10 Ideas and Inspiration

Contents

In this section you will find a variety of interpretive materials which illustrate different subjects, styles of writing, layout and design, and different ways of using illustrations. Have a look through them and see what catches your eye. Look out for concepts or ideas which may work well in your garden.

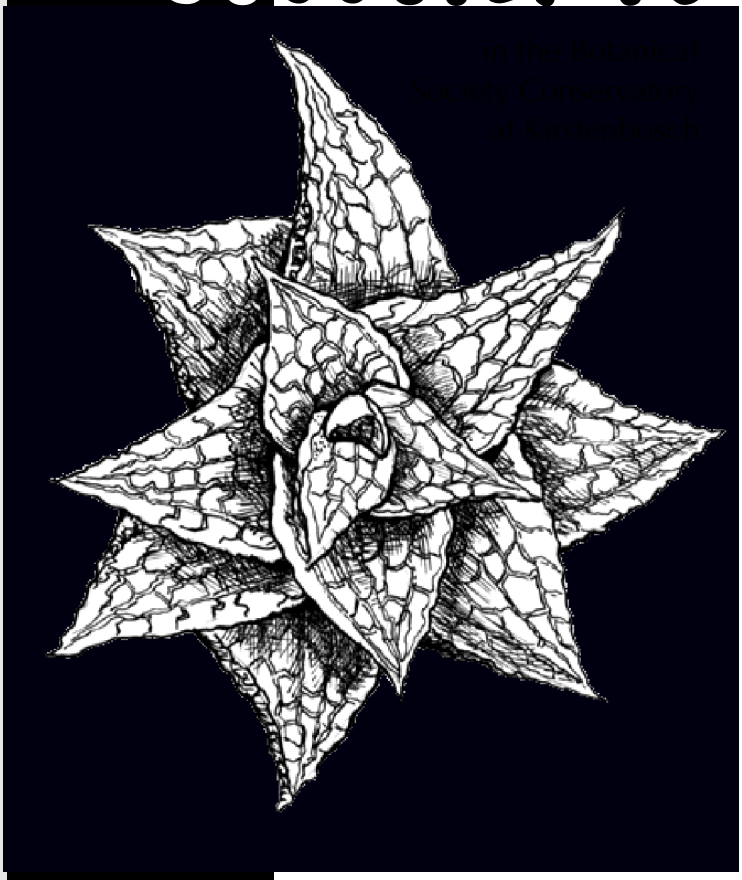
Of course the most important aspect of interpretation which is missing here is the *context* of the interpretive product. How does the brochure or sign relate to the situation in the garden? Is it effective? Although each product is contextualised here with a caption, you can't really tell from a book. So be prepared to experiment with ideas and evaluate them critically in your garden. Let the visitors decide what works best by observing their responses to the interpretive materials you produce.

Sizes and Measurements

Please note that the interpretive materials in this section are not reproduced at full scale. Many interpretive signs and brochures are made to fit standard paper formats:
A3 – 297 x 420 mm (two pages of this book, side by side)
A4 – 297 x 210 mm (the size of this page)
A5 – 210 x 148 mm (half the size of this page)

Suggestion: Use a photocopier to enlarge some of these signs to their actual size. This will give you a much better idea of what they look like.

Sensational Succulents

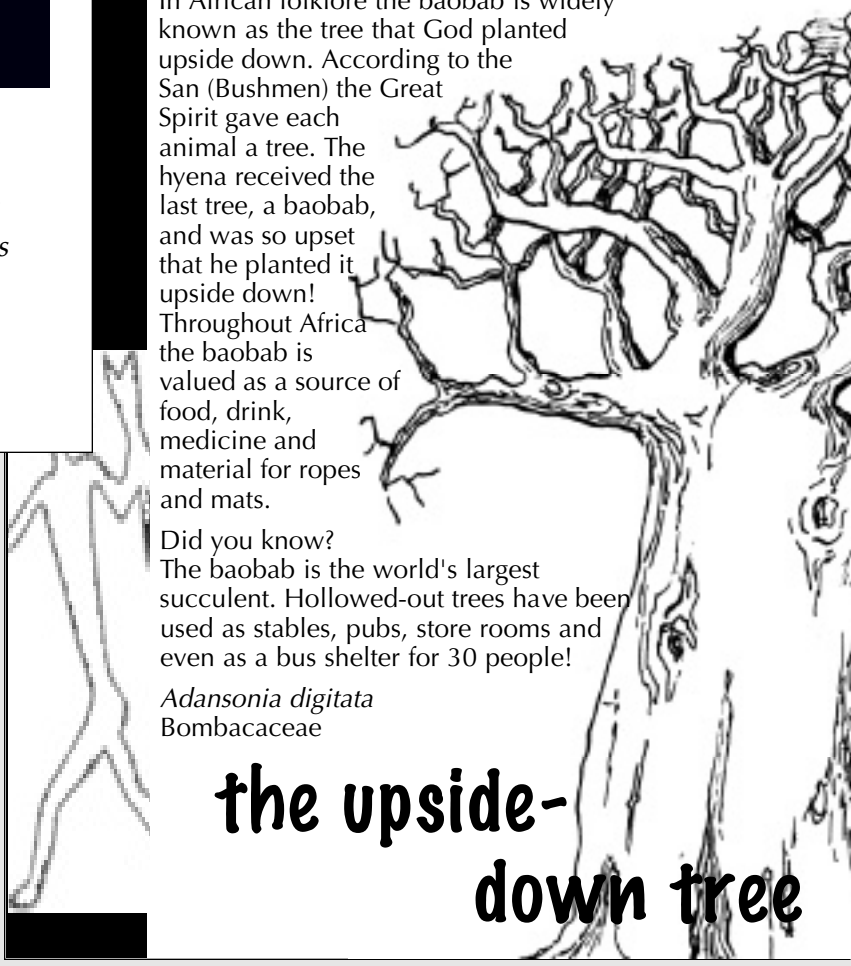


in the Botanical Society Conservatory at Kirstenbosch

Conservatory you can see some of their remarkable diversity, ranging from the giant baobab to tiny plants which resemble stones, buttons, horse's teeth and many other bizarre forms.

