

A YEAR OF SPECIAL DAYS

STEPPING UP TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING

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There are two International Years
being celebrated in 2012

- * International Year of Sustainable Energy for All
- * International Year of Co-operatives



McCarthy Limited



OLD MUTUAL



The **Year of Special Days 2012** has been developed through Share-Net, a project of WESSA. The booklet supports educators and community leaders to make links between environmental days in the 2012 calendar and **environmental learning in the school curriculum**.

The first **Year of Special Days** was compiled in 1995 by Kate Davies from the Diocese of Umzimvubu, near Kokstad, as her final assignment for the Gold Fields Participatory Course in Environmental Education. Since then, the booklet has been annually updated and expanded with contributions from people around South Africa and has even been adapted for several other countries in southern Africa.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

The **Year of Special Days 2012** is designed to help educators **plan school assemblies and learning activities**. Each page provides just enough information to launch learners and educators on a quest to find out more! Possible activities for each Special Day include inviting a **guest speaker** to assembly, planning **active learning** in line with the **curriculum**, or whole class/school **activities around a chosen theme**.

For planning the school calendar, the centre page is a **2012 calendar** showing the commemorative days outlined in this booklet. A single page is allocated to each Special Day and includes:

- Interesting background **information** on the day
- ? A **guiding question** to stimulate further enquiry
-  **Contact details** to obtain more information
-  References to **WESSA Share-Net and other materials** that can support learning
- www** Useful **website** addresses

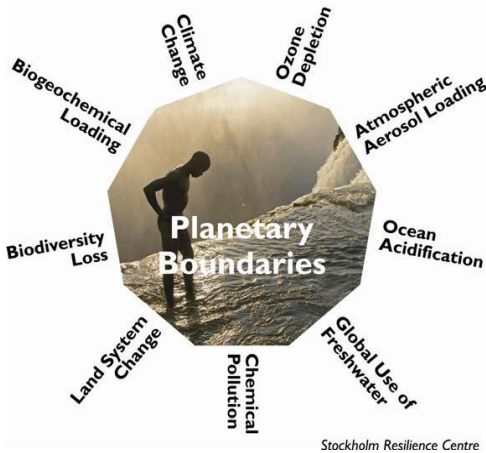
On the back cover, titles of **WESSA Share-Net learning support materials** are listed.

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*Dates may change, please contact Working for Water and SANCCOB for confirmation of dates.

STEPPING UP TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING – WHAT CAN WE DO?



Human activities have placed increasing pressure on our life supporting planet, Earth. To continue to live and operate safely, humanity has to stay within critical boundaries in the Earth’s environment, and respect the nature of the planet’s climatic, geophysical, atmospheric and ecological processes, says Johan Rockström, Director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre. He warns that exceeding planetary boundaries may be devastating for humanity, but if we respect

them we could have a bright future for centuries ahead.

Scientists have attempted to quantify the safe biophysical boundaries outside which, they believe, the Earth cannot function in a stable state, a state in which human civilizations have thrived. The scientists first identified the Earth System processes and potential biophysical thresholds, which, if crossed, could generate unacceptable environmental change for humanity. They have then proposed the boundaries that should be respected in order to reduce the risk of crossing these thresholds.

The nine boundaries identified are climate change, stratospheric ozone, land use change, freshwater use, biological diversity, ocean acidification, nitrogen and phosphorus inputs to the biosphere and oceans, aerosol loading and chemical pollution. The study suggests that three of these boundaries (climate change, biological diversity and nitrogen input to the biosphere) may already have been crossed. Boundaries are strongly connected — crossing one boundary may seriously threaten the ability to stay within safe levels of the others.

And so today, as never before, we need to consider the impact of our daily actions. We need to seriously think about our lifestyles and the choices we make when engaging in activities that could impact on our planet’s life support systems.

2012 UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEARS OF: ~ SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL ~ CO-OPERATIVES

2012 - International Year of Sustainable Energy for All

Energy is central to nearly every major challenge, and opportunity the world faces today. Be it jobs, security, climate change, food production or increasing incomes, access to sustainable energy for all is essential for strengthening economies, protecting ecosystems and achieving equity. More than 1.4 billion people worldwide have no access to electricity, and 1 billion more only have intermittent access. Some 2.5 billion people rely on traditional biomass for cooking and heating.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made sustainable energy one of his five priorities that will guide his second 5-year term. Specifically, he will direct the United Nations to extend energy's reach in order to combat endemic poverty. Universal access to energy, improved efficiency and enhanced deployment of renewable sources are ambitious goals, and the Secretary-General is leading a Sustainable Energy for All initiative to make them achievable.

In recognition of the importance of energy access for sustainable economic development and supporting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the UN General Assembly has designated 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All.

More information at <http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org/>

2012 – International Year of Co-operatives

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives, highlighting the contribution of co-operatives to socio-economic development, particularly their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

With the theme of “**Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World**”, the Year seeks to encourage the growth and establishment of co-operatives all over the world. It also encourages individuals, communities and governments to recognize the agency of co-operatives in helping to achieve internationally agreed upon development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals

More information at <http://social.un.org/coopsyear/about-iy.html>

WORLD WETLANDS DAY ~ 2 FEBRUARY

“Healthy Wetlands – Healthy People”

Wetlands are often thought of only in terms of their hydrological importance, but they also hold great cultural significance. Many cultures have developed traditional practices and belief systems for regulating the use of wetlands to protect these valuable ecosystems.

Wetlands are also known as *vleis, bogs, swamps, marshes* or *sponges*. They are regarded as some of the most productive ecosystems in the world because they serve as sponges that regulate river flow, they provide habitats for a variety of plant and animal species and they help to absorb silt and cleanse water of pollutants. Wetlands are at risk all around the world due to practices of draining the land for alternative use. Construction of dams, removal of plants, waste water pumped into the area by industries, seepage of agricultural fertilisers and mining are all threats to these sensitive ecosystems.

Each year government departments, non-governmental organisations, schools and groups of individuals undertake actions to raise awareness of the value and benefits of wetlands as well as the important role they play in sustainable freshwater use.

2 February is the anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention in 1971. The Convention took place in the Iranian city of Ramsar and is an inter-governmental treaty to promote national action and international co-operation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 160 Contracting Parties to the Convention with 1960 wetland sites of more than 190 million hectares.

? Do you know of wetlands in your area that require better management? What steps could be taken?



Stanley Tshitwamulomoni, Ramsar Communication Education Participation Awareness (CEPA) Focal Point, South Africa.
Department of Environment Affairs.
E-mail: StanleyT@environment.gov.za. Tel (012) 310 3919.



Wetlands Pack; Vlei and Marsh Wetlands; Wetlands and People; How Wet is a Wetland?; SWAP Starter Kit; miniSASS sheets.

WWW www.ramsar.org


INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY ~ 21 FEBRUARY

International Mother Language Day has been observed every year since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. The date represents the day in 1952 when students demonstrating for recognition of their language, Bangla, as one of the two national languages of the then Pakistan, were shot and killed by police in Dhaka, the capital of what is now Bangladesh.

At present over 3 000 of the approximately 6 900 languages spoken in the world are under threat, endangered or dying out. The past three centuries have seen languages die out and disappear at a dramatic and steadily increasing pace. A language is generally considered 'endangered' by experts when at least 30% of the community's children no longer learn it. Mandarin Chinese tops the list of most widely spoken world languages, with over a billion speakers. Ter Sami was traditionally spoken in the north east of the Kola Peninsula in Russia where the total population of the six villages was recorded as being just 450 in the 19th century. This year, the number of Ter Sami speakers has dropped to two elders from a population of 100, making it the least spoken language.

In Africa, there is little known about linguistics and many of its governments encourage the use of the major African languages, such as Swahili (East Africa) or even colonial languages. Other factors leading to the loss of native tongues is the break-up or translocation of a community where individuals or smaller groups find themselves in different cultural and linguistic environments. Languages may also be affected by the encroachment of a more dominant culture and adults encourage their children to learn the 'new' language especially if it means an opportunity for employment. This situation is also worsened when authorities discourage the use of native languages in the local community, local schools and the media.

? Are any South African languages threatened?

 *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing* 2001. By Stephen A. Wurm.

The Languages of the World. 2002. By Kenneth Katzner.

WWW www.un.org/depts/dhl/language/ and www.ethnologue.com/

MEATOUT DAY ~ 20 MARCH

Meatout Day is an international observance encouraging people to start enjoying a wholesome, non-violent diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Meatout Day started in the United States in 1985 and has now become an annual campaign, celebrated and observed in many countries around the world. Meatout Day is co-ordinated each year, on or around 20 March, by the Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM), a non-profit public interest organisation. FARM advocates plant-based (vegan) diets to save animals, protect the planet and improve health.

Vegan diets (sometimes called strict or pure vegetarian diets) are a subset of vegetarian diets, which are credited with lowering the risk of colon cancer, heart attacks, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, prostate cancer, and strokes. Properly planned vegan diets are healthy and have been found to satisfy nutritional needs. However, poorly planned vegan diets can be low in levels of calcium, iodine, vitamin B₁₂ and vitamin D. Vegans are therefore encouraged to plan their diet and take dietary supplements as appropriate.

