

# Restoration at Princess Vlei

Securing biodiversity at a critical Cape Flats conservation area



# What is restoration?

- *'Assisted ecosystem recovery'*.
- *'The scientific, active interventions that enable the recovery of a damaged and degraded habitat'*.
- Including: alien clearing, litter clean ups, restoring water systems, earth works, fire management, species introduction.

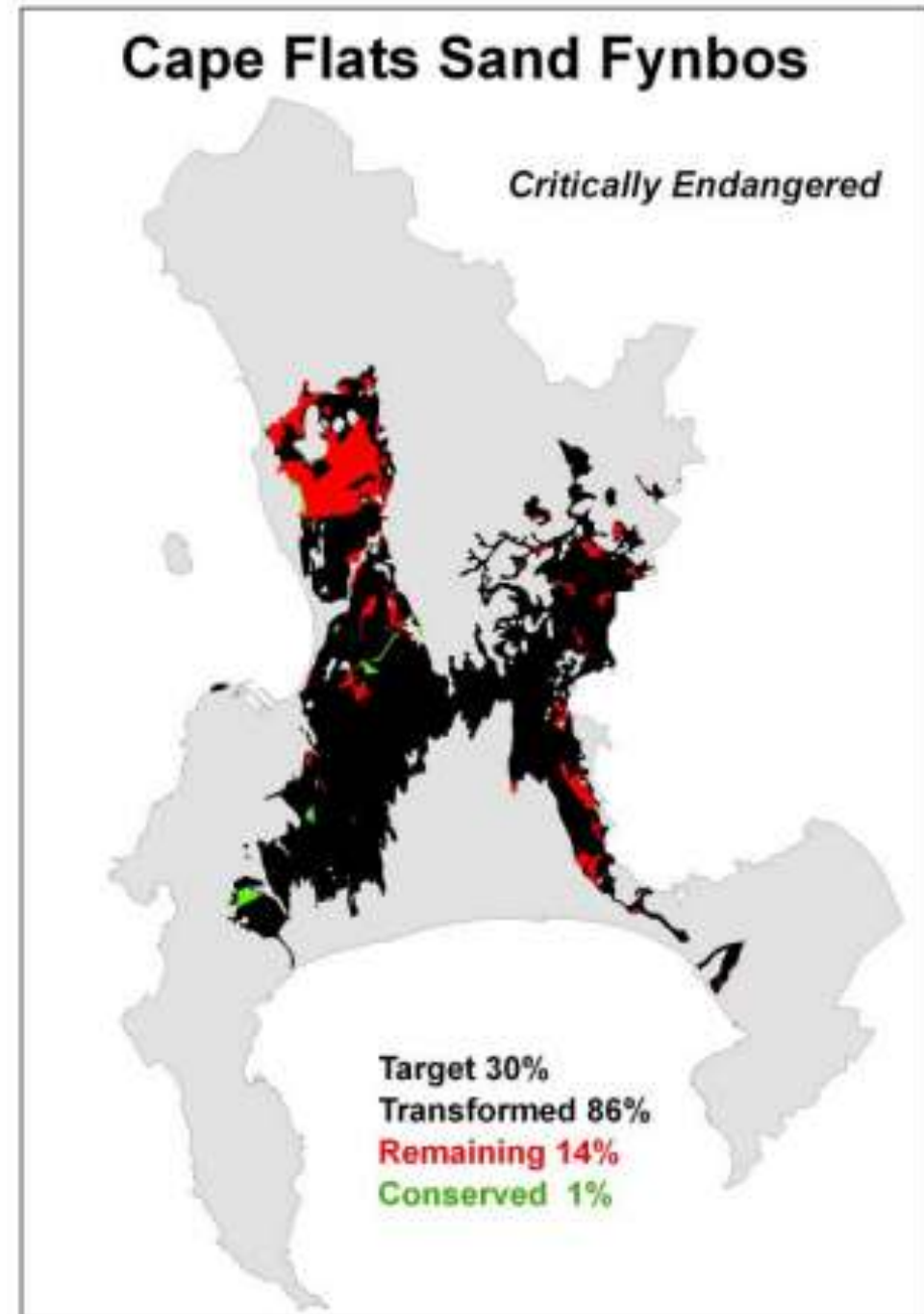
What restoration is **NOT**:

