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Photo by Luke Esprey
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GROW WITH US AND ORDER NOW
A recent pulpwood trade conference in Australia, attended by a number of South Africans, provided a useful opportunity to assess the current and future conditions in the hardwood pulpwood and woodchip markets that are so important to NCT’s members.

What was clear from reports from all of the main wood exporting countries is that there are no huge waves of “new” hardwood that are likely to flood the markets that buy from South Africa.

- There were fears a few years ago that South American countries like Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, who have forestry-friendly governments and have expanded their forestry areas significantly in recent decades, would be putting millions of new tonnes into the hardwood export market by now.
- A number of export projects have indeed been started, but so too have many pulp mill expansions and greenfield pulp projects. Expanded domestic pulp production will absorb most of the new fibre in these countries in the medium term and any growth in exports to countries such as Japan is not likely to be significant, particularly given the expensive prevailing freight costs.
- There are likely to be modest increases in the exports from SE Asian countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia, but here China, who recently swung from being a net exporter of pulpwood to a net importer, will be playing an increasing role as buyer.
- The country that does have increasing volumes of plantation Eucalyptus becoming available for the export market, mostly to Japan, is Australia. Favourable taxation laws in this country have resulted in new MIS (Managed Investment Scheme) afforestation over the last 10 years, peaking at over 100 000 hectares of new planting in 2000.

At the same time, though, Australia is under pressure, from its own citizens and its trading customers, to reduce logging in its native forests. The net result is that Australia’s exports will probably show some growth (if there are no new domestic pulp projects), but most of its plantation-grown timber will replace native forest harvests. One large project that will have an effect on the level of Australia’s exports - if it goes ahead - is the Gunns Pulp Mill in Tasmania, which is planned for an intake of 3.2 million tonnes of timber per year.

As far as demand prognosis goes, it was reported by leading consultants that global pulping capacity will grow by at least 7.2 million tonnes in the next four years, most of this being hardwood kraft in the southern hemisphere.

Beyond 2010 there are plans in various stages of development for a further nine million tonnes. This expansion is expected to maintain keen competition in the market for hardwood pulpwood and woodchips.

This competitive fibre market has led to an upward trend in average global prices since 2003 (see graph), and all indications are that the trend will continue upwards in the foreseeable future.

Timber growers in South Africa, and in other countries that market some of their resource internationally, can anticipate a buoyant market in the coming years.
A Potential Partner in PULP
NCT and the Rottneros Group, a leading manufacturer of market pulp in Sweden, have signed a Letter of Intent to carry out further research into the possible construction of a Eucalyptus-based BCTMP (bleached, chemi-thermo, mechanical pulp) mill at Richards Bay.

NCT, through its subsidiary, Pulp United (Pty) Limited, has been working on this project for some time.

In August 2006, Rottneros announced plans to close down operations at one of its mills at Utansjö in Sweden and move all or part of this production to a country with lower and more stable electricity prices than Sweden. NCT and South Africa presented an ideal opportunity to pursue this alternative.

"South Africa fulfills the demands to relocate and NCT has a good supply of the resource required" says Rottneros' CEO, Lars Blecko. "While the Co-operative has sound knowledge of the South African pulpwood market, Rottneros has good knowledge of the global pulp market," he continues.

The proposed co-operation will examine the feasibility of moving some of the core equipment currently installed at the Rottneros Utansjö mill in Sweden. This line was only commissioned in 2005 and the core components are virtually new.

"The scope, size and cost of the mill will depend on the outcome of the new studies but a final decision as to whether or not the project will go ahead will be made by the end of July this year," says Peter Keyworth, NCT's General Manager of Special Projects.

"The mill's capacity will probably reduce to 140 000 tonnes per year from the output of 300 000 tonnes per annum originally envisaged; costs in plant machinery may improve if these are brought in from the plant in Sweden," continues Keyworth.

In 2003, NCT formed Pulp United with Sweden's Södra Cell but suffered a setback when the Swedish shareholder withdrew from the project in 2005. NCT opted to purchase Södra's shares in the jointly-owned company and continued with the feasibility study.

To date, Pulp United has environmental approval and has secured an option on a 60ha site in the Alton North Industrial Development Zone of Richards Bay. A supply agreement with Eskom for electricity is yet to be finalised.
NCT has set up a new office in Piet Retief.
The office provides a full range of forestry services and advice to NCT’s members north of the Phongola River and in Swaziland.

“This has been long in the making,” says NCT director, Philip Day. “Membership numbers have increased over the years and it was essential for NCT to set up a northern office and service these members,” he continues.

Although NCT operates predominantly in KwaZulu-Natal, many private timber farmers from as far as the Cape, Mpumalanga and even Limpopo provinces have applied for membership recently to benefit from co-operative principles, benefits and representation on offer. The Piet Retief office is well-placed to service the interests of these private timber farmers who are now becoming members.

The office is managed by Jeremy Carr (above), NCT’s forester and member services co-ordinator who will not only find the best markets for members’ timber, but also ensure that they receive the best advice on logistics, forest technology and market trends.

Members who wish to visit the new office, should make prior arrangements with Jeremy on 083 634 6646 or jeremy@nctforest.com.

NCT’s office is located at 3b Park Crescent East, Piet Retief.

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Did you know?

... that 60%-80% of timber extracted from the Amazon comes from illegal logging and more than 64% goes towards domestic consumption? Every eight seconds, an area equivalent to a football field is deforested in the Amazon.

On the brighter side, more than 35 cities and municipalities in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil, have joined the “Cities Friends of the Amazon” programme. The initiative is to stimulate cities and municipalities to develop legislation that prevents them from purchasing illegal timber.

FSC International News+Notes
The question of land ownership and redistribution is an extremely emotive issue and one that all stakeholders including Government, communities and landowners are focussing on though from different perspectives.

Government is acutely aware of the slow pace of service delivery and land reform in general. Communities, whose expectations have been raised, are becoming frustrated, impatient, uncertain and worried about their future. Added to this are red tape and the lack of capacity in the responsible Government agencies namely the Land Claims Commission (LCC) and the Department of Land Affairs.

Land restitution (commonly referred to as "land claims") is one of three pillars of the Government's Land Reform Programme; the others being tenancy reform and land redistribution.

With regard to land restitution, the Government has set a target for all outstanding land claims to be finalised by the end of 2008. Although most urban land claims have been settled, very few rural ones have been and it is highly unlikely that the process will be completed by the deadline set. Despite the deadline for submissions of claims was the end of 1998, claims are still being gazetted on a weekly basis and will continue into the foreseeable future.

