

# Natural Neighbours: Indigenous Landscapes and 'Eco-estates' in Durban, South Africa<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In South Africa, new gated communities have begun branding themselves as 'eco-estates', 'game estates' and 'forest estates'. This is indicative of the way in which the marketing and consumption of nature has become prominent in the elite housing sector. A particular emphasis is placed on the use of native or indigenous plant species in landscape design. The relatively recent suburban fad for indigenous gardening represents a break with the conventional suburban gardening aesthetic which uses global horticultural plants. Indigenous gardening represents a concerted effort to bring nature appreciation, previously associated with distant nature reserves, into the domestic sphere. The fashion for indigenous gardening has been taken up with gusto by the development sector, particularly during the property boom of 2000-2007. Suburbanites seeking to escape the increasingly mixed and threatening post apartheid city are offered a chance to reconnect with nature in eco-estates. Where largely white elites often feel a precarious hold in the new South Africa, natural heritage offers attachment to place. Nature oriented gated communities offer spaces which exclude problematic plants and people alike. Yet, while attempting to capitalize on this new gardening fashion, developers have risked alienating conventional gardeners of exotic horticultural plants. The result has been the strategic accommodation of two different material expressions of landscape.

**Key Words:** Gated Communities, Landscapes, Nature, Elites, South Africa

Note to readers: This is a draft paper and any help with it would be appreciated. If you have any editorial comments, even minor, please jot them on your print out (if you are printing) and leave with me at the end of the seminar. Please also write with your name and school/building and I will return them to you via internal mail.

Home to a pair of Crowned Eagles nesting in a Marula Tree, Blythedale Coastal Resort offers a rich heritage of natural flora and fauna ... Find your future. There is nothing wrong with living in the past. Not if it means having space to grow in a place where old-worldly values still ring true (Blythedale estate promotional material).<sup>2</sup>

Since the transition to democracy in 1994, South Africa's urban landscape has been transformed by the advent of gated communities. Where new homes for the middle classes and elites were once built in racially exclusive suburbs, they are increasingly built in private estates. The overriding motivation to invest in these new neighbourhoods is generally held to be a fear of crime. A raft of studies, as well as regular newspaper reports and television documentaries, indicate higher levels of fear among South Africans than most other countries, including high levels of fear associated with home and the night (Roberts 2008, also see Dirsuweit 2002). Alongside the desire to escape crime, gated communities can be seen as a spatial strategy to deal with less tangible anxieties related to social change (Ballard 2004a; Beall 2002; Durlington 2006, Hook and Vrdoljak 2002, and Lemanski 2006). Those elite, mostly white, South Africans who have felt socially and politically alienated from society have engaged a variety of spatial practices in order to resolve their dissonance. Alongside emigration, gated communities can be seen as a kind of geographical escapism. They attempt to restore feelings of safety and control that were enabled by the earlier state-led spatial strategy of apartheid. With their assured purchasing power, relatively affluent people have invested in developments that promise to ensure not only their material but also psychic comfort.

As in similar developments around the world, elite housing estates require security features such as hard walling, razor wire and fortified motifs (Caldeira 1999; Ellin 1997; Low 2005). In South Africa these designs are sometimes taken a stage further through the 'security park' (see Hook and Vrdoljak 2002). Yet such marketing on security alone would be somewhat negative, and many attract buyers with various kinds of architectural themes. In Durban, the reproduction of rural or pre-industrial European landscapes such as Tudor, Cotswold, Tuscan for example, is pregnant with neo-traditionalist symbolism (see Duncan and Duncan 2004, Jacobs 1996). Yet the attempt to deploy the familiar idyll of rural pre-industrial gentrified Europe (Williams 2005, 82) seems to offer an overly anglophile motif for many of those seeking a more local sense of place. A little truer to the history of the region is 'Natal colonial', 'veranda' and 'farm cottage' architectural styles which hark back to a period of paternalistic sugar barons (Bunn 1996) and pastoral landscapes. Alongside these local references, the scramble for a distinctive identity by developers has resulted in the successful deployment of novel styles unrelated to the region including 'American Colonial' and 'Bali'. In our interviews, the consumers of these various styles professed to find them functionally conducive to their desire for neat and presentable neighbourhoods, but with many claiming to be indifferent to the symbolism of European gentry or colonialism from Natal or America.

This indifference seems, at first blush, to be paradoxical. Elite households appear to be moving in significant numbers to live in new residential arrangements, spending

considerable amounts of money and often trading down in terms of property size, with little appreciation of the architectural or design symbolism. We explore some of these issues in a separate paper but here wish to argue that it is nature which offers a more direct and less contestable route to an appealing sense of heritage. South Africa's rich diversity of plants and animals have long been enjoyed recreationally by suburbanites in their escapes from the city. Recently conservationists have succeeded in persuading many of these suburbanites to bring more of this nature into their domestic spaces by gardening with native or indigenous plants. Developers have seized on this trend as a way of inviting affluent urban residents to purchase 'a reconnection with the land', to borrow Swart's wording (2008, 204). In one estimation, 'eco-estates' went from being a virtually unknown concept to numbering more than 50 across South Africa within just a few years.<sup>3</sup> These new residential communities deploy the environment in the production of communities and place by offering landscapes that have been produced with indigenous plants and have preserved original forests and grasslands.

In this paper we aim to demonstrate the importance of gardens and landscape design to the formation of planned elite housing developments in South Africa.<sup>4</sup> In Part A, we situate the recent uptake of indigenous landscaping by housing developers in the relationship between nature and gardening in general and in the South African context. A broad tension emerges between, on one hand, ideologies favouring the substantial human alteration of landscapes and nature to create aesthetic, recreational and indeed new natural spaces, and on the other hand, the desire to minimize the alteration of nature or at least allow the flourishing of authentic ecological processes. In South Africa, nature in its ostensibly unaltered form was enjoyed widely amongst white people as rural game reserves, while the kind of nature that characterized living spaces tended to be substantially altered. Gardens generally consisted of global horticultural plants rather than native species. Since the 1990s, however, nature has been brought in to the domestic sphere of the garden far more explicitly by a growing 'indigenous gardening' movement. This, we argue, has open ended political implications with some of its advocates linking their project to racial reconciliation and others more conservatively positioning themselves as stewards of the environment in contrast to what they believe to be the environmentally damaging poor black population.

