

Green green grass of home

In line with the ABHOA's Operational and Environmental Management Plan (OEMP), the eradication of Kikuyu grass at all the estate's parks will be in full swing this year. Colebrook Park is first in line and the Kikuyu will be replaced by Cynodon grass. It will be done in stages, so that residents can still enjoy the park facilities.

Kikuyu, *Pennisetum clandestinum*, originated in the East African highlands. It's a creeping perennial with stolons and rhizomes. This vigorous, light green grass

is used widely almost everywhere. Alas, it's become an invasive grass in certain natural areas of southern Africa, including Atlantic Beach. In garden situations it grows rapidly into flower beds and infiltrates into cracks between walls and paving.

Cynodon, also known as Bermuda grass, Couch grass, Devils grass and Kweek grass, is a pioneer grass indigenous to



Photo courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Africa. However, the seed used is from the USA. The variety is a sward-forming perennial, spreading by stolons and scaly rhizomes. The stolons branch profusely, rooting at the nodes from which leafy shoots and numerous culms arise. It flowers from September to May.

Seeing the Cape Francolins always feels like seeing dear friends. An endearing, familiar sight.

Endemic to the southwestern Cape, the Cape Francolin, *Francolinus capensis*, is a gamebird in the pheasant family



Dear Friends

Phasianidae. At 40–42 cm in length, it's the largest of the southern African francolins. Males are larger than the female. This large francolin appears dark from a distance, apart from the red legs, but when seen closer, the plumage is finely vermiculated in grey and white, with a plainer crown and nape.

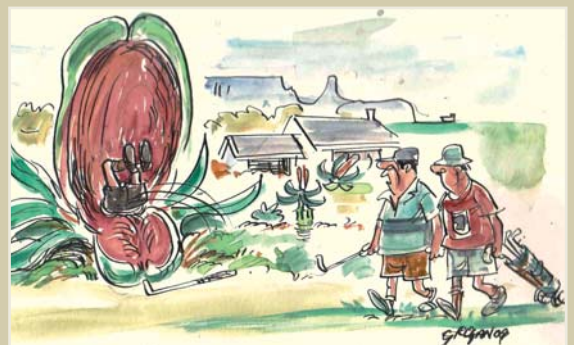
While the sexes are similar in plumage, the male has two leg spurs whereas the female has at best one short spur. Juveniles are similar to the adults, but have duller legs and clearer vermiculations. This large dark francolin is unlikely to be confused with any other species in its range.

Occurring in pairs or small coveys, its presence is often revealed by its call, although it's not a shy species. The call is a loud *cackalac-cackalac-cackalac*. As a bird of scrubby open areas, the Cape Francolin enjoys coastal fynbos and strandveld, preferably close to running water.

It's most common in the strandveld of the west coast.

Egglaying takes place August to February with a peak in September/ October. Its nest is a grass-lined scrape under a bush and six to eight eggs are laid. Sometimes two females will lay in one nest. The species can become very tame if disturbance is limited and will feed in gardens, by roadsides, or with farmyard chickens. It will run rather than fly if disturbed. Recent research has highlighted its dependence on fragments of natural habitats in human-modified environments for roosting and nesting.

RETURN OF THE ALIENS



And that's another reason for discouraging alien plants... they cause unplanned hazards on the fairways...

Malice, in whatever shape of form, is an inherent element of human nature. But, with due diligence, maturity, intelligence and common sense, it can be avoided. Intentional malice specifically directed towards a target is pre-meditated and intolerable in any decent society. Even worse are stories made up to make someone look bad or bring them down. A proverb says, 'What you do not see with your eyes, do not say with your mouth.'

Experts say most gossip helps us feel like we fit in, teaches us about our surroundings and helps us bond with others. While most gossip is innocent (so-and-so is getting divorced, the new guy drives a Lexus, etc) and quite harmless, there are times when gossip can be malicious.

In the following circumstances, the gossip has crossed the 'acceptable' line and has morphed into something that can hurt someone emotionally or practically (such as putting their job or marriage in jeopardy): exposing something that's supposed to be a secret; lying about something; saying something hurtful; spreading a negative rumour; saying something to be malicious, spiteful or vengeful.