However, what is clear is that the process to date has been fraught with problems, too numerous to mention. Of major concern is the haphazard claim validation process together with the number of spurious claims lodged and the difficulty in information transfer between the LCC and the affected landowners.

What has also become apparent is that claimants are no longer being deterred by the 1913 cut-off where white ownership pre-dates 1913, claiming that they or their ancestors had lost their “beneficial use rights”, a very broad interpretation and one that invariably applies to the entire property and not just that portion upon which the rights were granted.

Another potential problem is that as a general rule, the LCC will only pay compensation to affected landowners for land and fixed improvements. The trees on the restituted land would technically still belong to the ex-landowner. In practice this could lead to untold problems.

In terms of future developments, it is likely that to speed up the restitution process, Government will scrap the willing buyer–willing seller principle and use expropriation more aggressively.

To date very few restitution claims have been concluded on timber farms but this will increase in the months to come. Growers should be aware of what to do as and when claims are lodged in their area, the first is to form a Committee of affected landowners to deal with the LCC as a group and not as individuals. Decisions then need to be made as to whether or not the claims should be contested and if so, funding raised to pay for deed searches and other research to be undertaken and to fund possible legal costs.

The potential impact of land claims (and redistribution) on the forestry industry and the knock-on effect that this may have on the forest products industry could be hugely detrimental. It is in everybody's interest that the restitution process be completed as quickly as possible and in a manner that is fair, transparent and above all, one that does as little damage to the future sustainability of forestry.
Ernst Ortmann an NCT member from Hermannsburg saved a 1958 issue of the Farmer’s Weekly from the recycling bin which details the history of the wattle tree in South Africa. Here is an extract from the original publication.

Farmer’s Weekly • December 31, 1958
From a matchbox of seed grew South Africa’s mighty wattle industry. Here is the fascinating story from Conrad Lighton’s book, Sisters of South (published by Howard Timmins), of one man’s

ABOVE: A matchbox of tiny seed like this started South Africa’s wattle industry
FROM the packing case which served as his house on the outskirts of Maritzburg, John Vanderplank* once fired at lions which prowled too closely to the saplings surrounding his primitive home. From the same site now you can look over Natal's attractive capital city with its schools and colleges - and largest factory in the world for the wattle extract process.

Speaking figuratively, Johan Vanderplank laid the foundation of that factory with the trees that once grew round the packing case. Those trees sprang from seed he had brought from Australia in a matchbox. Had he not been crossed in love he would never have brought that matchbox to Natal, and South Africa might have lost the great wattle industry that supplies many countries, including Australia, with bark today.

The story starts in England during the reign of William III, Prince of Orange, who desired to improve the industries of England. With this object he travelled through Holland and returned with several Dutch families. The Vanderplanks were among them, experts at wool and cloth manufacture. They settled at Smithfield and built a clothing factory. John Vanderplank was one of the grandsons. His hobby was yachting on the Thames where, in the early 1830’s he often sailed the Cygnet belonging to him and his brother Bartholomew.

**Opportunity**

John loved the sea and wished to see the world. When he called upon a Colonel Swanston who had just returned to London from Tasmania, he got his opportunity. The Colonel was taking his family back to Tasmania and invited John to sail with them. But there was more to his visit to the Swanstons than that. In their home he met Miss Louise Whitechurch and fell in love with her. She returned his affections, and it was mutually agreed that John should make his trip to Tasmania before returning to London to marry and settle down.

John Vanderplank accordingly sailed with the Swanstons via the Cape. When they arrived at the mouth of the Tamar which led to the Colonel’s home they found that a sand bar prevented the ship from sailing up the river.

The recurring sand block was a problem that embarrassed the authorities. John Vanderplank’s engineering knowledge prompted him to offer to try to remove the obstacle permanently. He was so certain of himself that he signed a contract. His confidence was justified; he removed the sand for all time, and the Government was keen to retain his services. Delighted with the prospects for his future, John Vanderplank sailed back to London for his bride, who appeared to be as eager as he was to start life afresh on the other side of the world.

But the young couple never sailed. There was a quarrel and the engagement broken off. John, in his bitter disappointment, spent all his savings on buying a schooner. Then he sailed, not to Tasmania, but to the Baltic to trade in timber.

After his venture in the Baltic, John Vanderplank sailed in 1838 in the St. Thomas Laurie for Tasmania with an old school friend, Tom Shears. During the voyage the captain died, and the ship called at Cape Town. Here John was persuaded by a leading merchant to visit Port Natal, as Durban was then known. John Vanderplank took an immediate liking to Natal, and made several trips to the green midlands.

**One More Voyage**

This was the country he wanted to settle in. But before he gave up seafaring for good, he decided to make one more voyage to Australia. Perhaps, too, he wanted to see the Swanstons again. He sailed for Australia and returned a year later.

*It is of interest to note that Dr J.E. Vanderplank, chief of the Division of Plant Pathology in Pretoria, is a grandson of Mr John Vanderplank. Mrs Edith Carter, a daughter of the wattle pioneer, and an aunt of Dr Vanderplank, lives in Greytown. This is a unique father-daughter span embracing as it does 150 years of South African history.*
The day he returned, Vanderplank stood alone in the Australian bush which, for miles around was smoky-green with wattles. He remembered the treeless countryside to which he would be returning; so he filled a matchbox with seed.

John Vanderplank was the first Englishman to farm in Natal. He planted his wattle seed round his packing-case home, which was a rendezvous for all travellers. Farmers on trek asked him for seeds, and these he gladly supplied.

The wattle belts spread and trees rapidly matured, for Natal’s climate was eminently suitable. No one thought much about them until George Sutton, from the village of Howick, became interested in a film of moisture lying between the bole of the wattle and its bark.

He was so convinced that he had stumbled on some secret that he sent several specimens to London for analysis, but nothing was done, and Sutton forgot the whole thing.

Twelve years passed before a chemist discovered, in a warehouse, the wattle strips sent by Sutton. He tested them and found they contained tannic acid. He exhibited them at a Royal Colonial Institute show, and leather tanners were very interested.

John Vanderplank died in 1882 unaware of the heritage he had left. Only four years later the first export of Natal’s wattle bark was made to England. There were 39 packages valued at £11. Rapid strides were made in the following five years and exports in 1891 were worth £15,000.

Mr Sutton spent his spare time on his farm, Fair Fell, writing a booklet recording progress and giving information from Australia on wattle cultivation.

