

Dear Members of the Hangklip Botanical Society:

INTRODUCTION: On Saturday 21 st March 2026

The members of the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society overwhelmingly voted (there were only two abstentions) to close down the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa and voted in favour of the formation of the Hangklip Botanical Society NPC with the transfer of all the assets from the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa to Hangklip Botanical Society NPC.

As stated in the March 2026 Newsletter, the Hangklip Botanical Society NPC and the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa Committee that advises the Hangklip Botanical Society both strongly want to remain affiliated to the National Botanical Society via the Hangklip Botanical Society.

This has not been finalised yet, but everyone is aware of our desire, and hopefully this will be a seamless transition. The way that I see it is that you have a holding company, namely the Hangklip Botanical Society (the reasons for forming a holding company have been clearly spelt out at this Special AGM and other forums) and operating under the holding company is the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa.

You as individuals need to become members of the Hangklip Botanical Society and through the Hangklip Botanical Society you will be affiliated to the National Botanical Society. Sue McConnell has very kindly taken on the role of Membership Coordinator and already members of the old Supporters of the Kogelberg Branch would have received a letter signed by Tim Attwell and me explaining the transition and a membership application form. I do believe the letter is self-explanatory, but if anyone has any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Sue or me.

The branch continues to grow from strength to strength, and all facets of the branch are doing amazing work. See notes in this newsletter.

HAROLD PORTER NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDENS



Tim and I are committed to building a strong relationship with Senior Management and Staff at Harold Porter Gardens. We are arranging a meeting with Senior Management to discuss how we can strengthen this collaboration.

It is interesting to note that in the 2025/26 Financial Year, the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa donated over R100 000 worth of machinery and implement repairs, materials such as poles, reinforcing steel, etc., and even the purchase of a new weed eater, which has meant that the staff have been better enabled to maintain and improve the gardens and to make sure the gardens are a pleasing experience to visit.

There is a lot of work to be done, but I believe our input has made a difference.

Thanks to Viv vd Heyden and Jenny Pattinson and their team of gardeners, as they assist with maintaining the flowerbeds. Although it does seem to be an insurmountable task, I do believe we are making progress.

Chris Geldenhuys, Rob Boyd and I spent a morning spraying all the rampant patches of kikuyu grass with Focus Ultra, which is a very selective Fynbos-friendly herbicide; without a chemical intervention, the Kikuyu is going to take over all the flower beds.

One of the challenges is to be able to start planting fynbos plants in the beds that have been cleared, as Harold Porter Gardens are making very few plants these days, but hopefully this will change in the not-too-distant future.

As per the previous month, Chris Geldenhuys (Hardcore Hackers) and Rob Boyd (Betty's Bay Hack) have agreed to help us remove dead trees in the Harold Porter Gardens to clear a large area of overgrown vegetation, especially "Keurbooms" on the western side of the gardens.



I have nothing to add to the March Newsletter. We are still awaiting feedback from the National Botanical Society of South Africa as to when they will be transforming to a Non-Profit Company with external entities (there are only two proposed at present, Kogelberg Branch and Kirstenbosch Branch), but we continue with our transformation process and with our VAT Registration process, hopefully very imminent, but already we are up and running as the Hangklip Botanical Society trading as the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa.

WEATHER

What is of concern is that the weather forecasters at this stage are predicting greater than a 60% chance of a strong El Niño weather formation, which forms when sea surface temperatures warm beyond a certain threshold in the equatorial latitude of the Pacific Ocean.

Known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), the shifting weather dance has global consequences, and all global and climate centres, including the South African Weather Service, point to Elnino appearing before the Southern Hemisphere Spring.