NATIONAL BOTANICAL INSTITUTE

Succulents are ... juicy, fleshy plants which store water and save it for later.



Baobab tree
Kremetartboom

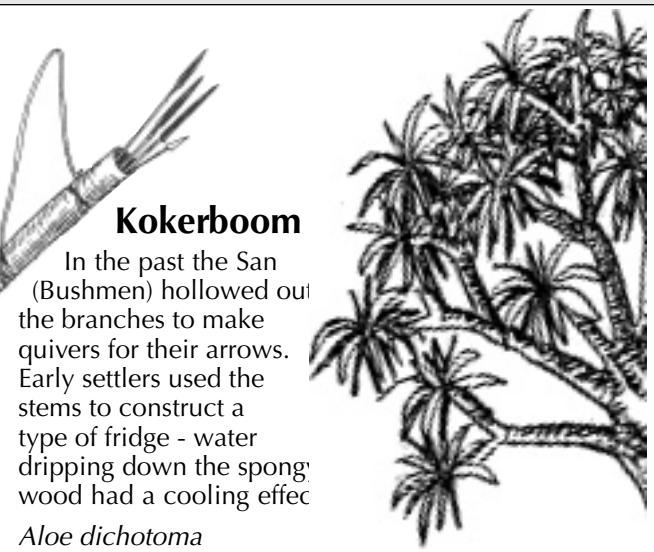
In African folklore the baobab is widely known as the tree that God planted upside down. According to the San (Bushmen) the Great Spirit gave each animal a tree. The hyena received the last tree, a baobab, and was so upset that he planted it upside down! Throughout Africa the baobab is valued as a source of food, drink, medicine and material for ropes and mats.

Did you know?
The baobab is the world's largest succulent. Hollowed-out trees have been used as stables, pubs, store rooms and even as a bus shelter for 30 people!

Adansonia digitata
Bombacaceae

the upside-down tree

An informal survey at Kirstenbosch showed that people visiting the Conservatory 'wanted something to take home'. The *Sensational Succulents* brochure is a response to this request. It features some eye-catching and unusual succulents found in the glasshouse and includes short 'eco-stories' about these plants. Notice that the text is not linked in any way to the display. The brochure is intended as a souvenir – something visitors will take away and hopefully read at home.



Kokerboom

In the past the San (Bushmen) hollowed out the branches to make quivers for their arrows. Early settlers used the stems to construct a type of fridge - water dripping down the spongy wood had a cooling effec

