

Tree Species in Unfamiliar Places

Graaff-Reinet town. East Cape Midlands. 10.06.1959

Graaff-Reinet is a small town with fine trees, and many of them in both gardens and streets. They do well there, often watered from street furrows. Tropical palms flourish and grow to great heights. Little did I expect to meet such wellgrown and typical southeast Cape species as *Erythrina* and wild figs there.

Along Somerset Street (?) near the Anglican Church a well-grown Kaffirboom, *Erythrina caffra* ~~xxxxxx~~ had sprays of dry, half-open pods filled with the unmistakeable red-and-black Lucky Beans waiting to drop. Another was nearby and many more were growing in other parts of the town.

A long straight row of ~~Cypresses~~ ^{grows} along Caledon Street's southern flank. A violent ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{the cypresses} public outcry arose when the municipality decided that they had to go. The trees were reprieved despite the municipality's aversion to root-damages to underground pipe-lines.etc-.

Along ~~in~~ ^{the} Somerset Street (?) near the Kaffirbooms was the high-domed canopy of a wild fig., with its typical bunched streamers of aerial roots like dark skeins of raffia hanging out to dry.

Beyond the fig, not 20 metres away, was a Yellowwood tree, *falcata*, firmly embedded in a Karoo pavement and none the worse for the dry climate.

~~Downxxxxxx~~ Streets after street had as its trees sturdy pines, gums, cypresses, palms and Araucarias pushing up through ~~dysty~~ ^{du} pavements causing, strangely, very little damage to kerbs and verges. Along the water-furrows from which water

/ is lead

G-Reinet trees

is lead into town gardens the trees' roots had caused very little damage to furrow walls and, in ~~one~~ case, the very root itself acted as a retaining wall to one part of a furrow.

Who would have planted those yellowwoods, kaffirbooms and figs? A hot place like Graaff-Reinet needs shade for its pedestrians and, nowadays, for its cars.

When would those trees have been planted? Certainly a long time ago judging by the size and growth of those trees, although the rich alluvium in which they were growing and the ready availability of water from the furrows might have developed them more rapidly than in less favourable coastal soils