert – hul glo vas hulle verjaag die vyand! En toe, net vandag op pad dorp toe sien ek die twee arende besig met huisie-huisie speel by 'n vorige nesarea op Nick se plot! Gelukkig het hulle 'n “arend-vriendelike” plot gekies om te gaan nesbou! Nou-ja ek kyk uit vir die nuweling – gelukkig sal die kuiken uitbroei wanneer die weer warmer is en kos hopelik ook meer volop!

**Alle skoenlapperfotos deur Garfield Krige**



Henning-se-swartogte (*Leptomyrina henningi*) Hennings Black-eye

Gewoonlik assosieer mens die somer met insekte soos skoenlappers. Ons het egter gevind ons sien baie meer en 'n groter verskeidenheid hierdie tyd van die jaar. Dis of hul vir oulaas 'n mooi dansie op ons tuinblomme kom doen voor die koue. Alhoewel ek al paar keer foto's van die mooi insekte geplaas het, het ons nou skielik agtergekom hoe 'n verskeidenheid van spesies hierheen kom en, wanneer ons kans kry, gaan ons beslis 'n webblad spesiaal net oor skoenlappers op ons webwerf oopmaak.

Skoenlappers is beslis nie net daar vir die mooi nie. Hulle speel 'n baie belangrike rol in die bestuiwing van plante en met die wêreldwye afname in die by-populasie is hulle baie nodig vir dinge soos voedselproduksie.



Grasjuweeltjie (*Chilades trochylus*) Grass Jewel Blue - die tweede foto met my wysvinger by gee 'n goeie idee van hoe klein hierdie skoenlappertjie is

Skoenlappers help ook met die genetiese variasie in plant spesies waar hul nektar van kry. Baie skoenlapperspesies migreer oor lang afstande en so help dit dat stuifmeel van groepe plante wat ver van mekaar af groei gedeel word. Met genetiese plantvariasies het spesies 'n sterker kans teen plantsiektes en kan dus beter oorleef.

Het julle geweet dat ampers twee-derdes van alle ongewerweldes kan op een of ander manier teruggeskakel word na die skoenlapper in hul voedselketting? Met ander woorde as hierdie, ampers onbeduidende insek, verlore raak deur uitwissing, dit 'n hele kettingreaksie kan veroorsaak. Die ekosisteem wat sterk staatmaak op die skoenlapper vir hul voortbestaan kan potensieel heeltemal in duie stort. Niks in die natuur is "per ongeluk" nie. Elke ding het sy plek in die natuur en neem jy een weg kan dit katastrofiese gevolge vir 'n ander hê.

'n Paar ander interessantheide oor skoenlappers:

- Daar is meer as 17,500 aangetekende spesies van skoenlappers wêreldwyd.
- Baie skoenlapperspesies migreer na warmer dele as dit koud word; van hulle migreer so rofweg oor die 4 000 kilometer!
- 'n Volwasse skoenlapper het 'n relatiewe kort leeftyd – ongeveer drie tot vier weke. Maar die hele lewensiklus van 'n skoenlapper is veel langer en,

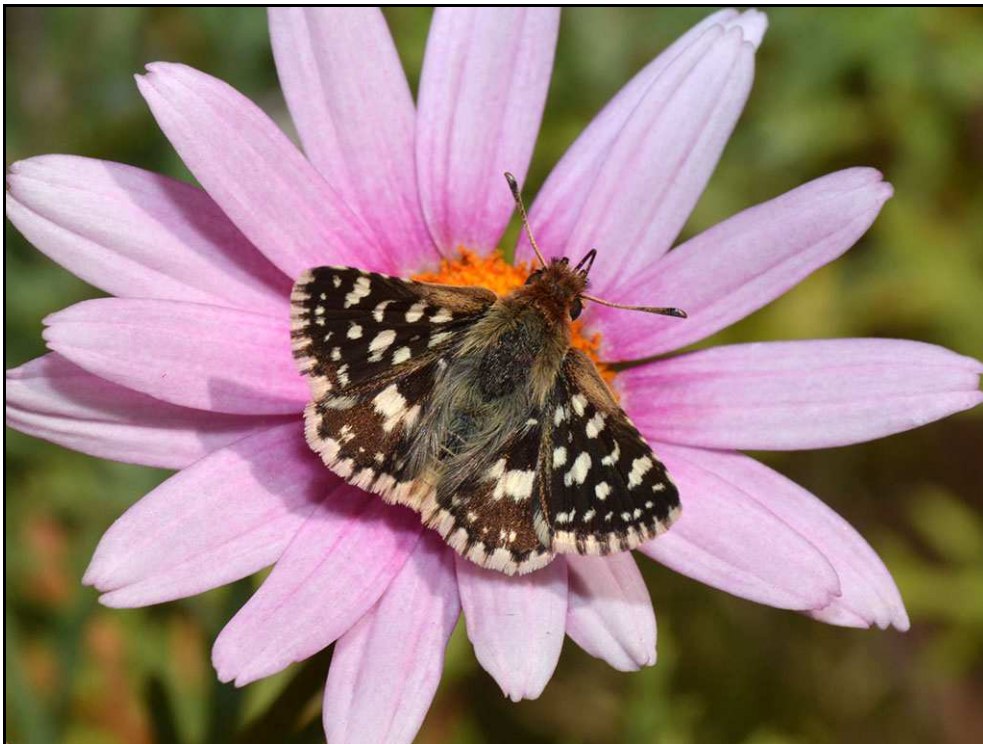
afhangende van die spesies, duur tussen twee en agt maande. Sekere migrerende spesies soos die Noord Amerikaanse Monarg kan so lank as sewe tot 8 maande leef in een generasie.

- Die Groot Swawelstert skoenlapper is een van die heel grootste skoenlappers. Die vlerkspan kan wissel tussen 10 en 17 cm. Hierdie knaap is van die Florida area in die VSA – waar alles mos altyd groter is. Of so vertel hulle mos graag!
- Skoenlappers word deur omgewingskundiges gebruik om die impak van habitat verlies en klimaatsverandering te bestudeer.

Een ding is verseker, ons skoenlappers het van die oulikste name in Afrikaans!



Links: Grasveldwitjie (*Belenois aurata aurata*) Brown-veined White en Regs: Bontrokkie (*Pontia helice helice*) Meadow White



Sterretjie-sandmannetjie, of Asterodia-sandmannetjie (*Spialia asterodia*) Star Sandman



**Sommer iets vir die snaaksigheid:**

Hoekom het klein Jannie die wekker by die venster uitgegooi? Hy wou kyk hoe tyd vlieg!

Nou ja, dis al van my hierdie maand. Onthou tog om blomdraende plante (veral inheems waar jul kan!) te plant en so skoelappers te lok – so hou ons die ekosisteem aan die gang!

**Erkennings/verwysings/References:**

WILLIS, C.K. & WOODHALL, S.E. (Compilers) 2010. Butterflies of South Africa's National Botanical Gardens. SANBI Biodiversity Series 16. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria.  
Butterflyconservation.org

**Totsiens, goodbye, adios, ciao, yia sas en do svidaniya!**