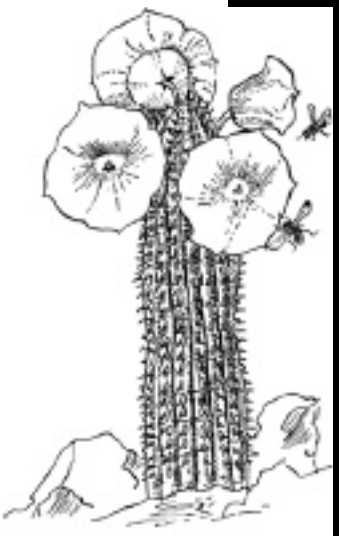
Aloe dichotoma
Asphodelaceae

quiver tree

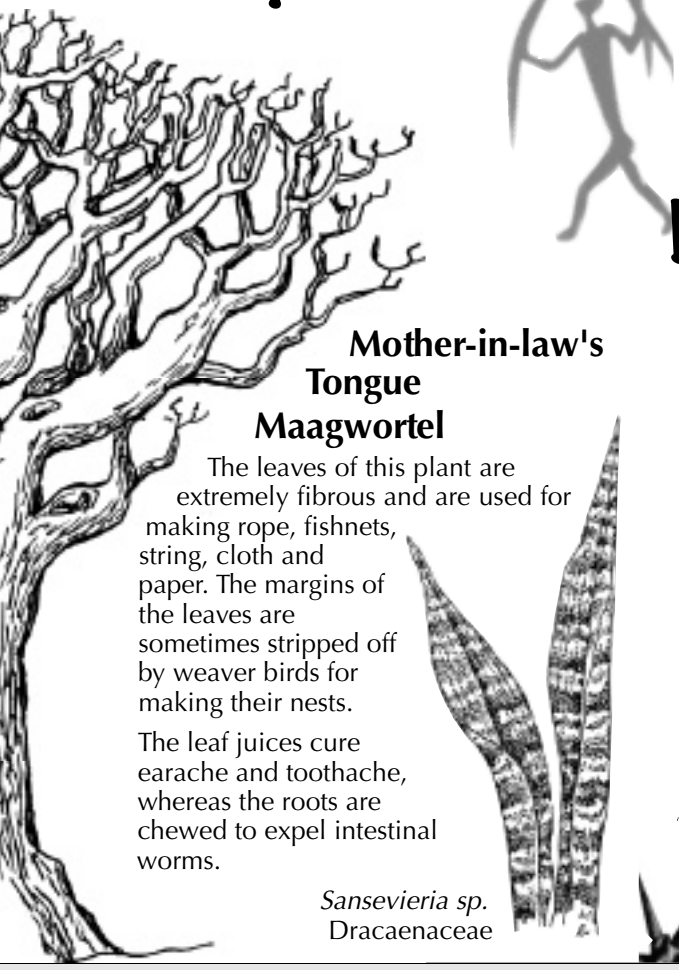
trickery & deceit

Ghaap

Keep an eye out for the flo of this plant - it resembles satellite dish! However instead of catching waves lures flies into its pungent depths. The flowers are pollinated by carrion flies, which are attracted by the smell of rotting meat, and crawl inside to lay their eg However, their larvae will have no food supply when they hatch and are doome die. This is just one of mar examples of trickery and deceit in the plant world.



Hoodia currori
Asclepiadaceae



Mother-in-law's Tongue
Maagwortel

The leaves of this plant are extremely fibrous and are used for making rope, fishnets, string, cloth and paper. The margins of the leaves are sometimes stripped off by weaver birds for making their nests.

The leaf juices cure earache and toothache, whereas the roots are chewed to expel intestinal worms.

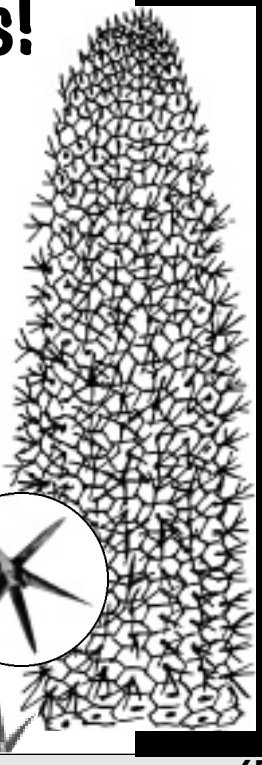
Sansevieria sp.
Dracaenaceae

NOT a cactus!

Sternoors

This spiny plant might look like a cactus but it belongs to a totally unrelated family - the Euphorbiaceae. Cacti are only found in the Americas. Euphorbias are characterised by producing a white milky sap (latex) which is extremely poisonous. The design of the stem enables the plant to swell up and shrink (depending on water availability) without collapsing.

Euphorbia stellispina
Euphorbiaceae



This weather-proof brochure holder dispenses pamphlets in the Water Wise Demonstration Garden at Kirstenbosch NBG. Visitors can lift the lid and help themselves to a brochure in their language preference. A rubber strip covers the hinges to prevent water from leaking in. The brochures are held in a clear perspex rack inside the wooden box. The box has been mounted rather high on the wall (about 1.6 m) to prevent small children from taking out handfuls of brochures at a time. This arrangement is however not user-friendly for people in wheelchairs.

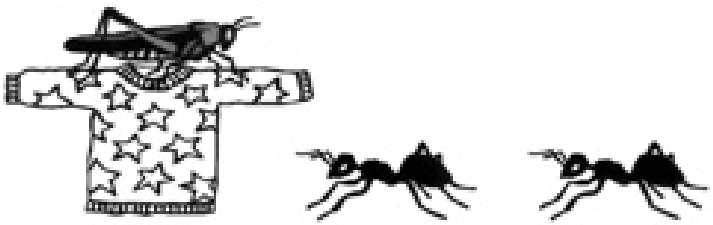
The secret den

No adults unless invited by children

Here hidden inside is a place where we hide,
away from our mums and our dads;
Where the rompers can romp and the stompers
can stomp, and nobody ever is sad.

Where the butterflies fly and no elephants cry,
and the ground is all covered in leaves;
Look closer you'll see an ant or a bee, or a
grasshopper's shirt with long sleeves.

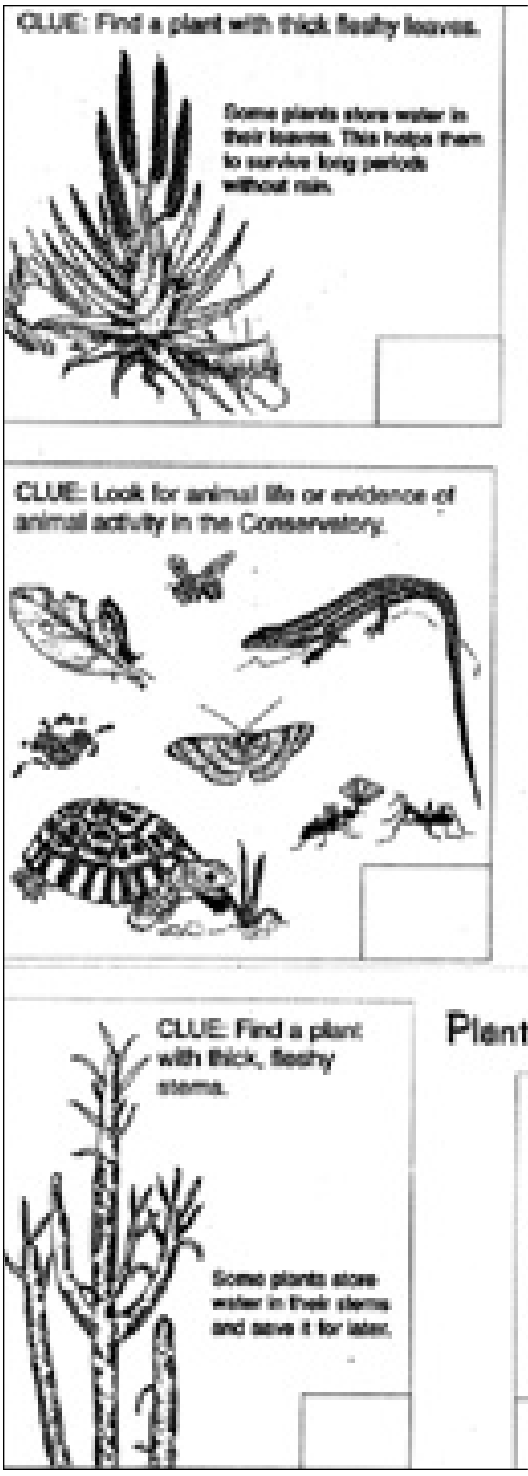
You could find Johns old sock and get a big
shock, or find flowers with petals uncurled;
Down close to the ground many smells can be
found, and their scent is right out of this world!



