

## Flowers of the Trails

Between the 14th and 16th of September 2012, the town of Darling held its 95th annual Wildflower show. The Darling Wildflower Show has been presented by the Darling Wildflower Society since 1917, and the work is substantially done by volunteers. The work of the society focuses on two significant aspects of renosterveld, namely its unique character and the urgent need for its conservation. This has led to the recent founding of the Darling Wildflower Trust, and whilst continuing to support local charities, the income from the show now mainly goes towards conservation initiatives like the Darling Flora Project.

A large part of the CWCBR trails experience hinges on the unique floral heritage of the Cape West Coast. In holding with our ethos of promoting sustainable ecotourism, we thought it only proper to introduce you, our intrepid trailblazers, to a few of the unique and endemic floral species found on the Cape West Coast and nowhere else on earth. We hope that you find this both informative as well as inspiring, just one more reason to pay us a visit.

### “Jakkalskos” - *Harveya squamosa*

*Family : Orobanchaceae*



Jakkalskos - *Harveya squamosa*

### **Description :**

This plant is a perennial, parasitic herb ranging between 200 and 400 mm high. It cannot photosynthesize and is fully dependent on its host for all its nutrients. It attaches itself to the roots of the host and absorbs all it needs from the host. The stems are fleshy and usually simple but, rarely, there can be up to eight branches. This plant does not bear normal-looking leaves but the stems are covered in small, appressed, scale leaves. The whole plant is usually one colour, deep carmine red to orange or rarely yellow.

**Distribution:**

This parasite grows mainly in sandy soils along the west coast of South Africa, from a little north of Hondeklip Bay, in the Namaqua National Park , Namaqualand, south to the Cape Peninsula. It can also be found as far east as Worcester. Recorded habitats include coastal sand dunes, low-lying sandy hillocks and coastal fynbos. Once it was found on a steep slope in heavy clay, derived from Malmesbury shale. Altitudes range from 15 to 650 m.

**“Kelkiewyn ” - Babiana Rubrocyanea**

*Family : Iridaceae*



Kelkiewyn - Babiana Rubrocyanea

**Description :**

Species of this genus are probably among the best known smaller cornous plants of the iris family. Their star shaped flowers appear in spring in a wide range of colours, often blue with contrasting centres. They have strongly ribbed, slightly hairy leaves. This species is self fertile but will only make seeds with active pollination.

**Distribution:**

This plant grows wild on granitic sands in the South Western Cape.

**“Pietsnot ” - Grielum Humifusum**

*Family : Neuradaceae*



Pietsnot - Grielum Humifusum

**Description:**

A common flower of the famous spring flowering season, shining sulphur yellow with a white ring in the centre. This plant has a large fleshy, or more precisely, a slimy root system that was an important seasonal carbohydrate staple food to the Nama and Khoi tribe inhabitants of the area in the past. Some of the ecotourists who try it today might still acquire the taste, especially if hunger helps. Pietsnot seeds contain an inhibitor to prevent germination until enough water has reached them, when the inhibitor is neutralised and new plants can grow, ensuring to some extent that the seeds are not lost in unsuitable conditions.

**Distribution:**

Common in sandy places, often in disturbed areas and along roadsides throughout Namaqualand and the drier parts of the Western Cape.