Germination

One can imagine how the sceptics received his instructions on planting the wattle seed. Boiling water was recommended for hastening germination. The seeds could be scalded or cooked for a few minutes. Alternatively they could be dropped in hot ash and sown with the ash. It seemed odd advice. The Australians had learnt the secret from the terrible bush fires which devastated the countryside, for the forests invariably sprang to green life again with the seed that had been split by the intense heat.

By 1898 there were 22,000 acres under wattle in Natal and in 1900 a trail shipment of 500 tons of the bark was actually sent to Australia. This was not a case of sending coal to Newcastle. The bark could be produced more cheaply in Natal, and Australia could take the supply.

In 1910 the forestry expert, Mr T.R. Sim, reporting on the Mount Edgecombe estate at Quanda, Natal, stated: “The results are a revelation. Not only is the wattle proving successful on the coast, and on all soils tried from pure sand to stiff clay and hard dry soil, but the growth has never been equalled.

“At any age after the trees are a foot in height, an average of a foot a month growth seems so far to hold good right through the season. Specimens measured in 24 feet high in 18 months with a circumference of 12 inches just above the ground. The average is twice that produced on most good wattle farms up country.”

Today wattle plantations cover 700,000 acres in South Africa and the exports of wattle extract and wattle bark have a value exceeding £5,000,000. In 1953 the figure was £6,802,000. There are eight wattle extract factories, the one in Maritzburg being the largest in the world.
There are wattle trees up to 50 feet in height in the Transvaal. Hundreds of thousands of stout wattle poles are used in mining operations after being stripped of the valuable bark.

And the wealth of the wattle in Africa is spreading northwards. It is providing Rhodesia with a new national industry and plantations there already exceed 25,000 acres. Umtali has a bark mill and extract factories are to be built at Melsetter and Inyanga. Hardwood and pulpwood industries will grow up with the wattle trees in Rhodesia. There seems no end to the legacy contained in Vanderplank's matchbox.

The resting place of the once lovelorn John Vanderplank overlooks the thousands of acres he once owned at Camperdown, between Maritzburg and Durban. As far as the eye can see the country is green with wattle.

**How did the wattle get its name?**

It is the name that came most readily to the lips of the Australian pioneers who used the long, plaint twigs of the ubiquitous acacias as "wattling" when they built daub huts. Wattle soon became the popular term for the trees. A national sentiment grew up with it and the various States observe Wattle Day every year on August 1 or September 1 depending on the flowering season in each State. On Wattle Day the fluffy gold blossom is used lavishly for decoration.

Australian wattle solved a problem that had baffled South Africa for 200 years - the drift sand problem. Van Riebeeck found the sand on Cape Town's doorstep in 1652. It was still there in 1872 when Mr De Smidt stood up in the House of Assembly and asked the Colonial Secretary what was being done to prevent the spread of drift sands. Twelve miles out of the town on the Maitland Road it was "fearful to look at", he exclaimed.

Two years later wattle seed from Australia was being planted extensively on the Cape Flats to bind the sand and prevent it blowing about.

Three kinds were given a trial: the acacia saligna, the weeping wattle of Western Australia; the acacia Cyclops, a smaller and bushy variety; the acacia longfolia, or rapid spreading Sydney golden wattle which is now popularly known as the Port Jackson tree.

It was a good choice from the 600 varieties of Australia's national flower. They all thrived,
subduing the loose sand which had refused to harbour vegetation since the dawn of time, when the receding ocean first left the Cape Peninsula joined to the mainland.

**Verdant Victory**

The tiny irrepressible seeds from Australia began to change the landscape almost overnight. Where the stately blue gums, procured from Australia by Sir George Grey in 1858, failed in the same task, the humble wattles scored a verdant victory and made it possible for the giant eucalyptus to gain a footing.

In 1879 J. Storr Lister, Superintendent of Plantations, was able to report that a further 80 acres of drift sand had been planted and fixed. The old custom of arresting the sand by bush screens at right angles to the prevailing wind had been wholly abandoned, he wrote. Numerous applications for the seed of both wattle and gums were being received from the public, Mr Lister added. But he regretted that through ignorance and from lack of method in planting, good seed was being wasted. He gave the instance of a man in a country town who complained that he could not raise any gum trees no matter how hard he tried. It was discovered that he had preserved and sown the small red husk found in the capsule and thrown away the seed.

The successful introduction of wattle on the Cape Flats was followed by similar experiments at Port Elizabeth and East London. Early in the ‘eighties an enormous area of rolling sand had been reclaimed near these ports.

The Port Jackson wattle grows rampant in many places along the South African coast today and people are apt to regard it as a weed, even a pest. But it cannot be overlooked that it nobly did the job it was given to do. It produced new industries, it reclaimed sandy wastes, it brought a new golden beauty to the springtime landscape; and it produced fencing material and an abundancy of fuel emitting clearer and greater heat than other firewood.

**Sir Lowry Cole**

The eucalyptus has been established in South Africa half a century longer than the wattle. The first were brought from Mauritius by Sir Lowry Cole in 1828 where he had been rearing them from Australian seed. When he was transferred to the Cape he brought a selection of seedlings with him. Nine survived the sea trip and were planted in the grounds round about Government House, Cape Town.

By 1886 only two remained and both were in the Botanical Gardens. In 1943 the only survivor had to be cut down. This veteran pioneer gum stood at the central entrance gates next to Government Avenue. It was not much more than a stump during the last 25 ears of its life. Mr Van der Houten had the pathway round it dug up and saw the tree was nourished; but it was unavailing. Now the oldest gums in the Peninsula are the giants
outside Wynberg Camp which are reckoned to be centenarians.

**General Smuts**

General Smuts wrote: “The various Australian acacia and eucalyptus species thrive here like weeds and completely outpace our beautiful native forms.”

On the credit side a lot can be said for gums. They are a national asset. South Africa has urgent need of all its eucalyptus plantations. Our country is exceedingly poor in timber. Australia has 90 acres of timber for every one of ours, and New Zealand has 20.

Australia has been settled only 13 years when it began to trade in timber with the Cape. The brig Anna Josepha left Sydney in November 1801 for Cape Town via Cape Horn loaded with spars for masts and coal. The cargo was sold immediately at 36 dollars (nearly £6 sterling) per ton. That was the first sale of Australian timber in South Africa. There was no doubt about the excellence of the spars. The brig’s top-masts and yards were cut from the same timber, and had been well and truly tested in the heavy weather encountered on the voyage round the Horn.

