



# Ideas and Inspiration

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In this section you will find a variety of interpretive materials which illustrate different subjects, styles of writing, layout and design, and different ways of using illustrations. Have a look through them and see what catches your eye. Look out for concepts or ideas which may work well in your garden.

Of course the most important aspect of interpretation which is missing here is the *context* of the interpretive product. How does the brochure or sign relate to the situation in the garden? Is it effective? Although each product is contextualised here with a caption, you can't really tell from a book. So be prepared to experiment with ideas and evaluate them critically in your garden. Let the visitors decide what works best by observing their responses to the interpretive materials you produce.

### Sizes and Measurements

Please note that the interpretive materials in this section are not reproduced at full scale. Many interpretive signs and brochures are made to fit standard paper formats:

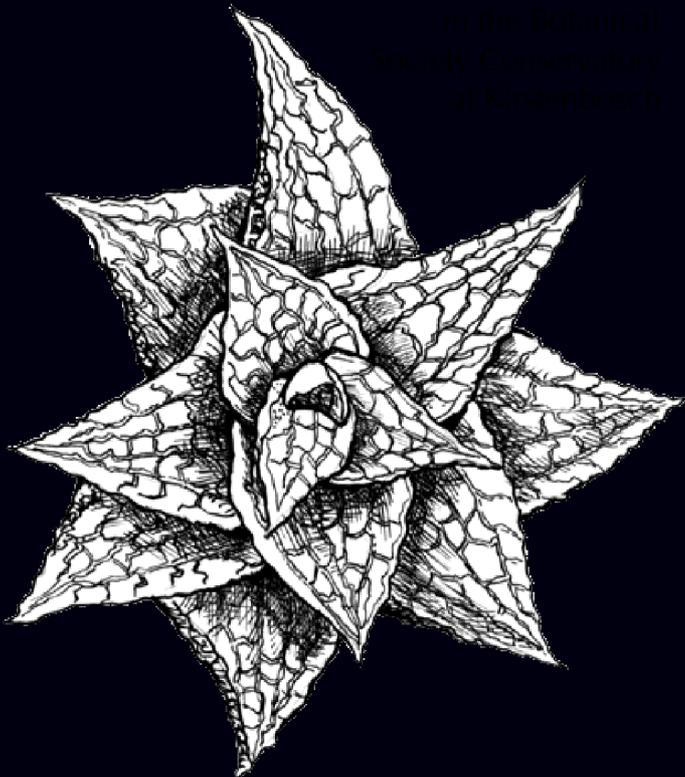
A3 – 297 x 420 mm (two pages of this book, side by side)

A4 – 297 x 210 mm (the size of this page)

A5 – 210 x 148 mm (half the size of this page)

Suggestion: Use a photocopier to enlarge some of these signs to their actual size. This will give you a much better idea of what they look like.

# Sensational Succulents



*Conservatory you can see some of their remarkable diversity, ranging from the giant baobab to tiny plants which resemble stones, buttons, horse's teeth and many other bizarre forms.*



