SABA newsletter (May 2014)

Exciting things are going on in the world of South African bonsai with a lot of energy and commitment shown by the fraternity.

Firstly a big thank you to everyone who helps to make this happen. Without everyone’s effort it would be impossible to grow our hobby and showcase the terrific talent and trees we have in this country.

The SABA Exco has had two Skype meetings with a lot of technical hitches. We are slowly but surely getting things done and this way there is no cost for the organisation although we know that face to face contact is better. Sometimes we are pleasantly surprised when we meet someone after an upsetting e-mail only to hear it was not meant aggressively at all!

I’ve just been on a dig with some clubs in the beautiful Hogsback area which is something to behold in autumn. I would love to go back when all the different azaleas are in full flower. (Is this good English?)

To get better communication going we have sent out an e-mail with a list of questions to most clubs to ask for more information. The response has been very good and we hope to improve things further with your help. The communication on Facebook seems to work and the membership has grown to about 280 by the writing of this letter. It is also heart warming to have so many members (local and overseas) post news and photographs on the page and sharing with others what is happening in their region.

1. At the last Exco meeting it was decided to sponsor Kat river Kai with R20 000 to host the SABA mini-convention from 24 to 28 September.

If SABA had to organise the event, it would cost much more and the logistics are just impossible with Exco members being all over the country. As the constitution stipulates that we need to have an AGM every year, it has become the custom to have it coincide with the mini-convention. It is in our opinion unfair to expect from one club to fork out for the event whilst SABA just piggy backs on this. It has been done in the past and we see no problem with it happening in future. We can discuss the way forward at the AGM and maybe get a tendering system going for future conventions and SABA sponsorship. We have a healthy bank balance and this will not hurt at all.

I’ve had discussions with Dr. Tobie Kleynhans, chairmen of Kat river, on how the money will be spent and exciting things are planned. One problem with conventions have always been to get trees from across the country to the event and that not only local trees are displayed. We don’t have to enter this nightmare and are thinking of having ‘n photographic display of wonderful trees at the convention. Photo’s will travel better than trees…

I will keep everyone updated on this but if you haven’t registered yet, go to [www.katrivierkai](http://www.katrivierkai/).co. za It promises to be a great event.

1. Speaking of photo’s – it was also decided that we will revive the Tommy Fluxman and SABA photo competition. This is because the SABA photographic competition has been going very well. Some of the sponsorship will go to the prizes. As we already have monthly winners and a lot of great entries that will go onto the shortlist for the competitions. A big thank you for everyone who participates and keep them coming in. It is a wonderful feeling opening your inbox in the morning to the sight of another beautiful tree.
2. SABA will be having a dig on 26 July in Koega near Port Elizabeth. A big thank you goes to Robbie de Witt and the EP Bonsai Society who kindly agreed to make this a SABA event. It is a good idea to get members from across the country together and do what we love most – talk about trees. Those of us who have been on EP Bonsais digs know they have very good material – wild olives, ghwarries, bitterbome, schotia, to mention a few. Interested members of SABA must contact Robbie directly at 083 699 4570 or on email at robertdewitt@telkomsa.net

I would love to see as many members as possible there to chat over a beer and a braai about the things happening in your area. The first get together will be on Friday 25 July with a braai and a briefing by Robbie. Saturday will be the big dig followed by another braai and stories about the great ones that, hopefully, did not get away. The Pretoria guys have already confirmed that they will be coming down and I am looking forward to catching up with them.

1. Speaking of Pretoria – Org Exley and his team are doing a sterling job in helping new clubs find their feet and has introduced a buddy system that works very well. This is the way forward. Too many times enthusiasts start out but do not have the experience or skill to develop a club and they lose interest. I’ve attended meetings of five clubs this year and that was raised as a problem. We must get the list of demonstrators going so that we can share knowledge. Please send me details of people willing to help other clubs in broadening the community. I wish I could visit more clubs but it is just not practical.
2. Our plans to publish all newsletters on the SABA website was met with some resistance as some clubs feel it is exclusive to members. It is a free country and clubs have the right to decide who they want to see their news. But please keep on sending me your newsletters and also state clearly if you want them published on the website or not.
3. Plans to have the SABA-logo changed has also met with some resistance and we have decided to rather put it on the agenda for the AGM for further discussion. Luckily it is not a pressing matter.
4. The organising committee for ABC4 (Africa Bonsai Convention 4) in 2015 is meeting regularly and things are on track to make this event the best ever. Thanks to all the volunteers and helpers who chip in with their valuable time to help make things happen.

And that’s it for now. As I said, I’ve just been on a dig with Kat River Kai and members of EL bonsai in Hogsback. It was very enjoyable sitting down after a hard days work with the fantastic autumn colours and enjoy a cold one or three. It showed me again that the spirit is alive and well.

Regards to all,

Willem Pretorius

President of SABA.

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