



## VEGETATION FACT SHEET FOR VERLORENKLOOF

The vegetation on Verlorenkloof contains many of the “escarpment specials” that make our escarpment so unique. Some of these species may be found elsewhere but the accumulation of all these on Verlorenkloof is certainly worth mentioning.

Verlorenkloof is blessed with a variety of trees (three of which may be worth special mentioning, see bottom of report), flowering plants, medicinal plants, bulbous plants, and two **dwarf grass aloes** (*Aloe verecunda* and *Aloe boylei*). The one **grass aloe** (*A. boylei*) is endemic to the Drakensberg escarpment area, while the other (*A verecunda*) has a very limited distribution and confined to small areas within the old Transvaal Province. Its occurrence on Verlorenkloof is the first record for the Badfontein area.

A variety of flowering plants can be found on Verlorenkloof. Many of these are generally confined to the greater Drakensberg escarpment area. Examples of attractive flowering species to be found along the hiking trails include: **Blood Lily or Paintbrush** (*Scadoxus puniceus*), **Rabbit's Ears** (*Haemanthus humilis*), **Candelabra flower** (*Brunsvigia radulosa*), **Ifafa Fire Lily** (*Cyrtanthus stenanthus* var. *major*), **Grass Hairbell** (*Dierama* sp.), **Forest Falling Stars** (*Crocasmia aurea*), **Zigzag Crocasmia** (*Crocasmia paniculata*), **Common Marsh Poker** (*Kniphofia linearifolia*), **Large Blue Scilla** (*Scilla natalensis*), **Tumblehead** (*Boophane disticha*), **Honey flower** (*Gladiolus longicollis*), which is pollinated by a moth with a 10 cm long proboscis, **Pineapple flower** (*Eucomis autumnalis*) and **the Barberton Daisy** (*Gerbera jamesonii*).

The forested kloofs are comprised of typical Afromontane elements such as **the Real Yellowwood** (*Podocarpus latifolius*), **Red Pear** (*Scolopia mundii*), **Wild Gardenia** (*Rothmania capensis*), **Silky Bark** (*Maytenus acuminata*), **Common Hard-Leaf** (*Phyllica paniculata*), **Cape Beech** (*Rapanea melanophloeos*) and **White Silky Bark** (*Robsonodendron eucoleiforme*).

A variety of fynbos-like plants may be found on the top of the plateau. Examples include four species of **Heath** (*Erica alticola*, *E. cerinthoides*, *E. drakensbergensis* and *E. woodii*), **Rice-bushes** (*Cliffortia repens* and *C. serphyllifolia*), **Mountain Gonna** (*Passerina montana*), the **Transvaal Cranberry** (*Vaccinium exul*) and four protea species (*P. caffra*, *P. gagedi*, *P. roupelliae* and *P. welwitschii*).

Important medicinal plants include two trees (*Curtisia dentata* and *Prunus africana*), a variety of bulbous plants (*Scilla* sp. and *Boophane disticha*) and some herbs (eg. *Artemisia afra*). Signs of bark utilization for medicinal purposes may be seen on an **Assegai tree** (*Curtisia dentata*) which occurs between points 3 & 4 on the hiking trail. On this tree one can see that a rectangular piece of bark has been cut out of the stem. The bark has medicinal values and is also used for the tanning of leather.



Verlorenkloof also contains two trees that are endemic to the Mpumalanga escarpment. They include the **Transvaal Wild Quince (*Cryptocarya transvaalensis*)** and the **Forest Beech (*Faurea galpinii*)**. The **River Currant (*Rhus gerrardii*)** is endemic to the greater Drakensberg escarpment where it is only found along rivers and streams, such as the upper reaches of the Crocodile River on Verlorenkloof where it is quite plentiful.

*To date, 483 plant species have been identified at Verlorenkloof and, of these, there are 142 tree species.*

**Compiled by: Mervyn Lötter**

**Email: [mervyn@intekom.co.za](mailto:mervyn@intekom.co.za)**