Children at the Natal NBG have discovered a tree with low overhanging branches which creates a perfect hideaway where they can play. This temporary sign was placed at the entrance to their den. John Roff (Interpreter) wanted to stimulate the children's imagination, and provide some fun. He designed a sign to heighten the sense of mystery and wonder that children have in a garden.

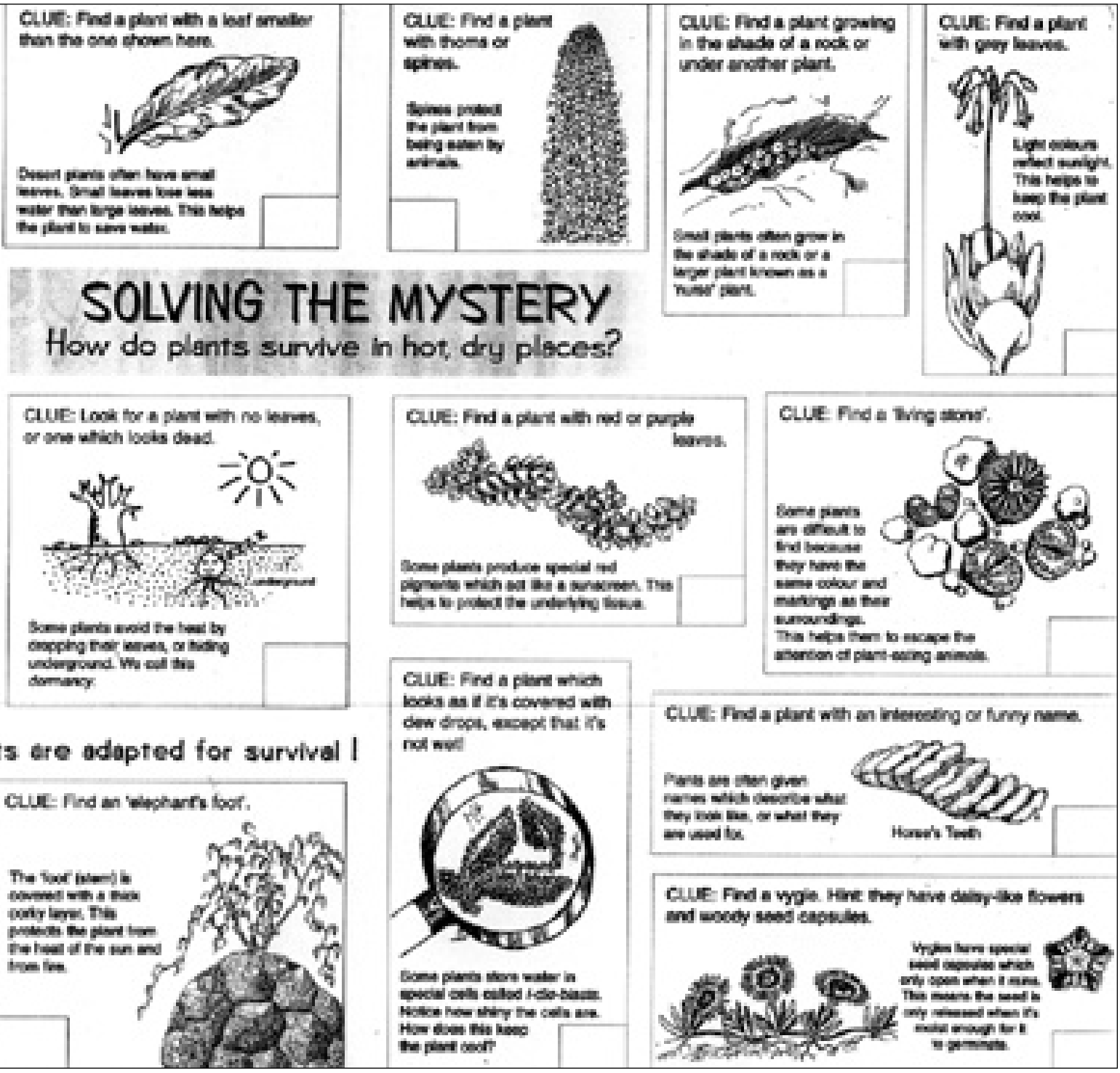
A 5 sign. Paper which has been plastic laminated.