Stop the rot



If you're the target of malicious gossip, the following tips can help stop the gossip and protect your emotional health.

1. Approach the gossip in a non-confrontational, but forthright, way. "I found that comment to be offensive and would appreciate if you would refrain from this type of behaviour in the future." If you're not certain, but suspect the person has said a mean-spirited thing about you or others, you could say, "I've heard you saying negative things that are untrue. These comments are offensive and I'd appreciate you not spreading them around in the future."

2. Seek help from a superior. Depending on the situation, there may be someone to whom you can report the gossip's behaviour.

3. Get it out in the open. If the gossip still persists, you can fight back by letting those in your social circle know that this particular person is saying untrue things about you or others. Once the group knows that someone is a malicious gossip, they're more likely to ignore what he or she says and restrict their dealings with the person as well.

4. Protect your emotions. Tap into your natural ability to let go of negative thoughts or feelings, including anger or resentment that may have popped up due to malicious gossip.

5. Don't participate in malicious gossip yourself. You may be tempted to start a negative rumour of your own in retaliation against the gossip. Resist this temptation as you will be surrounding yourself with negative emotions and your relationships may suffer if your friends, colleagues and loved ones fear you may start gossiping maliciously about them too!



Believe it or not

It's all in a day's work at the estate office. But we thought we'd share some of the complaints, criticisms and indeed instructions we receive from certain residents almost daily. These are top of the pops:

"The frogs in the dam are croaking at night and I can't sleep."

"The sea makes too much noise, the lawnmowers wake me up at 4 am and the wind is blowing sand. I have a constitutional right to live in peace and quiet!"

"The springbok have illegally entered my house and stolen my bread."

"There are too many flies on the estate which are coming into my house. Please ensure that they are removed."

"The seaweed on the beach has been lying there for a week, it smells and is attracting sand flies. When is the landscape department going to remove it?"

"The estate's rabbits are eating my plants and are sh#lling all over my lawn. If you don't remove them, we will have them shot."

"This is to advise you that we will be bringing a goat onto the estate on Saturday for slaughter." (*Needless to say we stopped the slaughter.*)

"A mole has escaped from the ABHOA land into ours and needs dealing with ASAP."

"I was told I don't have to pay any levies until I have built a house and sold it."

"My internet service provider tells me my internet is not working because the estate has not paid Eskom for electricity."

"I propose that a rule be introduced that does not permit residents to hang red, pink or other garish curtains anywhere on the estate."

Well, what can we say?



CATastrophe

Cats are causing more distress to residents than before - despite our informative articles. A major problem is cat fights and the resultant nasty injuries. Also, the estate office sadly had to dispatch a beautiful, unclaimed and un-microchipped cat to the SPCA, plus adopt a sick stray kitten. Then an unidentifiable estate cat was hit by a car and again the estate office had to make the heart-rending decision whether the cat should be operated on or euthanased.

Some residents simply don't understand what responsible cat ownership entails. Most cat fights occur between unaltered cats. Unless breeding with pedigreed felines, neutering or spaying is essential. It precludes more unwanted kittens brought into the world; prevents cats from wandering and thus being run over

generally testosterone-dependant. Spayed and neutered cats make for better companions and they tend to be less aggressive towards other cats and people. Plus, they're less likely to roam. The less they roam, the less contact they have with other cats and thus fighting, reducing the likelihood of acquiring common fatal infectious viral diseases such as Feline Aids and Feline Leukaemia Virus. Usually, these diseases are passed on through bite wounds.

It isn't true that having a litter will help a young female cat calm down. Maturity and training, not motherhood, lead to calmer behaviour. And contrary to popular belief, sterilisation will not lead to obesity either. Too much food and too little exercise make for fat pets, whether they're altered or not.

activity, playing with your cat daily is an excellent calorie burner. Add interactive toys to its environment. And consider adopting a friendly cat from the shelter so that the solitary cat has a friend for interaction. Two cats are more fun and no more trouble than a single cat. You also can buy toys that simulate an escaping prey.

FIV is a retro virus from the HIV subfamily, causing immuno-deficiency in domestic cats. At least 21% of the world-wide cat population is infected. Because of aggression and roaming, tomcats are the main carriers. Kittens may be infected via saliva, milk or in utero from a positive mother. Your vet can do a test in less than 10 minutes.

