

## Project Update: December 2021

October to December (3 months).

The data collection for two of the five species of trees was successfully obtained. This involves me, after individual tree identification and monitoring, climbing trees and spending 4 hours in the flowering canopy. I note every insect flower visitor, the species of insect and how often it interacts with the flower. Also, I take abiotic variables, which include temperature (using a handheld anemometer), wind (using the same device) and cloud cover. Notes are also made on the number of flowers, the height of the observer and the height of the tree. For the two species sampled, *Elaeodendron croceum* and *Ilex mitis*, I've sampled six tree individuals per species during the day, and three individuals per species during the night (to assess possible moth pollination). This already equates to 72 hours of pollinator observations (> 4000 interactions).

Due to this being a wetter than usual year (we had unusually high rainfall and floods in George), the trees seem to flower later than anticipated. However, this is not a large concern for me, as I am continually monitoring all of the trees in my study site to determine their flowering. The final species are currently covered in flower buds that should open in the next few days.

After I've gathered this interaction data (realised tree-insect interactions in a large, natural forest patch), the next step is to assess the pollinator diversity across the fragmented forest landscape. I've already constructed prototypes for the aerial pan traps, which will be placed in various forest fragments during the next flowering season (2022-2023).

The review paper on Afromontane tree reproduction is also gaining further traction - it has gone for a second review between me and my hosts, and I have involved a South African forest ecology specialist to form part of this paper.

