All predictions say that the whole of Southern Africa could have an abnormally dry summer next year. The predictions are also that the Western Cape Winter will be warmer and drier than normal. I do believe we have learnt a great deal of lessons from the 2015-2017 drought, and we have learnt to work with water more prudently, and our water resources are managed better. March 2026 rainfall was 48mm at the Harold Porter Gardens, which was below the long-term average for March. To date in April, we have recorded 30mm which is also very much on par with average. The months we expect cooler weather and a great deal of rainfall are May to August, and these will be the interesting months to watch.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Average
Jan	42	74	77	47	45	93	17	7	54	24	33	53	47
Feb	28	23	18	54	27	38	30	19	85	31	24	191	34
Mar	28	132	23	62	119	13	187	41	173	34	43	48	78
Apr	14	71	26	88	34	51	12	32	68	137	27	164	51
May	56	35	6	90	71	67	263	90	263	31	153	193	102
Jun	134	167	119	157	104	161	213	212	277	133	202	44*	171
Jul	246	144	110	84	195	168	211	91	126	391	195		178
Aug	134	110	148	188	67	196	193	119	89	219	111		143
Sep	29	104	51	113	140	100	33	44	232	71	61		92
Oct	71	33	72	28	12	84	124	14	65	30	28		53
Nov	45	12	140	59	61	127	69	25	38	38	7		61
Dec	18	32	10	21	61	39	125	89	34	26	29		46
Annual Total	845	937	800	991	936	1137	1477	783	1504	1165	913	693*	1058

HAROLD PORTER BOOK AND CRAFT SHOP



The shop continues to perform well, with March **sales 7% up** on the previous March. As we keep on moving the bar higher and higher, it is going to be more difficult to keep on exceeding the previous year's sales by double-digit numbers, but we continue to try. We started the new financial year (**1 April 2026**) with a bang and with a very successful Easter Plant Sale exceeding our wildest hopes, which meant that our turnover for the first twelve days of April was equal to the whole of April 2025. One must remember that 2025 also included Easter Plant sales, so we are comparing like with like.

The Easter Plant Sale organised solely by the Kogelberg Branch has become a social highlight, and it was wonderful to see groups amongst the plants. Some sitting on the lawn and some sitting on chairs, having a wonderful time. I know the volunteers greatly enjoyed their two days of interaction during the plant sales. It is now something that has to be on the social calendar for the Hangklip region every year.

Saturday 21 st March 2026 Book Launch by Tim Lundy "Lundy's Best Walks in the Cape Peninsula: This was a success. Probably would have liked to have seen more sales, but still it did well; it was just such an action-packed weekend.

Saturday 11 th April 2026 Book Launch by Eugene Moll "Sappi Tree Spotting Cape – Coast to Kalahari": This was a great success, well attended, and I know that everyone who attended it enjoyed it immensely. Thanks to Eugene Moll.

Saturday 9 May 2026 at 10h30 for 11 am: We have another book launch: "The First Safari", author Ian Glenn will tell us about his book. This book tells us how, for a quarter of a century, a South African Researcher searched for Levillant's Travel Notebooks and the fate of his collection and tried to solve the puzzles and mysteries of Levillant's life and times. This book is not only intended for would-be researchers but also for people interested in the bush or birding and who want to know why Levillant was our greatest naturalist.



Janet is taking a week's leave in April for her daughter's wedding, and we wish her the very best for the wedding. It is wonderful how the volunteers have eagerly stepped in to man the shop for the week that Janet is away.

FRIENDS OF THE HAROLD PORTER GARDENS

Viv and Jenny and their merry band of gardeners continue to do great work in Harold Porter Gardens. The weather is more friendly for gardening now. We appeal to anyone who has a great love for the Harold Porter National Gardens in the Kogelberg Biosphere to assist Viv and Jenny with the gardening activities.

The next gardening session is:

Thursday 16 th April 2026 at 08h30 with Viv von der Heyden.

Please note the winter starting time.

Jenny Pattinson's next session is Tuesday 21 st April 2026 at 08h30.

If you would like to volunteer, all you need to do is pitch up at the Harold Porter Gardens at the designated times; we have the tools and protective clothing; we just desperately need your hands to help.

