

A new 'Generation'

On 13 and 15 March 2018 around 120 learners from Generation Primary School in Melkbosstrand visited Koeberg Visitors Centre and Nature Reserve to learn about electricity, and about caring for the environment. Their visit began with a presentation at the Visitors Centre on how Eskom generates electricity.

The groups then embarked on an educational walk through the Koeberg Nature Reserve. While walking, the children were tasked with collecting a specific list of items. This included things such as pebbles, a porcupine quill, leaves, roots, a piece of rubbish and other items that they were likely to find on the trail. The aim of this activity was to encourage the youngsters to be aware of their surroundings.

On completion of the walk the collection of items were discussed and used as an educational opportunity.

Teacher, Colleen Aves, had this to say after the visit: "The visit was wonderful! This outing is all the kids can talk about – and between us teachers we honestly feel it's the best outing we've been on."



Jurina le Roux, Environmental Officer, teaching the youngsters about ecology



Where are Nanuk and Koda now?

Nanuk's carapace (shell) has been healing well since her rescue at Koeberg Nature Reserve last November. However, she recently needed flipper surgery for an underlying issue. It has taken a while to recover from this, but Nanuk is healing well and the Two Oceans Aquarium is cautiously optimistic. They report that she is loving her daily shell cleaning and eagerly looks forward to feeding time.



Koda undergoing goose barnacle removal

Goose barnacles



At the end of January another sea turtle was rescued from Eskom's Koeberg Nature Reserve and named 'Koda' by staff at Two Oceans. When rescued she was covered in goose barnacles.

This particular species of barnacle, *Lepas testudinata*, is often attached to floating plastic, and it has been suggested that Koda may be the first turtle recorded with them attached. Happily, now free of barnacles, Koda is doing well and has been released back into the ocean. A few days after her arrival she excreted several pieces of plastic and other non-digestible items. Sea turtles often fall victim to eating transparent plastic thinking it to be jellyfish – one of their main food sources.



Pieces of plastic and an ear bud excreted by Koda



Flower feature

Kukumakranka

Belonging to the *Gethyllis* genus of the family *Amaryllidaceae*, the kukumakranka has such unusual foliage, flowers and fruits that it ranks as one of the most fascinating groups of bulbous plants in southern Africa.

It is adapted to temperate climates and deciduous - meaning it loses its leaves. Nourished by long, fleshy roots, the bulbs store sufficient reserves to survive the long, dry season in a dormant state, but when conditions become favourable they produce leaves.

They flower fleetingly in midsummer, fruit in autumn, and have leaves in winter, a period when they are most likely to be seen before conditions dry out at the end of Spring. Each bulb produces only one flower each season. Followed by berry-like, finger-length fruits borne close to the ground. The fruit are fragrant, fleshy and yellow to pink in colour. They smell somewhat of strawberries.

Legend has it that finding a kukumakranka brings good fortune, but they are very rarely found in the veld nowadays. The San and Khoi-Khoi sang praises to the virtues of the kukumakranka or bramakanka, as it is known to them. The fruits are much sought after for their fragrance and medicinal properties. In the past the dried fruits were often used to scent handkerchiefs and linen cupboards.

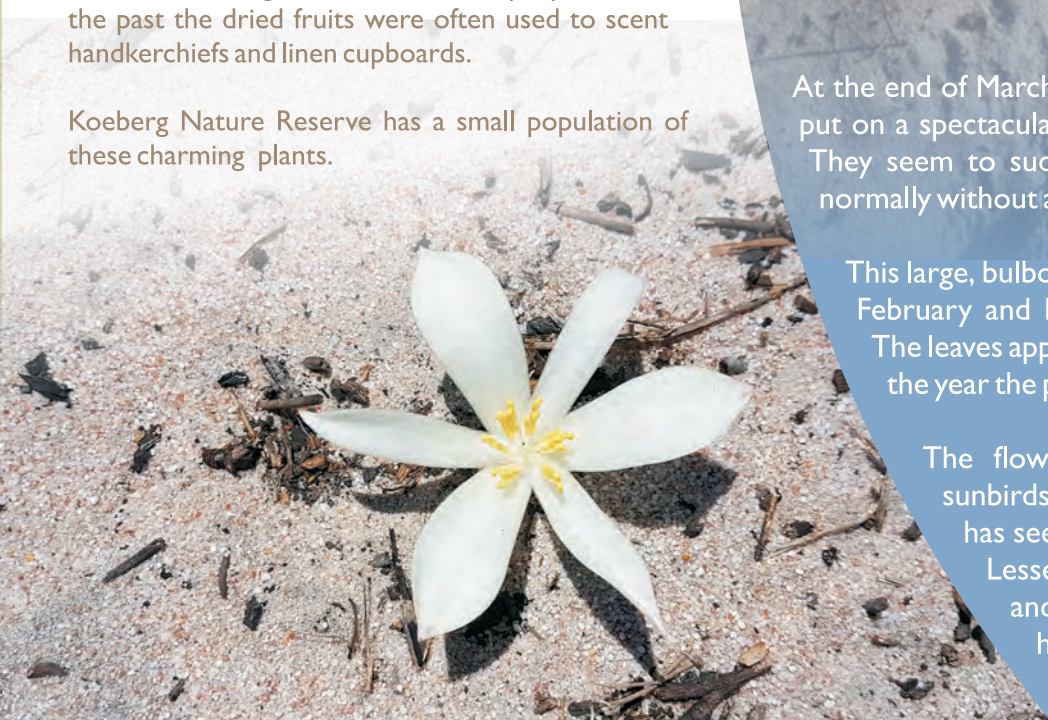
Koeberg Nature Reserve has a small population of these charming plants.



At the end of March the *brunsvigia*, or candelabra flower, put on a spectacular show in Koeberg's nature reserve. They seem to suddenly pop out of the bare ground, normally without a leaf in sight!

This large, bulbous perennial usually flowers between February and March, just before the rainy season. The leaves appear well after the flowers. The rest of the year the plant rests underground.

The flowers attract moths, butterflies and sunbirds that feed on its nectar. Anyone who has seen the ease with which Malachite and Lesser double-collared sunbirds perch and probe the flowers will appreciate how perfectly these plants are suited to bird pollination.



Brunsvigia

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veld fires**



Cape Peninsula Fire Protection Association

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