What is the connection between our diet and global warming? Animal agriculture produces more greenhouse gas emissions than cars. Cows raised for beef and dairy, in particular, emit massive amounts of nitrous oxide and methane. And, meat-based diets require 10-20 times as much land as plant-based diets - nearly half of the world's grains and soybeans are fed to animals!

South Africa is joining the global move to encourage people to have one day a week free of meat. It is a small move with a big impact on the environment, on animals, and on health. To find out more about South Africa's Meat Free Mondays, visit www.supportmfm.co.za

? **Investigate how your environmental footprint could be reduced if you reduced your meat consumption or adopted a vegetarian diet.**



Eating for the Earth.

WWW www.meatout.org; www.vegsoc.org.za; and www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM (Livestock's Long Shadow. United Nations FAO Report)

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY (SA) ~ 21 MARCH

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ~ 21 MARCH

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY ~ 10 DECEMBER


Human Rights Day (SA) commemorates the "Sharpeville Massacre" on 21 March 1960. A large group of people took part in a campaign to resist unjust apartheid laws which forced all black people to carry Pass Books. Failure to produce the book on demand by police was a punishable offence. Campaigners gathered at police stations in townships near Johannesburg where they were dispersed by police. At the Sharpeville Police Station a scuffle broke out. Part of a wire fence was trampled, allowing the crowd to move forward. The police opened fire, apparently without having been given an order to do so. Sixty-nine people were killed and 180 wounded.

Human Rights Day is a reminder of how undemocratic systems of government and abuse of authority can lead to injustice, oppression and violence. As citizens of a democratic country, we must ensure that basic human rights are never eroded.

The United Nations (of which South Africa is a member state) emphasises that human rights are for all people, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, political opinion, sexual orientation, national origin, property, birth, health or other status. This means that everyone is entitled to human rights without discrimination of any kind. The South African Constitution states that one of our basic human rights is access to a clean and healthy environment. As responsible citizens, we need to ensure that these rights are respected by finding ways, no matter how small, to improve the quality of people's lives.

? What does "human rights" mean?

 South African Human Rights Commission. Braampark Forum 3, 33 Hoofd Street, Braamfontein. Tel: (011) 877 3600.
E-mail: info@sahrc.org.za. Website: www.sahrc.org.za

 *Environment and Methods: a brief look at a developing picture of better and more varied ways of doing environmental education and The Environment, Development and Environmental Education.*

WWW www.amnesty.org; www.un.org/depts/dhl/racial/ and www.sahrc.org.za

WORLD WATER DAY ~ 22 MARCH

"Water and Food Security"

NATIONAL WATER WEEK ~ 18-23 MARCH


World Water Day was declared an international day in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly and was first celebrated in 1993.

Clean water is essential to the health and sustainability of the environment, people and agriculture. Increasing demand due to factors such as population growth is putting enormous pressure on this scarce but precious resource.

Many natural resources are found in abundance in South Africa except for water, and it is this resource that is essential for all life forms on Earth. South Africa's water supply is variable and distributed unevenly in time (frequent droughts alternate with periods of good rainfall) and space (the eastern half of the country is markedly wetter than the western half). The increase in demand for good quality water requires careful management and is a priority as it has been estimated that by 2025, there will be insufficient water supply for domestic, agricultural and industrial use in South Africa.

By celebrating World Water Day and National Water Week, it is hoped to focus attention on the need to address the problems regarding the supply of drinking water; increase public awareness about the importance of conservation and protection of water resources; and, increase government's, non-governmental organisations and the private sector's participation in World Water Day celebrations.

? Think of three actions you could take to reduce your water consumption, then work out how much water could be saved.

 Department: Water Affairs (DWA). Private Bag X313, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: (012) 336 7500.

 *Hands-On: Stream and Pond Life; Wetlands and People; How wet is a wetland?; SWAP Starter Kit; Water is life! A teacher's handbook; Enviro Facts and Water Lesson Plans for Grades R-12.*

WWW www.dwa.gov.za and www.unesco.org/water/

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL DAY ~ 23 MARCH

"Powering our future with weather, climate and water"

In 1960, it was decided by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) that 23 March should be celebrated as World Meteorological Day because, on this day in 1950, the World Meteorological Convention was held. The day is celebrated by focusing on an annual theme that is of current interest and is related to weather, climate and water issues.

The purpose of the day is to bring attention to the important role that meteorology and meteorological services play in the general welfare of humankind. Climatological data can assist when planning for building constructions, agriculture, forestry and can forecast weather that may have devastating effects and cost the country millions of rand each year.

People have altered atmospheric conditions through agricultural and industrial developments. The burning of wood and fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, increase carbon dioxide levels which contribute to global warming and hence enhance the greenhouse effect. The acidity of rain and river water is altered by sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxides which pass through the atmosphere and cause changes in the soil chemistry. This, in turn, affects plant and animal life.

We are reminded of our dependency on water, air and weather patterns and for the need to consider the environmental impact we have on these natural resources.

? **It is said that climate change will affect our weather patterns. How will your area be affected, and what risk-management strategies could be implemented?**



For information about the weather, contact the Weather Service Weatherline: 082 162.



Enviro Facts; The Greenhouse Effect: a teacher's manual; Equipment for Measuring Weather Conditions; Puzzling Climate Change: A start-up pack of pictures

WWW www.weathersa.co.za and www.wmo.int

EARTH HOUR ~ 31 MARCH

The very first Earth Hour occurred when, in 2007, as a response to an initiative of the Sydney Morning Herald and WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) 2.2 million residents of Sydney, Australia, turned off their lights for one hour to raise awareness regarding the need to take action against climate change.

This initiative has since grown and is now a global event. In 2011, 5 251 cities, towns and municipalities in 135 countries took part, many for the first time including Lebanon, Jamaica, Iran, Uganda, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Chad, Azerbaijan, Gibraltar, Palestine, Suriname, Uzbekistan, Trinidad, Tobago and Lesotho. Earth Hour 2011 reached an estimated 1.8 billion people!

You can support this initiative to bring about meaningful action against climate change by taking part, and you can register as a participant and receive interesting information, videos, and stories on the website www.earthhour.org

For South Africans, the 2012 Earth Hour will take place on Saturday, 31 March from 8.30pm to 9.30pm.

? In what way can actions like Earth Hour make a difference?



WWF South Africa. 1st Floor, Bridge House, Boundary Terraces, Mariendahl Lane, Newlands, Cape Town, 7700.
Website: www.wwf.org.za



Enviro Facts; The Greenhouse Effect: a teacher's manual; Puzzling Climate Change: A start-up pack of pictures; My Carbon Footprint (auditing our electricity, travel, water use, waste and food)

WWW www.earthhour.org; and www.wwf.org.za

WORLD HEALTH DAY ~ 7 APRIL

"Aging and Health"

Presently societies (whether rich or poor, developed or developing) are subjected to lifestyle changes leading to reduced physical activity, changes in diet, increase in tobacco use, and increased stress levels to keep up with modern and technological advances.

Poor communities lacking basic primary health care facilities suffer malnutrition, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases which are diseases of poverty. Social and economic changes, industrialisation, lack of education, violence, and lack of clear policy direction all contribute to a person's state of health.

We live in a time of medical breakthroughs with new drugs available to treat conditions that, in the past, would have proved fatal.

Over the past century, life expectancy has increased dramatically and the world will soon have more older people than children. Ageing populations occur everywhere, but less-developed countries are witnessing the fastest change. This social transformation represents both challenges and opportunities. In particular, countries may only have a single generation to prepare their health and social systems for an ageing world.

World Health Day reminds us of the challenges we face as a nation to provide all citizens, not only a clean and sanitary environment with access to primary health care and drinkable water, but also shelter, education, and nutritious food for all.

? Select at least ten vegetables and find out their nutritional value. What is the importance of these nutrients/vitamins for your health?



Department of Health. Website: www.doh.gov.za



Health Gardening: a guide to growing food for life; Knowing and Growing Muthi Plants; Permaculture Booklet; Learning to Grow - a resource for learners and educators; Nutrition in schools: a teacher's guide.

WWW www.who.int/world-health-day/ and www.doh.gov.za

FAMILY DAY (SA) ~ 9 APRIL

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES ~ 15 MAY

Family Day falls on the Monday after Easter Sunday and is a time to celebrate or relax with family and friends. Another day to celebrate the importance of the family unit is International Day of Families which occurs on 15 May each year. The first annual observance of this day took place in 1994 and this was the same year the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed as the International Year of the Family.

A family's role is to educate, protect, nourish and support its members, enabling them to function both dependently and independently of each other and in social situations.

Children learn values, morals and social behaviour within their family units and these will guide them through life. The basis of all relationships is also formed within a family and it is here where children learn to communicate and interact with one another as well as with the world around them.

At present, society is affected by instability, economic hardship and violence. All of these hinder the family's ability to fulfill the most basic needs for its members and it is this breakdown of family life that fuels insecurity and uncertainty within society.

"If tolerance, respect and equity permeate family life, they will translate into values that shape societies, nations and the world."

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

? **What benefits do you have through belonging to a family?**



Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA). PO Box 2800, Kempton Park, 1620. Tel: (011) 975 7106/7.

E-mail: national@famsa.org.za; Website: www.famsa.org.za



Household Environmental Management.