KOGELBERG GARDEN CIRCLE

By all accounts, the visit to Luce and Leon Siecker's garden in Marine Drive, Betty's Bay was a great success, and the photos that were taken of the event were amazing. Thanks to Luce and her husband Leon for opening up their garden for the garden circle, but also to Galia for finding these hidden gems and getting people to open up their gardens for our visits. The next garden circle meeting will be on Friday 17 April 2026 at 09h30. The venue is: 2825 Clarence Drive, Betty's Bay. Our hostess this month is Andrea Kampmann, who moved to Betty's Bay two years ago from Gaborone, Botswana. Their house was used as a holiday home for many years, and the garden was mainly left to its own devices, with many plants popping up randomly. Like many properties in our area, the front garden is dryish, and the back garden is wettish. So where to now? Will you invite more experienced gardeners (who have really walked round and round in circles) to get advice and ideas from them, especially on pruning trees and bushes?

So, join us as we exchange experiences of what to do and what not to do and planting for different microclimates with a practical demonstration on pruning. Tea/coffee/biscuits will be served as always, and we would really appreciate a donation towards keeping the group going.

Convenor: Galia Manicom Cell: 082 963 3804

CREW

The Kogelberg Crew Team continues to do wonderful work in searching for endangered or near-endangered species, recording the numbers and locations, and it all helps with conservation of the fynbos in the Kogelberg Biosphere. I am fortunate to see the Crew's monthly report, and it is amazing what they do discover in the Kogelberg mountains. We cannot let on even what species are found because, as soon as a really endangered plant is noted and its location is noted, someone, somehow or other, gets to steal it. So, not that we want to be secretive, but it is for the sake of preserving the fynbos that we are so secretive.

To Gerda Theron and her team, thank you very much. Keep up the good work; we are proud of what you do. On behalf of the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society.

Contact: Gerda Theron Email: kogelbergcrew@gmail.com

MONTHLY TALKS

The next monthly talk will take place on:
Saturday 18 April 2026 at 17h30.

The talk will be given by Corlie Hugo, CEO of the Kogelberg Biosphere. Connect with nature enthusiasts and learn from Corlie Hugo, an expert on managing and preserving the exceptional Kogelberg Biosphere, one of the most remarkable natural landscapes in the world. It promises to provide us with a deeper understanding of the challenges we face and how thoughtful stewardship can ensure conservation of our forests, rivers, wildlife and coastal plains.

Join us at 17h30 for 18h00 (enjoy a glass of wine before the talk). In the Nivenia Hall, Harold Porter Gardens. **A contribution towards the evening's expenses will be appreciated.

Please RSVP via WhatsApp to 079 657 2385 or Email hpbookrsvp@gmail.com

KOGELBERG BRANCH MONTHLY WALK

The next monthly walk will take place on Saturday 18 th April 2026. Tim says as follows: “We will be walking up from Fairy Glen to hopefully find Erica Pillansii. There are two trails, one stage fairly low and another that goes up the steep Klipspringer Trail to Dot’s Dash. Which of the two we will take will depend on the capabilities of the group.

To meet as usual at the **Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens at 09h00 in the parking area on Saturday 18 th April 2026.**

CONCLUSION

The branch amazes me with all that it achieves in its work to conserve the fynbos of the Kogelberg Biosphere. There are so many people working relentlessly in this greater conservation project, either in the shop to make sure that we have funds to fund all these projects (and create stimulus for the many volunteers) and the hackers that do unbelievable good work, the garden circle that does a huge job of education and getting people to appreciate the fynbos, and the Fight For Fynbos and plant rescue, driven by Galia Manicom.

The efforts of the Friends of the Harold Porter, in trying to maintain the gardens in as pristine a condition as possible, and then all the other people that are never hesitant to put up their hands when asked to do something on behalf of the Kogelberg Branch of the Botanical Society of South Africa.

To all of you, thank you. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. We truly live in a beautiful part of the world, but I have come to realise that what makes this place so much more special than any other place in the world is the people that make up the community. We have a truly wonderful, caring and supportive community. To all of you, thanks for your tremendous efforts.

Best Wishes,

Peter Dall

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