A DESERT DETECTIVE GAME
FOR KIDS
(and their parents)
The Kirstenbosch Detective Agency invite
you to become a Desert Detective.
We need your help to solve a mystery.
How do plants survive in hot, dry places?
The Agency has given you some clues to test your detective
skills and help you solve the mystery. Good luck on your search!
Join Sam Strelitzia in solving a mystery!
HOW TO PLAY
1. Remember to stay on the paths while looking for the clues.
2. Put a mark in the correct clue box each time you discover an
example of a clue. The more examples, the better!
CLUE: Find a plant with thick fleshy leaves.
Some plants store water in their leaves. This
helps them to survive long periods without rain.
3. To find out what kind of detective you are, turn to the back
page.


CLUE: Find a plant with thick fleshy leaves.
Some plants store water in their leaves. This helps them to survive long periods without rain.
CLUE: Look for animal life or evidence of animal activity in the Conservatory.
CLUE: Find a plant with thick, fleshy stems.
Some plants store water in their stems and save it for later.
Plant

This game is aimed at children and families visiting the Conservatory at Kirstenbosch. Children are invited to become detectives and look for certain plants in the glasshouse. Each clue has a simple instruction in large text and an explanatory note written in smaller text. Many children only read the clues, but sometimes their parents read the explanatory note and interpret this to their kids. The idea for this game comes from the Desert Botanic Garden in Phoenix, Arizona. They had an excellent concept, so we modified it to our context and added a theme to make it more focused.

A4 brochure. Printed or photocopied onto A3 paper and folded into A4. Single colour (brown).



THE ZULU MUTHI GARDEN

A Library for the people

Over many generations the Zulu people have built up a vast knowledge about the properties of the indigenous healing herbs or muthi plants. Over 1000 different plant species are known to be used for medicinal or magical purposes in KwaZulu-Natal alone. These plants, along with the knowledge about them and their uses, form part of the heritage of all South Africans.

Enjoy your visit to this 'library' of muthi information. May you leave with knowledge of and interest in our healing herbs.

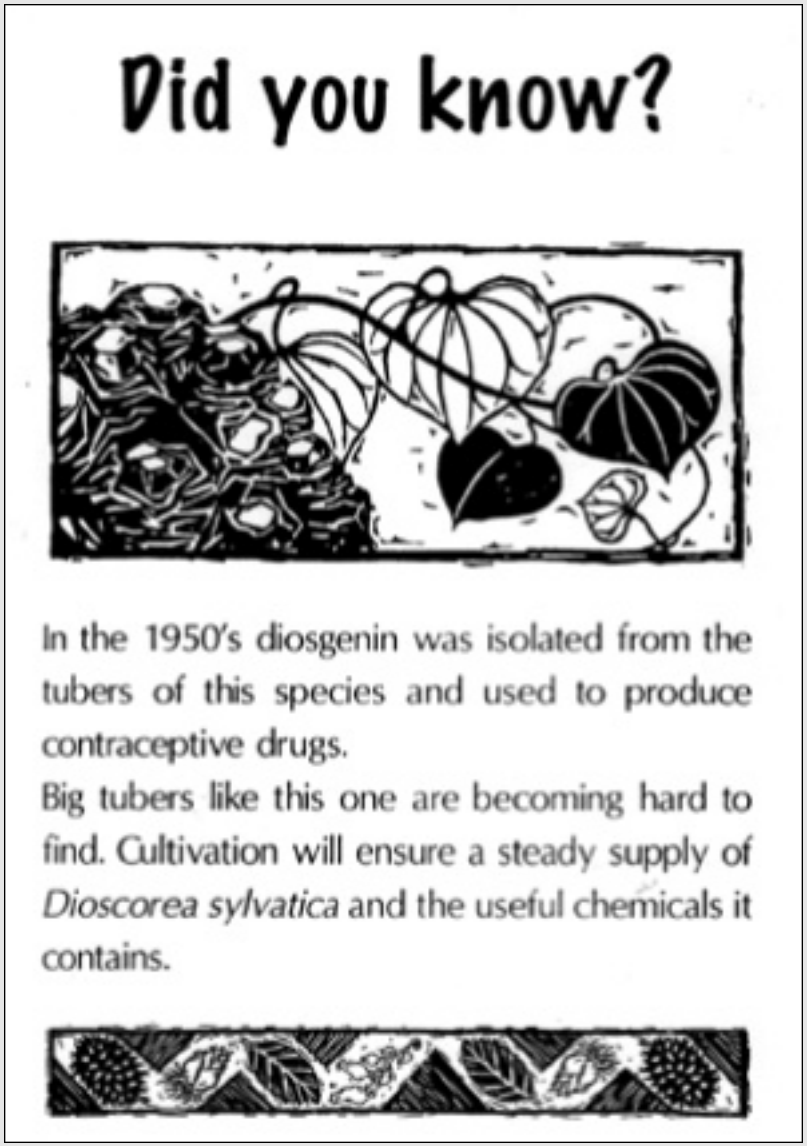
Umtapo wolwazi wabantu

Izizukulwane eziningi zabantu abangamaZulu sezakhe ulwazi olukhulu mayelana namakhambi okwelapha omdabu. Izinhlobo zezimila ezahlukene ezingaphezu kwenkulugwane zaziwa ngokusetshenziswa ekulapheni noma ekwenzeni ezinye izinto ezingajwayelekile, njengokwelapha nokuthakatha Kwa Zulu-Natal kuphela. Lezizitshalo nolwazi ngazo kanye nokusetshenziswa kwazo, zakha ifa labobonke abantu base Mzansi Afrika.