**Succulents are ... juicy, fleshy plants which store water and save it for later.**

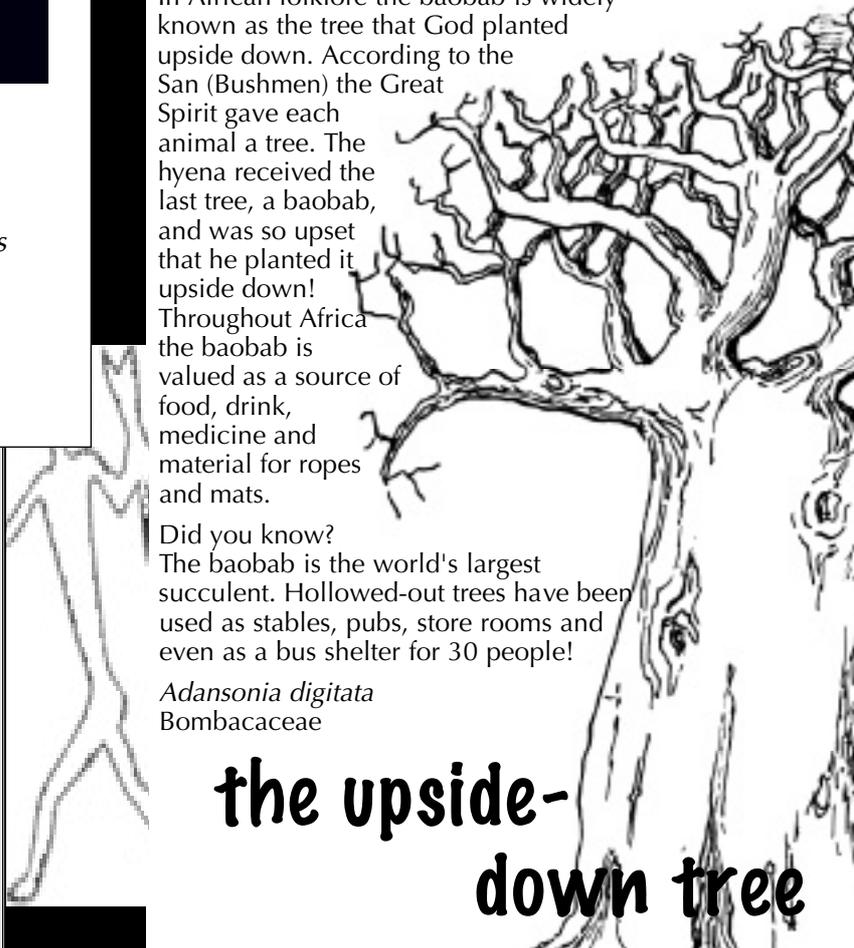
## **Baobab tree Kremetarboom**

In African folklore the baobab is widely known as the tree that God planted upside down. According to the San (Bushman) the Great Spirit gave each animal a tree. The hyena received the last tree, a baobab, and was so upset that he planted it upside down! Throughout Africa the baobab is valued as a source of food, drink, medicine and material for ropes and mats.

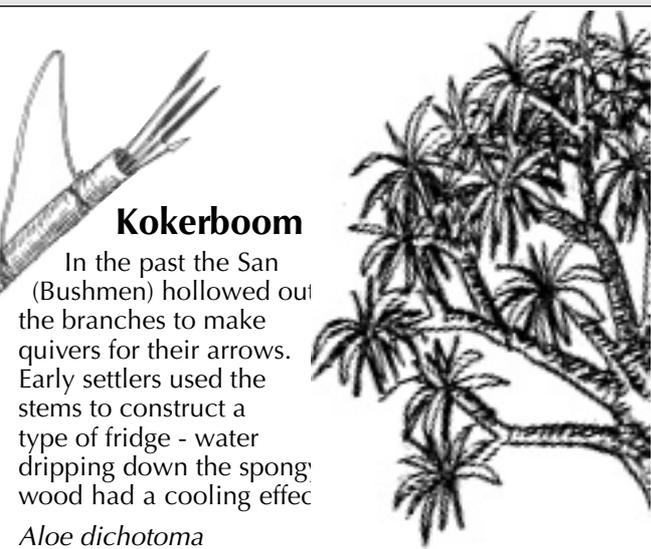
Did you know?  
The baobab is the world's largest succulent. Hollowed-out trees have been used as stables, pubs, store rooms and even as a bus shelter for 30 people!

*Adansonia digitata*  
Bombacaceae

**the upside-  
down tree**



An informal survey at Kirstenbosch showed that people visiting the Conservatory 'wanted something to take home'. The *Sensational Succulents* brochure is a response to this request. It features some eye-catching and unusual succulents found in the glasshouse and includes short 'eco-stories' about these plants. Notice that the text is not linked in any way to the display. The brochure is intended as a souvenir – something visitors will take away and hopefully read at home.

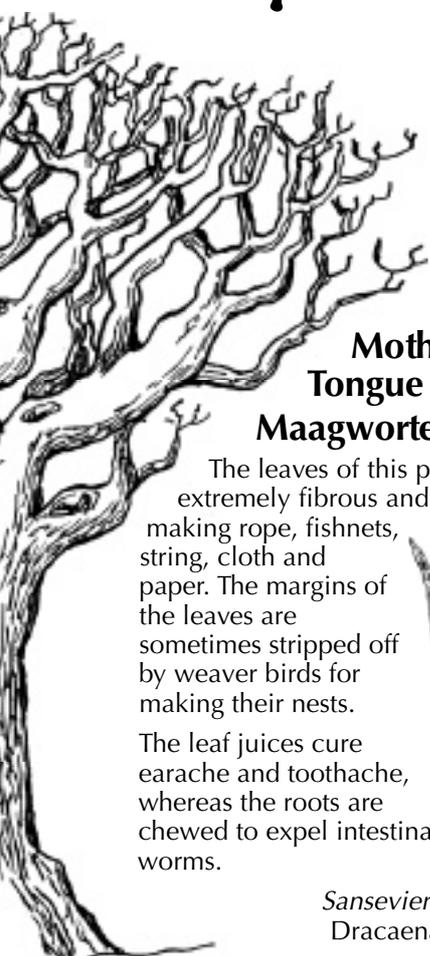


**Kokerboom**

In the past the San (Bushman) hollowed out the branches to make quivers for their arrows. Early settlers used the stems to construct a type of fridge - water dripping down the spongy wood had a cooling effect.