It was only in the ‘seventies that the gums began to be planted on a big scale at the Cape. The planting of the Worcester plantations in 1876, the Tokai nurseries were established and within a decade 33 species were thriving. In 1878 alone the Forestry Department raised and sold more than 67,000 young trees at Cape Town and Worcester. There were then 80,000 blue gums flourishing at Worcester plantation. Avenues were laid out in the town but, unfortunately, thousands of the trees were destroyed by a borer in 1908.

**Durbanville**

It was in the ‘seventies that the lovely blue gum avenue was planted leading to Durbanville. Luckily no borer worried the 3,000 trees that were set after the Rev. George Lawrence of the English Church, Durbanville, had stirred public opinion to provide shade and beauty.

The noble trees are as magnificent a sight as you will see anywhere in the Western Province today, and when they are shedding their bark in winter the pinks and browns of the trunks are tints that the artist must envy.

The biggest blue gum in South Africa stands on the bank of the Dwars River at Ceres. It rises 132 feet and its girth at breast level is 28 feet. According to Mr J.D. Keet, Director of Forestry from 1935 to 1943, the tree dates from about 1875.

The timber of the blue gum (eucalyptus globulus) is pale, hard and durable. In transverse strain its strength equals English oak, and it is one of the best timbers for joists, studs and rafters. The wood yields valuable by-products. A ton of green timer from the trunk stripped of bark give 17 ounces of pure potash.

In the First World War the blue gum showed its adaptability. In April 1917 the owner of a plantation near Pretoria drew the attention of the Department of Agriculture to fungus on the trees. There was a great shortage of khaki-coloured material at the time and he believed that the golden brown powder in the “puff balls” could produce a dye. Experiments proved that the powder in the solution of ammonia made a khaki dye.

**Oil Tests**

The Department of Agriculture in 1932 reported on the possibility of producing oil of eucalyptus on a commercial scale in South Africa. Oils were sent to the Imperial Institute in London. Tests there showed that the oils were of very good quality – in fact were better than the corresponding ones from Australia. It was obvious, however, that the world market was over-supplied and that production in South Africa would not pay.

No other tree can equal the gums for honey production. The gums must account for an appreciable portion of South Africa’s annual honey harvest. An Australian apiarist with several hundred bee colonies once harvested 660lb. of honey per hive thanks to gum blossom. The dark eucalyptus honey is not as attractive looking as the light amber honey from Lucerne and heaths, but the claim is made that it is richer in medicinal qualities.

At least one of the gums was introduced to South Africa via Europe. This was the eucalyptus macarthurii, or Camden Woollybutt, named after a descendant of Captain Macarthur of Merino fame. Seeds of this variety were brought from Europe by General Joubert who established the trees on his farm Spandekroon, near Standerton in Transvaal. This variety of gum grows to 80 feet and has a rough woolly bark. It is native to the district of Camden, New South Wales, where Captain Macarthur farmed the Gordon Merinos from Cape Town.

South Africa is infinitely the richer for cultivation of the gums.
CTC hosted a number of visitors from Japan recently. Motoyuki Oka, President of Sumitomo Corporation visited in February followed by Matsumoto Nakamura, President of Nippon Paper Industries and Nippon Paper Group in March.

The Nippon delegation was made up of Deputy General Manager, Tetsuo Matsumoto and Atsushi Arimoto, Nippon representative based in Pietermaritzburg. Accompanying them from Sumitomo Corporation were Yasuo Kumagai, General Manager, Material & Supplies Division, Tokyo; Satoshi Ishikawa, Manager, Pulp & Paper Department Tokyo, Tatsuo Hattori, General Manager, Johannesburg and Tadashi Hosaka, Manager, Johannesburg.

After taking in some of the popular sights of South Africa, the group toured the CTC Mill at Richards Bay and were hosted at a function by CTC. Nippon Paper presented CTC with a Japanese “Wadaiko” Drum (widely used in ceremonies and festivals in Japan). Seen here (right) is President, Mr Nakamura demonstrating the drum at the gift presentation.

A tree planting ceremony was held at CTC’s Longridge Forestry Estate to commemorate Mr Nakamura’s first visit to South Africa. He is seen here with Chris Hiestermann, CTC’s Chairman (top right).

Chris Hiestermann has been elected Chairman to the CTC Board on the retirement of Peter Lorenz who served as Chairman for 14 years. Chris joined CTC as an alternate director in 1996 and became a director in 1997.
Only in its second year of production, NCT Durban Wood Chips has exceeded all expectations and continues to supply quality woodchips to Japan.

To date, production stands at 35 000 tonnes per month compared to 20 000 tonnes per month at inception. The mill expects to achieve its first million tonnes by September this year. Twenty-four shipments to Japan have taken place with 11 shipments expected this year.

The plant was designed to operate on a “just-in-time” principle, with logs being chipped immediately after arrival at the facility and then directly loaded onto the ship. The storage shed can hold up to two shiploads of woodchips.

A unique feature of the mill is its situation. It is a mere 50 metres from berth compared to other wood chipping mills that have kilometres of conveyers leading to the ship loader and where, in some cases, a barge system is used to load vessels. At Durban, ship loading activities are confined to a small, manageable area. It also offers the benefit of reduced time in loading ships compared to other international plants.

NCT Durban Wood Chips’ main customer, Hokuetsu Paper Mills Limited, has been delighted with the quality of woodchips. All woodchips are destined for the Niigata Mill in Japan where Hokuetsu is in the process of installing a new digester. The expansion project is at an advanced stage and includes the upgrading of their port facilities. The project is on schedule with increased volume intake and will be phased in by 2010.

It is business as usual at ShinCel following NCT’s acquisition of the remaining shares in this company.

Customers and staff alike are extremely positive regarding the acquisition.

ShinCel’s Japanese customers are delighted that the new owners are a timber co-operative. This means that all benefits of the business will be passed on to participating members which results in a more secure and sustainable supply source for them.

New faces at senior level include Harald Niebuhr (executive director at NCT Forestry), who takes up chairmanship and Gawie Swart (ex Mondi) who has joined the ranks as Financial Manager.

ShinCel exports 500 000 – 700 000 ADTs (air dried tonnes) per annum to Japan. It remains an efficient, productive and service-orientated business.
Thaumastocoris is one of the new emerging invertebrate pests found in exotic eucalyptus commercial plantations in South Africa. It was first reported in South Africa in 2005, with sightings in the lowveld of Mpumalanga. Since then, it has spread rapidly throughout the country with reports as far south as Stellenbosch.

The pest poses a significant threat to eucalypt plantations in South Africa. It is important to monitor outbreaks and understand the biology of this insect to develop management strategies. This insect is of the order Hemiptera (true bugs). The family Thaumastocoridae comprises of small phytophagous (feeding on plants) bugs. Two sub-families are recognized, the Xylastocorinae with two genera and the Thaumastocorinae with four genera. (Carpintero and Dellape 2006).