WWW www.un.org/en/events/familyday/

EARTH DAY ~ 22 APRIL

The 42nd anniversary of Earth Day will be celebrated in 2012. This day marks an opportunity for volunteers to initiate actions towards a sustainable future. Building on the major achievements of Earth Day 2011 and *A Billion Acts of Green*, the Earth Day Network is working to reach more people all over the world to promote environmental awareness. Volunteers may join the *Green Generation* and register their efforts on the website www.earthday.net as part of the *Billion Acts of Green* Campaign. The *Billion Acts of Green* Campaign aims “to mobilize the power of people to create change by taking small steps in our homes, our schools and our businesses that add up to an enormous collective action”.

On 22 April 1970, approximately 20 million Americans supported and celebrated the first Earth Day and today it is celebrated worldwide with more than 17 000 groups in 174 countries forming a global network that works towards environmental protection in communities, regions and around the world. More than a billion people around the world participate in Earth Day activities. In 1990 Earth Day had an enormous effect on recycling efforts worldwide and assisted in leading the way to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Earth Day is a global attempt for international co-operation to address issues such as global warming, toxic waste, destruction of rainforests, expanding deserts and ocean pollution. Individuals and organisations are encouraged to use Earth Day to take environmental action in their area.

? **Think of three things that you can do to reduce your environmental footprint.**



Earthlife Africa. PO Box 32131, Braamfontein, 2107.
Tel: (011) 339 3662.



Environment and Methods: A brief look at a developing picture of better and more varied ways of doing environmental education; Enviro Picture Building games and puzzles; My Carbon Footprint (auditing our electricity, travel, water use, waste and food).

WWW www.earthday.net; www.earthlife.org.za; www.cap.org.za

FREEDOM DAY (SA) ~ 27 APRIL


This day is to commemorate the first democratic elections held in South Africa on 27 April 1994. History was made when all South Africans over the age of 18 were allowed to vote for a new democratic government. The election was hailed as a miracle because, in spite of the long history of institutionalised discrimination and oppression of non-whites, voting took place in a spirit of spontaneous goodwill without violence or bloodshed.

Since that turning point, the path to our new democracy has not always been smooth. On Freedom Day we celebrate the miracle of our nation's change of heart, remembering always that there can be no freedom without responsibility - responsibility to care for our families, our communities and our land.

From the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, everyone has the right:

- a) to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing; and
- b) to have an environment protected, for the benefit of recent and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that -
 - i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation;
 - ii) promote conservation; and
 - iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources.

? What do you think 'freedom' means?

 Street Law (South Africa) National Office. University of KwaZulu-Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban, 4001. Tel: (031) 260 1291. Fax: (031) 260 1540. E-mail: info@streetlaw.org.za

 *Enviro Clubs Action Pack.*

WWW www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/holidays.htm and
www.streetlaw.org.za

WORKERS' DAY ~ 1 MAY

In Medieval Europe, the first day in May was celebrated as a general holiday to herald the coming of Spring. With the onset of the Industrial Age, workers had to struggle against terrible working conditions, until they were able to form trade unions. During the 1880s workers, under the influence of the Socialists, used the existing holiday as a day to celebrate workers' solidarity. In 1890, Workers' Day was recognized internationally for the first time in industrialised countries but it has only been observed in South Africa since 1904. It became an official public holiday in South Africa after the first democratic elections in 1994.

The international trade union movement has supported the struggles of workers worldwide to organise their own unions to fight against exploitation and a better life for workers. Now there is a day which reaffirms workers' rights to join together to promote their own welfare in a world which is often dominated by the rich and the powerful. Trade unions are an important feature of any democracy.

Workers' Day reminds us that all people who work deserve a fair wage and decent working conditions. It also reminds us of the importance of establishing justice and a sense of responsibility and caring in the workplace.

? **What is the percentage of employment in South Africa?**



Department: Labour. Private Bag X117, Pretoria, 0001.
Tel: (012) 309 4000. Fax: (012) 320 2059.

WWW www.labour.gov.za

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY ~ 18 MAY


"Museums in a Changing World. New challenges, new inspirations"

The worldwide community of museums will celebrate the 35th anniversary of International Museum Day around 18 May, 2012.

In 2012, ***Museums in a Changing World. New Challenges, new inspirations*** is the theme of International Museum Day. Today, the world is changing faster than ever. New technology delivers new ideas, gigabytes of information, news of an increasingly unstable climate. International Museum Day will allow its visitors to wonder about the role of museums in our new society, in the era of new media, and to discover and rediscover how museums are looking to the future in terms of sustainable development.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) established International Museum Day in 1977 to encourage public awareness of the role of museums in the development of society. Momentum has been rising unabated ever since. In 2011, International Museum Day garnered record-breaking participation with almost 30 000 museums hosting events in more than 120 countries.

? Visit your nearest museum and compare two different cultures or eras. What are the similarities and differences?

 South African Museums' Association (SAMA). 3 Davann Court, 50 Bellair Road, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 8001. Tel: (021) 461 2315. Fax: 086 695 6595. E-mail: samuseums@gmail.com

 *Indigenous Knowledge Series.*

WWW www.icom.museum and www.museumsonline.co.za

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY~ 22 MAY “Marine Biodiversity”

The term biological diversity, or biodiversity, is given to the variety of plant and animal life, and micro-organisms, on Earth and the different ecosystems in which they live. The biodiversity we see today is the result of the natural process that has taken place over many years and which has caused changes, such as weathering and adaptation of the landscape and its inhabitants. The rate at which this natural process takes place is increased by human activities and it is this unnatural increase that can have harmful effects on our biophysical environment.

There has been an increase in the loss of the Earth's biological diversity and this day has been set aside to increase public awareness of the importance and value of biological diversity.

Biodiversity also includes genetic differences within each species – for example, between varieties of crops or breeds of livestock. Another aspect of biodiversity is the variety of ecosystems that occur in mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, deserts and other biomes. Within each ecosystem the abiotic (non-living) elements and biotic (living) organisms, including people, interact within a complex community.

To date, 1.78 million species have been identified, although the total number of species is unknown and is probably between 5 and 30 million. It is the combination of these species and their interactions with each other and the environment that has made the Earth a uniquely habitable place. Biodiversity provides a sustainable lifestyle for all inhabitants if the Earth's natural resources are utilised wisely.

? **The theme for 2012 International Day for Biological Diversity is ‘marine biodiversity’. How can we protect our coast and oceans?**



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
E-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; Website: www.cbd.int



Hands-On Series; Enviro-Facts.

WWW www.cbd.int; www.gbif.org; www.undp.org/biodiversity

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY ~ 5 JUNE

WORLD ENVIRONMENT WEEK ~ 4-8 JUNE

World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. This conference resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

People have the most impact on our environment. The nature and extent of this impact depends on factors such as the type of economic activity, distribution of wealth and resources, cultural values and lifestyles.


World Environment Day aims to encourage people to become active supporters of sustainable and equitable living, to promote awareness and an understanding that communities play a central role in changing attitudes towards environmental issues, and to develop partnerships that will ensure all nations and people enjoy a safer and more fulfilling future.

In many countries, activities on this day include the signing of petitions that can lead to the establishment of permanent political action taken by governments to commit themselves to caring for the environment.

Celebrate World Environment Day by appreciating this unique planet and make a conscious effort to practice energy-saving techniques, walk or cycle to work, recycle, re-use, support fresh produce markets, avoid environmentally hazardous goods or wasteful packaging and ensure a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle.

? What does the term “ecosystem services” mean?

 Department: Environmental Affairs. Private Bag X447, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: (012) 310 3911. Website: www.environment.gov.za

 *Environment and Methods; Enviro Picture Building games and puzzles; Eco Puzzles; My Carbon Footprint (auditing our electricity, travel, water use, waste and food).*

WWW www.unep.org

WORLD OCEANS DAY ~ 8 JUNE

“Youth: the Next Wave for Change”

The concept for a “World Ocean Day” was first proposed in 1992 by the Government of Canada at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. As a result of a United Nations General Assembly resolution passed in December 2008, World Oceans Day is now officially recognized by the UN as 8 June each year.

Everyone can help protect the world's ocean. Small changes we make in our everyday lives can add up and have a big positive impact on the health of the seas. By taking *The 7 Cs Pledge* and committing to make a real difference we can protect the ocean, its incredible inhabitants, and even our own community. There are many challenges facing our oceans right now including climate change, pollution, and overfishing, but these challenges are not insurmountable. We can all take steps and turn the tide for our seas! The term “Seven Seas” has been used for centuries as a general description for all the oceans of the world. The *7 Cs Pledge* uses this play on words to help us all remember how each of us can make decisions in our daily lives for the benefit of our planet's future.

- I promise to:
1. Commit to making a real difference
 2. Conserve in my home
 3. Consume consciously
 4. Communicate my interests and concerns
 5. Challenge myself daily
 6. Connect in my community
 7. Celebrate our oceans.

Source: *The Ocean Project* – see website details below.

? **What are some of the land-based activities that can cause coastal and marine pollution?**



NPC Sea World Education Centre at uShaka Marine World.
1 King Shaka Avenue, Point, Durban, 4001. Tel: (031) 328 8222.
E-mail: info@seaworld.org.za



The Treasure Chest: An educator's guide; Science on Sea Grades 7-12: Educators's resource for physical and natural sciences. Enviro Facts; Hands-On Coastal Series.

