

**Minister Lindiwe Hendricks to launch Arbor Week 2007**  
**Media release by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry**  
**31 August 2007**

The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Mrs Lindiwe Hendricks, the Gauteng Premier, Mr Mbhazima Shilowa, and the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane, Dr Gwen Ramokgopa, will launch this year's Arbor Week in Ga-Rankuwa, west of Pretoria, where they will plant a trees to promote the greening of South Africa. The event will also launch the **Plant a Million Trees a Year**, a campaign that seeks to accelerate the Trees for Food Program.

Arbor Week is an annual event run by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry in partnership with Total South Africa.

**Arbor Week 2007** will be celebrated under the theme: **Plant a tree - Grow our Future** from 1 – 7 September by thousands of South Africans throughout the country. Arbor week is a significant feature on the Department annual calendar. During this important week the Department and other stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to undertake a major national awareness programme re-iterating the value of trees and the key role they play towards sustaining our livelihoods, both now and for future generations.

The focus is to highlight the opportunities for sustainable economic development, community participation, poverty alleviation and job creation in forestry thereby contributing towards growth, development and a better life for all. The target audience includes all South Africans but more specifically rural communities, municipalities and schools. Emphasis will also be placed on communicating how the Department's forestry policies and legislation developed and implemented over the last years can change people's lives, especially with regard to the second economy. Furthermore, partnerships with the forestry stakeholders will be highlighted during this awareness week through participation, joint efforts and shared objectives.

Also, about 500 employees of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry at the Pretoria office will stage a mini-march in Schoeman Street on 3 September 2007 to highlight the importance of the planting of trees and for the greening of South Africa.

Fruit trees are multi purpose, they help clean the air, reduce heat, provide nutrition, and support good mental health and well-being. For these benefits to happen, fruit trees must be planted strategically, guided by careful planning and leadership. At the same time, the ongoing survival of these trees is dependent on support from local government structures, engaged residents and ability to curb attack by pests and diseases.

The Arbor Week campaign is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To promote improved knowledge of trees particularly indigenous trees and their importance.
- To stress the necessity for everyone to contribute to the greening of South Africa by planting and caring for trees.
- To highlight the vital roles of trees in the natural environment.
- To contribute to the achievement of green dignified and healthy environments in all parts of the country.
- To encourage the youth to participate in tree planting activities and related environmental education programmes.

A number of events have been organised by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Private Sector, other Government Departments, Municipalities, Non-Government Organisations,

Community Based Organisations and Schools. The calendar of events is available on the DWAF website at <http://www.dwaf.gov.za/Events/Arborweek/2007/Default.asp>.

Arbor Week 2007 Campaign Launch Event

Date: 1 September 2007

Venue: Ga-Rankuwa Ext 21

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