

OBITUARY

IAN FREDERICK GARLAND (1925–2007)

Ian Frederick Garland (Figure 1) was born on 20 March 1925 in Verulam, north of Durban. He attended the Verulam and Cordwalles Primary Schools and Michielhouse High School.

Ian arrived at Twinstreams, his sugar farm, in Mtunzini in October 1945, ‘when the stream banks were well wooded and protected and the valley bottoms were stable wetlands. Crystal clear water flowed out of papyrus swamps and swamp forests and in November the vleis were yellow with *Eulophia* orchids’. An all round naturalist, he became a life member of the Natal Society for the Preservation of Wildlife in 1947 and was chairman of that pioneer society when it joined the National Society and became the Natal Branch in 1954. He later edited the monthly bulletin and wrote a natural history column for many years. He was among the first sugar farmers to realise the environmental damage that is caused by the practice of draining inland and coastal wetlands for agricultural exploitation and set about establishing a restoration project on the Siyayi Catchment that served as a demonstration area. In his retirement, he propagated and planted out about 40 000 trees in a huge reclamation project.

Eve Palmer, author of the ground-breaking three-volume study, *Trees of southern Africa* (1972), paid great tribute to Ian Garland in the chapter on *To build a book*: ‘In Zululand, a fermenting passion of interest in trees burst into these pages. It was that of Ian Garland of ‘Twinstreams’, Mtunzini, sugar farmer by profession and naturalist by choice. He supplied most of the specimens and some of the photographs of Zululand trees and much of the information on them—their uses, their place in magic and medicine, and their Zulu names’. Furthermore, it ‘was Ian Garland who, in pursuit of material for this book, collected, for the first time in South Africa, *Commiphora zanzibarica*, and many other rarities’.



FIGURE 1.—Ian Frederick Garland (1925–2007).

Ian was listed as ornithologist on the famous Tongaland (Maputaland) Expedition of 1947. This expedition, ‘an important scientific survey of Tongaland’ attracted attention around the country and the world. It was a remote and little known corner of South Africa at that time. The members of the expedition included leading specialists and produced reports on birds, mammals, fish and flora.

Ian Garland had formed a close partnership with Jobe Mafuleka (Figure 2), whose ancestral home was in Sihangwane Forest near the Pongola floodplain in the far north of Maputaland. In Ian’s own words ‘Jobe is a wonderful companion and teacher and has been responsible for most of my knowledge about the trees of Maputaland and their uses. He has been my friend, teacher and adviser for over forty years’ (Garland 1994). There will be a number of botanists who will recall expeditions with Ian and Jobe along winding, deep, white sandy tracks exploring the great sand forests of Maputaland, turning up many new species and new distribution records.

He was at the forefront of the cultivation of indigenous plants in the summer rainfall area. He had over 350 species of trees in his arboretum at Twinstreams and his nursery would form a centre for the propagation for the University of Zululand Indigenous Plant Use Programme. Over the years he set up a nursery with an extensive list of trees and shrubs and many flowering herbs too. The delightful little *Pelargonium tongaense* was one of his introductions. *Raphia australis*, *Monodora junodii*, *Craibea zimmermannii*, *Albizia zuluensis*, *Ficus trichopoda*, *Croton pseudopulchellus*, *Croton steenkampianus*, *Pteleopsis myrtifolia* and many other Maputaland species were popularized by Ian. Ever the enthusiast, his mission was to get people interested and involved, selling the plants was never important! He inspired many an indigenous grower and gardener over



FIGURE 2.—Ian Garland and Jobe Mafuleka botanizing at Kosi Bay.



FIGURE 3.—Ian Garland on the granite dome overlooking Ngoye Forest, sharing his knowledge with a group of plant enthusiasts.

more than 50 years. He was a great gift giver—of plants, fruit and, most generously, of his time.

As long ago as the 1950s he established an environmental educational facility called Mick's Park at Twinstreams. It has inspired generations of people, young and old, including teacher training courses and groups from the Wilderness Leadership School and African Conservation Education (ACE). All this was in addition to Ian's farming and family commitments! Today Mick's Park is run as a project of the Wildlife and Environment Society, with Mondi Forests, providing more formal accommodation for school groups.

Ian's most lasting legacy, the extent of which it is almost impossible to calculate, was to inspire a passion for the natural world and for plants in particular. There is surely hardly a field botanist in the country who has not at some stage been in the field with Ian—either at Twinstreams, exploring the coastal dunes, dune forest, swamp forest and wetlands—or his beloved Ngoye (Figure 3) and the other great Zululand forests, as well

as Tongaland/Maputaland. He knew his plants intimately, in every season, and their place in the larger scheme of things—the birds, animals, insects and other life forms, including people, with which they were associated—and he shared this knowledge generously.

Hilliard & Burt (1991) said '*Dierama sertum* (the adjective *sertum* means 'garland'), is named in honour of Mr Ian Garland of Mtunzini, whose name will always be associated with conservation in Zululand; he was with us on all three occasions that we collected the plant, at Ngoye and on his farm at Mtunzini, and he and Mrs Garland kindly sent material to Mrs Batten for illustration'. He and his wife Jean's hospitality was legendary.

Ian Garland received his M.Sc. at the University of Natal in 1971, his D.Sc. in 1995, and D. Philosophy at the University of Zululand in 1997. He was much honoured in his lifetime, as the Wildlife Conservationist of the Year (1982), and was awarded the Sugar Association Gold Medal (1990), Botanical Society Flora Conservation Gold Medal (1990), Wildlife Society Gold Medal (1991), and the S.A. Nature Foundation (WWF) Gold Medal (1995).

He is survived by Jean and his five children, Bill, Francie, Peter, Ruth and Jilly and their families.

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