WWW <http://theoceanproject.org/> and www.seaworld.org.za

YOUTH DAY (SA) ~ 16 JUNE

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY ~ 12 AUGUST


In 1975 protests began in African schools when the previous Bantu Education Department stated that Afrikaans had to be used on an equal basis with English as a language of instruction in secondary schools. This, however, was symptomatic of the broader problem of the unjust Bantu education system, characterised by separate schools, universities, inadequate classroom facilities and poorly trained teachers.

On 16 June 1976, more than 20 000 learners from Soweto, outside Johannesburg, began a protest march. With the intervention of the police, violence broke out and on this day and during the following few weeks, approximately 700 people, many of whom were youths, were killed and property was destroyed. It took another 14 years of struggle before the system of apartheid was finally abolished but the youth of South Africa had played an important role in the struggle for this costly freedom.

Youth Day, previously known as Soweto Day, commemorates the contribution the youth has made to the democracy of South Africa and to reaffirm the rights of children and youth to education, food, health and a safe and secure home and school environment.

On 17 December 1999 the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, that 12 August be declared International Youth Day. To support the day, it is recommended that public information activities be organised to create more awareness of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

? **The youth have an important role to play in the protection of the environment. In what ways can young people participate?**

 South African Scout Association. PO Box 2434, Clareinch, 7740.
Tel: 0860 726 887. E-mail: info@scouting.org.za

 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.*

WWW www.un.org/youth; www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/flash.htm
www.scouting.org.za


WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT ~ 17 JUNE

The United Nations General Assembly acknowledge that desertification and drought are a global problem as they affect all regions of the world and require joint commitment of individuals and organisations to work together in minimising this problem. On 17 June 1994, World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought was proclaimed.

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions that are a result of climatic variations and human activities. Careful land management is very challenging in the more arid and semi-arid regions that only receive between 450mm and 600mm of annual rainfall, respectively. Today, a third of the Earth's surface is threatened by desertification, which adds up to an area of over 4 000 million hectares of the planet. It contributes to food insecurity, famine and poverty, and may also fuel social, economic and political tensions that can cause migration, conflicts, further poverty and land degradation. It is estimated that the livelihoods of more than 1 000 million people globally are at risk from desertification, which may eventually force 135 million people off their land. Desertification appears to be most severe in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa.

To assist in combating the problem of desertification and drought, this day aims to promote awareness of the effects of drought, the impact desertification has on the Earth and to encourage the need for global co-operation, and the education of communities to address these problems and find solutions.

? **What plants can be used as pioneer species to rehabilitate degraded land in a specific area?**

 Food & Trees for Africa. 94 Bessemer Street, Wendywood, 2144.
Tel: (011) 656 9802. Fax: 086 547 1258. Website: www.trees.co.za

 *Enviro Facts; The Greening Booklet: All about trees; Indigenous Knowledge Series: Soil Conservation through Indigenous Knowledge Practices in Swaziland.*

WWW www.undp.org/drylands/ and www.unccd.int

WORLD POPULATION DAY ~ 11 JULY

"This year's World Population Day falls during a milestone year, when we anticipate the birth of the Earth's seven billionth inhabitant. This is an opportunity to celebrate our common humanity and our diversity. It is also a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for each other and our planet."

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Message for World Population Day, 11 July 2011

The world population is presently standing at nearly 7 billion people and increases by three people per second, which is the equivalent of a quarter of a million people every day. The first national population census for South Africa, in 1904, recorded the country's total population as 5.17 million people. Just over a century later, South Africa's population is estimated at 50.5 million people.

For human progress, human equality and for sustainable living, all societies need a balance between natural resources and population. One may ask how can this be achieved when the United Nations has estimated that by the year 2025 the population will have risen to 8.5 billion people. It is evident that the more people there are, the greater the impact and demand on the Earth's resources. However, the human impact on the Earth is not only determined by the number of people. The amount of energy consumed, the way the planet's finite resources are utilised, and the amount of waste generated by each person all make a global impact.

Can solutions such as controlling the birth rate through a stipulated number of children per family, or improving health, education, housing and employment opportunities, lead to a 'controlled' population that can live sustainably on the Earth?

? **Debate the pros and cons of population control.**

 World Population Foundation. Website: www.wpf.org

 *Enviro Facts.*

WWW www.un.org/depts/dhl/population/

NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (SA) ~ 9 AUGUST

On 9 August 1956 approximately 20 000 women, from all walks of life, participated in a march outside the Union Buildings in Pretoria. It was probably the single most famous protest by women to have taken place in the history of South Africa. The Union Building site was chosen because of its historical significance in the development of the apartheid struggle.

Women were opposing the law which forced the black population to carry a pass (or document) with them at all times to permit them entering a 'white area'. "You strike the women, you strike the rock", was chanted during the protest and this gave strength to South African women who suffered from exploitation and discrimination during the apartheid era.

Programmes such as Violence against Women and others have been established as a result of this march and the determination of women countrywide.

On National Women's Day 2000, the Women's Monument at the Union Buildings was unveiled to recognise women's contribution towards gender equity and human rights for all. In many parts of South Africa, women still bear the brunt of extreme poverty, abuse, over-exploitation, oppression and great suffering, yet they are still the "rock" upon which family life and our society depends.

On National Women's Day all women are affirmed, their courage and sacrifices over the ages acknowledged, and their aspirations and achievements applauded.

? **Name some of the women who have played a significant role in the history of South Africa.**

☎ National Council of Women of South Africa. PO Box 72499, Parkview, 2122. E-mail: admin@ncw.org.za
Website: www.ncw.org.za

Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), PO Box 32175, Braamfontein, 2017. Website: www.cge.org.za

WWW www.ncw.org.za

NATIONAL ARBOR WEEK ~ 1-7 SEPTEMBER


Arbor Week is a special week that has been set aside for the planting and caring of trees. Arbor Day originated in Switzerland during the 15th century to raise awareness amongst people about the importance of trees. In South Africa, Arbor Day started in 1983 and in 1997 it was extended to a National Arbor Week. In South Africa, Arbor Week falls in the first week of September.


Every South African Arbor Week celebration highlights at least two specific trees - one common and one rare species. In 2012, the common tree is *Syzygium cordatum* (Water berry, Waterbessie); and the rare or uncommon trees are *Protorhus longifolia* (Red Beech, Rooiboekenhout) and *Bruguiera gymnorrhiza* (Black Mangrove Swartwortelboom).

People have depended on trees through the ages. They offer shelter and shade, are a source of food, fuel, medicine, timber, and also have numerous other uses. They are essential for replenishing our oxygen supply and taking in the atmosphere's carbon dioxide, a contributor to the greenhouse effect. They prevent soil erosion by binding the soil with their roots and add nutrients to the soil with their leaf litter.

Arbor Week celebrations intend to promote a better understanding of trees, in particular indigenous trees; encourage the planting of trees and greening activities within communities; highlight the importance of trees for a sustainable future and the role trees play in the livelihoods of people and their environment; and raise awareness amongst South Africans about greening initiatives.

? **List all the ways in which trees contribute to life on Earth.**

 Food & Trees for Africa. 94 Bessemer Street, Wendywood, 2144.
Tel: (011) 656 9802. Fax: 086 547 1258. E-mail: info@trees.org.za;
Website: www.trees.co.za

 *Hands-On: A Forest Community; Trees of Umgeni Valley; The Greening Booklet: all about trees; Arbor Day: A Teacher's Guide; Forest Fun: A Handbook for primary school teachers; A Tale of our Tree World; Enviro Facts; Hand Print booklets: Planting Mother-tree Seedlings.*

WWW www.plantzafrica.com; www.dwaf.gov.za and www.trees.co.za

CASUAL DAY ~ 7 SEPTEMBER

All South Africans are encouraged to get involved in the country's principle fundraising project for people with disabilities by celebrating Casual Day.


Casual Day started in 1995 and is a project of the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa (NCPDPSA).

This event is held on the first Friday of September each year and people are asked to wear something different, something formal, casual or funky and the official Casual Day sticker in support of the disabled. Casual Day is the day to show that each one of us can make a difference.

Funds are raised for the disabled through the sale of the official Casual Day sticker and the intention of this day is also to increase the public's awareness of issues surrounding disability.

Since Casual Day started in 1995, millions of rand have been raised. By supporting this day you will be contributing to a worthy charity and it is a fun and easy way of making a difference.

? In what ways can you help disabled people?

 The National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa. 82 Andries Pretorius Road, Edenvale, Eastleigh, 1609. Tel: (011) 452 2774. Fax: (011) 452 6583.
E-mail: nationaloffice@ncppdsa.org.za
Website: www.ncppdsa.org.za

WWW www.casualday.co.za

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY ~ 8 SEPTEMBER

Today one in five adults is still not literate and about two-thirds of them are women while 67.4 million children are out of school.

Since its foundation in 1946, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) has been at the forefront of global literacy efforts and is dedicated to keeping literacy high on national, regional and international agendas. However, with some 793 million adults lacking minimum literacy skills, literacy for all remains an elusive target.

It is our role to remind authorities at international and national levels to strengthen local capacity and support community initiatives.

International Literacy Day is an occasion to celebrate the importance literacy has on individuals, communities and societies worldwide. It also provides the opportunity to encourage those whose illiteracy currently excludes them from full participation in society.

