

IRMA BOOYSEN FLORA RESERVE

There are several footpaths through the Reserve. The conservation of the reserve was due to the late Irma Booyesen. Her family were the original owners of the farm Ongegunde Vryheid.

During the development of the farm to a township, Irma Booyesen persuaded her husband to set aside a tract of land for the preservation of the unique coastal fynbos (delicate bush) of the area. She was a great lover of nature. She painted the many diverse species of plants in the Reserve.

Fynbos is the term given to the vegetation typical of the South Western Cape, where wet winter rains and hot, dry summers occur. The term 'fyn' denotes the fine structure of the leaves of most fynbos plants.

The fynbos in our region is called dune fynbos and is particularly rich in species. Many are endemic (occur nowhere else) to our local region. Unfortunately, it is highly fragile and easily

destroyed or altered by human activities. Much of the veld is now in danger of becoming extinct due to over- development, extensive farming and the encroachment of the Australian Wattle, Rooikrantz.

Fynbos or Maccia, as it is internationally termed, is a unique Plant Kingdom relative to the vegetation of the rest of the world and the Cape Floral Kingdom is one of the seven floral kingdoms in the world. It is the smallest kingdom as well as the most species rich.

A walk in our Reserves at springtime will convince you of this fact. You may be familiar with a particular scent associated with Cape St Francis. This is given off by a particular species called a Garlic Buchu. A myriad of interesting insects, reptiles, small animals and birds inhabit the Reserve. We strongly urge visitors to respect our indigenous flora, to prevent damage and to support the eradication of alien species that threaten our landscape.