Part B examines the ubiquity of 'indigenous gardening' and 'nature' motifs in gated community marketing material and the enjoyment of nature by residents who have moved in. The material shows that indigenous landscaping is an elastic idea, one that is applied equally to attempts at authentic reconstructions of the environment and English country landscapes created using mostly indigenous plants. There is much emphasis from developers and buyers on the ethic and virtue of indigenous gardening. Our argument is that, in selling estates to the middle class, a specific notion of nature has rapidly become a crucial element in the security-lifestyle package. The marketability of indigenous planting can only be understood within the context of a recent paradigm shift in gardening which has sought to transfer the enjoyment of natural Africa from the game reserves to privately developed suburban neighbourhoods. For those who buy in, both metaphorically and literally, gardening aesthetics are aligning with nature enjoyment aesthetics and

conservation ethics. In this way the production and marketing of nature becomes an essential tool for developers to capture their slice of the lucrative elite housing market.

While the analysis may well only go no further than this for many producers and consumers, we believe that this trend does play a powerful role in the social place of private estates. It represents, in the first instance, a new element in the repertoire 'politics of aesthetics' (Duncan and Duncan 1997, 170) where class and possibly race are marked through landscape taste (also see Lee 1995). The content of this aesthetic is itself metaphorical. Anxieties over mixing of plants closely parallel anxieties of social mixing and political change. Indigenous landscaping represents a certain kind of localism and attachment to place amongst a group of people who feel in many other ways 'displaced'. Furthermore, fears that sophisticated climax ecologies being dumbed down by unruly weeds echo a dread that the achievements of modernity and civilization are now being undone in post-apartheid South Africa. The ability to channel vast resources into the production and maintenance of purified indigenous landscapes allows residents to attempt to reassert control over what they consider to be deteriorating social and natural environments. Social and botanical communities are thus co-defined and policed.

Yet, as our empirical case shows, many suburbanites have not yet converted to the indigenous fashion and prefer the conventional cosmopolitan approach to gardening. Only some utopian estates were successfully able to apply an exclusively indigenous planting rule. In other cases, such attempts backfired. The atmosphere of one community had been poisoned by a bitter dispute between indigenous gardeners and those who wanted to plant exotic horticultural plants. Other developers had carefully steered a course between the two fractions by claiming the ethical capital of indigenous gardening but, in practice, using large numbers of 'non-invasive' exotic plants 'for colour'. What this exposes is two contradictory material expressions of what is ostensibly a single community. The successful production of new elite communicates needs to navigate two different ways of reproducing class through landscape – one cosmopolitan-global and one purist-indigenous. The politics of aesthetics therefore is not only inter-class but also intra-class.

## **Part A: 'Bring nature back to your garden'**

Gardens are significant sites for the ways in which they mediate between nature and culture (Chevalier 2008, 48). Through the selective use of nature, western society believes it turns nature into culture (Anderson 2003, 245; Swyngedouw 1996). Gardens are highly managed spaces which can convey and constitute particular identities through particular landscapes. Composing a garden has been described as part of the tendency of people to minutarize the universe by collecting objects together (Shepard 1991). Gardens are an opportunity for residents to display, and for passers to judge, aesthetic, social and market values simultaneously. They can be modern spaces that rely on technology such as hybridisation, mass plant production, chemical control, and mechanical and human labour. However, while gardeners often have 'a sense of control over a small patch of earth', gardens remain subject to the vagaries of nature (Francis and Hester 1991, 6). Not only are gardeners aware of the fact that plants are going to do their own thing, but derive

much of their pleasure of gardening from this unpredictability (Hitchings 2006). Pesticide averse gardeners hope that their gardens will be used by insects, birds and animals (Dawson 1991) and that ecological processes will occur there such as composting, carbon absorption and oxygen production.

Yet, as we are reminded by a book advocating indigenous gardening in Durban, *Bring nature back to your garden* (Botha and Botha 1995), many believe that conventional suburban gardens are anything but natural and amount to little more than green deserts. Lewis Mumford argued that developers of American suburbs accentuated the conformity of landscape and planting, in line with the social, economic and aesthetic conformity that resulted in a 'low-grade environment' (Mumford 1961, 486). Indeed, both in the mimetic of the 'garden city' and the platted developments of the US and Canadian mid-West city the chemically sustained lawn and monotonous planting at the expense of indigenous flora are synonymous with the suburb (Jackson 1987, Robbins and Sharp 2003)<sup>5</sup>. As Guterson (1992) observed in his acute dystopian analysis of master planned communities in Nevada, developers suggestively deny the desert's reality with names such as Green Valley, The Fountains, Creekside and Bay Breeze.

In reaction to what is seen as the environmental poverty of suburbia, conservationist gardeners and landscapers have advocated a closer adherence to the form and content of unaltered nature. This was informed by a growing disquiet amongst conservationists of humanity's role as 'improvers of nature' and the desire for unaltered nature (Williams 2005, 78). These ecological discourses privilege 'groundedness in place, and intimacy with one's immediate surroundings', a search for 'homeliness and rootedness' (Clark 2002, 105). From the 1960s, ecological gardeners were advocating a more naturalist kind of gardening (Trieb 1999). In a recent example, Hitchmough and Dunnett (2004) call for the inclusion of more ecological processes in gardening. This would require a value shift from wanting to exaggerate nature in gardens by creating more 'colour and drama' to an appreciation of the more mundane appearance of semi natural planting (Hitchmough and Dunnett 2004, 4). Gardeners are encouraged to be holistic, considering the needs of plants rather than treating them as merely ornamental (Hill 2001, 50).

One of the main results of the ecological or naturalist lobby has to re-value plants on the basis of their origin. Many plant collectors over centuries have prized specimens precisely because they are from elsewhere. In the colonies, gardening could reproduce landscapes from home. For many suburban gardeners, the origin of plants simply does not matter. Gardening manuals and nurseries frequently provide a repertoire of globalised horticultural plants of no specific origin, organized by their landscaping function, colour, size, hardiness, or sun tolerance. By contrast, ecological gardeners have reintroduced an interest in determining whether a plant is local or not. Broadly they argue that local plants are more useful to local fauna and facilitate functioning ecology rather than decorative horticultural planting. Furthermore, some exotic or non-native plants are seen to have been highly damaging. This alien vegetation, undisciplined by natural predators, swamps delicately balanced local plants and animals (Clark 2002). The result, it is feared, is the loss of local diversity, extinction, and the homogenisation of the environment into 'one giant mongrel ecology' (Hettinger 2001, 216). Humans have destroyed nature's balance

and, in a kind of eco-essentialism, it is believed nature can best be encouraged by facilitating a return to the kinds of plants, animals and landscapes that existed locally before alteration.

