



## A unique vegetation type

Renosterveld is the name given to the vegetation found on fertile clay soils in the western and eastern Cape. It is often confused with fynbos, which grows only on nutrient poor sandy soils.

Renosterbos is the main shrub found in this type of veld. Although Renosterbos is a key species in Renosterveld and often dominates, the shrub can be quite invasive, particularly in the absence of fire. This can be a problem for farmers as livestock generally does not feed on Renosterbos.

## What's in a name?

300 years ago, black rhinoceros and other large mammals used to roam free on the Renosterveld plains.

Some people maintain that this is how Renosterveld got its name; and others believe that the dark grey shrubs and bushes resemble the rhino's hide.



Bobbejaantjie



Black rhino



Ixia



Sparaxis

Moraea

## Why is it so special?

The diversity of bulb species in Renosterveld is staggering compared to anywhere else in the world. Many of them are extremely rare and are found only in small patches of veld on road verges and between fields of crops.

At the turn of the last century many of the more showy flowers were exported and developed into bestsellers on the international flower markets, e.g. gladiolus, freesias.

These spectacular flowers depend on very specialised insects and birds for pollination and seed dispersal.

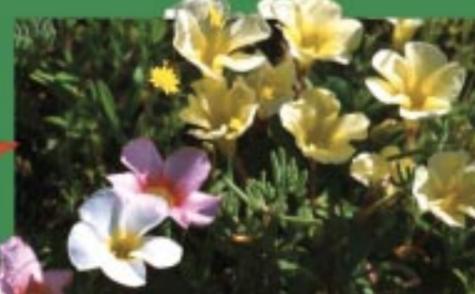
Many fascinating succulent plants are also tucked away in these Renosterveld remnants like this newly discovered vygie.

This attractive buchu is a Renosterveld species only recently discovered through field research.

New buchu

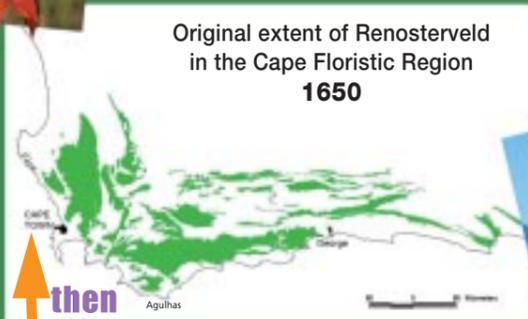


Rooi afrikaner



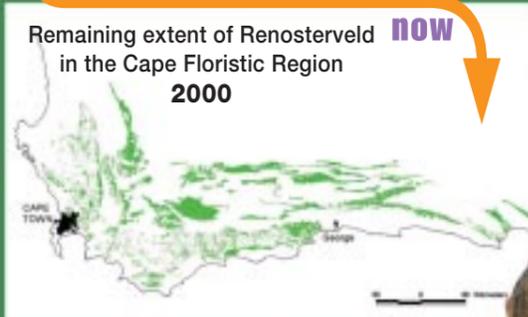
Sorrel

Original extent of Renosterveld in the Cape Floristic Region 1650



then

Remaining extent of Renosterveld now in the Cape Floristic Region 2000



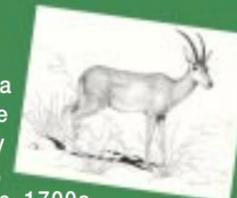
now

## Under severe pressure

Today very little Renosterveld is left as most of it has been ploughed up for crop cultivation. Only fragments in a sea of croplands remain.

These fragments are under further pressure from invading alien plants as well as indiscriminate crop spraying, amongst other things.

The bloubok, a spectacular relative of the Roan antelope, used to live exclusively on the Overberg Renosterveld plains, but was shot to extinction in the 1700s.



The geometric tortoise – one of the world's rarest – is found only in Renosterveld and is highly threatened by habitat loss and illegal collection.



Greater awareness of the importance of Renosterveld will help ensure that this tortoise does not suffer the same fate as the bloubok.

## Every last fragment counts.



March flower

Romulea



peacock moraea



**“You will only protect that which you love and you only love that which you know...”**

Awareness is the key to the conservation of these hidden treasures.

Your knowledge can contribute significantly to our understanding. Get to know your Renosterveld flowers. Find rare species or rediscover lost species, and get in touch with the Renosterveld Forum.



# Renosterveld: Hidden Jewels of the Cape



Renosterveld is a unique and highly threatened vegetation type in South Africa. Less than 10% remains and virtually all of it is found on privately owned land.

Awareness is the key to Renosterveld's future survival – the more we understand and know about it, the more we are likely to conserve what remains. . .

## For more information

### Useful contacts:

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**Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB)**  
**Regional ecologist**  
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www.capenature.org.za

**Botanical Society of South Africa - Cape Conservation Unit**  
Tel (021) 797 2284 Fax (021) 761 5983  
www.botanicalsociety.org.za

**Botanical Society Bookshop**  
Tel (021) 762 1621 Fax (021) 762 0923  
email kbranch@botanicalsociety.org.za

**National Botanical Institute-Conservation Farming Project**  
Tel (021) 799 8800 Fax (021) 797 6903  
www.nbi.ac.za/consfarm/cfindex.htm

### Renosterveld Forum

Tel (021) 808 3313 Fax (021) 808 3304  
email info@renosterveld.uwc.ac.za  
http://renosterveld.uwc.ac.za/

## What is being done?

Together with landowners, researchers are investigating the best management techniques for the remaining Renosterveld fragments, to establish which species occur where, and to assess the economic value of the veld ecosystem to farmers.

Landowners play a critical role in Renosterveld conservation through the establishment of conservancies and private nature reserves or by adopting environmentally sensitive management practices.

As part of a broad strategy to conserve the unique Cape Floral Kingdom, Cape Action for People and the Environment (C.A.P.E.), is working towards a comprehensive Renosterveld conservation strategy.

C.A.P.E. – a national priority, lead by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, is a partnership programme to secure the conservation of the Cape Floral Kingdom, and through this to deliver sustainable economic benefits to the people of the region.

Sparaxis



Ixia



Vygie



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