



*Prismatocarpus fruticosus*,  
Klapmutskop

## November News

**NEW MEMBER** - We would like to welcome Cannon Route as a new member of the Greater Simonsberg Conservancy. The Conservancy currently consists of 20 members.

**Fire Management** – Rob Erasmus from Enviro Wildfire Services has offered training to various farms within the Conservancy. This season he will be serving as the Fire Manager of the Greater Simonsberg Conservancy. With his knowledge of fire and his help we hope that we will be able to make the right decisions at the right time, in order to stop runaway fires.

**Firebreaks on Simonsberg** - CapeNature received funding to make vertical firebreaks on Simonsberg. The contractor has been employed and 5 breaks must be completed by the end of March 2010. These breaks will in future be used to start a block-burn system on Simonsberg.

## Environmental Youth Camps

The Greater Simonsberg Conservancy has hosted a total of 7 3-day Environmental Camps for underprivileged kids of the Stellenbosch area up to date. We have funding available for a further 5 camps for the beginning of 2011. These camps have been extremely successful and we see a big change in the attitude of the children after attending the camp. Most kids are brought up with the perception that nature is there to serve you and you can do with it what you want. We try to change this attitude of killing and destroying organisms in nature, because everything plays a vital role. There is a huge demand for environmental education amongst kids and with the funding and help from LandCare and the Cape Winelands District Municipality; we have been able to address this issue in our surrounding communities. We would like to thank our two Volunteers – Luzi and Lena Graber from Switzerland, who helped a lot at camp, and hosted dancing and body percussion workshops for the kids at camp.



Above: A group of kids from J.J.Rhode Primary School at Bettie's Bay



Right: Kids from Groendal Primary busy testing the river health using SASS

## Conservation

**Owls** – Lianda from SKOVA research will be visiting Stellenbosch and doing research on some farms within the conservancy. SKOVA RESEARCH is committed to developing awareness, consideration and respect for owls. The research project will collect data and information providing guidelines for future conservation practices of owls.

**Blue Cranes** – human population growth, the conversion of grasslands into commercial tree plantations, and poisoning of these birds have caused their numbers to decline drastically over the past few years. It is thus essential to protect the habitats where our national birds occur. This vulnerable species is often seen within the Conservancy, and a breeding pair can be seen at DelVera.

**Cape Leopard Trust** - Tokara purchased a camera in November as part of the Cape Leopard Trust research project. The Conservancy will aim to put another two cameras within the Conservancy, in order to monitor and conserve this magnificent creature.



Above: Buzzard – this buzzard was photographed at Delheim Estate at the end of November 2010. This is possibly a new species. Please be on the lookout for this bird, and inform the Conservation Officer with any sightings.