### ***Gardening and nature in South Africa***

... English [immigrants] ... always persist, with homesick pigheadedness, in trying to grow “an English garden,” instead of drawing upon the immense resources of the native flora – a weakness upon which your born South African looks with absolute sympathy; after all, were not the oaks and roses, the apples and pears of his pride brought originally from Europe? (Cran 1927, 48)

Marion Cran, a gardening travel writer, published *The Gardens of Good Hope* in 1927 based on two visits to the Union earlier in the decade. She hoped to tell ‘England, the garden land, that there *are* gardens in South Africa!’ (Cran 1927, 5), despite her own expectation of ‘drought and dust, or deserts of sand and cactus’ (Cran 1927, 134). Many species familiar to those at home were thriving in the colony. Varieties of roses were being hybridised to survive in the warmer climates of Australia and South Africa. Some, such as tulips, were grown with much difficulty. Yet while some bemoaned the obstacles to the cultivation of European flowers, Cran enthusiastically wrote of the potential of local plants: ‘Ankle deep in violets; knee deep in arum lilies; waist high in wild gladioli. So one wades in Africa – as one wades here in England among the buttercups in the May meadows’ (Cran 1927, 134). Cran’s text is useful not only for highlighting the colonial relationships with imported and local plants, but also for her comments on the owners of those gardens. Unlike the ‘emasculated folk’ of overpopulated European cities, she found in South Africa a courageous, likeable and hospitable people creating a new nation (1927, 174). She felt it appropriate to devote attention to settlers in a book about gardening because she ‘thought that the transplanting of people is a kind of gardening too’ (1927, 174).

The health of the colonial environment in contrast to the polluted and overcrowded cities of the metropole was a major attraction for migrants (Bell 1993), performed an important role to placate concerns of disease and tropical malaise (Anderson, W. 1997) and served as a device to ‘teach’ natives moral behaviour and authority (Cangi 1993; Casson 1998). Abundant space allowed for both the enjoyment and exploitation of nature. The land was being improved by the migration of people, plants and animals (Anderson 1998; Clark 2002; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Draper 2003; Swart 2008). The importation of plants and animals could be used to replicate familiar landscapes from home (Anderson 2003, 430). Yet as that home was defined through its relationship to its empire, a globalised stock of plants and animals could be deployed in the production of these new nations (Draper 2003, 70; also Veracini 2007, 272). Natal plants entered this global exchange of plants in earnest from the 1850s when amateur and professional plant collectors in Natal sent specimens to Kew gardens in London (McCracken and McCracken 1990, 4). In return, Kew sent species to the colony for gardening and agriculture.

While many colonialists considered the increasing alteration of the landscape to reinforce their dominance and transcendence of nature (Anderson, K. 1997), concerns about environmental deterioration were evident in the South African colonies from early in the 1800s. Blame for this was attributed variously to African populations for removing trees and to the rapid transformation of the landscape as a result of colonialism (Grove 1989). In Natal, sugar and timber plantations resulted in rapid enclosure and clearance from the mid 1800s. The consequences of degradation were thought to be drought, loss of hunting grounds, and by the more botanically minded, a loss of valuable plant habitat. As Grove explained, early conservationists argued that the preservation of nature was a virtue of civilisation, although this boast disguised the more anxious search to regain control over social and natural environments that threatened to be uncontrollable. Game reserves were established in the Cape in 1956 (Grove 1989, 177) not only to preserve forests but to buffer expanding colonial agriculture and African populations. In Natal Hluhluwe and Umfolozi game reserves, were proclaimed in 1895 initially with a strong interests in preserving hunting grounds (Brooks 2005, 222; Draper 2000, 48-9) although later were responsible for saving the white rhino. The later establishment of the Kruger National Park in 1926 to the North promoted the access of rural spaces by rail as an antidote for urban life on the Witwatersrand. Urban nature reserves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were used as buffers between racial ‘group areas’.

Game and nature reserves functioned ‘as an imaginary repository of value forms lost in the process of modernization’ (Bunn 1996, 38). Increasingly, conservationists in Natal fought for recognition that wilderness was not simply to be swept aside in the march towards agricultural and industrial modernisation but to be preserved and enjoyed recreationally, in part as redemption from the ills of that modernity (Draper 1998). Visits to affordable state run game reserves just a few hours drive from cities became a regular excursion of white suburban families. A key aspect of the wilderness landscape was that it required the relocation of many Zulu people and their cattle in order to create idealised African landscapes (Brooks 2005). While parading as authentic, they were spaces that were actively produced in order to offer an idealised pre-human Eden which could be enjoyed by nature lovers (Draper, Spierenburg and Wels 2004, 343). They were nostalgic spaces that were thought of as existing outside of or predating industrial time (Brooks 2000). They were distilled nature and separated it from culture, although the enjoyment of nature became increasingly important to suburban culture.

While the wilds of nature were relegated to game and nature reserves, urban areas were the sites in which modernity, progress and civilisation prevailed. Suburbanisation frequently resulted in the obliteration of the veld and its replacement with bungalow houses surrounded by lawns and global horticultural gardening plants such as azaleas, hydrangeas and roses. Teppo’s study of a poor white suburb in Cape Town shows the way in which gardens became a source of pride and one of the ways in which ‘successful whiteness’ could be demonstrated (2004, 147). By the 1980s, gardens were central to white South African suburban culture. A gardening manual insisted that

Landscaping, once considered a luxury of the wealthy, is a necessity today. The increased pace of living has resulted in a need to “get away from it all” – and what better place to do it than your own back yard. Today ... gardens are becoming extensions of the home ... Patio and barbecue areas are virtually outdoor livingrooms. Because of our wonderful climate and love of the great outdoors, South Africans spend more time in the garden than practically any other nation on earth. (Kirsten no date, 11).

Retreating to game reserves and retreating to gardens were, therefore, conceptually distinct ways of getting away from it all.

A small group of collectors in Natal have planted indigenous plants in their gardens since early colonial settlement. Only a fraction of the great diversity of indigenous plants have until recently been available in commercial nurseries, having themselves been absorbed into the category of horticultural garden plant. Indigenous planting therefore required experimentation with propagation from the wild. From the 1990s, indigenous gardening increasingly became a recognizable and more commercially available style. Field guides to local flora doubled as reference books for gardeners. Elsa Pooley’s guides won many over by pointing out that there are 750 tree species indigenous to the Eastern Region of Southern Africa, which is 11 times greater than the whole of Europe (Pooley 1993, 9), and that ‘SA has over 23 000 plants, the richest temperate flora of an area of comparable size in the world. With more than 16 500 endemics, it is the largest flora in Africa’ (Pooley 1998, 16). Local newspapers have carried columns promoting the indigenous plant of the week. Workshops have been held in order to share knowledge of indigenous gardening. Particular success in the western area of Durban was achieved with an annual open garden weekend in which five show gardens were opened up to the public, receiving up to 2000 visitors. While some of these show gardens demonstrate the potential for using indigenous plants with conventional gardening aesthetics, some departed more sharply from the convention. The African bushveld, was now being cultivated in suburban gardens. Plant stock was distinctive, with flat topped trees such as *acacias* and *albizias*, along with succulent plants like *aloes* and *euphorbias*, acting as iconic African plants. Lawns were rolled back in order to create bird and insect-friendly ‘bush clumps’. Areas of thigh-high wild grasses were encouraged and weathered sandstone rocks, gravels, and dead wood used as accessories in order to achieve a striking *African* look. Indigenous gardening became a form of conspicuous consumption amongst the fashion conscious. Suburbanites who were ecologically inclined and sufficiently well resourced commissioned landscapers to convert to indigenous gardens. In response, a thriving landscaping industry emerged and innovative techniques developed. Grown trees were transplanted in order to give the garden an established appearance. Nurseries that specialised in indigenous plants emerged and garden centres began offering a larger array of indigenous plants.