Thaumastocoris peregrinus is a small (2-4 mm) sap-sucking insect. It originates from Australia and kills the leaves reducing the trees photosynthetic ability (the process by which plants convert sunlight to food). The lack of food results in stunted growth and even death of severely infested trees.

The foliage on a tree infested with Thaumastocoris is usually seen to turn a deep red/brown, starting at the northern side of the canopy, but progressively spreading to the entire canopy. This is sometimes referred to as “winter bronzing” and/or “winter die-back”.

Although this phenomenon occurs throughout the year, the bronzing of leaves usually appears during high infestation levels of Thaumastocoris.

The tree may, however, appear to recover when the Thaumastocoris population is reduced when unfavourable conditions for their survival
Thaumastocoris are gregarious insects with adults and nymphs occurring on the same leaf. They have a very short life cycle (35 days) allowing several generations to develop in a year.

Each female will produce about 60 eggs aiding the rapid dispersal ability of this insect.

Eggs are laid in black capsules on the leaves either singularly, scattered but usually in a cluster that can be seen as a large black mark on the leaf.

Management Strategies
Currently no effective large-scale control strategies exist to combat Thaumastocoris in South Africa or elsewhere.

Biological control, based on parasitic insects, will probably prove to be the long-term solution.

Black Eggs
( Photo: Courtesy of FABI, University of Pretoria)

However, even in native Australia no such agents have presently been identified.

In the short-term, it will be important to test pesticides and obtain a chemical registered for the use against this insect.

FABI (Forestry & Agricultural Biotechnology Institute) is exploring options of using semiochemicals (chemicals used in plant-insect or insect-insect communication) to control or monitor the pest.

This is, however, a long-term option, but is seen as a positive alternative to pesticides in an integrated pest management system.

Threats to NCT
Potentially this insect could have a large effect on NCT. Thaumastocoris seems to be able to feed on the leaves of most commercially grown eucalypt species including E.grandis, E.dunnii, E.macrocarpum, E.smithii and commercially grown hybrids (GxG & GxU).

Ongoing infestations will reduce tree growth rates ultimately reducing the availability of timber for marketing. Stress and defoliation will also affect harvesting costs.

Action by NCT
NCT will take an active role in establishing an industry working group to co-ordinate the development of monitoring and management strategies.

This will also include testing and registration of chemicals that can be used in large-scale control operations. The work initiated by the TPCP (Tree Improvement Co-operative Programme) must be supported to ensure that capacity is developed to research this insect.

NCT has set up a monitoring network to get a handle on the extent and spread of infestations.

We are looking for sites to establish permanent sample plots so that the economic impact of this pest on various plantations can be determined.

If you have identified this pest on your farm, please contact Gary Button on 033-8978554 or 083 631 9062 or e-mail: gary@nctforest.com

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1. Sydney University research website of www.thaumastocoridae.org
3. Pers Comms, Ryan Nadel, FABI, University of Pretoria
The CSIR’s Tree Improvement Research Group focuses its research on technologies which will ensure that plantation owners get the best genetic stock to suite their changing needs, in the quickest possible response time.

The Tree Improvement Research Group is part of the larger CSIR’s Forestry Competence area, which has a strong presence in Durban.

The Forestry and Forest Products Research Centre (FFP) (a joint initiative of CSIR and University of KwaZulu-Natal) provides invaluable and world-leading research and support in understanding wood properties and how best to process and manage the natural resource.

FFP focuses on the afforestation and planning component of the value chain, aimed at creating an impact on the processing component. Research is directed at understanding the fibre characteristics of timber, the properties of the raw material, how this knowledge can add value in processing operations, and how processing can be improved.

Addressing the changing needs and standards for plantations

The trees planted in modern plantations have to comply with more requirements than in past years. Some of the characteristics that have to be ‘built into’ the resource include:

• More rapid growth.
• Higher wood density.
• ‘New’ pest and disease tolerances.
• Better pulping properties.
• Lower wood end splitting.
• Increased rooting ability for cuttings.
• More environmentally friendly (eg less invasive) trees.

In response to these needs, the CSIR’s Tree Improvement team of 18 researchers and field technicians, in partnership with local and international companies, has developed genetic material which is increasingly being used in commercial production. These products include:

• Novel sawtimber E. grandis clones, which are selected for low end splitting, wood density and low brittle heart.
• A low splitting E. grandis seed orchard about to come into production.
• Fast-growing GxU (E. grandis x E. urophylla) and SxU (E. saligna x E. urophylla) (with increased wood density) hybrids.
• A high-rooting GxN (E. grandis x E. nitens) clone.
• The pine hybrid P. elliottii x P. caribaeas for growth and some pest and disease tolerances.
• Drought–hardy clones of GxC (E. grandis x E. camaldulensis), GxU and GxT (E. grandis x E. tereticornis).

Underpinning research

The CSIR Tree Improvement Research group of four PhD, three Masters, four BSc (Hons) graduate researchers and a number of students, is working on the technologies which enable the rapid creation and delivery of new varieties or clones. Some of the research includes:

• Statistical modelling of how best to genetically improve crops.
• Development of BLUP (a statistical method) software to more accurately and easily rank the
genetic performance of selections (together with the Australian National University).

- Rapid development of new hybrid types. The team is exploring (with partners):
  - Reproductive biology to assist with counteracting inter-specific hybridization barriers.
  - New drought-hardy hybrids (with NCT, Australian National University, New South Wales State Forests, University of Stellenbosch, ACIAR).
  - Novel competitive high-pulp hybrids (Project Pulp, with NCT, DST-Innovation Fund).
  - Novel pine hybrids and new disease resistant pines (with Singisi Forestry, Global Forest Products).
  - Novel saw-timber hybrids (with Hans Merensky).
  - The use of polyploidy (multiple copies of chromosomes) in eucalypts.

**Significance for NCT**

NCT, together with the CSIR, has licensed three nurseries (Top Crop, Sunshine Seedling services and CPS Seedling Services) to mass-produce the latest genetic material for its members. In so doing, NCT has achieved a degree of independence with regard to obtaining the best of this strategic resource.

In addition, the genetic material is tested in strategically selected NCT sites, to provide confirmation of the performance of the material, and also to provide a display of the varieties to members. In addition, wood samples are sent to NCT clients and our FFP labs to obtain their assessment of preferences.

