

Sustainable use of land vital for fynbos protection

As the world looks for ways to tackle both an unprecedented health crisis and the ongoing climate crisis, the Flower Valley Conservation Trust in the Western Cape is working hard to bring to light the importance of fynbos protection through sustainable land use.



S Molteni via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Established in 1991, the Flower Valley Conservation Trust is making sure that it creates a fynbos-filled future for life and livelihoods. The trust is a non-profit organisation based on Flower Valley Farm, just outside Gansbaai. It focuses on fynbos protection in natural landscapes and improving livelihoods across the fynbos biome.

Fynbos is part of the Cape Floral Kingdom – one of six global plant kingdoms. Many fynbos species have been exported for decades. Moreover, certain species, such as the king protea, *Protea compacta* and silver brunia are currently trending in Europe, Asia, Russia, and other international markets. They have unusual aesthetic appeal and last far longer than non-fynbos flowers.

Support for fynbos protection

With the planet experiencing severe climate change threats and unsustainable use of natural resources, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Nedbank Green Trust supports organisations such as the Flower Valley Conservation Trust in making sure that conservation efforts for land continue to meet the current demand for fynbos.

"Through the Sustainable Harvesting Programme, we can demonstrate the possibility of harvesting fynbos in a commercially viable way, creating green businesses and decent green jobs for people living in the fynbos region," says Roger Bailey, acting executive director at the Flower Valley Conservation Trust. His love of fynbos developed when he was a child growing up in Bot River in the Overberg.

Bailey adds: "Fynbos protection and harvesting are vital for the growth and development of the local economy. Through the support of the WWF Nedbank Green Trust, we can support livelihoods through the development of Flower Valley's internal management system.

"This system helps micro-fynbos-harvesting businesses on a journey of continuous improvement. This includes compliance with legal requirements, ethical business principles, and good harvesting practices. As a result, businesses that harvest wild fynbos offer and supply ethically harvested fynbos products to the market, supporting their livelihoods and benefiting the environment through their practices."

Three decades of nature conservation

Celebrating 30 years of nature conservation, the WWF Nedbank Green Trust has helped raise R300m to support initiatives in the spheres of land, fresh water, marine, climate, species, and leadership. The help of countless South Africans made this achievement possible, with the trust being able to support various land conservation projects through organisations.

Like any other organisation, Flower Valley is and continues to be affected by Covid-19 and the impact of the national lockdown.

Impact of Covid-19 on the industry

Bailey says: "While support was ongoing for our invasive alien clearing teams in the Flower Valley Alien Clearing Programme, the fynbos harvesting industry came to a complete standstill due to the lockdown. Harvesters were therefore unable to earn an income during this time. Even now, things are not yet back to normal for the trust.

"The economy may be opening up. However, the trust now ensures that we adapt to the new situation to help support sustainable green economies that ensure social, environmental and economic benefits to communities. That means continuing to respond with even more vigour to challenges in pursuit of our vision."

How to support fynbos protection

For 21 years, the Flower Valley Conservation Trust has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate the importance of fynbos protection through the sustainable use of land.

While nature conservation continues to thrive through the work of the WWF Nedbank Green Trust, South Africans are urged to play their part in contributing to a healthier environment. Through the Nedbank Green Affinity Programme, Nedbank has opened the doors of conservation and made it easy for everyone to support nature conservation at no cost to them.

To support the WWF Nedbank Green Trust, visit www.nedbankgreen.co.za or call Nedbank on 0860 555 111 for more information.

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