

Michiel (Mike) Adriaan Niklaas Müller (Figure 6), second curator of the National Herbarium of Namibia (South West African Herbarium) died tragically in a motor car accident on 4 April 1997. Botany in Namibia has lost a valued scientist and colleague in the prime of his career at age 49.

Mike, as he was affectionately known, was born in Citrusdal in the Western Cape, South Africa, on 25



FIGURE 6.—Mike Müller with artist Christine Marais, at the Namibia exhibit for *Flora '88*.

January 1948, where he also matriculated before registering for a B.Sc degree at the University of Stellenbosch. After graduating in 1970, he took up the position of Professional Officer at the SWA Herbarium in Windhoek. In 1973 Mike took leave of absence for a year to obtain his B.Sc. (honours) degree at the University of Pretoria.

By the time he succeeded Mr Willy Giess as Curator in 1975, Mike had already developed a keen interest in the genus *Eriocephalus* (Asteraceae), which also formed the subject of his Masters degree from the University of Pretoria obtained in the same year. An extensive taxonomic revision of the genera *Lasiospermum* (Asteraceae) and *Eriocephalus*, resulting in the description of four new species of the latter (unpublished), earned him a Ph.D. from the University of Stellenbosch in 1988. (Efforts are currently under way to have his thesis published, hopefully in *Bothalia*). Mike held the position of Officer-in-Charge of the Herbarium and Agricultural Laboratory until his promotion to that of Deputy-Director of Forestry in 1991.

Mike's infectious enthusiasm for the unique Namibian flora and his incomparable knowledge thereof, resulted in numerous popular articles. His impressive and informative exhibits of indigenous plants at the annual Agricultural Show in Windhoek contributed largely to public awareness of our flora (Figure 7). Mike is perhaps best known for his publication *Grasses of South West Africa/Namibia*, available in three languages (Müller 1984). This book, covering over 115 grass species, the majority of agricultural importance and each accurately illustrated in black and white by the artist Blythe Loutit, continues to be in great demand by scientists, students, farmers and tourists. At the time of his tragic death, Mike was completing a monumental work on the *Trees and shrubs of Namibia*, a project which had kept him occupied for almost 15 years. It is anticipated that the book will be published in the foreseeable future. We have no doubt that it will be hailed as a historic and comprehensive reference work.



FIGURE 7.—Mike in lily pans (*Crinum paludosum*) near Maltahöhe, Namibia.

Mike collected widely in Namibia (Figure 8). His collections are housed both in the National Herbarium of Namibia (WIND) with  $\pm 1\ 070$  numbers and the National Herbarium, Pretoria (PRE) totalling 580 numbers (57 with Willy Giess).

Mike is survived by his wife Petro (née Scholtz), a lecturer in Afrikaans at the Windhoek College of Education, and by three daughters and a son.

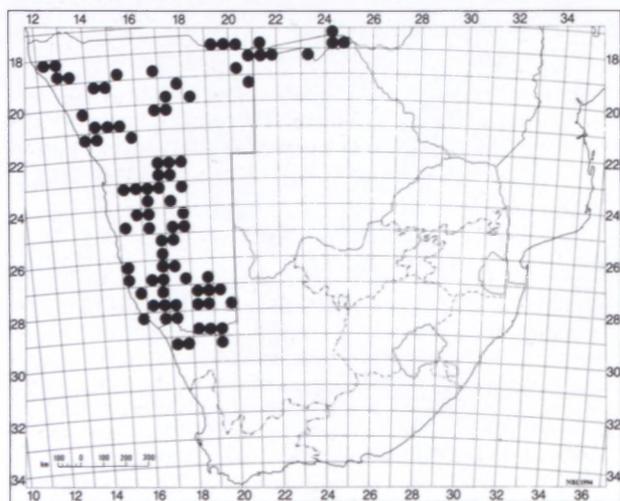


FIGURE 8.—Grids where Mike Müller collected.

For those of us who had the privilege of working closely with Mike, his death is far more than the passing of a colleague. He was a sincere and generous person who cared about others and displayed all those characteristics which we associate with inherent goodness but which are, alas, so seldom encountered. His influence will continue to be felt through his writings and the love of plants he instilled in the hearts of so many.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### REFERENCES

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