



*Yondela Nqadala, this year's intern with Renu-Karoo/Wolwekraal Nature Reserve, writes exclusively for the Prince Albert Friend as part of her learning experience.*

## Eco-circle: A way around the drought

*Yondela Nqadala (Wolwekraal Conservation and Research Organisation)*

Not only does the current drought make things difficult for Prince Albert farmers, but water restrictions are making things tricky for home gardeners, who are struggling to maintain their vegetable gardens under the unforgiving sun.

On the first of February, the Renu-Karoo Nursery introduced the Eco-Circle Project to the 2018 class at the Prince Albert Skills School. The Eco-circle Project is designed to make gardening a simple and productive task.

The Project improves the way people water their gardens and is ideal for those who live in hot and dry places like ours. With the eco-circle style of gardening, you can save up to 70% of the water and still create an attractive garden which is low on labour and capital costs, but able to produce a large number of vegetables in a small space.

The group of 15 learners and I divided ourselves into pairs to make eight eco-circles. Using spades, garden forks, and pickaxes, we

dug circles, separating the topsoil from the subsoils, making piles. Each hole was about knee height in depth for an adult person.

The first layers to be put inside the completed holes were twigs and leaves from weeds that we had raked before digging. We then added alternate layers of donkey manure (as compost) and soil.

To water our eco-circle gardens we used empty 2 litre bottles into which we had punched 16 holes around the circumference, using a wire heated over a candle. These were stood in the pits with their caps on and covered with layers of compost and soil. Next we put in a variety of plants including cabbage, spinach, spring onion, and many more. Some were planted as seeds, while others were young seedlings. Watering is done by pouring water into the empty 2 lt bottle once each day, and keeping the lid tightly closed.

Using this method you save a lot of water as it is not exposed to evaporation by the sun. The

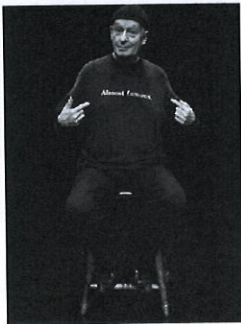
compost acts like a sponge to hold the water and make it available to the plants for as long as possible. Root development is enhanced by this way of watering and mulching your garden like this, with compost, conditions the soil.

Making compost at home is very easy. Almost anything can be used - all you need is an old rubbish bin and 'rubbish'. Use your vegetable peelings, grass clippings, young weeds and chicken manure as the fast rotting material. You will need to create a good balance by adding slow rotters to prevent the fast rotters from clumping into a slimy mass. Used tea bags, sawdust, wood shavings and autumn leaves are a good mix. If you want to add more texture to your compost use cut cardboard pieces, donkey manure and garden waste. Avoid using too many potato peelings, citrus peels or cooked food and newspapers in your compost. Cat litter, dog litter, glossy magazines and disposable nappies must never be used. ■

# THE SHOWROOM

THEATRE • ART • FILM

**Pieter-Dirk Uys Sat. 3 March @ 8pm - R150pp**



Pieter-Dirk Uys has always used humour as a "weapon of mass distraction" and describes the laughter he evoked as a relief from the fears that shaped South African society in 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. PDU unpowdered!

**FRANCOIS VAN COKE**

**Wed. 28 March @ 8pm - R150pp**

FRANCOIS has only one speed and that is full throttle. Francois is burning the candle at both ends as always and he is not letting up.

FRANCOIS VAN COKE het naam gemaak as die ikoniese voorsanger van die legendariese rock groepe Fokofpolisiekar en Van Coke Kartel.



**March 2018 PROGRAMME**

**Andrew Young and Rene Piet**



**Sat. 24 March @ 8pm - R150pp**

Saxophonist **Andrew Young**, (Liverpool) and Pianist **Rene Piet** (Amsterdam) are back with their own unique brand of easy listening/ smooth jazz.

They have great pleasure in bringing this new program Easy Street to Prince Albert.

**Valiant Swart**



**Sat. 7 April @ 8pm - R120pp**

**Valiant Swart** particular brand of soulful blues, folk and country-rock, blended with indigenous South African influences like boeremusiek and kwela, has earned him a large, loyal following countrywide.

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