- Gardening

# What was once on the Cape Flats?

## Cape Flats Sand Fynbos

- Endemic to Cape Town
- 16 endemic species, 6 **extinct**
- 14% remaining
- <2% statutorily conserved
- 30% national conservation target:  
UNATTAINABLE





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*Aspalathus globulosa* [EN]



## Taxonomy

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b><i>Aspalathus globulosa</i> E.Mey.</b>
<b>Higher Classification</b>	Dicotyledons
<b>Family</b>	FABACEAE
<b>Synonyms</b>	<i>Aspalathus nigra</i> L. b. <i>involucrata</i> Pappe ex Harv.

## National Status

**Status and Criteria** **Endangered B1ab(i,ii,iii,iv,v)+2ab(i,ii,iii,iv,v)**

**Assessment Date** 2016/03/17

**Assessor(s)** D. van der Colff

**Justification** This species has an EOO ranging from 3140-3459 km<sup>2</sup>, an AOO of 56 km<sup>2</sup> and the population is severely fragmented. Subpopulations on the Cape Peninsula are extinct due to urban expansion and alien plant invasions of the habitat. Remaining subpopulations are declining due to ongoing habitat loss to coastal development, lack of fire and agricultural expansion.

## Distribution

**Endemism** South African endemic

**Provincial distribution** Western Cape

**Range** The species formerly occurred on the Cape Flats, but it is now locally extinct in this area. The current distribution range is from Hangklip and Betty's Bay to Baardskeerdersbos near Pearly Beach and De Hoop.

## Habitat and Ecology

**Major system** Terrestrial

**Major habitats** Cape Flats Dune Strandveld, Albertinia Sand Fynbos, Agulhas Sand Fynbos, Hangklip Sand Fynbos, De Hoop

Limestone Fynbos

**Description** Coastal fynbos on marine sand.



© D. van der Colff

Search for images of *Aspalathus globulosa* on [iSpot](#)

# Contemporary Distribution



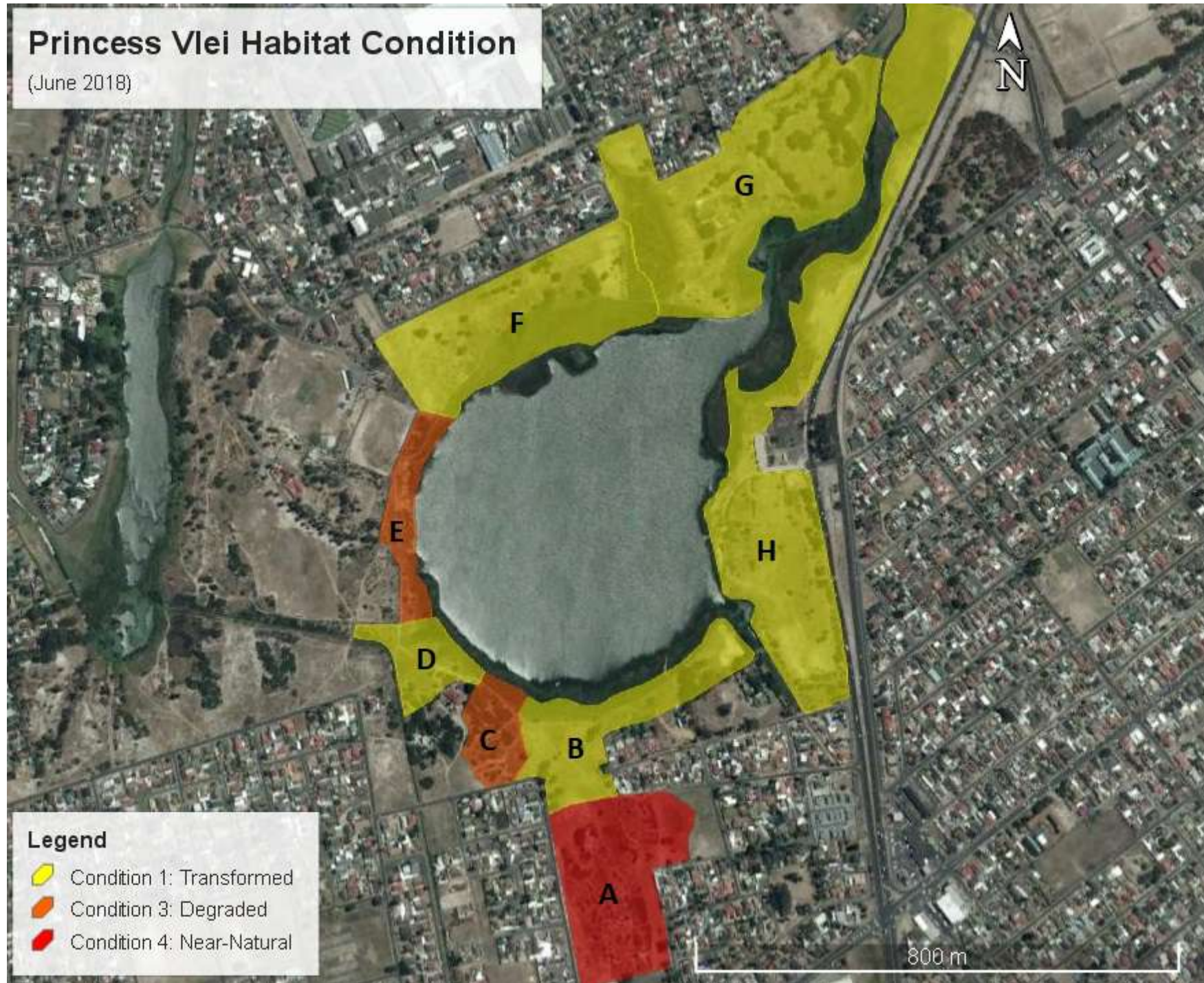
- 114 Botanical Records
- 91 Species
- 18.68% (17) on **Red List**