To prevent cats contracting FIV, keep them indoors at night when most fighting takes place; and as said already, sterilise your cats. According to a leading veterinary specialist, the available vaccine isn't recommended in SA. Reason being



by a car; and stops male cats spraying. Also, it reduces cat fights. The recommended neutering age is about 15 weeks for a male and 20 weeks for a female, depending on development.

In addition, sterilisation eliminates potentially life-threatening health problems and reduces the chance of others. Not only does that spare your pet the pain of disease, it spares you the emotional and financial cost of caring for a sick pet. Spaying eliminates the chance of ovarian and uterine diseases, including cancer. It also reduces the risk of mammary cancer significantly, especially if the surgery is done before the female cat's first heat cycle. Furthermore, you won't have boy cats lined up at your front door every time your girl cat is in heat.

Because the testicles are removed when neutering a male cat, there won't be further risk of testicular diseases such as cancer. Neutered males also are less likely to develop prostate disease, which is

Don't contribute to the heartbreaking destruction of thousands of animals euthanased in pounds and shelters. You have the power to make a difference by having your pet sterilised NOW.

All resident pets should have an identification chip implanted to prevent the inordinate problems experienced with strays. Pet identification definitely forms part of responsible pet ownership. Owners of microchipped pets have the comfort of knowing that vets and animal welfare organisations throughout the country can identify both the pet and owners after a scan.

Many cats are left alone for long periods and have nothing happening in the home that would trigger a carnivorous hunter's interest levels. There's nothing to chase, nothing to hide from and nothing to stalk and run down. All that remains are cat naps or roaming.

To assist in improving your feline's physical

the unavailability of a local test to distinguish between infection or the vaccine-induced antibodies. However, if the cat is first tested and found FIV-negative, a vaccine may be given.

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) is a communicable agent usually transmitted through virus-infected saliva via cat-fight wounds, mutual grooming, or sharing food and water dishes. The most hazardous situation for FeLV transmission is a multi-cat household. This virus may lead to the development of malignancy or immunity depression, followed by secondary diseases.

Your vet can perform an in-house blood test to identify FeLV. Cats in multiple-cat households should be checked to ensure that they aren't carriers. Luckily, vaccines are effective in preventing infection. Young cats are more susceptible and should be vaccinated after nine weeks of age and a second booster dose a month later.

Metropolitan glamour

Being almost as much part of Cape Town as the south-easter, the glitz-and-glam-themed J&B Met was attended by 60 Atlantic Beach residents. Everything went swimmingly in the Bedouin tent and one lucky resident walked away R3000 richer.



High fashion everywhere
 Jacko and Barbi Maree
 Malcolm and Trish Judd
 Atlantic Beach homeowner Glen Hatt who won the Fancourt race on Mother Russia



Marathon man

While most estate residents are happy to go for a stroll or a light jog every so often, Angelo Henry of erf 4389 pounds the roads (and the ice!) with meaning. He's recently completed the Antarctic marathon and managed a 3rd place finish for SA. With this achievement he's qualified for membership of the 7 continents by running a marathon on all seven continents.

As if all that's not enough, Angelo will leave for the North Pole in March to hopefully become the first South African member of the Grand Slam Club. For this honour, runners have to compete in marathons on each of the seven continents, as well as the 42 km North Pole marathon, which is run on the frozen Arctic Ocean.

Angelo covers his own expenses, but uses these opportunities to raise money for Reach for a Dream. He's been running marathons since 2003 soon after quitting smoking to lose unwanted kilograms. He said he enjoyed setting goals for himself, because he valued his health. "There's something very powerful about running in the pristine North Pole environment at such temperatures. It's amazing what ordinary men can accomplish on such a harsh continent." To date the North Pole marathon has about 20 competitors from 14 countries. See www.angelo-northpolemarathon.com.

Double dog delight

Canine residents of Atlantic Beach had a delightful dog of a day in November last year at the superbly organised and attended Canine Carnival. Eighty dogs participated and to date 183 pets have been microchipped. The pictures tell the story.



On the menu

- A wine tasting and picnic at Capaia in late March.
- The annual Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday, 12 April, in the various parks at 08h00.