Points to ponder:

- How can we build a democratic nation if so many remain without one of life's most basic skills?
- How can mutual understanding and dialogue between different cultures prosper when the illiteracy levels are so high?
- How can poverty be eradicated when the roots of ignorance are left undisturbed?

? How do you think that 'reading' the environment, understanding ecosystems and following sustainable practices can be a form of literacy?



READ Educational Trust. PO Box 30994, Braamfontein, 2017.
Tel: (011) 496 3322. E-mail: info@read.co.za



Indigenous Knowledge Series; Enviro Facts; A Tale of our Tree World.

WWW www.reading.org and www.read.org.za

NATIONAL CLEAN-UP WEEK ~ 10-15 SEPTEMBER

RECYCLING DAY SOUTH AFRICA ~ 14 SEPTEMBER

South Africa's first National Clean-Up Week was launched in 1999 by the Plastics Federation of South Africa (the Plastics Industries Enviromark) and Pick 'n Pay. It is held every year in the week preceding the International Coastal Clean-up.

It brought together under one umbrella, organisations that are already actively involved in environmental campaigns, as well as community groups and schools to 'clean-up' beaches, waterways, parks, streets, local communities and schools.

During this week all South Africans are urged to do something towards cleaning their local community. The focus of an individual clean-up may vary and will depend on issues pertaining to a particular community. Examples of clean-ups in the past include litter picking, the clearing of illegal dumping and competitions on a clean-up theme. An important part of the clean-up is to include a component to ensure that the benefits of the clean-up are sustained. This may take the form of an education campaign or ensuring that local facilities for cleansing are in order.

In 2010, the Plastics Federation of South Africa's Enviromark initiated an annual recycling day for South Africa. Recycling Day South Africa encourages South Africans to recycle at home, school and at work and buy products made with recycled material. This day occurs during National Clean-Up Week and aims to increase awareness by educating the community about the social, environmental and economic benefits of recycling.

? **What are some creative ways to reduce the amount of waste we produce?**



Douw Steyn, Director Sustainability, Plastics SA.
Tel: (011) 653 4794. Cell: 083 301 8157. Fax: 086 158 313.
E-mail: Douw.Steyn@plasticssa.co.za



Enviro Facts.

WWW www.cleanup-sa.co.za; www.recyclingday-sa.co.za;
www.plasticsinfo.co.za

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP ~ 15 SEPTEMBER

On the third Saturday of September each year, volunteers around the world take part in the world's biggest clean-up. This year marks the 27th annual International Coastal Clean-up (ICC) when people head to the beaches and begin removing debris from shorelines, waterways and oceans.

In 1986 the Centre for Marine Conservation held the first beach clean-up on the Texas coast with the aid of 2 800 volunteers. Since then, the ICC has included inland lakes, rivers, streams and underwater sites in lakes, rivers and streams in the annual clean-up.

The problem of marine debris does not necessarily start at the ocean but is dumped further inland and washed down into the oceans.

Each year there is a vast increase in the number of marine animals injured or entangled in debris found in the oceans. Turtles mistake floating bags as food and thousands of seals, whales, dolphins, sharks and birds die from entanglement in fishing line and other debris.

The aim of the clean-up is:

- to remove debris from all bodies of water;
- to collect valuable information about debris;
- to heighten public awareness of the causes of litter and debris;
- to make a positive change and to promote water pollution prevention efforts worldwide.

? **What effect does land-based pollution have on our ocean ecosystems?**



Douw Steyn, Director Sustainability, Plastics SA.
Tel: (011) 653 4794. Cell: 083 301 8157. Fax: 086 158 313.
E-mail: Douw.Steyn@plasticssa.co.za



Hands-On Coastal Library; Waste Resource Pack; Hands-On: Stream and Pond Life; A Beginner's Guide: Seaweeds (algae); A Beginner's Guide: Some Common Waterbirds.

WWW www.oceanconservancy.org; www.cleanup-sa.co.za/


INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OZONE LAYER ~ 16 SEPTEMBER

The Montreal Protocol was adopted on 16 September 1987. Governments agreed to co-operate in phasing out chemicals that deplete the ozone layer. South Africa adopted this Protocol in 1990.

This invisible layer in the atmosphere protects the Earth from harmful ultra-violet rays from the sun. Should these ultra-violet rays reach Earth by passing through the thinning ozone layer, skin cancer and damage to crops will increase. Ozone depleting substances such as chloro-fluorocarbons (CFCs), hydro-fluoro-carbons, methyl bromide, to mention a few, are pollutants used all over the world. There has been an attempt by manufacturers of products releasing these pollutants to produce 'ozone friendly' products. These pollutants are emitted from products such as refrigerators, air conditioners, spray cans, agricultural products and pesticides.

By celebrating this day, we are reminded of the necessity to live in ways that do not contribute to the depletion of this vital and essential layer of atmosphere that shields the Earth. It also gives individuals and organisations time to reflect on what progress has taken place to combat this environmental threat.

? **Investigate whether legislation to protect the ozone layer, such as the banning of CFC's, has had any effect.**

 *Enviro Facts; Puzzling Climate Change: A start-up pack of pictures; My Carbon Footprint (auditing our electricity, travel, water use, waste and food).*

WWW www.unep.org/ozone/

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE ~ 21 SEPTEMBER

In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly declared that the opening day of its regular session in September "shall be officially dedicated and observed as the International Day of Peace and shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples" (resolution 36/67). It was in 2001 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new resolution stating 21 September will mark the International Day of Peace.

The celebration of this day is intended to have the entire world observing a day of peace and non-violence and all organisations and individuals are encouraged to celebrate this day in an appropriate manner.

To enhance the importance of this Day, a 24-hour vigil for peace and non-violence is held. This global 24-hour vigil aims to bring to our attention, the power of prayer and other spiritual observances in promoting peace and preventing violent conflict.

There is still a lot of conflict and tensions amongst people in South Africa and this day reminds us of our need to work together and put our differences behind us so that we can ensure a safer future for all citizens.

? Debate whether you think that we are justified in spending enormous amounts of money on weapons of war, rather than on rehabilitating degraded ecosystems.

 The World Peace Prayer Society, 26 Benton Road, Wassaic, New York 12592 USA. E-mail: info@worldpeace.org
Website: www.worldpeace.org

Ceasefire Campaign, PO Box 31740, Braamfontein, 2017.
Tel: (011) 403 5315. Fax: (011) 339 7863.
E-mail: stopwar@mail.ngo.za

WWW www.worldpeacenewsletter.com, www.ceasefire.org.za and www.internationaldayofpeace.org/

HERITAGE DAY (SA) ~ 24 SEPTEMBER

Heritage Day commemorates the World Heritage Convention signed in 1972. The mission of the Heritage Convention is for countries to:

- conserve the natural and cultural heritage in their territories, and
- encourage states to nominate sites within their territories for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

In South Africa, its significance is to recognise various aspects of South African culture which include creative expression, historical inheritance, language, culturally specific food and the land in which we live.

Natural and cultural heritage include monuments, architectural works, sculpture and painting, structures of an archeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and groups of buildings. Also included are sites of outstanding universal value from an historical, aesthetic, and ethnological point of view to geological and physiographic formations and natural sites.

Of the 936 cultural and natural properties forming part of the World Heritage List, which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value, eight can be found in South Africa.

The need to acknowledge this rich and varied cultural heritage is knowing that it has profound power to help build our nation.

? **Name South Africa's World Heritage Sites and state where they are found.**

 South African Heritage Resource Agency. 111 Harrington Street, Cape Town, 8001. Tel: (021) 462 4502. Fax: (021) 462 4509. Website: www.sahra.org.za

 *Indigenous Knowledge Series.*

WWW www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/holidays.htm and <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>

WORLD TOURISM DAY ~ 27 SEPTEMBER

“World Tourism Day is an opportunity to reflect on the importance of tourism to global well-being. As we travel, let us engage with other cultures and celebrate human diversity. On this observance, let us recognize tourism as a force for a more tolerant, open and united world.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, message for World Tourism Day 2011


This date was chosen as it coincides with an important occurrence in world tourism - the anniversary of the adoption of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) Statutes on 27 September 1970.

The main purpose of World Tourism Day is to create awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic values.

In South Africa, tourism brings in foreign revenue and exposes nations to the South African culture.

Eco-tourism involves creating a tourist industry which will help the economy of a country by creating jobs while promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. Tourists may visit areas to see and photograph wildlife and scenic beauty. However, the numbers of tourists and methods of approach in the tourism industry must be carefully monitored to maintain the spirit and natural status of an area and avoid disturbing both wildlife and ecosystems.

? **It is better for the environment, if we holiday locally, and avoid flying on aeroplanes. Plan the ‘ultimate’ local holiday, without flying!**

 Tourism KwaZulu-Natal. PO Box 2516, Durban, 4000.
Tel: (031) 366 7500. Fax: (031) 305 6693.
E-mail: hilda@zulu.org.za; Website: www.zulu.org.za

WWW www2.unwto.org/

WORLD HABITAT DAY ~ 1 OCTOBER


“Better City, Better Life”

World Habitat Day is celebrated on the first Monday of October and is a reminder to us of the importance of maintaining a balance within our social, political, economic and biophysical environment. For our survival and for the well-being of our planet, we must ensure that the different natural habitats are conserved so that species and biodiversity (the complete variety of all living things) are maintained.

