



YOUTH EDUCATION AT THE HERMANUS FLOWER FESTIVAL

The Hermanus Flower Festival has been a regular feature of Hermanus for the last 60 years, when the locals and a few visitors come to marvel at the wealth of fynbos species and the splendour of the flowers.

However, over the past 20 years the demography of Hermanus has changed hugely. Many of the present population come from outside the Western Cape or do not have a fynbos tradition. In fact, most know very little about it. This is especially true of the youth who have not had the privilege of walks in Fernkloof or hikes in the mountains.

These young people are the future custodians of our precious fynbos environment and unless they are given the opportunity to connect with it, there will be little motivation to care for it.

Whale Coast Conservation and the Hermanus Botanical Society have attempted to address this.

With sponsorship from the Botanical Society, Whale Coast Conservation took expos on fynbos to seven schools in Hermanus and Stanford during August and September. The interactive expo exhibits highlighted the types of plants that make up fynbos; how these plants have evolved to cope with harsh climate and poor soils; its value to our economy; and the many threats to fynbos. (See separate report on fynbos expo at Mt Pleasant Primary).

The lessons learned at these expos were reinforced by an invitation for 6 of the schools to visit the Flower Festival at the end of September.



The theme of the Flower Festival 2016 was Fynbos and Fire.



“Dr Vic” Hamilton-Attwell explained to learners from Hermanus Waldorf why fires every 15 years or so are necessary for the survival of fynbos.



Cape Nature explained how they deal with wildfires in fynbos.



Overstrand Municipality's Neville Green told the learners about fynbos fire management and controlled burning.



Whale Coast Conservation's 'frog whisperer' Denfred Brintjies introduced learners from Hawston to the Fernkloof endemic, Drewes' Moss Frog.



They also connected to some of the fynbos snakes and learnt more about

snake behaviour and why they are an important part of fynbos ecology.



The 'Clueless Capers' adventure was one of the highlights for the youngsters. Following clues and finding the answers in the Fernkloof gardens was both educational and fun.



Young artist Rinaldo Appel, Grade 9 learner at Hawston Secondary School, interpreted the relationship between fynbos and fire.

We need sponsors to continue to bring young people into contact with nature. If you can help, please contact Whale Coast Conservation on 028 316 2527.