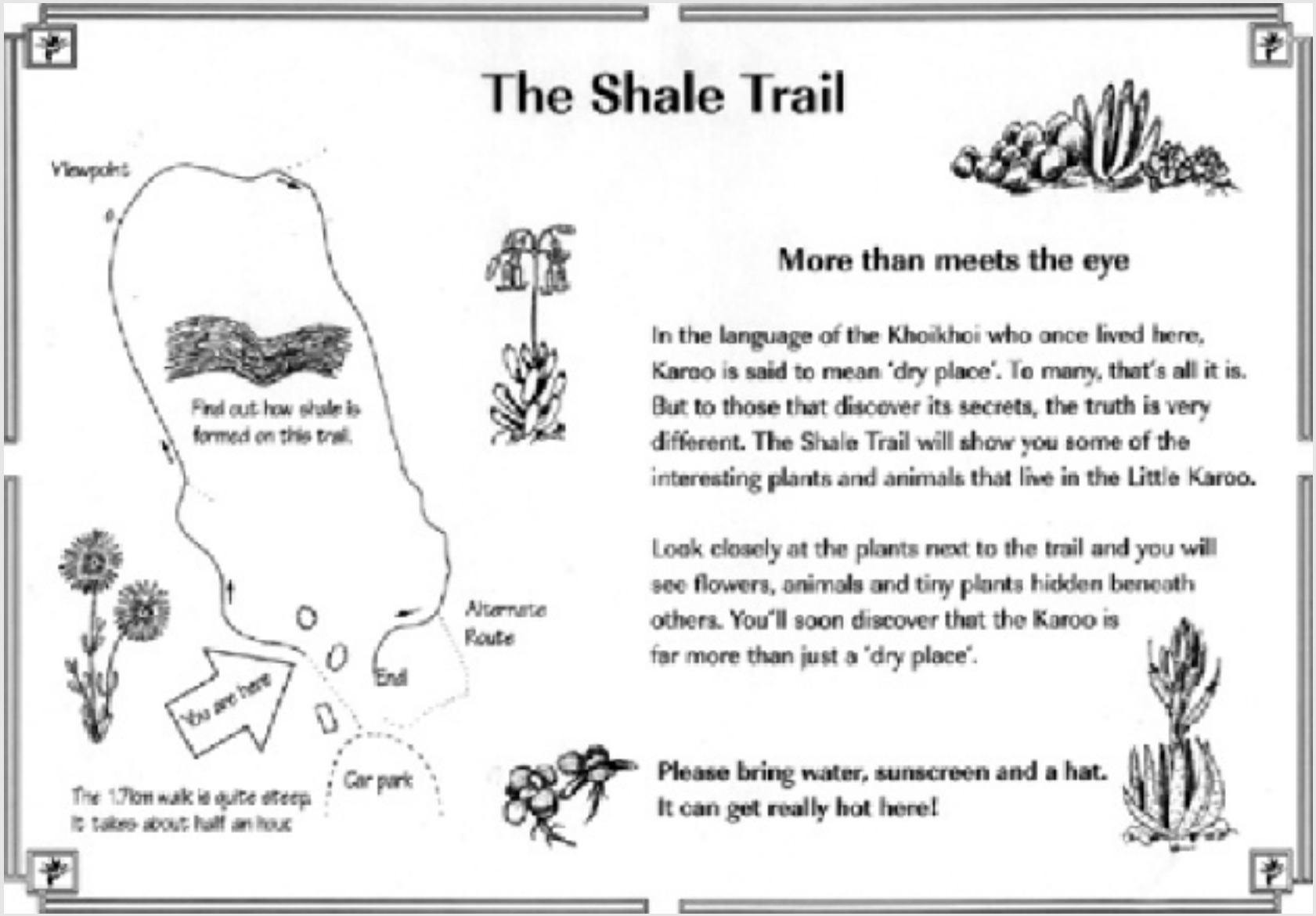
Thokozela ukuvakasha kwakho kulo 'mtapo wolwazi' ulwazi lemithi. Sengathi ungahlala nolwazi, nothando lwamakhambi ethu okwelapha.