# Princess Vlei Habitat Condition

(June 2018)



## Legend

-  Condition 1: Transformed
-  Condition 3: Degraded
-  Condition 4: Near-Natural

<b>Habitat Condition Category</b>	<b>Polygon letter</b>	<b>Surface Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Surface Area (%)</b>
<b>Lost</b>			
<b>Transformed (1)</b>	B, D, F, G, H	36.84	81.29
<b>Heavily Modified (2)</b>			
<b>Degraded (3)</b>	C, E	3.21	7.08
<b>Near Natural (4)</b>	A	5.27	11.63
<b>Natural (5)</b>			
<b>Total</b>		<b>45.32</b>	<b>100</b>

*Diastella proteoides* [CR]

- 3 remnants of the southern form (Tokai, Meadowridge, Kenilworth)



*Erica margaritacea* [CR]

- ca. 250 plants in Kenilworth Racecourse



*Leucadendron levisanus* [CR]



*Leucadendron floridum* [CR]



## ***Erica verticillata* [EX]**

- Extinct in the Wild
- Clones brought back from: Vienna, Germany, UK, USA
- Reintroduced to Kenilworth, Tokai, Rondevlei
- 2019: Rondebosch Common, Princess Vlei



# Saved from extinction – it's a bloomin' miracle!

Environment Reporter

**B**LOOMING lovely!

Conservation success stories are almost as rare as the quagga, but staff at Rondevlei nature reserve on the Cape Flats have at least one happy tale to tell – the rediscovery of an “extinct” species and its subsequent successful propagation for sale to gardeners.

Howard Langley, the Western Cape Regional Services Council's chief nature conservation officer and for several years warden of Rondevlei, searched for *Serruria foeniculacea* for 14 years.

The plant, a “cousin” of the famous Blushing Bride which was also rescued from “extinction”, was listed in botanical literature as having occurred in Grassy Park and was recorded in Rondevlei's plant check list in 1975 when Mr Langley arrived at the reserve.

But he could find no trace of it, and – even worse – plant taxonomists decided it wasn't a separate species at all but merely a Cape Flats form of a relatively common species, *Serruria glomerata*. The latest botanical references made no mention of the plant at all.

“So to all intents and purposes it never existed, but I found this difficult to accept,” Mr Langley recalled.

“Not only because I'd spent so long searching for the plant but also because *glomerata* has creamy white flowers, and *foeniculacea* apparently had pink flowers, according to early illustrations.

“Also, as a conservationist, I felt guilty because this species should never have been allowed to disappear from a nature reserve.”