Underpinning the shift to indigenous planting was a fear that exotic plants and animals constituted a threat to delicate local ecologies (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). Farmlands and the bush were being invaded by exotic weeds that had either been deliberately introduced by gardeners or plantations, or had taken hold through the unintentional



importation of seed. Nature reserves and game reserves, which were supposed to resemble the landscape prior to human transformation, were now being spoiled by runaway plants. Thirsty Australian *eucalyptus* or gum trees could consume 60 litres of water a day, and rivers were drying up. When fires moved into a stand of exotic plants, they burned much hotter than the natural veld fires and therefore destroyed the soil and killed seeds. Vigilant weeding was required. The South African government has pursued an employment generating programme called 'Working for Water' which clears 'alien invasives'. These publicly played out anxieties rapidly shifted the definition of good plants to those that were *from here*, as against bad plants from elsewhere.

By the 1990s, then, indigenous gardening was a recognizable gardening fashion. One of our respondents identified this as follows:

...indigenous plants has only really come into fashion I'd say in the last ten years. Everyone suddenly started talking about 'indigenous'. Before that nobody cared really. You just got what you fancied. I'd say in about the last ten years everyone's on about indigenous. (Interview, Tracy, 2006)

Indigenous gardening has not displaced more conventional horticultural or cosmopolitan gardening. Staunchly conventional gardeners claiming the right to produce the most attractive garden with all available plant stock regardless of origin. Indigenous and exotic gardeners clashed on the issue. Conventional horticultural gardeners think of indigenous plants as weedy, thorny and colourless. Indigenous gardeners contemptuously describe roses as 'icing sugar', and exotic gardeners as vectors of weeds. Yet the definition of 'indigenous' is itself vague. Some indigenous gardeners draw their stock anywhere from the Southern African region and others confine themselves to extremely local plant distributions, anxious that plants from just 500 kilometres away could become weeds in areas where they were previously not distributed. The simple conceptual binary of indigenous/exotic does not accord with a loose understanding of area of origin in practice (see Woods and Moriarty 2001).

### ***A taste for nature***

The blue gum trees lend the scene an aromatic character. Their leaves are thin and dry. As a boy I used to dislike them. How, I wondered, did Australians love with these untidy, peeling, intractable trees? My mother told the gardener, Solomon, that on no account were gum leaves to be used in compost. Gums were from such a low form of tree life, in the same way that Australians came from a criminal stratum, that they contain no nourishment. White people were always nourishing the soil. Darwin had shown that worms were the basis of life, the worms ate compost, and in some way the process enriched the soil. (Cartwright 2002, 101)

This extract from Justin Cartwright's novel, *White Lightning*, on a South African returning home after a long period in the United Kingdom hints at the relationships between plants, place and identity. The turn to indigenous gardening, and the associated anxieties about

exotic plants, arguably signify the search of a certain kind of attachment to place. The political transition in South Africa shifted moral gravity from things foreign and European to things native and African. In one sense, therefore, this is a kind of politically correct gardening which plays up the virtues of the local. Furthermore, some hoped that an appreciation of the local environment would play a positive role in social progress in South Africa. In the foreword to an early field guide (Gibson 1975), Adolf Bayer, Professor of Botany, stated that

The intrinsic natural beauty of our veld is one of nature's most wonderful gifts. Helping people to recognise, to understand and to appreciate this gift ... is one way of fostering a feeling of intensive love for our country, a feeling which could become a powerful solvent of most of our present social and racial difficulties and dissensions. (Gibson 1975)

Yet many of those who are staunch advocates of indigenous gardening and the preservation of natural heritage are relatively conservative people in whose interest apartheid was implemented and who feel politically and socially alienated by the transition. Where faith in the democratically elected political elite and those who elected them is low, ecological patriotism substitutes for nationalism as a mechanism for achieving an attachment to place and claims to autochthony (Ballard 2005, also see Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000). Furthermore, the post-apartheid government itself and the needs of large numbers of the urbanized poor black population are cast as a threat to the environment. A speaker at a seminar to promote indigenous gardening in 1999 opened her presentation by arguing that it was necessary to take action to conserve the environment with indigenous gardening because 'We cannot rely on AIDS to solve all our problems'. This Malthusian sentiment evoked the apartheid-era notion that environmental problems are caused by black population growth (for further examples see Ballard 2004b, 82).

Conservationists frequently express the concern that the post-apartheid government places development ahead of the environment. In a contribution to an email discussion group a botanical enthusiast expressed his dismay at the environmental destruction taking place as a result of a low cost housing development west of Durban: 'Apart from being another example of redistribution of capital from those who create it, to those who merely consume it, this is also a fine example of bad spatial development and ratepayer/taxpayer funded trashing of a rich natural area.' (Posting to Plantchat discussion group. 2001/02/01 'State-sponsored environmental thuggery inland of Durban'). More sympathetically, a respondent in our research, who lived in a gated community with indigenous landscaping, was concerned that new low cost housing developments were unhomey because of their lack of trees: 'they're allowing these [low cost] houses to mushroom almost out of control. There's no provision [for] trees. ... I just felt sorry for them I just would have liked to have seen a little more homeliness to these places going up' (Interview, Anna, 2006). The black middle class is also seen to fall short environmentally. An indigenous landscaper proposed in that black upwardly mobile people are 'aspiring to what we [white indigenous gardeners] are trying to get away from. They're aspiring to the exotic

the typical landscapes that they have been ... shown for the last 20 or 40 years ... they're not interested in indigenous at all' (Interview, indigenous landscaper, 2007).

Ecological discourses speak not only to the immediate issue of the environment but also to senses of race, class and place. The implications are open ended and range from a hope for social healing to the belief that poor black people and development are to blame for environmental ills.