*Aloe dichotoma*  
Asphodelaceae

**quiver tree**



**Mother-in-law's Tongue  
Maagwortel**

The leaves of this plant are extremely fibrous and are used for making rope, fishnets, string, cloth and paper. The margins of the leaves are sometimes stripped off by weaver birds for making their nests.

The leaf juices cure earache and toothache, whereas the roots are chewed to expel intestinal worms.

*Sansevieria sp.*  
Dracaenaceae

**trickery & deceit**

**Ghaap**

Keep an eye out for the flc of this plant - it resembles satellite dish! However instead of catching waves lures flies into its pungent depths. The flowers are pollinated by carrion flies, which are attracted by the smell of rotting meat, and crawl inside to lay their egg. However, their larvae will have no food supply when they hatch and are doomed to die. This is just one of many examples of trickery and deceit in the plant world.



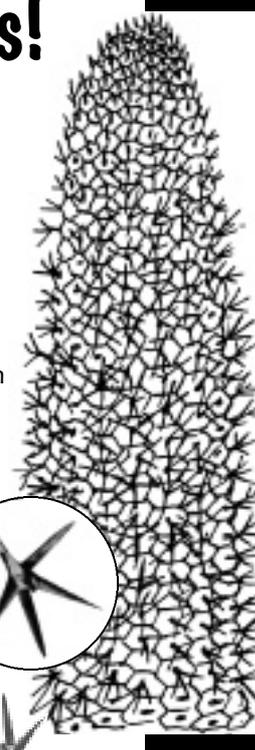
*Hoodia currori*  
Asclepiadaceae

**NOT a cactus!**

**Stemoors**

This spiny plant might look like a cactus but it belongs to a totally unrelated family - the Euphorbiaceae. Cacti are only found in the Americas. Euphorbias are characterised by producing a white milky sap (latex) which is extremely poisonous. The design of the stem enables the plant to swell up and shrink (depending on water availability) without collapsing.

*Euphorbia stellispina*  
Euphorbiaceae





This weather-proof brochure holder dispenses pamphlets in the Water Wise Demonstration Garden at Kirstenbosch NBG. Visitors can lift the lid and help themselves to a brochure in their language preference. A rubber strip covers the hinges to prevent water from leaking in. The brochures are held in a clear perspex rack inside the wooden box. The box has been mounted rather high on the wall (about 1.6 m) to prevent small children from taking out handfuls of brochures at a time. This arrangement is however not user-friendly for people in wheelchairs.





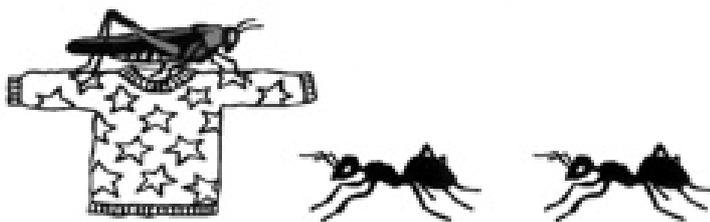
# The secret den

**No adults unless invited by children**

Here hidden inside is a place where we hide,  
away from our mums and our dads;  
Where the rompers can romp and the stompers  
can stomp, and nobody ever is sad.

Where the butterflies fly and no elephants cry,  
and the ground is all covered in leaves;  
Look closer you'll see an ant or a bee, or a  
grasshopper's shirt with long sleeves.

You could find Johns old sock and get a big  
shock, or find flowers with petals uncurled;  
Down close to the ground many smells can be  
found, and their scent is right out of this world!



Children at the Natal NBG have discovered a tree with low overhanging branches which creates a perfect hideaway where they can play. This temporary sign was placed at the entrance to their den. John Roff (Interpreter) wanted to stimulate the children's imagination, and provide some fun. He designed a sign to heighten the sense of mystery and wonder that children have in a garden.

*A5 sign. Paper which has been plastic laminated.*



# A DESERT DETECTIVE GAME

**FOR KIDS**  
and their parents

The Kirstenbosch Detective Agency invite you to become a **Desert Detective**. We need your help to solve a mystery.

## How do plants survive in hot, dry places?

The Agency has given you some clues to test your detective skills and help you solve the mystery. Good luck on your search!

### HOW TO PLAY

1. Remember to stay on the paths while looking for the clues.
2. Put a mark in the correct clue box each time you discover an example of a clue. The more examples, the better!

**CLUE:** Find a plant with thick fleshy leaves.



Some plants store water in their leaves. This helps them to survive long periods without rain.



