



Lowveld National Botanical Garden
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Press Release

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Date: 20 May 2009

BIODIVERSITY DAY

THE LOWVELD NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN (LNBG): Through its Biodiversity Education and Empowerment Centre will be hosting a Career Expo during the celebration of the International Biodiversity Day. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness about biological biodiversity, review the status of Biodiversity in our areas and also to encourage learners to pursue careers that are environmentally and scientifically inclined. Dr Khumalo, the Provincial Head of Environmental Education Section from the Department of Education in Mpumalanga, will be outlining the benefits for schools participating in environmental awareness campaigns and programmes as these will encourage the learners to pursue careers in that field and thus the drive for conservation of the environment will be advanced.

Background

It is through the National Botanical Gardens and its various programmes that SANBI (South African National Biodiversity Institute) carries out its mandate of monitoring and

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reporting to the Minister on the status of the country's biological diversity. South Africa is home to approximately 10% of the world's plants and nearly 7% of its reptiles, mammals and birds. This thus makes South Africa the third most diverse country in the world following Indonesia and Brazil. Furthermore, it is estimated that in South Africa the area infested by invasive alien trees and shrubs will double within 15 years if left alone. Alien species already use up to 7% of the country's water. Some invasive alien plants like the Bug weed and Lantana take up on South Africa's vegetation . Invasive alien plants have a detrimental effect on the productivity of the land or ground.

This year's theme of the International Biodiversity Day is “**Biological and invasive alien species.**” Thus the curator of the Lowveld National Botanical Garden, Mr Taki Mamatsharaga will elaborate on the impact of humans in degrading the biodiversity and how this can be rectified.

Exhibitors

Information on careers opportunities and/or financial assistance that is available within their respective institutions will be made available to the learners.

- ❖ Vodacom - Telecommunications
- ❖ Sanparks - Conservation, Game Rangers
- ❖ MTPA – Conservation- Biodiversity
- ❖ DoE – Environmental Education
- ❖ Wessa – Conservation
- ❖ Monticola Nursery
- ❖ Riverside Mall

The day will be concluded with a biodiversity tour of the Garden and viewing of the exhibition stalls.

Venue: Lowveld National Botanical Garden,
Biodiversity Education and Empowerment Centre

Date : Friday, 22nd May 2009

Time : 09h00 till 13h00