NCT also provides direction for the development of new genetic resources. For instance, NCT has significantly influenced the direction of the multi-million rand investment into Project Pulp, which has the end goal of providing highly competitive pulp timber for its members.

Collaboration and partnerships with the CSIR provides NCT members with a world-class facility at a fraction of the total cost. Forestry is a long-term business and tree improvement even longer term. However, NCT is able to draw on decades of investment in tree breeding knowledge and products for the benefit of their members.

It is also comforting to know that NCT, through its association with CSIR, is able to contribute to crucial research and development for forestry in South Africa. Together with the research, there is training of young talented people; there is an increase in the local knowledge base; and the exploitation of the research products.
IUFRO COMES TO DURBAN

22-26 October 2007
International Convention Centre, Durban

The IUFRO (International Union of Forest Research Organisations) Conference comes to Africa for the first time in 15 years. It will play a significant role in promoting plantation forestry on the continent, exposing the world forestry community to a dynamic and diverse plantation forestry environment.

This conference will provide a platform to impart and discuss the current global knowledge for the genetic improvement and sustainable growth of commercial Eucalyptus species. It is an opportunity for delegates to exchange knowledge and ideas, and broaden networks.

The South African forestry is characterised by tremendous resource and product diversity; sites range from low altitude sub-tropical to high altitude temperate, encompassing extreme climatic conditions of drought, frost and snow. These require innovative management and silvicultural practices, for a wide range of species to be planted for varied end uses.

The Scientific Programme for the Conference will address the broad theme of “Eucalypts and diversity: balancing productivity and sustainability”, focusing on issues of Tree Breeding, Applied Silviculture, and the Integration of Genetics and Silviculture.

The programme includes a one-day mid-week field tour that will take you through the picturesque KZN Midlands, providing opportunities to view research pertaining to tree improvement, seed production, silviculture, propagation and nursery practice. This is an opportunity to visit world class facilities, meet research scientists and field staff alike.

A pre-conference tour (15-20 October 2007), combines an intensive view of the South African forestry industry and visiting some of South Africa’s most spectacular areas.

The tour starts in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, traveling down through Zululand and finishing in Durban.

For more information or to register online, visit www.iufrodurban.org.za or contact conference organisers:

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Think - that's what NCT's Development Services Manager, Vusi Dladla does best. A chess champion at university, it is no wonder that he's gleeful at this thought.

Fresh out of university and having completed his degree in agriculture and a post graduate diploma in social sciences, Vusi joined NCT in 1999 as Development Forester.

Born and raised in rural Port Shepstone, his interest in agriculture started in high school; natural sciences were among his subjects and this sparked the initial passion.

Had Vusi not chosen forestry as a career, he may have opted for engineering. He has mixed feelings over his choice but he admits that knowing what he knows today, his choice in forestry is a good one.

“Forestry is such a dynamic industry with so many social issues at hand; it makes me work at what I enjoy most - thinking, designing a plan of action and ultimately resolving the issue,” says Vusi.

Vusi’s portfolio at NCT is to develop its business in the broadest sense and this involves small-scale timber growers.

“It is very challenging, trying to balance people with processes,” continues Vusi. “And although I achieve the results, they are difficult to quantify in terms of tonnes over the weighbridge.”

His strength lays in his ability to convince every able-bodied private timber grower to supply their timber through NCT. In the small-scale timber grower sector, this has been strengthened by the respect he commands from all Traditional Leaders in South Africa and Swaziland.

Vusi serves on the National Forestry Advisory Council where he chairs one of its sub-committees. He is also a member of the National General Committee for the Medium Growers Group at Forestry South Africa.

Vusi enjoys analysing how party politics impact on and influence business. “The political climate at any given time definitely impacts on how business operates, but it’s all a matter of interpretation – make it work for you,” quips Vusi.

Described as calm, collected, considerate and always thinking with a “criminal mind”, Vusi considers himself an excellent delegator, with agendas up both his sleeves. He sees himself as NCT’s future General Manager, answerable to NCT’s future generation of members.

Vusi least enjoys bureaucracy in any form and most enjoys spending time with his lovely wife, Zethu.
NCT purchased Enon Estate in 1995 to act as a reservoir during times of under-supply to ensure a consistent supply of quality timber to markets.

The farm is also used extensively for research/development purposes and more recently for seed production. Presently, NCT members purchase most of their seedlings from private nurseries and attempt to source improved seed from commercial forestry companies. Recently, it has become increasingly difficult to access this seed due to companies’ own requirements for improved material with certain organisations preferring to sell seedlings from their own nurseries (rather than seed).

Extensive trials are carried out at Enon in conjunction with the ICFR (Institute for Commercial Forestry Research). Numerous field days are held on the farm to promote good management and NCT sound forestry practices.

The benefits derived from establishing trials at Enon are vast and contribute to the knowledge base of the industry. It plays a significant role in assisting NCT’s members to improve the management of their own farms.

The establishment of trials and orchards on NCT land places extra challenges on the forester. Special sites need to be prepared and planted with specific tending requirements.

Land used for the establishment of seed orchards is taken out of timber production for approximately 30 years. These orchards require special management which includes application of hormones, selective weed control, pruning and seed collection. This must be managed on an ongoing basis. E.smithii is the preferred species and is the most important fibre resource for NCT and its’ members. In time, MAI’s (mean annual increments) will improve as the “better” seed becomes available to members. This translates to bigger profits for better tonnages.

Enon Estate is situated in Richmond and efficiently managed by NCT Tree Farming (Pty) Limited.

1. Different clones have been planted to measure performance on this particular site together with low split varieties which will be tested for pole suitability.

2. Roads are upgraded and banks are stabilised on a regular basis to improve drainage. This lessens the impact on the environment (erosion and waterway pollution).

3. Wetland and riverine rehabilitation are important aspects of management at Enon. This enhances specie diversification, improves water quality and acts as a valuable, natural firebreak. Enon boasts 460ha of indigenous forest, a natural heritage site.

4. Portion of Enon showing indigenous forest.

5. Social upliftment is high on Enon’s agenda. The picturesque traditional-type village where employees are housed has running water and good ablution facilities with electrification on the cards.
NCT Tree Farming (Pty) Ltd

NCT Tree Farming (Pty) Ltd is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NCT Forestry Co-operative Limited, formed in 1996 to manage the Co-operative’s own plantations and those of its Members who require this service.