3. To find out what kind of detective you are, turn to the back page.

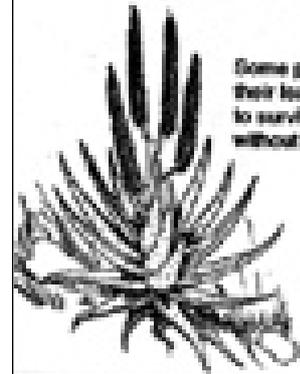
Join Sam Strelitzia in solving a mystery!



KIRSTENBOSCH  
GARDENS  
Cape Town



**CLUE:** Find a plant with thick fleshy leaves.



Some plants store water in their leaves. This helps them to survive long periods without rain.

**CLUE:** Look for animal life or evidence of animal activity in the Conservatory.



**CLUE:** Find a plant with thick, fleshy stems.

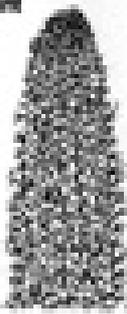


Some plants store water in their stems and save it for later.

Plant

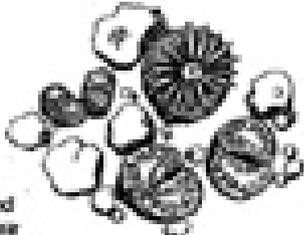
This game is aimed at children and families visiting the Conservatory at Kirstenbosch. Children are invited to become detectives and look for certain plants in the glasshouse. Each clue has a simple instruction in large text and an explanatory note written in smaller text. Many children only read the clues, but sometimes their parents read the explanatory note and interpret this to their kids. The idea for this game comes from the Desert Botanic Garden in Phoenix, Arizona. They had an excellent concept, so we modified it to our context and added a theme to make it more focused.

A4 brochure. Printed or photocopied onto A3 paper and folded into A4. Single colour (brown).

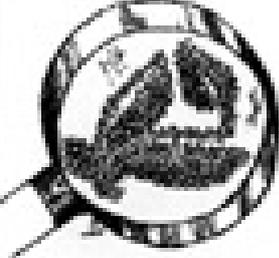
<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a plant with a leaf smaller than the one shown here.</p>  <p>Desert plants often have small leaves. Small leaves lose less water than large leaves. This helps the plant to save water.</p>	<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a plant with thorns or spines.</p>  <p>Spines protect the plant from being eaten by animals.</p>	<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a plant growing in the shade of a rock or under another plant.</p>  <p>Small plants often grow in the shade of a rock or a larger plant known as a 'nurse' plant.</p>	<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a plant with grey leaves.</p>  <p>Light colours reflect sunlight. This helps to keep the plant cool.</p>
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## SOLVING THE MYSTERY

### How do plants survive in hot, dry places?

<p><b>CLUE:</b> Look for a plant with no leaves, or one which looks dead.</p>  <p>Some plants avoid the heat by dropping their leaves, or hiding underground. We call this dormancy.</p>	<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a plant with red or purple leaves.</p>  <p>Some plants produce special red pigments which act like a sunscreen. This helps to protect the underlying tissue.</p>	<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a 'living stone'.</p>  <p>Some plants are difficult to find because they have the same colour and markings as their surroundings. This helps them to escape the attention of plant-eating animals.</p>
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## Plants are adapted for survival

<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find an 'elephant's foot'.</p>  <p>The 'foot' (stem) is covered with a thick corky layer. This protects the plant from the heat of the sun and from fire.</p>	<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a plant which looks as if it's covered with dew drops, except that it's not wet!</p>  <p>Some plants store water in special cells called <i>chloroplasts</i>. Notice how shiny the cells are. How does this help the plant cool?</p>	<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a plant with an interesting or funny name.</p>  <p>Plants are often given names which describe what they look like, or what they are used for.</p> <p>Horse's Teeth</p>
<p><b>CLUE:</b> Find a vygie. Hint: they have dairy-like flowers and woody seed capsules.</p>  <p>Vygies have special seed capsules which only open when it rains. This means the seed is only released when it's moist enough for it to germinate.</p>		