Communities of plants and animals live in habitats that are specific to their living requirements and are determined by environmental conditions. The survival of many species of flora and fauna rests on the careful management of these habitats. Some of these communities and/or individual species are under major threat as they are affected by the drainage of wetlands, damming of rivers, agricultural and urban development.

Government departments, non-governmental organisations, businesses, local authorities and schools are all encouraged to work together on issues such as global warming, air pollution, poverty and other environmental concerns. The need to realise the importance of working together as a community to raise awareness about such issues, is essential.

? **In what ways could we improve our ‘habitat’ to make it more environmentally sustainable?**

 Department: Environmental Affairs (DEA). Private Bag X447, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: (012) 310 3911. DEA Call Centre Number: 086 111 2468.

 *Eco Puzzles; Enviro Facts; Hands-On and Beginners' Guides.*

WWW www.unhabitat.org and www.environment.gov.za

WORLD ANIMAL DAY ~ 4 OCTOBER

World Animal Day takes place every year on 4 October. Animal welfare groups, sanctuaries and individuals throughout the world hold special events to heighten public awareness of animal issues and to encourage people to think about how we as humans relate to animals.

The mission statement of World Animal Day is:

- to celebrate animal life in all its forms;
- to celebrate humankind's relationship with the animal kingdom;
- to acknowledge the diverse roles that animals play in our lives from being our companions, supporting and helping us, to bringing a sense of wonder into our lives;
- to acknowledge and be thankful for the way in which animals enrich our lives.

World Animal Day was started in 1931 at a convention of ecologists in Florence as a way of highlighting the plight of endangered species. Since then it has grown to encompass all kinds of animal life and is widely celebrated in countries throughout the world. October 4 was chosen as World Animal Day as it is the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

It is intended as a day of celebration for anyone in the world who cares about animals. It is not restricted to any one nationality, creed, religion, political belief or ideology.

You do not have to be an activist, you just have to care! Buy a few tins of animal food for your local SPCA, make a small donation to an animal charity, plant a shrub that will attract butterflies and birds to your garden - the possibilities are endless.

? **What animal protection/rehabilitation centres do you have in your area? What can you do to help?**

 National Council of SPCAs. PO Box 1320, Alberton, 1450.
Tel: (011) 907 3590. Fax: (011) 907 4013.
E-mail: nspca@nspca.co.za

WWW www.worldanimalday.org.uk; www.nspca.co.za and www.animalsmatter.org

NATIONAL WEEDBUSTER WEEK ~ 5-9 OCTOBER*

The Working for Water Programme is a multi-departmental alien clearing initiative led by the Department of Water Affairs. It is the Programme's intention that by the year 2020, substantial control over invading alien plants in South Africa will have taken place in order to contribute to economic empowerment, social equity and ecological integrity. Invasive alien species are causing billions of rands worth of damage to South Africa's economy each year, and are the single largest threat to the country's biodiversity.

Invasive alien plants (IAPs) pose a direct threat not only to biodiversity, but also to water security, the ecological functioning of natural systems and the productive use of land. They intensify the impact of fires and floods and increase soil erosion. IAPs can divert enormous amounts of water from more productive uses and invasive aquatic plants, such as water hyacinth, affect agriculture, fisheries, transport, recreation and water supply. Of the estimated 9 000 plants introduced into South Africa, 198 are currently classified as being invasive. It is estimated that these plants cover about 10% of the country.

National Weedbuster Week aims to raise awareness and increase public understanding about the problems alien plants cause; help the public make the connection between gardening and agricultural practices and potential land and environmental degradation; provide the public with the information and skills required to play a responsible role in the sustainable use of land and water resources and ultimately make the necessary changes in behaviour to help the environment; foster community ownership of problems resulting in acceptance and support for alien plant management projects.

? **What effect do alien plants have on biodiversity? What action could we take to reduce the number of IAPs in our area?**



Department: Water Affairs, Working for Water Programme.
Website: www.dwa.gov.za/wfw



Hack Attack Pack: making sure your school is free of invader plants; Catchment Action: 28 Alien Plant Invaders in KwaZulu-Natal and Eradicating Invading Alien Plants in KwaZulu-Natal.

WWW www.dwa.gov.za/wfw/

*Date may change, please contact Working for Water (website above) in 2012 for confirmation of dates.

NATIONAL MARINE WEEK ~ 8-12 OCTOBER

Celebrations around our marine life have taken place each year since 1988 as government endeavours to create public awareness on marine conservation issues and remind South Africans of our spectacular ocean heritage that provides employment and recreational opportunities for all.

South Africa boasts a coastline of over 3 000 kilometres which stretches from the Orange River in the west to Kosi Bay in the east. The oceans along this coastline are rich in marine life and support many different marine ecosystems.

Great demand is put on our marine life by commercial fisheries, fishermen, and for recreational purposes such as the collection of marine creatures for fish tanks. These factors and the increase of marine pollution cause the decline of many species and it is our duty, as humans, to make sure such resources are not overexploited resulting in total destruction and possible extinction.

To celebrate this special week, we can learn more about our fragile oceans and its inhabitants in order to help conserve and utilise this natural resource in a more sustainable manner.

? Find out which species of fish commonly served in our restaurants are protected in South Africa. How can public awareness be raised?



Enviro Facts; Hands-On Coastal Library; Beginner's Guide: Common Marine Fish; Beginner's Guide: Seaweeds (algae); Hands-On: East Coast Reefs; Hands-On: East Coast Sandy Shores; Hands-On: East Coast Dune Plants; Hands-On: East Coast Estuaries and Mangroves; Hands-On: East Coast Rocky Shores; Hands On: Marine Reptile Life of southern Africa.

AFRICAN PENGUIN AWARENESS DAY ~ 12 OCTOBER*


The African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), is also known as the Black-footed Penguin. Because of its call, which sounds like a braying donkey, this penguin used to be called the Jackass Penguin.

The African Penguin is so named because it is the only species of penguin that breeds in Africa, and it is endemic to our south-west coast. There are various colonies between Namibia and Port Elizabeth, the largest of which can be found on Dreyer Island, near Kleinbaai.

Unfortunately, due to egg harvesting, guano harvesting (collection of bird droppings for fertilizer), disease, and pressure from commercial fishing, and oil pollution on their food supply, African Penguin populations have rapidly declined and the bird is now listed as "vulnerable to extinction". One hundred years ago, it was estimated that the African Penguin numbered 4 million - today there are only around 56 000 breeding pairs left.

African Penguin Awareness Day is an international SANCCOB (Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds) initiative to raise awareness around the plight of this delightful bird. The University of Cape Town's Avian Demography Unit have shown that SANCCOB's rehabilitation efforts have meant that the penguin populations are as much as 19% higher than they would have been, had action not been taken. Since 1968 this organization has treated more than 85 000 birds.

? **What action do you think could be taken to help protect the African Penguin?**

 SANCCOB. PO Box 11116, Bloubergrandt, 7443. Tel: (021) 557 6155. Fax: (021) 557 8804. E-mail: info@sanccob.co.za

WWW www.africanpenguin.co.za/; www.sanccob.co.za/

*Date may change, please contact SANCCOB (contact details above) in 2012 for confirmation of date.

WORLD FOOD DAY ~ 16 OCTOBER

“1 000 000 000 people live in chronic hunger.”

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2011

World Food Day marks the date of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on 16 October 1945. In 1980, the United Nations General Assembly initiated the day by stating that 'food is a requisite for human survival and well-being and a fundamental human necessity' (Resolution 35/70 of 5 December).

This day encourages us to focus on ensuring sustainable food resources for the growing world population and the essential role water plays in maintaining this food supply. Agricultural practices use about 70% of the world's freshwater supply and as the population grows so will the demand for food supplies increase and hence more water will be needed for irrigation purposes.

Some of the objectives of World Food Day are: to raise public awareness of the hunger problem in the world, to draw attention to agricultural food production and to encourage the support of governmental and non-governmental organisations, to incorporate rural communities in decision-making that influences their living conditions, to strengthen solidarity amongst countries in the struggle against hunger, poverty and malnutrition, and to encourage economic and technical co-operation amongst developing countries.

Consumers are encouraged to become more aware of the social, economic and environmental cost of food production and to practice healthier and more sustainable eating habits.

? **What is meant by sustainable eating habits?**



Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.
PO Box 13782, The Tramshed, Pretoria, 0126. Tel: (012) 354 8540.
E-mail: FAO-ZA@fao.org; Website: www.un.org.za



Enviro Facts; Health Gardening: a guide to growing food for life; How to make a trench garden; How to build a chicken tractor; Nutrition in schools: a teacher's guide; Eating for the Earth.

WWW www.fao.org; www.trees.co.za and www.1billionhungry.org/

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY ~ 17 OCTOBER

The day was first observed in 1987. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in 1992, in Resolution 47/196.

At the Millennium Summit, world leaders committed themselves to cutting by half by the year 2015 the number of people living in extreme poverty - people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names; 1 billion children live in poverty (1 in 2 children in the world); 640 million live without adequate shelter; 400 million have no access to safe water; 270 million have no access to health services. It is difficult to comprehend this in a world of great wealth, of scientific and technological advancement and in a world in which people are more aware of how others live. Yet, it is still a disturbing reality.