NCT Members, who prefer not to manage their own plantations, are able to procure the management services and expertise of NCT Tree Farming. These services are tailored to suit each individual which includes:

**Forward planning:**
- Annual plan of operations
- Budget
- Forecasts
- Benchmarking of costs

**Effective, on-the-farm management:**
- Silviculture
- Fire protection and Fire fighting
- Road construction
- Environmental activities
- Harvesting
- Transport
- Labour matters
- FSC certification systems
- Marketing of timber to our client’s best advantage
- Technology transfer

**Advanced financial and administration systems:**
- Detailed monthly accounts - debtor and creditor control
- Submission of all statutory returns and payment of VAT
- Insurance valuations
- Monthly reporting
- Meetings/farm visits
- Client surveys
- Newsletters/publications

Meet Forester, Clive Mattison

“I never saw myself as an office type and always knew that I would follow an outdoor career,” confesses Clive Mattison, NCT Tree Farming’s Estate Forester in Vryheid.

Clive joined NCT Tree Farming in May 2005 and manages two farms in the Vryheid area totalling 950ha planted mainly to Black Wattle.

Clive comes from a strong forestry background and grew up on Almansnek near Vryheid where his parents still farm beef and timber. His father has been a member of NCT since 1987.

After matriculating from Vryheid High School followed by his National Service, Clive re-joined the family farming business. He completed his forestry diploma at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (formerly Saasveld) in 1997 and concluded his practical training on Mondi farms in the Creighton, Giant’s Castle and Gilboa areas. This was followed by a further two years with Mondi in the Greytown/Seven Oaks area working on various timber and sugar cane estates. Clive joined Sappi (Ixopo) in 2000 before joining NCT five years later.

Other achievements include an Environmental Education course through Rhodes University and a B-Tech in Forestry through the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Clive spends valuable time developing forestry skills within rural communities to secure sustainable timber resources from community projects.

“A forestry career with NCT Tree Farming is rewarding; one is involved in the whole process from planning, admin, silviculture, harvesting, FSC-certification, protection right through to marketing. Working for NCT is refreshing. The support from all departments is excellent and one really feels like a part of the team,” says Clive.

“The next five years will see major changes in the forestry industry and issues such as land reform, labour shortages and rising production costs offer great challenges, but also opportunities for lateral thinking,” he concludes.

Clive resides at Riversdale Farm with wife Helena, son Leo (4) and daughter Rebecca (1). His hobbies are reading about early southern African exploration and history, the propagation of indigenous trees and bulbous plants, birding and fishing. Clive also enjoys playing squash and hockey - weather permitting.
Safe's aim is to provide sustainable and cost-effective insurance cover for those growers who take risk management seriously.

We offer an extended range of insurance products including short-term, commercial and industrial cover.

According to the latest South African Weather Services Seasonal Forecast, the summer rainfall region of South Africa can expect above normal temperatures and below normal rainfall from March 2007 to July 2007.

The good rains experienced towards the end of last year resulted in vigorous growth of grass and other vegetation and subsequently high fuel loads both within and adjacent to plantations.

The relatively hot and dry weather that has been predicted coupled with high fuel loads mean that growers must take extra caution when burning tracer belts and firebreaks.

Pre-fire season planning and preparation is essential. The following issues are usually addressed:

- Planning the location of firebreaks and in what order they will be burnt.
- Checking the condition of fire fighting equipment.
- Training of staff.
- Repair and maintenance of fire lookout posts.

Planning is also essential to ensure that you have adequate insurance cover.

Issues to consider regarding timber insurance prior to the onset of the fire danger period:

- Ensure that you have selected the correct value per hectare for each compartment. This needs to be looked at each year, especially considering the impressive increases in prices being paid for timber in recent times. Ensure that you are using the correct method when calculating these values.
- Ensure that your areas are correct. You need to check your maps and their accuracy. An example of a problem frequently encountered here is where trees have been removed from waterways and the map has not been updated accordingly.
- Ensure that you nominate the correct levels of cover for harvesting costs and debris removal. This changes from year to year, and needs to be updated accordingly (look at your age class distribution and harvesting plan).
- Choose an excess level that you can afford in the event of a claim.
- Read your policy wording early in the season. Identify areas of possible non-compliance and attempt to address them prior to the onset of the fire danger period. If there are things that you do not understand in the policy wording, please contact Safire for assistance.
- Check if there have been any material changes to the risk and inform Safire accordingly.

Finally, if there are any issues that concern you with regard to timber fire insurance for the year going forward, please contact us on 033-3944456.

Safire Insurance Company Limited

Giovanni Sale, Technical Services Manager, Safire Insurance Company Limited
The 2007 NCT Boys’ inter-school adventure race lived up to all expectations and more. It was never a dull moment for the boys from Kloof High School, who walked away with this year’s race winning three of the four categories.

The event, sponsored by NCT Forestry and organised by Willows Adventure Sports, was staged from 16-18 February at Mondi’s Mount Shannon Estate in Boston and attracted 18 teams from 13 schools including a team from Lydenberg.

The race started on Friday morning with 47 boys heading off on mountain bikes to tackle a gruelling 54kms of some of the best mountain bike terrain this province has to offer - forest roads, 4x4 tracks, single tracks and fire breaks.

Their first compulsory activity en route was taking penalty kicks, challenging the rural school’s goalkeeper’s skills. For every goal scored, 30 seconds were deducted from the team’s race time.

Day two (Saturday) meant stronger legs for hiking, boulder hopping and “kloofing”, the highlight was negotiating a rope ladder suspended over a 25m waterfall. The descent to the overnight camp next to a dam saw the competitors completing a 100m “foofie” slide which provided an adrenalin rush for the boys.

Before racing to the finish on day three (Sunday), the first compulsory task of the day saw the teams having to work together using bow-saws to cut through logs. No sooner had they completed this task, they were climbing up a fire tower; then back on their bikes for the final leg to the finish line.

After three days racing and many tasks completed, the shortest elapsed time provided the winners of the four sections of this event:
Section 1 (Senior - teams of 3) Kloof 1st team
Section 2 (Senior - teams of 2) Deep Dale School
Section 3 (Junior - teams of 3) Kloof 2nd team
Section 4 (Junior - teams of 2) Kloof 3rd team

Lydenberg High School received the Best Spirit Award.

In addition to the main sponsorship, NCT also sponsored a development team from the Zakhe Agricultural College at Baynesfield who took third place in the senior category. Special thanks to Hatton Cycles who provided the NCT Zakhe Team (below) with mountain bikes.

Another winner was the Harding Special School for the physically-challenged. Each year, a worthy cause is nominated to benefit from proceeds from entries and this event raised R6 525 for the school.
The Indaleni School for the Deaf in Richmond was last year’s beneficiary to the race. The school chose to purchase a photocopy machine from the proceeds.

