

# Sappi invites action to plant trees as a source of hope during Arbor Week 2021

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At the start of September every year, when Arbor Week is celebrated in South Africa, it also heralds the beginning of spring and thoughts of rejuvenation and hope. Tying in with the fact that woodfibre is at the heart of our business, Sappi has taken to promoting the planting of trees as a source of hope, as it emphasises our focus on sustainability and our commitment to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): protecting life on land (SDG 15) and taking action to combat climate change (SDG 13).



**Arbor Week 2021** **sappi**

## Plant a tree of hope to help fight climate change

Trees support life and without them every living organism would struggle to survive. At Sappi we support life by not only planting trees but also by being responsible about maintaining biodiversity and ensuring sustainability. You can do your bit for the environment and help slow down the effects of climate change by planting a tree that is good for the earth, air, water and beings, like the climate warrior Spekboom.

The water wise Spekboom (*Portulacaria afra*) has a highly effective ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the air, making it a powerful tool in the fight against climate change, bringing hope in the midst of our climate crisis by helping fight climate change.

- Plant the Spekboom early morning, late afternoon or on a cloudy day.
- Water the plant properly the day before you plant it.
- Choose a sunny spot in your garden that has well-draining soils (sandy soil).
- Dig a hole just a bit bigger than its existing bag, and insert the spekboom without the bag.
- Fill the hole up with soil and compact the soil around the plant.
- Water the plant well and proceed to only watering it every few days.

Take a photo of you and your climate warrior and tag us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram **#SappiTreesOfHope**

[click to enlarge](#)

“Arbor Week highlights the vital role of trees in our lives and their contribution to the achievement of a green, dignified and healthy environment for all human beings. This includes the benefits derived from making products out of trees such as paper, furniture and medicines and also emphasises the employment and business opportunities provided by trees and the forestry industry. A practical way in which each person can play their role during this significant week is to choose certified woodfibre-based forest products over fossil-based products and then to also plant a tree in their own garden or community,” says Hlengiwe Ndlovu, Sappi Forests Divisional Environmental manager.

At Sappi, the overarching theme for its 2021 Arbor Week celebrations is its #SappiTreesOfHope campaign; which encourages Sappi staff, members of surrounding communities, schools, and the wider public to become active participants by planting trees. The theme of ‘planting trees of hope’ is particularly fitting at a time when we all need to look towards a brighter future where our lives are not defined only by our response to the global Covid-19 pandemic, but also how we respond to the global threat of climate change. So in terms of responding to SDG13 and ‘taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts’, we urge everyone to contribute by planting a tree. In addition to the carbon benefits, trees also improve water quality, air quality, and soil quality, which all slow down the impact of climate change.

In celebrating the South African trees of the year, three species are highlighted and this year these trees include the common tree of the year, *Vachellia karroo* - the Sweet Thorn; and the rare tree of the year *Portulacaria afra* - the Spekboom. In continuation of its efforts to help rescue a tree that previously became almost extinct due to its widely popular medicinal properties, the *Warburgia salutaris* - the Pepperbark tree, Sappi also continues to shine a light on this wonder tree.

## Support our efforts, take action

As part of its efforts to create awareness, Sappi has launched an educational programme among its staff, and has extended into surrounding communities by donating and planting 2,000 Spekboom trees. The water wise Spekboom has a



effective ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the air, making it a powerful tool in the fight against climate change, bringing hope in the midst of our climate crisis by helping fight climate change.

Play your part in our country's sustainability journey by planting your tree and by tagging us on social media using #SappiTreesOfHope.

## How to plant your Spekboom *Portulacaria afra*

You can do your bit for the environment and help slow down the effects of climate change by planting a tree that is good for the earth, air, water and beings, like the climate warrior Spekboom.

- Plant the Spekboom early morning, late afternoon or on a cloudy day.
- Water the plant properly the day before you plant it.
- Choose a sunny spot in your garden that has well-draining soils (sandy soil).
- Dig a hole just a little bit bigger than its existing bag, and insert the Spekboom

without the bag.

- Fill the hole up with soil and lightly compact the soil around the plant.
- Water the plant well and proceed to only watering it every few days
- Be careful of overwatering your tree, avoid planting it with other high water demand plants, like roses.
- Always make sure that you plant trees that are suitable for the region where you reside.
- Take a photo of you and your climate warrior and tag us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram: #SappiTreesOfHope

## About the Trees of the Year

*Vachellia karroo*, commonly called the [Sweet Thorn](#), occurs in a variety of habitats on different soil types. It is the most common and widespread *Vachellia* in South Africa, occurring in all nine provinces and northwards into Angola, Zambia and Malawi. Although not usually found in mist belt and montane areas, it is an indicator of sweet veld which is prized for the good grazing and fertile soils. If an area is overgrazed the sweet thorn becomes invasive.

[The Spekboom/Porkbush](#), *Portulacaria afra*, is a large succulent shrub found on dry rocky slopes in the bushveld. It is dominant in the dry river valleys of the Eastern Cape, through Kwazulu-Natal and into the northern provinces of Mpumalanga and Limpopo. It has a wide variety of uses; the leaves are edible to both humans and animals, and is a highly prized food source for tortoises. The plant has also been indicated as a soil binder for erosion control.

*Warburgia salutaris*, the [Pepperbark tree](#) or 'isibhaha' in isiZulu, is one with which Sappi has a long history of association. The Pepperbark tree is a highly prized muthi plant and is popularly used to treat many health problems. The strong demand for the species has placed pressure on wild populations, resulting in a scarcity of supply and naturally occurring populations are disappearing along its eastern distribution range of northern and eastern Kwazulu-Natal, northern and eastern Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Despite being formally protected under South African legislation, it is now listed as Endangered.

Sappi came on board in 2014 with an initial donation, and then using its tree breeding and production expertise to start propagating Pepperbark trees from cuttings for distribution to rural communities. This project has been a huge success and by 2018 over 40,000 Pepperbark seedlings and cuttings had been distributed to neighbouring communities around the Park. Read more about the "Warburgia Working Group of the Sappi Threatened and Endangered Species Stewardship Programme [here](#).

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