



## REPORT: HERMANUS BOTANICAL SOCIETY

### FYNBOS EXPO IN STANFORD

**23 August 2016**

Whale Coast Conservation took its Expo on Fynbos to Stanford where it was presented to Okkie Smuts Grade R and parents, and Die Bron Primary Grades 6 and 7.



Sheraine van Wyk illustrated the amazing plant diversity in fynbos by comparing different parts of Africa. She explained to the learners how the evolutionary pressure of harsh climate, poor soils and fire cause speciation and high biodiversity.



They then learned how to use dissecting microscopes to look at how Erica leaves are specially adapted to hot dry summers.



Anina Lee demonstrated the four main groups of fynbos plants.



She explained that if there are no restios, it's not fynbos.



Pat Miller described how fynbos is both adapted to fire and reliant on fire to return nutrients to the soil. She described the concept of serotiny in *Protea repens*.



Pat impressed on the learners not to start fires in the fynbos, not even to see the helicopter.



Shirley Mgoboza and Denfred Bruintjies talked about the threat that alien plants pose to fynbos, and how to deal with them.



Shirley showed how human transformation of the landscape through urban sprawl, agriculture and mining threatens fynbos habitats.



Elisabeth Smit explained how important fynbos is for the local economy, with eco-tourism being a major job-creator.



She also explained the value of ecosystem services we get from fynbos, like water, the flower industry, bee products and bee-pollinated crops.



The group from Okkie Smuts thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

**The Expo was kindly sponsored by the Hermanus Botanical Society. We, and the children, wish to thank them for the opportunity to bring this Expo to Stanford.**