## Part B: Gated nature

The normative shift from exotic to indigenous gardening laid the ground for the advent of eco-estates and game estates. Older residential developments produced in the 1990s predated this shift. They were landscaped with jacarandas, firs, cedars, pines with occasional concessions to existing pockets of forest, grassland or wetland, and foregrounded nearer to clubhouses and plots by palms and succulents, bougainvilleas, and with formal 'show gardens'. These combinations made for some confusing vistas (Plate 1). More recent developments associated with the 2000-2007 property market boom have, however, placed a much greater emphasis on their environmentalism. Existing patches of undeveloped land, often not suitable for cultivation because of steepness or nearness to rivers, are restored and offered to potential buyers as indigenous forest or bushveld or grassland. Some developments have built houses into existing forests and give extremely tight footprints in which builders can work. The very shape of houses in coastal developments is sometimes determined by the presence of large milkwood trees around which they must be built. More often, houses and infrastructure are built on land that has been substantially altered, which is usually former sugar cane plantations. Here, verges and private gardens provide the opportunity for the rehabilitation of plantation land into a more diverse ecology using indigenous plants.

Plate 1: View over Camelot, Hillcrest, with Impala in the foreground and Tudor style houses and a 'castle' beyond a lake.



The conservation of original ecologies and the use of indigenous plants to replant altered areas are, in the first instance, measures to ensure the smooth passage of the planned

development through regulatory approval. Environmental Impact Assessments bring environmentalists onto site who will insist on the preservation of pockets of undeveloped land. Environmental Management Plans are then devised to ensure the process of constructing the development has the right environmental outcomes, and environmental officers check on their implementation. However, even without regulatory requirements, developers have a strong incentive to invest in indigenous landscapes. Of themselves, these attributes have high market value because of the currency of conservation and indigenous gardening amongst suburbanites.

...people are becoming more and more indigenous conscious, that's also a good selling mechanism because indigenous sells. .... the word 'indigenous' has become a marketing tool. And it sells. Its become fashionable, to keep up with the Joneses, saying 'I live in an indigenous [development]' ... Its probably only picked up in the past 5 or 6 years where the whole sort of indigenous movement has picked up. (Interview, Landscape architect, 2008)

Marketing material for gated communities almost inevitably contains some mention of nature and, with it, the use of the word 'indigenous'. Promotions describe in enticing detail the kinds of nature one might expect to encounter:

Simbithi Eco-Estate has been planned with one thing in mind, to give you the opportunity to reconnect with nature and embrace a lifestyle in harmony with your natural environment. Away from the chaos of the concrete jungle, in the heart of KwaZulu Natal's northern coastline, lies Simbithi, a 430 hectare Eco-Estate. Simbithi Eco-Estate is a natural, coastal paradise with dense, indigenous riverine vegetation, lush valley wetlands, undulating hills and distant, breathtaking vistas. It is a way of preserving nature, as much as it is a way of preserving a lifestyle... (Elan Group, Promotional web site)<sup>6</sup>

Some incoming residents may not care too passionately for indigenous planting but be broadly content that they are in on a trend, or that their estate is being constructed ethically. Yet the marketing is clearly appealing to those who treat nature as a hobby or a passion. Says an eco-estate developer, 'This is a particular lifestyle: it's not for everyone, but for people who enjoy the outdoors and being close to nature'.<sup>7</sup> Another developer offers 'an uninhibited reconnection to nature that has been lost through excessive urbanisation.'<sup>8</sup> A development for the 'active over 50s' aimed to create a botanic gardens from indigenous plants. Landscapers were commissioned to create a waterway running between the houses which lead to an open wetland complete with bird hide. There are 30 ponds each of which has a theme such as the 'the birds of a feather pond, where plant species create a safe haven for birds and waterfowl' and 'the protea pond, surrounded by the national heritage flower'.<sup>9</sup> Residents of this community were enthusiastic about these facilities and said they were persuaded to buy in as a result. Anna said that 'they are starting a bird club here and we are going to join, and I'll get back into my birding and all the things I enjoy' (Interview, 2006).

In varying degrees, then, there is an appeal to those who would enjoy nature reserves and game reserves. Indigenous gardening is seen as a mechanism to ‘bring the bird life and the wildlife back’ (Interview, Mary, 2006).<sup>10</sup> One development is going to prohibit pets and fencing around individual houses as ‘[w]e already have Giraffe, Zebra, Wildebeest, Impala, Blesbok, a variety of Duiker, Bush Buck, bush pig and approximately 160 species of birds’.<sup>11</sup> For jaded suburbanites, a move to a gated community offers the thrill of the frontier:

A women was sitting on her verandah ... and this leopard walked past. And so she called the security guy and he saw it ... But nobody else has ever seen it. ... And then they are saying that there was a carcass of a buck found ... and they got the vet and all the wildlife fundis [experts] in to check it out and they say it definitely is a leopard, the spoor was a leopard spoor. ... We’re all waiting, we’re all looking now. Every time we drive around here we’re looking for the leopard (Interview, Tracy, 2006)

In this particular development, the excitement of encountering wildlife within the community is carefully arranged by the developer. Banks of condominium units overlook watering holes where animals come to drink in the evening, bringing a sense of the ‘game reserve’ into the development, the animals complimenting the ‘sundowner’ cocktail. This scene, however, is confined to one area, moving a few hundred metres toward the main clubhouse and restaurant a wetland sanctuary offers another opportunity for nature watching, again combined with the possibility of an evening drink or party gathering.

Plate 2: Simbithi bird pool hide



### ***Landscape***

Many investors in gated communities are in search of country living. In this regard, indigenous gardening can help achieve a country landscape: ‘it’s not too starched with these formal kind of plantings which I don’t like. I like the happy relaxation of the indigenous planting’ (Interview, Anna, 2006). Similarly, Mary said ‘I don’t like the prissy little gardens, that look, you know, terribly neatly edged’ (Interview, Mary, 2006). Yet, along with a generally informal country style, the indigenous label is lending itself to a variety of landscape styles. Residual coastal forest adjacent to the beach has been used

to great effect so as to achieve a forested residential environment. However, aside from the coastal hills and steep or riverine areas, much of the region would naturally have been grassland or more open bushveld. An eco-estate north of Durban has attempted to recreate an ecology that is true to what would have been found there before conversion to sugar cane. It consists mostly of palms and grassland. However, some have suggested that while this might be an authentic ecological landscape, it does not lend itself particularly to a residential development. The relative absence of trees and shrubs results in a lack of screening between houses.

Other developers have separated indigenous gardening and the production of indigenous landscapes. A new equestrian estate is developing a landscape based on the combination of lawn and indigenous trees. Another seeks to achieve an English country appearance with the use of indigenous plants. The estate's landscape guidelines explain:

Our philosophy for Cotswold Down will be to reflect what is historically characteristic to the Cotswold Country-side region in the United Kingdom. We will however, be using a predominantly indigenous plant palette to adapt this character to South Africa.<sup>12</sup>

Developers are therefore harnessing the fad for indigenous landscaping to achieve a variety of different kinds of landscapes, ranging from approximations of what the land might have looked like before human alteration, to the production of scenes that replicate distant places.