Over and above the human suffering it causes, poverty is also one of the major causes of environmental degradation. People – usually those who are politically disempowered and illiterate - are forced to cut down trees, farm in unsustainable ways and have numerous children to support them.

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty encourages all authorities at all levels to promote, as appropriate in the national context, activities that will aid in combating poverty and destitution. Many individuals and governments have different views on how poverty should be alleviated, but most agree that the poor should be given access to resources and education in order to improve their quality of life in sustainable ways.

? **In what ways will people living in poverty be affected by climate change?**



Food & Trees for Africa. PO Box 2035, Gallo Manor, 2052.
Tel: (011) 656 9802. Fax: (086) 547 1258. E-mail: info@trees.org.za
Food and Agriculture (FAO) Representation of the United Nations. Metro Park Building, 351 Schoeman Street, Pretoria, 0001. Tel: (012) 354 8540. E-mail: FAO-ZA@fao.org

WWW www.un.org/observances/days/; www.fao.org/;
<http://social.un.org/index/>; and www.trees.co.za

DISARMAMENT WEEK ~ 24-30 OCTOBER

"Let us keep pushing on disarmament and non-proliferation. Let us fulfill the dream ... a world free of nuclear weapons."

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2011

Disarmament Week begins on the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Since the United Nations commencement in 1945, they have supported disarmament and arms control issues. It was in 1995 that governments and non-governmental organisations were approached by the United Nations to continue to assist in the struggle against weapons.

Worldwide there are threats of war and in many countries there is civil war. Although families have the right to safety, it is not a safe solution to own a weapon and countries are not more secure through increased militarisation. When we develop our potential and human dignity, and when nations learn to solve their differences peacefully, the safety needs of the community and individuals will be met without armed conflict.

Wars are not only financially costly but also environmentally and socially costly. The money spent on weapons could be used more sensibly by making contributions towards the upliftment of communities and moving towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

Stakeholders are invited to emphasise the danger of the arms race, encourage the abolishment of arms deals and increase the understanding of the public for the urgent task of disarmament.

"Our hard-won political freedom will mean nothing unless we have freedom from violence, freedom from fear ..." Former President Nelson Mandela.

? **Aside from arms, what other warfare exists?**



Gun Free South Africa (GfSA). PO Box 12988, Mowbray, 7700.
Tel: (021) 461 7211. Fax (021) 461 7213.
E-mail: info@gfsa.org.za; Website: www.gfsa.org.za

WWW www.un.org/disarmament/

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY ~ 20 NOVEMBER

"We were all children once. And we all share the desire for the well-being for our children, which has always been and will continue to be the most universally cherished aspiration of humankind."

We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children Report of the Secretary-General (2001)

Universal Children's Day marks the day in which the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. It was in 1954 that all countries were approached by the United Nations to observe a Universal Children's Day, promoting the welfare of children around the world.


Children represent the future of our country and other countries around the world. It is the duty of parents, governing bodies, government and non-governmental organisations to ensure that the safety and the rights of children are considered and met.

The environment in which we live requires careful management and respect in order for future generations to benefit from the Earth's resources and maintain a sustainable way of living. Children need to learn, from a young age, about the importance of being environmentally literate and responsible citizens so that they can grow up to enjoy a decent quality of life.

Universal Children's Day is an excellent opportunity to encourage and empower the children of South Africa to tread lightly on the Earth.

? The role of children varies in different countries. List some of these roles.

 Eco-Schools South Africa. PO Box 394, Howick. 3290.
Tel: (033) 330 3931 extension 145. Fax: 086 501 3974.
E-mail: ecoschools@wessa.co.za

 *United Nations: Declaration of the Rights of the Child. 1959.*
United Nations: Convention on the Rights of the Child. 1989.

WWW www.un.org/depts/dhl/children_day/

BIRDING BIG DAY (SA) ~ 24 NOVEMBER

Birds belong to the class Aves and, of the higher vertebrates, they are the most studied, the most easily seen and accessible, the most melodious and many think, the most beautiful animals on Earth.


Fish are the only other vertebrates that have a higher number of species than birds. There are approximately 10 000 species of bird distributed over most of the Earth. They are found in forests, deserts, mountains and prairies, and on lakes, rivers and oceans. A few species have even visited the North Pole and one, a skua, was seen at the South Pole! Some birds dive to depths greater than 45m to prey on aquatic life while others live in caves and in this total darkness are able to find their way around by echo-location.

South Africa is richly endowed with a diversity of approximately 890 different bird species.

In recognition of our bird heritage, BirdLife South Africa co-ordinates two important birding events, Birding Big Day and National Bird Week. Birding Big Day is a competition open to everyone with the aim of seeing how many birds can be spotted on that day, within a radius of 50km. Prizes are awarded to the team who spots the highest numbers.

National Bird Week, usually held in May each year, is a national bird awareness and conservation initiative in South Africa that focuses on birds, their habitats and their conservation needs.

? **What different roles are performed by birds in an ecosystem in/around your school?**

 BirdLife South Africa, PO Box 515, Randburg, 2125. Tel: (011) 789 1122. Fax: (011) 789 5188.

 *A Beginner's Guide: Some Common Waterbirds; "Wild about birds" resource pack and Hadedda Island Curriculum Pack.*

WWW www.birdlife.org.za

BUY NOTHING DAY ~ 24 NOVEMBER

“Buy Nothing Day is your special day to unshop, unspend and unwind. Relax and do nothing for the economy and for yourself - at least for a single day.”

Adbusters, the founders of Buy Nothing Day, are a global network of artists, activists, writers, students, educators and entrepreneurs. Their aim is to question existing power structures and encourage consumer lifestyle changes in the 21st century.

Buy Nothing Day, celebrated on the last Saturday in November, challenges us to avoid participating in the economy. We should bear in mind that it is not only when we take cash from our wallets to pay for goods, that we are spending money, but also when we make a cell phone call, use electricity or water in our homes, or drive our cars.

Many people are beginning to realise that the population explosion, coupled with our consumerist lifestyles are putting unnecessary pressure on our planet's dwindling resources, only to produce an enormous amount of waste that is difficult and costly to dispose of. This situation is not sustainable.

If we are to make lifestyle changes that reduce our environmental footprint, we need to think and reflect on how we, as consumers, are adding to the problem, and come up with creative ways in which we can live on this planet in a more sustainable manner.

? **Keep a log of how many 'transactions' involving money you make in a day. Assess the impact these transactions may have on the environment.**

WWW www.buynothingday.org; www.buynothingday.co.uk

WORLD AIDS DAY ~ 1 DECEMBER

The World Health Organisation declared 1 December 1988 World AIDS Day in recognition of the deep concern about the pandemic proportions of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). There are now currently 5.6 million South Africans, infected with HIV. According to the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World Health Organisation, on a global level, the number of people living with HIV continues to grow - from 29 million in 2001 to over 33 million in 2009. More than two thirds of all people infected with HIV are living in sub-Saharan Africa.

Many communities have been devastated by the virus. Teachers, doctors and medical assistants are dying each day, the future of civilians is jeopardised, and many of these people cannot afford medical treatment. Society needs to be aware of this disease and the causes of it to help and care for those who are suffering.

The HI virus that causes AIDS disables the immune system by destroying the T4-lymphocytes (white blood cells) that help 'killer' lymphocytes attack invaders. HIV weakens the body's natural defences against infection, making those people with the virus less able to fight the organisms that cause infection and disease. It is only once people with HIV begin to show signs of having one or more infections that they are said to have AIDS.

Sadly, AIDS sufferers are often rejected by society at a time when they most need physical, medical, emotional and spiritual support. Unfortunately, stigma and discrimination remain major barriers in finding ways to combat this virus.

? **What are the untruths of the HIV/AIDS virus that cause sufferers to be rejected or misjudged?**

 Contact your provincial AIDS Training, Information and Counselling Centre (ATICC).

 *The AIDS Healers: a compilation of AIDS-related stories with grammatical and comprehension exercises.*

WWW www.worldaidsday.org and www.unaids.org

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ~ 3 DECEMBER

In 1992, 3 December was declared the International Day of Disabled Persons by the United Nations General Assembly. This followed the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled People which ran from 1983-1992. The official title of the Day was changed on 18 December 2007 from International Day of Disabled Persons to International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Initially, the Day was proclaimed to commemorate the anniversary of the General Assembly's adoption of the World Programme of Action concerning Persons with Disabilities. The Day also aimed to promote an understanding about disability issues and to increase awareness of the importance of including disabled persons in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

Celebrations of this day should be supported and agreed upon by people with disabilities.

Eco-Access is a non-profit organisation in South Africa bringing people with disabilities and able bodied people together and offering to: facilitate camps and outings to natural venues where people with disabilities and able bodied people learn about each other and the planet; facilitate a corporate team building and change management process called the 'Eco-Access Diversity Challenge', where corporate executives 'twin' with community structures to tackle various environmental and disability-related activities together; manage environmental education projects with persons with disabilities; produce and distribute information about how to include people with disabilities into society and the environment; and, create public awareness on disability and environmental issues.