The Harding Special School was formed in 1990. It is a boarding establishment for 155 physically disabled children aged 6-18 (Grade 1-7). The children come from impoverished, rural homes and rely on the school for basic and practical skills to prepare them for high school and the outside world. The school follows an adapted (special educational needs) state academic learning programme based on Outcomes Based Education. Empowering skills such as agriculture, chicken rearing, arts & crafts (weaving, pottery, leather and wire work, computer literacy, etc. are also taught.

The Indaleni School for the Deaf in Richmond was last year’s beneficiary to the race. The school chose to purchase a photocopy machine from the proceeds.
NCT’s mission is to assist Members to achieve their full forestry potential and thereby optimise financial returns on a sustained basis. In so doing, NCT also encourages its members to subscribe to its Environmental Policy based on the 10 principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

NCT staff will, as far as possible, ensure that the Members of the Co-operative conduct their tree farming operations on a sustainable basis (ecologically, economically and socially).

In order to achieve this NCT subscribes to the following principles:

- **Compliance with applicable laws**
  Timber growers should only establish plantations on land that has been granted a permit or that qualifies for afforestation and their operations should be conducted according to the laws of the land.

- **Social responsibility**
  Members will be encouraged to conduct their operations in such a manner as to create wealth for the communities in which they live. This will be achieved by using, wherever feasible, local labour and local processors. Education and upliftment of labour will result in a contented, productive work force.

- **Communication and education**
  NCT will promote awareness of environmental issues and of new technologies to ensure that operations are conducted on a sustainable basis.

- **Conservation**
  All landowners should set aside areas worthy of conservation. This would include representative eco-systems, natural forests, refuges for rare and endangered species, wetlands and sites of archaeological, cultural or historic interest. Biodiversity on farms will be encouraged at every opportunity.
  NCT recognises that its Members’ operations impact on the environment. These impacts will be kept to a minimum as far as it is reasonable.

- **Research and development**
  NCT will support research and development to optimize the use of resources on a sustainable basis and to gain a better understanding of the impact of plantation forestry on the natural environment.

- **Work and living environments**
  The Co-operative’s policy is that only the highest standards of occupational health and safety are acceptable. Members will be encouraged to adopt this policy and also encouraged to provide an acceptable living environment for employees.

- **Annual review of Policy**
  NCT supports the Principles and Criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
Surveys on Oribi, since the early 1980’s, have revealed a serious decline in numbers with the destruction of the Oribi’s moist grassland habitat leading to the fragmentation of remaining populations.

• A 1981 antelope survey showed Oribi had disappeared from 20 out of 86 farms surveyed;
• In 1998, the 86 farms were re-surveyed. Oribi numbers declined on 31% of the farms and on 25% had become extinct over a 17-year period. The survey also indicated Oribi populations of less than 10 were at a high risk of extinction.
• At the same time, 16 Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife reserves were assessed. Eight reserves had populations of less than 10, placing these areas into the high risk category.
• In 2000, 300 farms were involved in a KZN survey. Similar results were reached reflecting loss of habitat and poaching as main reasons for the decline in numbers.
• The 2003/04 KZN census revealed a highly fragmented population of 1873 on 220 farms.
• In 2005, the survey highlighted a population of 1550 Oribi (from 208 responses). This again showed a disturbing decline in numbers from the previous survey.

With about 600 Oribi found on Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife reserves, the future survival of Oribi is in the hands of farmers.

Oribi require grassland on gently undulating terrain. They feed on the best quality grasses and the grasses are more often than not threatened by poor management practices such as over-grazing of stock/game, over-burning, no burning, burning at the wrong time of the year. Oribi also require a mosaic of long grass (shelter for their young and from bad weather and predators) and short grass (for grazing) in the same year.

A KZN Survey in sheep farming areas where all reported sheep kills were analysed, showed that over 80% of the sheep kills were caused by dogs, often by the farmer’s own house dogs.

The effect of dogs on Oribi is a great concern. The survey showed that the larger the property, the fewer the dogs per unit area, the more Oribi present. The more subdivided the properties became, the more landowners present (each with their own dogs) and more labourers (with their own dogs), resulting in significantly reduced Oribi numbers.

If you have Oribi on your property or would like to know how to implement Oribi management, contact Andre Roussouw (072-3919750) or Athol Marchant (033-2391513).
This fast-growing, evergreen pioneer tree reaches heights of up to 10m in warm moist areas and between 2-7m in Highveld areas. Also known at the False Olive tree, it is widespread in South Africa – from the Western Cape through to Zimbabwe, extending inland from the coast to central South Africa and the Kalahari thornveld in the north-west.

It is hardy, frost- and drought-resistant giving a spectacular show of flowers in spring and summer. The Buddleja saligna occurs on dry hillsides, mixed scrub, wooded valleys, forest margins, along streams and in coastal bush. It is the most widespread of our indigenous Buddlejas.

The flowers are tiny, honey-scented, creamy white and borne in dense sprays usually at the ends of branches, appearing from August to January. The leaves are long and narrow, similar to the olive from which it gets its common name – but more textured.

The leaf upper surface is hairless and dark green, the underside is white with prominently raised venation. The seeds are minute, formed in small, hairy capsules which develop in the dried out flowers (October-March).

The plant is used for traditional medicinal purposes, the roots as a purgative and the leaves to treat coughs and colds.

The wood is hardy, heavy and durable. Straight branches have been used for fencing posts, assegai handles and fishing rods. Small pieces of furniture can also be made from it. It makes good fuel wood as it burns with intense heat. The large amount of pollen and nectar it produces makes it popular with bee farmers.

Other common names are Witolien (Afrikaans), iGqeba-elimhlope (Zulu), unGqeba (Xhosa), Mothlware (Tswana), umBatacwepe (Siswati) and Lelothwane (South Sotho).

Text: PlantzAfrica.com
Photographs: Mashudu Peter Gavhi
Three labourers from NCT Tree Farming’s Baynesfield Estate attend basic adult literacy classes sponsored by NCT and FIETA (Forestry Industries Education & Training Authority).

(l-r) Florence Nyembe, former learner and now facilitator with Siya Mhlotshana, supervisor/driver, Thulani Shezi, nursery and grounds man & Bagezile Zondi, general worker who attend daily classes from 08:30-15:30.
When it comes to knowledge and practical experience our more than 100 years of combined expertise enables us to give you the best possible solutions in product and farming practice. Our industry certifications form part of our commitment to providing unequalled quality at competitive prices for forestry seedlings and clones, vegetable and flower seedlings & grass plugs.

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