### ***Ethical estates***

Not only do gated communities offer a mechanism for nature lovers to access plants and animals, but they are told that their very purchase of a home in a community will help rehabilitate and preserve the environment. Promotional material for one estate explained that the land owner 'watched the decline of the Valley of a Thousand Hills [a peri urban area west of Durban] as the invasion of the alien vegetation swept through it. He ... devised a plan to save the valley. He knew that there were lots of families who would love to preserve the Valley whilst having their own secure, private game reserve less than 7 kms from Hillcrest'.<sup>13</sup> Another estate claims the 'conversion of an ecological desert (previously cane lands) into an abundant coastal climax grassland community, interspersed with coastal forest environmental corridors, lakes and wetlands to attract as much biotic diversity that the carrying capacity of the site can support'.<sup>14</sup> In a context of limited public funds for nature conservation and increasing pressure of urban sprawl, developers boast that by setting aside land they are able to protect indigenous coastal forest 'ad infinitum'.<sup>15</sup> Buying property in an indigenously landscaped estate is a kind of ethical consumption on a grand scale. Estates commit to a triple bottom line approach, 'focusing equally on profit, people and the planet' and delivering 'more overall value with less environmental impact'.<sup>16</sup> Golf course designers claim to 'listen to the land' and insist that 'in many cases, developers actually improve the environment and uplift the area'.<sup>17</sup> In a few cases, fair trade trademarks and 14001 certification are used to endorse environmentalist credentials.<sup>18</sup>

This search for credibility is in part a response to an image problem experienced by property development. Gated communities have been criticised by many, including the state president, Thabo Mbeki, for reinforcing social inequality.<sup>19</sup> The rebranding of gated communities was therefore important to their greater social credibility. Through the use of indigenous plants, golf courses and horse paddocks make the transition from elite indulgence to virtuous landscapes. Yet claims of environmentalism have themselves been challenged. An environmentalist lodged a challenge to the use of the word ‘eco-estate’ with the advertising standards authority (Interview, Harold Witt, 2008). He argued that marketing enormous, opulent and energy-hungry houses built to accommodate long distance highway commuters constituted false advertising. Estates require infrastructure such as sewerage processing which local government is not always able or willing to provide. Golf courses themselves are notoriously thirsty, require the use of pesticides and fertilisers, and depend on lawns of exotic grass types.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, one of the defining features of an eco-estate is said to be very low housing density.<sup>21</sup> At one such estate, only 35% of each plot is allowed to be covered by building. For residents at least this creates an enjoyable living environment as a resident explains:

the plots are nice and big and spaced out, and they’ve left a lot of areas open for our animals, which is lovely, so that appealed to me. I wouldn’t want to live ... [in estates where you have huge houses on small pieces of land] I like to have bigger plots and more spaced out and leave little bits in between of natural vegetation. (Interview, Tracy, 2006).

This certainly succeeds in surrounding the few residents and visitors able to access the estate in more greenery than in a city. Detractors, however, and including the city manager of Durban, point out that low density development has very high environmental costs necessitating more infrastructure per house and putting pressure on transport infrastructure. The production of natural living environments for elites gets conflated, therefore, with service to the environment (cf Duncan and Duncan 2004, 140).<sup>22</sup> While there is little doubt that some developments have made substantial investment in environmental ‘best practice’, many have also sought to evade such investment. There is resistance in others to excessively close regulation by the state,<sup>23</sup> and in one spectacular case the bribery of a provincial premier to overlook environmental concerns.<sup>24</sup>

### ***War of the roses***

In open suburbia the use of autonomous domestic spaces are largely determined by individuals. Although there are municipal by-laws, these largely do not refer to questions of taste. However private residential estates aspire to be collective domestic endeavours which introduce much greater potential to regulate and police the architectural and landscaping choices of residents. Some of the most up-market developments forbid the planting of any exotic plants. However the stipulations of developers and trustees are not always well received by people who until now have not been dictated to in this way. A small community in Hillcrest of less than 40 houses began as a utopian project of the land owners but has become acrimonious over this very issue. The land owners were prompted

to convert their estate into a gated community in order, they said, to prevent squatters moving onto the land who they feared would be difficult to remove. A residential development would be a way of surrounding themselves with a set of more congenial neighbours of their choosing. Indigenous plants were to play a key role in the production of their very own neighbourhood.

We go away to game reserves quite a lot. When we get to a game reserve, we might sit in a place that's far more humble than our home and say isn't this absolutely amazing? And what we are looking at is indigenous trees, natural grasslands and it's all so harmonious that we actually love it, so we love all the experiences we've had in the bush. [We] are very aware of how this country is being over run by invasives. I mean you can't drive anywhere and not be struck by the fact that invasives are taking over our natural vegetation. ... When we got rid of our gums, our dam filled up ... And we've actually seen what all of this has done in our lives. In April you see butterflies all over this garden. We see trees, the birds coming into this garden. It is so rewarding. (Interview, Judy)

Assuming that purchasers of homes on the new estate would agree with this method of gardening, the developers are mortified that some seek more freedom to garden with exotic plants.

We've got some people who have bought into it, but by and large, many people don't actually understand indigenous ... In fact it's a very contentious thing, incredibly. I mean there are people that we don't get on well with at all. They've bought and now they want to continue planting whatever they want to, and we've said, 'no you can't ... We want it to remain fully indigenous' and there are people who don't see it that way ... it's lack of understanding, knowledge, education in terms of indigenous planting ... and some lack of integrity ..., the lady up at the top there who likes miniature [exotic] conifers so she's got 30 or 40 miniature conifers which we say are not plants that we want you to put on the property. We've got people who've got roses, they want standard roses (Interview, Bruce and Judy)

For their part, the new neighbours who are introducing exotic plants show considerable understanding of the value of indigenous. However they seek a more libertarian approach to choosing plants:

Margy: But the trend now is to indigenous planting, because it saves water and as you know, the country is becoming very conscious of the lack of water. And I think the reason for the indigenous, and it's also good for birds, and wildlife, not that ordinary gardens don't attract birds and bees, but I think indigenous planting goes hand in glove with a normal garden as well, because you can mix and match.

Richard: But you like to have a bit of freedom as well?

Margy: Well this is it. What we've found here is that as time has progressed, the restriction on the indigenous has got to a stranglehold, where people now are



just putting their backs up. You know what it's like when a gun is held to your head, ... In many ways it's a fashionable thing having indigenous, and fashions change, so you cannot lay down rigid rules that you can expect to last twenty or thirty years, because fashions will change again.

The developers recognise with disappointment that their creation of a residential estate has brought people into their lives who 'don't follow the vision' (Interview, Bruce, 2006).

