

Elvenia J. Slosson Endowment Fund

Ornamental Selections of South African Origin with Educational Interpretive Displays
Project Period July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001

Preliminary Report December, 2002

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Original Summary:

An area 300 x 120 ft on a rocky south-facing slope has been set aside as a South African plant demonstration garden. The project will construct a demonstration and education garden using relevant species from different plant communities in South Africa. Pathways will be handicapped graded, surfaced and hand railed. Beds may be retained by granite-colored blocks. Overhead sprinkler and drip irrigation systems will be installed depending on the plant community involved. Plants and communities will be labeled. Specific climatic areas will include winter-flowering species and life forms, some of which require summer irrigation. Horticulturally attractive species of relevant genera will be used to illustrate plant and climatic communities. This extension garden will be the only one in the Inland Empire that illustrates South African plant material that generally requires low input maintenance.

Budget Summary: July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001 \$19,8698

The start of this project was delayed a year because the Botanic Garden staff were behind in completing a demonstration garden that illustrates the use of Central and Northern California plants that will grow in the Inland Empire. Part of the problem was that campus contractors were delayed in laying a handicapped graded concrete pathway and in building a handrail. This is now completed and the irrigation system is installed. Central and North Coast trees and shrubs will be planted and labeled this winter.

In the meantime, a volunteer survey crew outlined the route of a handicapped graded pathway for the South African demonstration garden, with a turn around at the Garden fence line. In fact, they outlined two possible routes, and we have chosen one which allows for links with future graded pathways. This was not the one we had in mind when we wrote the original proposal. It is perhaps a good thing to be able to think about a garden design more carefully. The new route will allow for future handicapped access to the Cactus Garden as well as the South African slope.

The survey crew also provided a possible route for a less steep pathway, from the turn around at the end of the handicapped grade by the fence line, to the top of the South African slope. This part of the pathway is not quite at grade, but it is far less steep than

the existing path, which is uneven and dangerous. There is not sufficient space to have a graded pathway to the top of the slope, without destroying some of the better specimen aloes. Handrails have been designed for both paths and will be installed once the path surface is completed. Garden Staff hope to start cutting and/or widening the pathways once the planting in the north coast garden is completed.

Daryl Koutnik now works full time for the Los Angeles County Planning Department and has left Botanic Garden employment. However, he has provided us with a list of desirable species of trees, shrubs, herbs and bulbs for the South African demonstration Garden. Stephen Morgan is collecting together the plant material from other local Botanic Gardens and nurseries, so that we are ready to plant when the irrigation systems are installed. Dr. Koutnik has presented a preliminary design for large interpretive display boards to explain the pertinent features of the three vegetation zones in the South African Floral Kingdom.

We are looking for a trained gardener to work part time in maintenance of the existing South African plantings and in installation of the new plantings. We think we have found such a person who was trained at a University Botanic Garden in the UK, and who is familiar with horticultural outreach in university gardens.

To date, we have spent very little of the budget that the Slosson Foundation granted for this project. We expect to spend it once we start the pathway and garden construction phase. I will provide an update on the project in December, 2003.

The Elvenia J. Slosson Foundation

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(Project Period July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001)
Continuing Report, December, 2003

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Original Summary: See page 1

Work on this project continued. Starting July 1, 2003, a part-time employee has devoted four hours a day, in the morning, to the project.

The survey crew suggested a new route for the wheelchair-graded pathway for the South African demonstration garden. It starts at the main drive and runs northwards at the foot of the California desert garden, and then turns east to bisect the south facing slope that houses the South African succulents and other plants from that floral community. It is somewhat longer than the original one, but it will allow future wheelchair pathways to branch off from it and reach the cactus garden, the California desert garden, and the subtropical fruit orchard. Cutting the pathway was the major work-effort in summer/fall 2003. Also, invasive *Parkinsonia* trees, not native to South Africa, were removed. Cutting the pathway to grade involved moving plants and widening the path to six feet. Some granite outcrops had to be cut through with a jack-hammer, but the excess rock and decomposed granite soil was used to fill low spots.

A retaining wall is now being built with granite-colored concrete blocks to retain fill in the low spots. Once this wall and the final graded pathway are completed, and the fill has settled, a concrete surface will be poured and the handrail installed.

In spring 2004, relevant plants for the three different communities will be set out. We already have plants of 35 taxa, from 27 genera, and 21 families in pots in the lath-house waiting to be set out. In addition, we have seed of a further 26 taxa that will be germinated this winter/spring to add to the South African collection. We expect to complete the project by June 30, 2004. A final report will be submitted in September 2004.