WILLEMBA  
ZULU MUTHI GARDEN  
ESTABLISHED  
1987

# THE ZULU MUTHI GARDEN

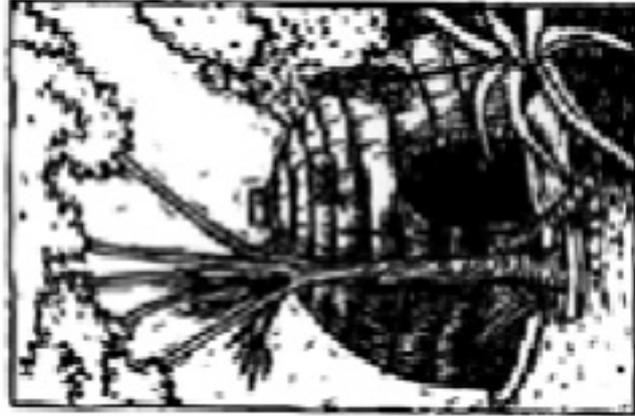


WILLEMBA  
ZULU MUTHI GARDEN  
ESTABLISHED  
1987

## A Library for the people

Over many generations the Zulu people have built up a vast knowledge about the properties of the indigenous healing herbs or muthi plants. Over 1000 different plant species are known to be used for medicinal or magical purposes in KwaZulu-Natal alone. These plants, along with the knowledge about them and their uses, form part of the heritage of all South Africans.

Enjoy your visit to this 'library' of muthi information. May you leave with knowledge of and interest in our healing herbs.



## Umtapo wolwazi wabantu

Izukulwane eziningi zabantu abangamaZulu sezakhe uhvazi elukhulu mayelana namakhambi okwelapha omdabu. Izihlobo ezimila ezahlukene ezingaphezu kwenkulugwane zaziwa ngokusetshenziswa ekulapheni noma ekwenzeni ezinye izinto ezingawoyelekile, njengokwelapha nokuthakathisa Kwa Zulu-Natal kuphela. Lezintshalo nolwazi ngazo kanye nokusetshenziswa kwazo, zakha ita labenbenke abantu base Mzansi Afrika.

Thokozela ukavakasha kwinkho kulo 'mtapo wolwazi' uhvazi lemithi. Sengathi ungahlala nolwazi, nothando lwamakhambi ethu okwelapha.

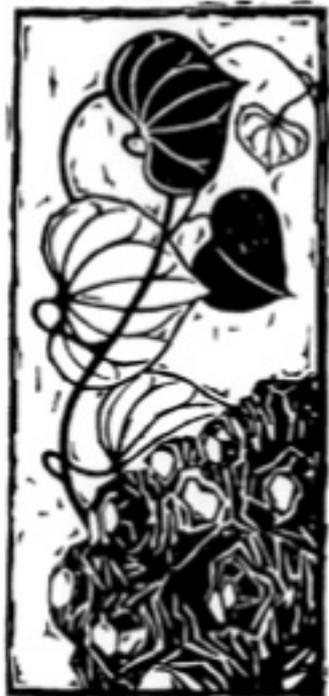


Large (300 x 600 mm) aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

This theme garden was developed in the Natal NBG to display indigenous medicinal (muthi) plants and to highlight the value of local knowledge about these plants. Medicinal plants are always interesting because they provide a direct link between people and the garden. We tried to make the information about these plants as practical and interesting as possible, and used orange card to attract attention to the signs. The orange faded rather quickly, however, and we now use a light grey background for most temporary signs. This is not as harsh as white or orange, and does not fade easily.



# Did you know?



In the 1950's diosgenin was isolated from the tubers of this species and used to produce contraceptive drugs. Big tubers like this one are becoming hard to find. Cultivation will ensure a steady supply of *Dioscorea sylvatica* and the useful chemicals it contains.



A5 signs. Photocopied onto orange card and plastic laminated.

This sign introduces the theme of the trail: *The Karoo is more than just a dry place - it is full of fascinating plants, animals and geological stories.* A map, with trail length and duration is given so that people can plan their walk accordingly.