Some less personally invested developers have been more willing to turn a blind eye to transgressions. Having sold their plots using the indigenous gardening fashion, it was immaterial to them whether individuals adhered to this norm. A resident of one such development of 120 homes observed:

When we first started ... they said 'we encourage indigenous gardening', which is the big thing here these days, that you try and plant indigenous. But it wasn't enforced like Zimbali for example where they have to plant only plants that would have naturally grown there in the old days. So quite a few people have got fairly indigenous gardens but there are quite a lot that have been landscaped totally without a single indigenous plant in them. ... With the style of the house, that's not the sort of garden they wanted. (Interview, Pam, 2006)

Other residents in the same community explained their dislike of the indigenous style and other difficulties they experienced with the pressure for conservation. They said that a show house within the development 'had an indigenous garden and it looked more like a weed field. It wasn't nice ... They gave you a list of plants [and] they recommended you plant ... indigenous, ... and we said 'no' ... we wanted a bit of colour. So we got a bit of everything. We've got both.' (Interview, Liz, 2006).

Therefore, while indigenous gardening has become a widespread claim in new property developments, it does not have universal appeal. Landscape consultants shrewdly build in a compromise from the outset, recognising the need to keep as many people happy as possible. For example they stipulate the use of 70% indigenous plants and 30% non invasive exotics.<sup>25</sup> One developer, who's estate predated the trend toward indigenous gardens, felt that 'the greeny's take it too far. ... there are so many beautiful trees in this country that are not indigenous. ... And one hopes of course that they are not going to destroy [them]. There are some lovely trees here which along the outside road, just going down to the main gates. They're not going to have those taken down.'<sup>26</sup>

## **Conclusion: protecting endangered species**

This paper has explored a case in which new representational and material engagements with domestic natures helps to explain elite engagements with nature, society and itself. Colonial and modern societies were enchanted not only with the vast bounty of nature being revealed to them through exploration, but also with their ability to alter nature and create new economic and aesthetic values. Yet the very success of these alterations

sparked fears that nature itself is under threat and that unaltered nature should be appreciated and conserved. Once restricted to ideas of wilderness, rurality or selected urban locations reified as exemplary of the 'sustainable city', and very rarely associated with the suburbs, change seems to be afoot. The offer by contemporary elite gated communities in South Africa to insert suburbanites into indigenous natural spaces shows a set of people becoming less comfortable with their role as nature improvers and more comfortable with their role as appreciators, lovers and stewards of unaltered nature. Care for the environment is assumed to be a quality of the civilised, in contrast with those too ignorant to desist from the crass practise of using exotic plants, or the overpopulated poor whose material needs appear to trump nature. The focus on the production of and relationship with domestic natures presumes that environmental ethic is demonstrated by an intimate relationship with nature. Yet this passionate commitment to nature detracts from structural environmental damage resulting from elite suburban accommodation and indeed the production of the wealth for the elite. Furthermore, the execution of landscape designs through civil engineering and mass planting means these 'natural' spaces are created through intense intervention, or what Harvey calls 'the market provision of constructed authenticity' (Harvey 1993, 12). Where land was once used to produce sugar cane, the very same owners now make money from it by selling nature in another form. As Williams reminds us,

There is more similarity than we usually recognise between the industrial entrepreneur and the landscape gardener, each altering nature to a consumable form: and the client or beneficiary of the landscaper, who in turn has a view or a prospect to use, is often only at the lucky end of a common process, able to consume because others have produced in a leisure that follows from quite precise work. (Williams 2005, 81)

In the postcolonial context, the production and consumption of nature takes on particular urgency amongst elites who are in many other ways alienated from the social, political and urban landscape and whose lineage of migration exposes them to accusations of not belonging. The localism of indigenous landscaping offers a basis for attachment to place and autochthony. It is nature, rather than architecture, which most animates a sense of heritage. Through their close proximity to and preservation of South African plants, people enhance their own belonging and naturalisation.

Indigenous landscaping also enables new kinds of botanical and human exclusion. The weeding of plants reinforces the importance of the perimeter fence and the likely response to its transgression by the wrong plants, people and behaviours (cf Bauman 1993 and Cresswell 1997). These estates assure freedom from 'alien invasives' and from people such as the poor black majority of the city who have an alarming habit – in the eyes of the elite – of invading land to create shack settlements or on whose behalf the government sometimes builds unsightly low cost houses. Eco-estates produce landscapes, therefore, which claim to protect two different sets of vulnerable values and assets. Common cause is struck between, on one hand, people who feel threatened by crime and uncontrolled urban mixing and, on the other, sensitive ecologies under threat from weeds, agriculture, urbanisation, and the needs of poor masses. Where game reserves were

developed as spaces in which nature would be protected and enjoyed by visitors from modern, elites have now decided to create pseudo game reserves and move in with nature behind the fences.

The study suggests that indigenous gardening might function, as any landscape, in the 'reproduction of a class or status group' (Duncan 1992, 40). A certain kind of ethical and nature loving person is able to invest in the preservation of nature and display this compassion to others. What the study shows, however, is that there is little consensus within this single 'status group' as to whether an indigenous landscape is the desirable material expression of that group. Conventional gardeners are still persuaded by established horticultural aesthetics in which exotic plants form an integral part of design. Further research might examine whether this is a kind of cosmopolitanism, a kind of neo-colonialism, a search for acceptability to a global gaze, or simply habit. For our purposes, what is most interesting is the way in which this divergence in gardening aesthetic is deeply unsettling to people who attempted to create somewhat utopian communities on the assumption of shared values, but are now barely on speaking terms. Attempts to build private communities of like minded people in response to a threatening post-apartheid society have not always provided the comfort of home so anticipated.

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> Blythedale Estate web page <http://www.blythedale.co.za/environment.php> (Last accessed 24 July 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Koblitz, C. (2006) Eco? Logical - What makes an eco estate? Property. March 2006 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco\\_Logical\\_-\\_What\\_makes\\_an\\_eco\\_estate\\_.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco_Logical_-_What_makes_an_eco_estate_.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008)

<sup>4</sup> There is a certain degree of auto ethnography, with one of the authors having gardened with indigenous plants and participated in conservation orientated interest groups for a long time. More formally, we thoroughly examined online marketing material and housing industry and real-estate publications, some of which referred to estates in other parts of South Africa. We also conducted interviews with 29 people, either alone in couples, in 20 interviews in Durban in 2006 and 2008. It is extremely difficult to access willing gated community respondents through cold calling. Our methodology was to utilize personal networks to access willing respondents and then in some cases to use their referrals to find further respondents. Our respondents were mostly residents but included 2 developers, a chair of a board of trustees, an estate manager, a city official, a landscape architect and an environmental activist. They were associated with 9 different estates in the Durban region. All of our interviewees were white, as are the majority of gated community residents. Our informants in communities of a few hundred homes generally reported a small minority of homes being occupied by Indian, black and sometimes foreign black owners. Some larger gated communities have larger number of Indian residents, although the majority is white. Our paper offers an analysis of certain kinds of relationships between white identity, nature and residential form. It cannot address those middle class who were classified differently under apartheid, who may share some of these characteristics, or indeed for white people in general, many of whom may well not fit these patterns.

