

It's too late to cry about the trees.



It's time to shout for shade.

The merciless chopping down of trees on Table Mountain, in Tokai and Cecilia, has upset thousands of people who enjoyed the shade of the plantations for walking, picnicking and worship.

Yet these people are happy that 96% of Table Mountain National Park is already given over to indigenous plants.

And they understand the need to regenerate rare species of fynbos that once existed on Table Mountain because of their importance to the Cape Floral Kingdom.

But they cannot see why a tiny portion of the mountain could not have remained under shade trees.

Neither can they comprehend why Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) and the "fynbos fanatics" who speak for them, seem to think that people who want shade are either criminals or idiots.

The belief out there is that TMNP failed to conduct a fair public participation process when they announced their plan to fell the trees and cover the entire mountain in waist-high fynbos.

The galling fact is that a mere 4% of the entire Table Mountain chain offered any large shade trees before the felling started. Now it's down to less than one half a percent!

SHADE TREES AND FYNBOS

Fynbos, the indigenous plants of the South Western Cape, are low, generally waist-high, small leaved, tough, woody shrubs.

There are virtually no large shade trees in fynbos. So although it contains a great variety of different species, it will never be able to provide the kind of shade and botanical magnificence of large shade trees.

In the eyes of some botanists, even local SA trees like Yellowwoods are aliens in fynbos. Indeed, TMNP recently cut down a number of mature Yellowwood trees above Tokai because they did not fit in with the fynbos policy.

"Shout for Shade" does not insist on replanting pine trees as there are many other magnificent shade trees, some of them indigenous to South Africa, to choose from. But none of them are native to fynbos. So if we want large trees, we must acknowledge that they will be "aliens."

WHAT ABOUT WATER AND CARBON?

Much is made of the fact that the pines and gums draw more water from the soil. It is obvious that any large tree will absorb more water than a metre high scrubby bush. However,

- most of the run off water from the mountain slopes enters the City of Cape Town's storm water drains and eventually finds its way to the sea. It does not add to our supply of drinking water and is simply wasted.
- A large tree takes tons of carbon, the single most potent cause of global warming, out of the atmosphere. All over the world people are passionate about planting large trees to reduce global warming – here we cut them down!

What is more important – increasing the water run off into the drains of Cape Town – or reducing carbon dioxide and global warming?

WHERE WAS COUNCIL?

Many local residents are furious with the City Council for not intervening in the felling process when it became plainly obvious that two of Cape Town's most beautiful recreational areas were being wiped off the map. Were they blind to the consequences? Or did they simply not care?

WE SEEK A COMPROMISE

The leading botanist pushing for the destruction of the trees wrote last year: "I am sure that only 1% of people support the removal of plantations". Yes, even those involved admit privately that their policy does not have the support of the majority of the public.

Our objective is to enter into a civilized discussion with TMNP and the City Council, with a view to achieving a solution whereby a reasonable part of the mountain is replanted with shade trees.

We believe that if the people of Cape Town can live together harmoniously despite diversity of race, colour and creed, then plants can too.

- We call upon Table Mountain National Park to change the policy of permanent destruction of the shade tree areas in Tokai and Cecilia, and to replant large shade trees.
- In the meantime, until this policy is established, we request that the present felling of pine trees be stopped immediately.
- Failing any satisfactory response, we call upon the City of Cape Town to take over the management of Tokai and Cecilia in the interests of the citizens of Cape Town. There are already some in the City who are in favour of this, and we shall initiate a campaign to support the City in taking over these areas. Unlike TMNP we believe the City will manage these areas in accordance with the democratic wishes of the majority of the citizens who use the mountain.

If you loved the shade of Tokai and Cecilia and want to see shade trees replanted, join the "Shout for Shade" movement. In 2006 over 3,000 signatures in favour of shade trees were obtained in only two weekends. The Park authorities arrogantly dismissed this expression of heartfelt public feeling.

**Let your voice be heard - send an email to: trees@goforit.co.za
Copies of your emails will be forwarded to the Management of Table Mountain National Park automatically.**

SHOUT FOR SHADE
A PUBLIC APPEAL TO REPLANT SHADE TREES ON TABLE MOUNTAIN

These concerned people have already declared their support:

Fatima Abrahams, Michelle Bennett, Carole Bloch, G Brand, Julie Brett, Steve Broekman, Ian Cormack, W B Cole, Dr Ben du Toit, N Dimopoulos, Marlene Ehrenreich, George Ellis, Viviane Erasmus, D Fohemma, S Gialemas, Bill Gogos, Neville Gottlieb, Karadanais family, Cindy Victoria Hendrick, Marlene and Joe Hofmeyr, Joe Josiphakis, Sharon Jacobs, Kaniaris family, Jenny Kipps, M Korteweg, Penny and Francois Kritzinger, C van der Kwast, K and O Laspatas, Gabriel Lloyd, Shelly Lochner, Y Loodema, S and V Luizinho, Chris Mahon, Di McLoughlin,

Nils Michelsen, Helen and Arnold Moebius, Professor Eugene Moll, Daphne O'Malley, Pamela and Robert Pace, V Pavlis, Sabine and George Preschern, Christopher Reader, Grace Samuel, Karen Sass, Jonathan Schrire, Delia and John Scott, Bertie Sugarman, Andrzej Suski, Annette Swan, Kevin ter Hoven, R V Thomson, Chris Thorne, Christina Tsarvetekis, E and G Tsomas, Maria and Taki Tsuvelekis, Merel Verstraten, Mary and Vasilij Vetsos, Antoinette Walter-Landall, Eleanor Warren, Alison Wells, Geoffrey Wittenberg.