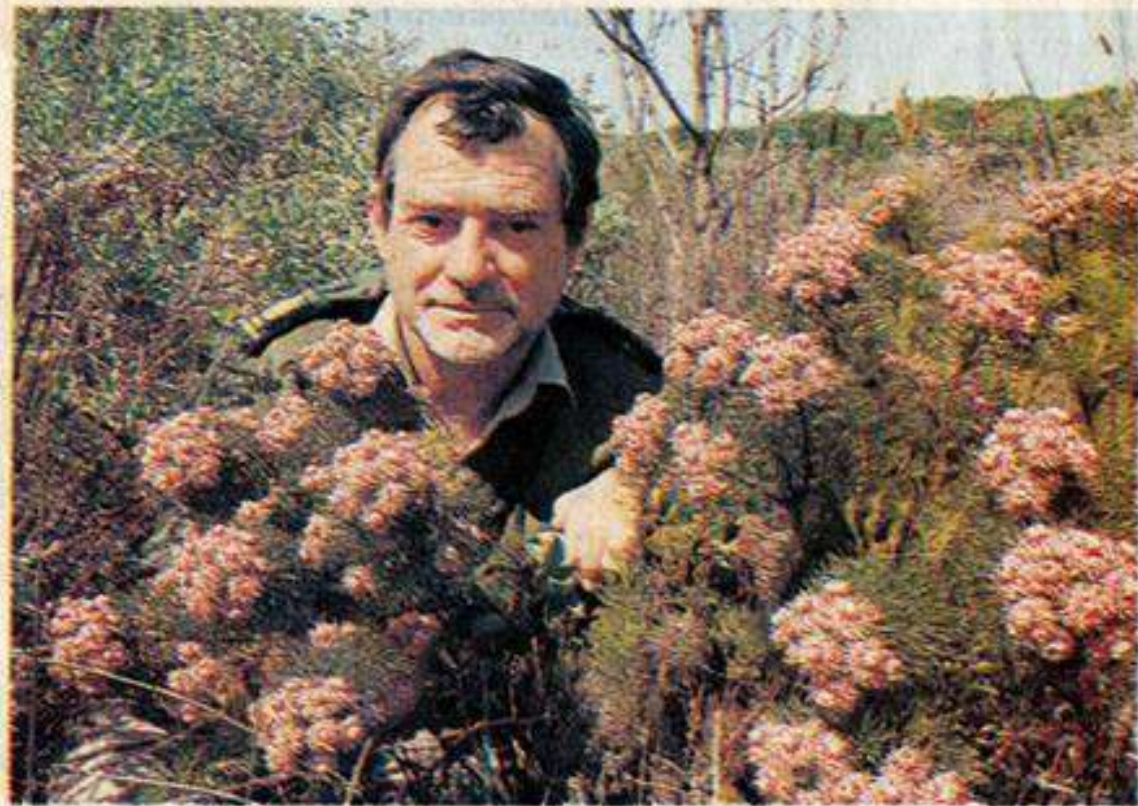


Picture: DOUG PITHEY, The Argus.

**FOUND IN 1989 ...** RSC chief nature conservation officer Howard Langley – then warden of Rondevlei – with the two small plants of the “lost” species which he rediscovered just outside the reserve.

Then in 1989 Mr Langley by chance discovered two tiny specimens of the “extinct” plant, growing in an open area earmarked for housing just 500 metres from the reserve's gates.

Because of the planned development, the two specimens were carefully lifted and



Picture: JOHN YELD, The Argus.

**... AND THRIVING IN 1994:** The same two plants, transplanted into the reserve, have matured into substantial, healthy bushes, and more than 300 new plants – developed from cuttings taken by Kirstenbosch staff – are being grown at Rondevlei.

planted in the reserve.

National Botanical Institute experts John Rourke and Hannes de Lange took cuttings for propagation at Kirstenbosch, and their efforts have been so successful that the plant is now sold at Kirstenbosch and at

the Botanical Society's annual sale.

Also, some 340 new plants of the species have been planted out at Rondevlei.

The two original specimens grew vigorously after being moved and are now large mature bushes.

# Find out More

[www.capetownbotanist.com](http://www.capetownbotanist.com)

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Thanks:

- **City of Cape Town**
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