<sup>5</sup> Antagonism between urbanism and wildlife is well documented historically, and periodically resurfaces with concerns for sightings of mountain lion in West Coast US cities, measures to control alligators in Florida, crows in Japanese cities, pigeons, foxes, rats and squirrels just about everywhere (see Baron 2004; Davis 1999). As often, the presence of indigenous wildlife may go unnoticed by most. In a Nevada suburban community, Guterson (1992) recounts how a nine year old informant rejoiced in the presence of lizards, rattlers, chipmunks, lions, black widow spiders and scorpions in the most bland urban environment possible.

<sup>6</sup> Elan Group (no date) Web page. <http://www.elan.co.za/> (Last accessed 24 July 2008)

<sup>7</sup> Koblitz, C. (2006) Eco? Logical - What makes an eco estate? Property. March 2006 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco\\_Logical\\_-\\_What\\_makes\\_an\\_eco\\_estate\\_.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco_Logical_-_What_makes_an_eco_estate_.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008)

<sup>8</sup> Sunday Tribune. Secure estate offers country life in the city. 1 June 2008. Property Section. P 67

<sup>9</sup> Richards, K (2006) Le Domaine. Landscape SA. January – February 2006. [http://www.gerbera.org/landscape-sa-2006-02-le\\_domaine.html](http://www.gerbera.org/landscape-sa-2006-02-le_domaine.html) (last accessed 24 July 2008)

<sup>10</sup> There are of course limits to how much nature is enjoyable. Egyptian geese wake some residents at 4 in the morning (Interview, Mary). Some fear noisy frogs that will sound off all night from waterways. Monkeys are seen as pests, particularly when they invade homes for food. Most alarmingly, small pets have been carried off by Crowned Eagles.

<sup>11</sup> PheZulu Game Estate (No date) Estate Web Site <http://www.phezuluestate.co.za/index3.swf> (last accessed 22 April 2008)

<sup>12</sup> Uys and White (2006) Cotswold Downs Estate: Landscape Guidelines. Durban. <http://www.cotswolddowns.co.za/docs/CDGLandscapeGuidelines03.doc> (last accessed 24 July 2008)

<sup>13</sup> PheZulu Game Estate (No date) Estate Web Site <http://www.phezuluestate.co.za/index3.swf> (last accessed 22 April 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Simbithi (no date) Estate web site, 'Landscaping Design' section [http://www.simbithi.com/estate\\_landscaping.php](http://www.simbithi.com/estate_landscaping.php) (last accessed 24 July 2008).

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- <sup>15</sup> Koblitz, C. (2006) Eco? Logical - What makes an eco estate? Property. March 2006 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco\\_Logical\\_-\\_What\\_makes\\_an\\_eco\\_estate\\_.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco_Logical_-_What_makes_an_eco_estate_.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008).
- <sup>16</sup> Hooper, M. (2008) 'Spier estate' Property April 2008 <http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2008/April/articles/nw-spier-estate.asp> (last accessed 24 July 2008).
- <sup>17</sup> Nevill, G. (2004) Golf estates: Keeping the green. Property. Aug 2004 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2004/August/Golf\\_estates\\_-\\_Keeping\\_the\\_green.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2004/August/Golf_estates_-_Keeping_the_green.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008).
- <sup>18</sup> Hooper, M. (2008) 'Spier estate' Property April 2008 <http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2008/April/articles/nw-spier-estate.asp> (last accessed 24 July 2008); Nevill, G. (2004) Golf estates: Keeping the green. Property. Aug 2004 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2004/August/Golf\\_estates\\_-\\_Keeping\\_the\\_green.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2004/August/Golf_estates_-_Keeping_the_green.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008).
- <sup>19</sup> Cape Argus (2005) It's time to stop the developers riddling our natural heritage with holes. 12 September, <http://www.capeargus.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=342&fArticleId=2873296> (last accessed 24 July 2008)
- <sup>20</sup> A civil society group called 'guardians of the garden route' has organised in the southern Cape to oppose rapid enclosure of land and monopolisation of water resources by elite groups in new developments (Cape Argus 2005)
- <sup>21</sup> Koblitz, C. (2006) Eco? Logical - What makes an eco estate? Property. March 2006 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco\\_Logical\\_-\\_What\\_makes\\_an\\_eco\\_estate\\_.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco_Logical_-_What_makes_an_eco_estate_.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008)
- <sup>22</sup> Williams (2005: 78) identifies confusion in what nature actually is and therefore confusion about what the destruction of or defence of nature might be. He also identifies hypocrisy in those who defend nature on the weekends and yet derive a living in between from highly destructive economic processes (2005: 81).
- <sup>23</sup> The Western Cape province produced guidelines (Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning 2005) to ensure that issues such as water sustainability had to be resolved before approval. These guidelines are being challenged by some developers as unconstitutional (Koblitz 2006). Koblitz, C. (2006) Eco? Logical - What makes an eco estate? Property. March 2006 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco\\_Logical\\_-\\_What\\_makes\\_an\\_eco\\_estate\\_.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2006/March/Eco_Logical_-_What_makes_an_eco_estate_.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008).
- <sup>24</sup> Nevill, G. (2004) Golf estates: Keeping the green. Property. Aug 2004 [http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2004/August/Golf\\_estates\\_-\\_Keeping\\_the\\_green.asp](http://www.thepropertymag.co.za/pages/452774491/articles/2004/August/Golf_estates_-_Keeping_the_green.asp) (last accessed 24 July 2008).
- <sup>25</sup> Uys and White (2006) Cotswold Downs Estate: Landscape Guidelines. Durban. <http://www.cotswolddowns.co.za/docs/CDGLandscapeGuidelines03.doc> (last accessed 24 July 2008).
- <sup>26</sup> There have been various panics, including a particularly effective April Fool's joke, that conservationists are going to succeed in removing all jacarandas whose blue flowers define the spring landscapes of towns such as Pretoria and Pietermaritzburg. In fact the official policy is to remove those that have escaped from controlled settings into the wild. Independent Online (2001) Pretoria's jacarandas won't get the axe 15 May. [http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set\\_id=1&click\\_id=13&art\\_id=qw989935261711J265](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=qw989935261711J265). (last accessed 24 July 2008), and Montgomery, K.. 2001 'Alien invader list is a minefield for gardeners' Independent online. 5 April [http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?click\\_id=79&art\\_id=qw986475902471L162](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?click_id=79&art_id=qw986475902471L162) (Last accessed 24 July 2008).