# The Shale Trail

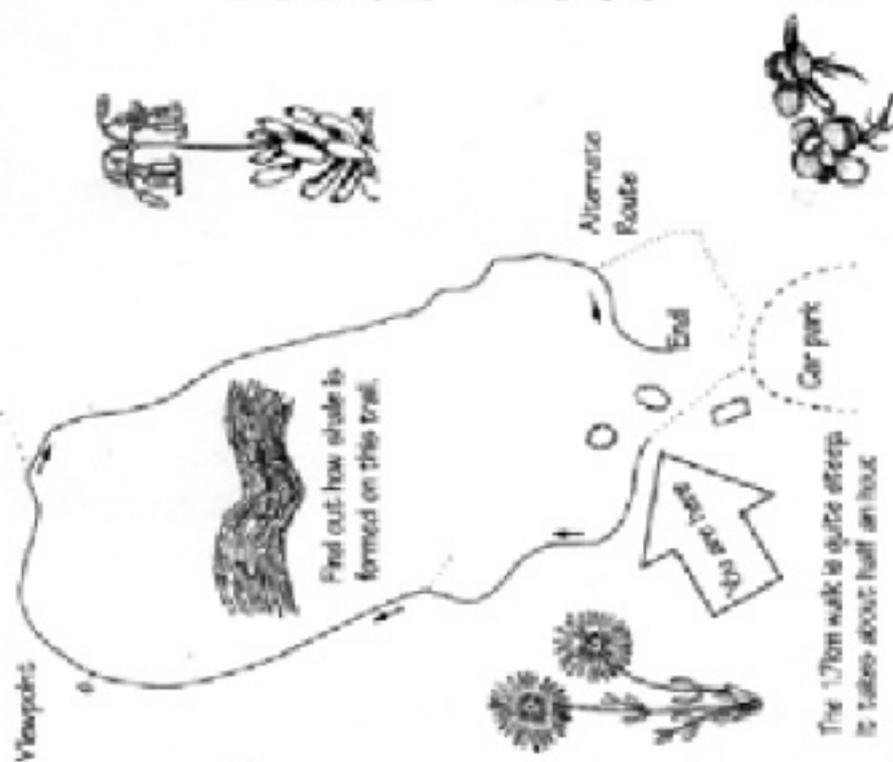


**More than meets the eye**

In the language of the Khoikhoi who once lived here, Karoo is said to mean 'dry place'. To many, that's all it is. But to those that discover its secrets, the truth is very different. The Shale Trail will show you some of the interesting plants and animals that live in the Little Karoo.

Look closely at the plants next to the trail and you will see flowers, animals and tiny plants hidden beneath others. You'll soon discover that the Karoo is far more than just a 'dry place'.

**Please bring water, sunscreen and a hat.**  
It can get really hot here!

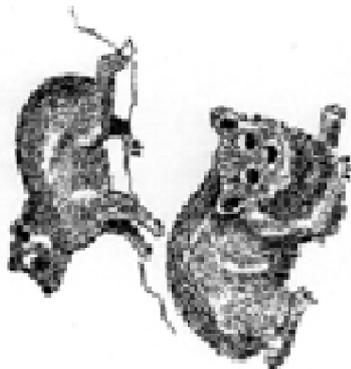
# Karoo Creatures

## The desert is alive

You're surrounded by animals. From ants to eagles and bees to beetles, every square metre of the Karoo is crawling with life. Every creature does something important. Mole-rats live underground and eat bulbs and roots. Their tunnels aerate the soil, which helps plants grow.

Black Eagles swoop down to kill and eat dassies. Dassies eat plants, and their dung enriches the soil. Plants and animals need each other.

Close your eyes for about a minute and listen for different bird calls. How many did you hear?



Dassie (Rock Hyrax)



Harvester Ants collect seeds and store them for hard times. Look for ants carrying 'food parcels' into their nests.



Tortoises eat flowers and disperse seeds. There are four different kinds of tortoises here.



Giant Ground beetles chase after their prey. They spray a nasty chemical when attacked.

'Karoo creatures' shows how Karoo animals and plants are interrelated, and how they depend on each other for survival. Illustrations have been used to indicate which animals are commonly seen along the trail.

A3 aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

## A Roof over your Head

Plants are widely used in South Africa for thatching huts and houses. In the northern parts of the country grasses are most commonly used. In the Western Cape, where grasses are rare, restios (Cape Reeds) provide thatching material. They are grown and harvested commercially in the Renssela area.

## Rietdakke en Grasdakke

Plants word dwarsdeur Suid-Afrika vir die dak van dakkie gebruik. In die noordelike gebiede is die gewone riet gras wat gebruik word, maar in die Weskaap word Kaapse dekriet (restios) gebruik. Naby Renssela is dit 'n kommersieel-landbouery.

## Indawo yokufaka intloko

Isizantsi Afrika izityalo zizinyenziswa kakhulu ekusakazeni kwindia. Kwizingingqi ezikumbi weli kusetyenziswa ingca lukhulu ekufakeni. Ekabona Kabori, eJongotube ingca inqabile nye, kusetyenziswa imizi ekusakazeni. Iintyaba phaya bezingingqi yeliRenssela, ibangqose.



**Common Thatching Grass**  
*Hyparrhenia hirta*  
POACEAE



A traditional beehive hat made of thatching grass.



**Albertinia Dekriet**  
*Panicum australe*  
RESTIACEAE

The culms (stems) grow to a length of about 2.5 metres.



Can you tell the difference between a restio and a grass?

- Restios have no leaves, and the male and female flowers are on separate plants.
- Grasses have leaves and bisexual flowers.

A thatched roof lasts 10 to 50 years, depending on the climate.



The main theme of this sign is that people use plants which are locally available. A secondary theme relates to plant taxonomy: visitors are asked to compare reeds (restios) growing on the left of the sign with thatching grass on the right.

