Overberg Fynbos Route

Contributed by SJ du Toit

The fynbos riches of the Overberg are world renowned and botanists and visitors have admired and studied them since the seventeenth century. Fynbos is the collective noun for plants in the winter rainfall area of the Western Cape. It includes among others, the protea and erica families and a large number of other flowers and plants. They are especially well adapted to the strong winds, wet winters, dry summers and soil types of the region. One of the plants with a useful component is the restio family of reeds used for thatched roofs.

A group of land owners in the southern Overberg formed the Fynbos Eco-Tourism Forum in 1996, with the aim of publicising the Fynbos Route. Regular outings and workshops are organised where participants may learn more of fynbos. Development and marketing of eco-tourism are promoted as well as nature conservation and greater co-operation.

Many of the farms that belong to the forum offer hospitality to tourists. The route also includes some nature reserves as far as the Agulhas plains.

Stanford and Elim are two of the starting points to the route. The Overberg Fynbos Route is a valuable mechanism for residents, visitors and tourists to come to know more of the fynbos and the region. Everybody comes away from such a tour benefiting from a greatly increased understanding and knowledge of this unique floral kingdom.

Many of the farms include guest facilities as well as the normal farming activities. Casa Blanca Tours of Hermanus takes groups on these outings. One of the old historical farms in the Stanford area, where a third generation De Villiers farms, is Boskloof and makes an interesting starting point for a tour. Thys de Villiers Tel (028) 423-3628 has a diverse and rare selection of erica species (some being endemic) on his farm. Visitors can book special mountain transport and a guide, and if so wished, also a farm picnic.

It is quite impossible to supply all the information about the route and accommodation in this story, but further information about fynbos and the Overberg Fynbos Route can be found on www.africandream.org.

This story was originally published in "The Overberg - Historical Anecdotes", written by SJ du Toit.
The book is available from bookshops and tourism bureaux in the Overberg or from the author:
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