? **What does the Equity Act state about the rights of disabled people?**



Eco-Access. PO Box 1377, Roosevelt Park, 2129.
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E-mail: info@eco-access.org; khanya@eco-access.org

DAY OF RECONCILIATION (SA) ~ 16 DECEMBER

On 16 December 1838, a group of Voortrekkers defeated the Zulu army at the battle of Blood River. This battle was the climax of many battles that had been fought between the two armies as a result of land disputes and failed negotiations. In preparation for the battle, the Voortrekkers took a vow before God stating that, should they defeat the Zulu army, they would build a church and they, and their descendants, would celebrate the day as a day of thanksgiving for their victory. It was then known as the Day of the Covenant and later the Day of the Vow. With the advent of democracy in South Africa, 16 December remained a public holiday but was renamed the Day of Reconciliation.

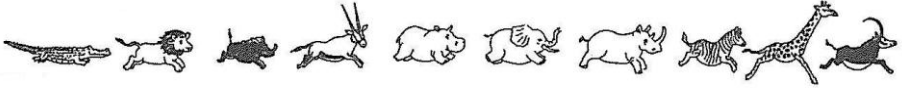
It was also on this day in 1961 that Umkhonto we Sizwe, the liberation army of the ANC, launched its first military acts of sabotage against the apartheid government. This day was celebrated by supporters of the liberation, as the beginning of their armed struggle.

Today, 16 December is celebrated by all South Africans as the day on which we remember the sacrifices of the people who died in the centuries of conflict and the day on which we commit ourselves to peace and reconciliation in our land.

? **What do we mean by 'reconciliation'?**

WWW www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/holidays.htm#16december

From current action to more sustainable action!!!



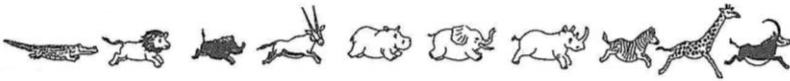
What is an audit and why should we 'audit' our activities?

Every action we take, every piece of equipment we buy, every kilowatt of electricity we use and every piece of waste we discard, has an impact on the environment and future sustainability. We all have a responsibility to contribute to better environmental management.

We use the term 'audit' to review our conditions as they are right now. We are literally taking a 'snapshot' of the situation at any one time – be it the amount of water we are using, the amount of waste we each produce every day, or the amount of electricity we use in our house.

By examining our current practices, we can identify how they can be improved. The four audits that follow are simple ones but you can develop your own and add more detail. It is also very useful, after doing an audit, to decide HOW you can take environmental action and what changes you will be able to commit to in your daily life. A few months later, you could redo the same audit and see if things have improved.

Become part of WESSA Share-Net, an informal network of people, publications and places! If you develop your own audits, please consider e-mailing them to us at Share-Net (sharenet@wessa.co.za) so that we can share them with others through the Share-Net network.



AUDIT ONE - WATER

My personal water audit - how much water do I use in a day?

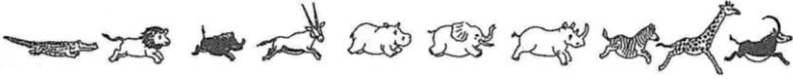
Answer the questions below, then find out how much water you're using by filling in a 'water diary'.

WATER	YES	NO
1. Do you have water-on-tap?		
2. Is the drinking water safe and clean?		
3. Do you have tanks in your garden to collect rainwater?		
4. Do you water the garden each day?		
5. Are you aware of ways of saving water?		
6. Do you reuse any water e.g. bathwater?		
7. Do you wash cars and/or bicycles with buckets of water?		
8. How many flushing toilets are in your house?		
9. How many toilets are leaking?		
10. How many taps are there in your house?		
11. How many taps are dripping?		

Let's find out how much water you use each day

Below are rough estimates of water use, which may help you when calculating your water usage.

- Cup of water/tea/coffee – 250ml
- Washing a sinkful of dishes – 18 litres
- Flushing toilet - 13 litres
- Having a short shower (10 minutes) – 30 litres
- Having a long shower – (30–40 minutes) – 120 litres
- Washing hands (with water running) – 5 litres
- Washing hands (without the tap running) – 1 litre
- Brushing teeth (with water running) – 2 litres
- Having a bath – 90 litres
- Washing the car (with a hosepipe) - 50 litres
- Watering the garden (15 minutes) - 50 litres
- Washing clothes in an automatic washing machine – 250 litres
- Washing clothes in a twin tub machine – 40 litres
- Topping up the pool - 4 000 litres



AUDIT TWO - WASTE

My personal waste audit - how much waste do I produce in a day?

We all produce waste, be it the plastic bags we throw away each day or the paper, milk sachets or sweet wrappers we drop into our rubbish bins.

Measure your waste for one day.

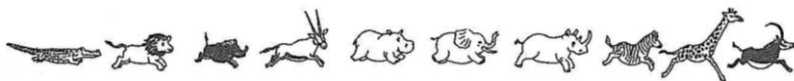
1. Carry a plastic bag around with you all day. Put everything that you would have thrown into the bin, in the plastic bag.
2. At the end of the day, separate the rubbish into paper, plastic, glass, tin, food and other.
3. Weigh each separate pile.

(Everything that we throw away was made somewhere in a factory, except the organic waste. The process of making the item, be it a plastic bag or a tin can, caused CO₂ emissions. After weighing your waste, you may also like to work out how many kilograms (kgs) of CO₂ were released from 'your waste' today).

Type of waste	Weight of waste (kgs)	CO ₂ produced by 1kg	Total CO ₂ emissions
Organic material		0.62 kg CO ₂	
Paper		2.13 kg CO ₂	
Plastic		3.30 kg CO ₂	
Glass		1.03 kg CO ₂	
Metal		2.20 kg CO ₂	
		TOTAL	

I produced _____ kgs of WASTE today.

_____ kg of CO₂ were released by me in one day.



AUDIT THREE - BIODIVERSITY

A biodiversity audit - how green is my garden?

South Africa has one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world, including more than 18 000 different indigenous plant species. By planting an indigenous garden we can start restoring natural ecosystems. Plant what grows naturally in your area and create a 'mini nature reserve' for local plants, birds, butterflies and other small creatures!

Find out how green your garden really is and how much you know about the animals and plants that live in your garden by doing the quick audit below.

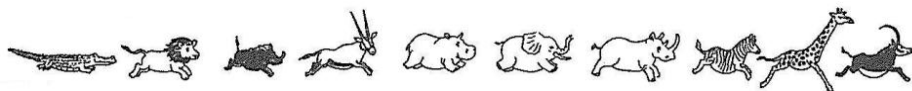
Green Garden Audit Questions	Comment
Count all the trees in the grounds, then work out which are indigenous and which are exotic. Circle 1 for 0 – 25%; 2 for 26 – 50%; 3 for 51 – 75% and 4 for 76 – 100%	1 – Weak 2 – Can be better 3 – Average 4 – Good
What percentage of birds visiting your garden do you know the names of? Circle 1 for 0 – 25%; 2 for 26 – 50%; 3 for 51 – 75% and 4 for 76 – 100%	1 – Weak 2 – Can be better 3 – Average 4 – Good
How are tree clippings and grass cuttings disposed of?	

Date _____

	YES	NO
Do you often see birds and insects in your garden?		
Do you have any facilities, like bird feeders and bird baths, to encourage bird life to your garden?		
Do you have any mammals visiting your garden?		
Is there a large lawn area that needs mowing and watering?		
Are organic pesticides and herbicides used in the garden?		
Do you have an irrigation system in your garden?		
Do you water your garden early in the morning or in the late afternoon?		
Is the area under the garden taps well maintained to cope with overflowing water?		
Do you collect rainwater in tanks for watering the garden?		
Do you have all the basic equipment needed for gardening?		
Do you have a vegetable garden?		
Do you have fruit trees?		
Do you have a compost heap?		
How are tree clippings and grass cuttings disposed of?		
TOTAL		

How did you score?

- 1-2 "Yes" answers. A little more effort is needed to green your garden.
- 2-5 "Yes" answers. A good start!
- Over 6 "Yes" answers. Your garden is well on its way to becoming a haven for many plants and animals.



AUDIT FOUR - ENERGY

A quick energy audit in my house

By reducing your electricity consumption at home, you are reducing air and water pollution from power stations. A ton of greenhouses gases is saved for each 1 000 kilowatt-hours of electricity you save.

Do you ...	always	sometimes	never
know how much energy you use each month (in kilowatt hours-kWh)?			
know how much you spend on electricity monthly?			
know how much energy each appliance uses (in kilowatts)?			
turn off electrical appliances when not in use?			
turn off the lights when not in use?			
connect your computer monitor to the hard drive so that both switch off automatically?			
use natural light wherever possible?			
have windows that can be opened instead of air conditioning?			
dress according to the season/temperature?			
use energy efficient heaters in winter?			

Value of ticks: Always = 2 Sometimes = 1 Never = 0

How did you score?

- 13+ Well done!
- 8-12 You are on the right track.
- 0-7 You are just at the starting point and have the opportunity to make great improvements.

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16th Edition: November 2011

ISBN No. 978-1-919991-69-6

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Why not join the WESSA Eco-Schools Programme?

Is your school ready to take up the challenge? Are you ready to join the growing number of schools in South Africa and around the world which are caring for the environment?

*Contact the Eco-Schools National Co-ordination Team on
(033) 330 3931 ext 145; e-mail ecoschools@wessa.co.za*

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