300 x 600 mm aluminium sign. Single colour (black).



Oops! Who is responsible for this overgrown sign? Is it the horticulturist or the interpreter? Discuss this issue with your colleagues and decide who is responsible for routine maintenance.

## People and Plants

We wear plants, eat plants and use them to build our homes. But would you be able to find your own food, medicine, clothes and tools in the veld (bush)? How would you survive? Take a walk around this part of the garden to find out.

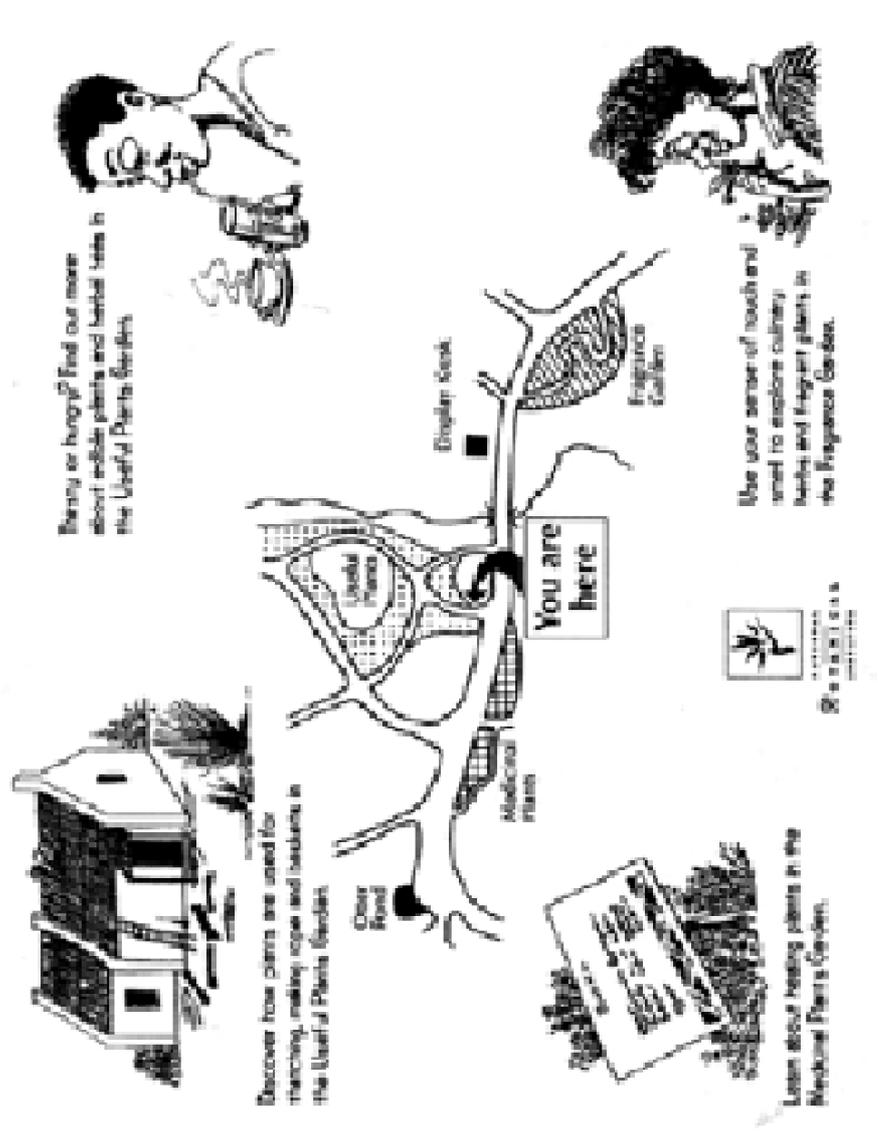
### Mense en Plante

Plante verskaf grondstowwe vir ons Mense, kos en huisvesing. Sal jy jou kos, medisyne, klere en gereedskap in die veld kan kry om te oorleef? In hierdie tuin-gedeelte kan jy meer daartoe ontdek.

### Abantu nezityalo

Sinoba izityalo, siya izona, kanti nasibavakheni amakhaya ethu sobenzima kwazona. Phoku ka ngaba ungowazi na ukuzifumela ukhaya, amayezo, impahla nezinye zokasibenza phaya endlel' Ungeriza njani ukuzeruphile phaya? Khumbathe ukumbaba-bambe apha kule gadi uze kutumama impendulo.





**You are here**

KIRSTENBOSCH NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Over the years Kirstenbosch NBG has developed three areas related to the 'Plant Uses' theme: the Medicinal Plant Garden; Fragrance Garden and the Useful Plants Garden. The 'People and Plants' sign introduces the theme and encourages visitors to explore the area and learn about the many different uses of plants.