Large (300 x 600 mm) aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

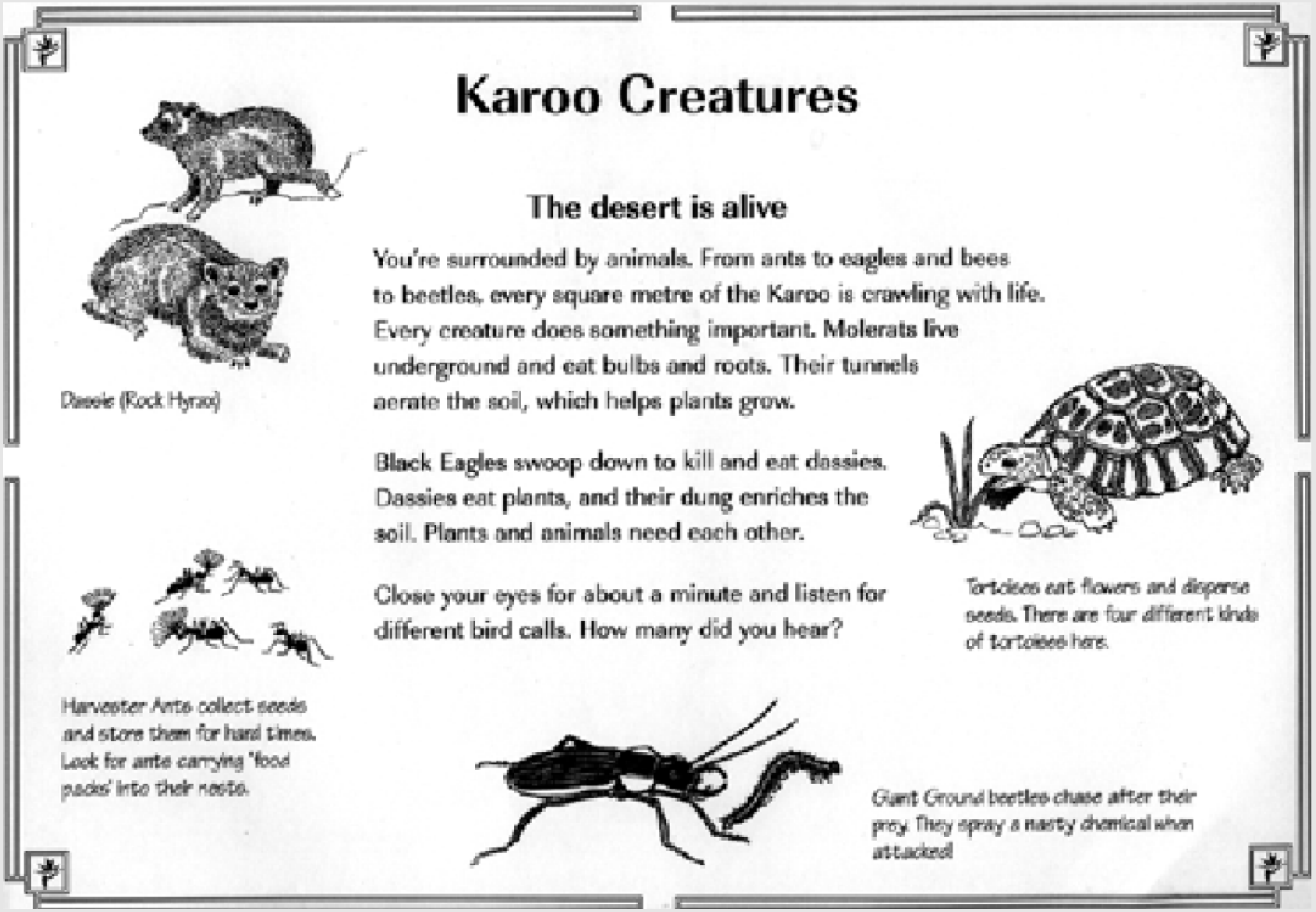
This theme garden was developed in the Natal NBG to display indigenous medicinal (muthi) plants and to highlight the value of local knowledge about these plants. Medicinal plants are always interesting because they provide a direct link between people and the garden. We tried to make the information about these plants as practical and interesting as possible, and used orange card to attract attention to the signs. The orange faded rather quickly, however, and we now use a light grey background for most temporary signs. This is not as harsh as white or orange, and does not fade easily.



A5 signs. Photocopied onto orange card and plastic laminated.



This sign introduces the theme of the trail: *The Karoo is more than just a dry place: – it is full of fascinating plants, animals and geological stories*. A map, with trail length and duration is given so that people can plan their walk accordingly.



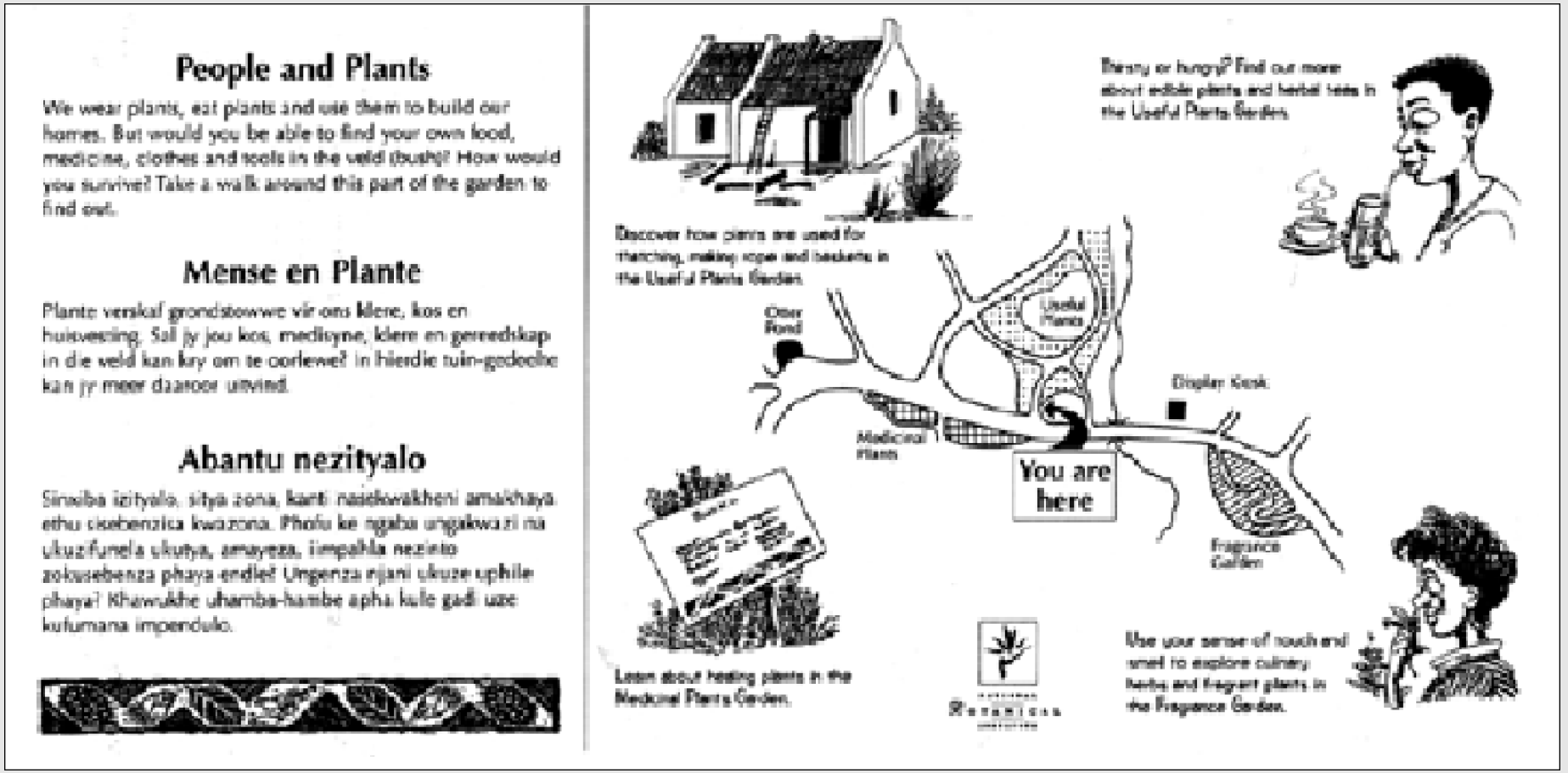
'Karoo creatures' shows how Karoo animals and plants are interrelated, and how they depend on each other for survival. Illustrations have been used to indicate which animals are commonly seen along the trail.