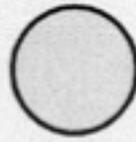
300 x 600 mm aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

**The 'look listen feel smell' Garden**  
*Where nature's always more than meets the eye...*

**Fun with your fingers**  
Try using the back of your hand or the tip of your nose to really feel the leaves of this plant. Do they remind you of anything?



**Look for the hand sign next to other plants which are fun to feel.**



**Welcome to a different kind of garden...**

Here in the 'Look Listen Feel Smell' garden we invite you to explore and discover nature using all your senses.

Try taking off your shoes and enjoy feeling the different path surfaces under your feet.



Look for insects hiding in the trees.



Have fun and enjoy!



**The 'look listen feel smell' Garden**  
*Where nature's always more than meets the eye...*

These signs form part of a sensory garden at the Natal NBG. The signs encourage visitors to use all their senses to explore the garden.

Notice how the theme has been used as a slogan on each sign: *Where nature's always more than meets the eye . . .*

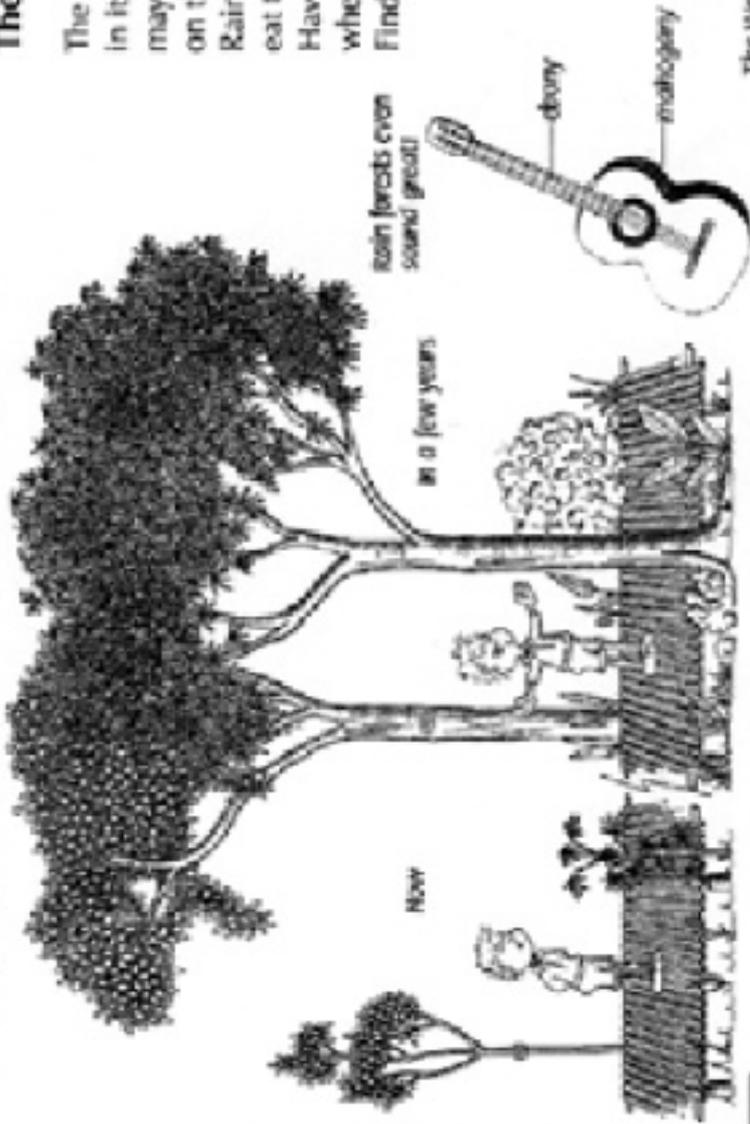
This is the introductory sign to the Rain Forest Trail in the Lowveld NBG. Notice how subtitles have been used to summarise the main idea in each paragraph.

A3 aluminium sign. Single colour (black).

# Growing a forest of hidden treasures

## Perfect conditions

All around you we've planted trees and shrubs from rain forests throughout Africa. Shade and a unique overhead sprinkler system re-create the forest climate in which they need to grow. This young rain forest is going to change. How will it look in ten years' time?



## The useful forest

The treasure of the forest lies in its beauty and uses. You may find some greyish yarns on the creeper in front of you. Rain forest dwellers boil and eat these round starchy lumps. Have you ever wondered where coffee comes from? Find out on this trail.



The West African Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) is an important source of vegetable oil in central Africa.