A3 aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

The main theme of this sign is that people use plants which are locally available. A secondary theme relates to plant taxonomy: visitors are asked to compare reeds (restios) growing on the left of the sign with thatching grass on the right.

300 x 600 mm aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

Oops! Who is responsible for this overgrown sign? Is it the horticulturist or the interpreter? Discuss this issue with your colleagues and decide who is responsible for routine maintenance.



Over the years Kirstenbosch NBG has developed three areas related to the 'Plant Uses' theme: the Medicinal Plant Garden; Fragrance Garden and the Useful Plants Garden. The 'People and Plants' sign introduces the theme and encourages visitors to explore the area and learn about the many different uses of plants.

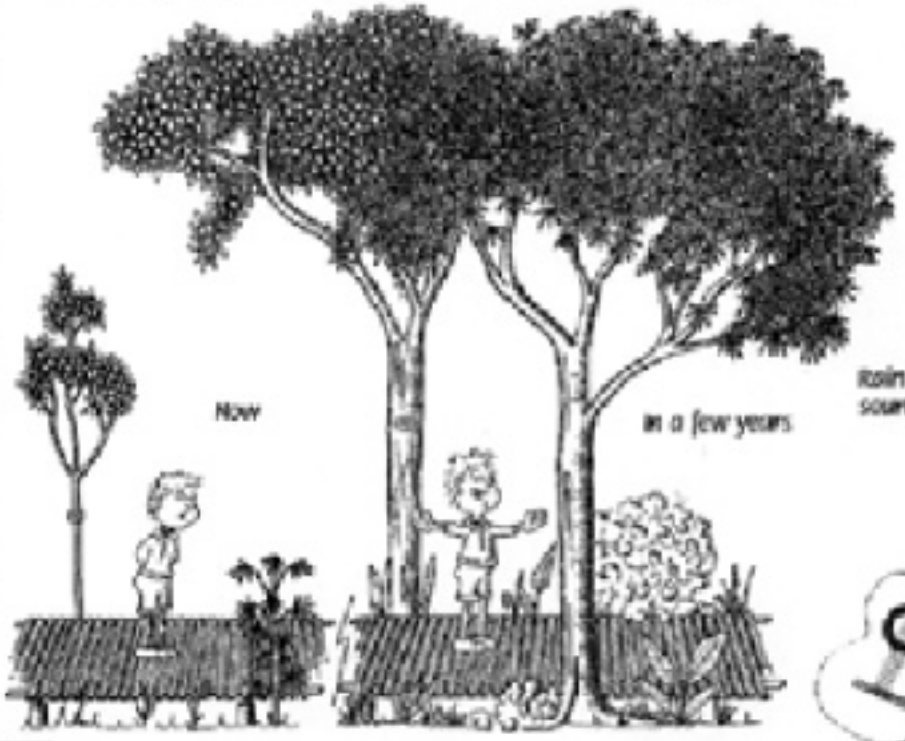
300 x 600 mm aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

These signs form part of a sensory garden at the Natal NBG. The signs encourage visitors to use all their senses to explore the garden. Notice how the theme has been used as a slogan on each sign: *Where nature's always more than meets the eye . . .*

Growing a forest of hidden treasures

Perfect conditions

All around you we've planted trees and shrubs from rain forests throughout Africa. Shade and a unique overhead sprinkler system re-create the forest climate in which they need to grow. This young rain forest is going to change. How will it look in ten years' time?



The useful forest

The treasure of the forest lies in its beauty and uses. You may find some greyish yams on the creeper in front of you. Rain forest dwellers boil and eat these round starchy lumps. Have you ever wondered where coffee comes from? Find out on this trail.

The West African Oil Palm, *Elaeis guineense*, is an important source of vegetable oil in central Africa.

This is the introductory sign to the Rain Forest Trail in the Lowveld NBG. Notice how subtitles have been used to summarise the main idea in each paragraph.

A3 aluminium sign. Single colour (black).