



Rhodes Wild Flower Snippet

MARCH 2017

Header: Typical early-autumn grassland meadow scene across the Rhodes Common looking towards the Carlislehoek valley with Ben McDhui (3001m) in the distance.

No need to traipse off the beaten track, look what was discovered right here in Rhodes. All photographs and inserts by kind courtesy of Brendan and Molly Cole, residents of Rhodes. Brendan is an Art Historian and artist who specialises in late-nineteenth century non-realist art. He has published widely in leading international journals on the work on Jean Delville, Fernand Khnopff and, most recently, on Nicholas Poussin. He completed his Doctorate at Christ Church, Oxford, on aspects of the work of Jean Delville, and tutored at the University of Oxford and the Open University before becoming a School Master at Eton College, which followed on from his work as Keeper of Collections at Knowsley Hall, the home of the Earl of Derby. Brendan is a nature lover who moved to Rhodes three years ago from the UK and when he's not creating magic in his veggie garden, he takes Molly exploring our piece of paradise. Should you have images and info to share, or specimens that you can identify, we'd love to hear from you.

Please also visit: www.instagram.com/drakensberg_wildflowers



Above: Molly taken on one of their flower safaris up on the escarpment. She loves taking in the view while catching her breath when they go hiking together - sums up her love of life and the mountains



The Rhodes Common is currently covered in bright yellow daisy-like flowers that grow on the end of long stems - their leaves remain close to the ground. It seems closely related to the HAPLOCARPHA SCAPOSA that is used locally for medicinal purposes



An eye-catching meadow plant that seems closely related to the Small Witchweed (*Astriga bilabiata*), except that the petals are more elongated. This beautiful herb-like plant was captured on the Rhodes Common and stood alone. No other examples of its kind have been observed there to date



SEBAEA SEDOIDES. Seen flourishing on the Common, punctuating the meadows with its bright yellow flowers



A delightful bright yellow buttercup-like flower growing in a small colony on the Rhodes Common. Flower is similar to the local yellow-flowering wild flax (*linum thunbergii*). Identification pending



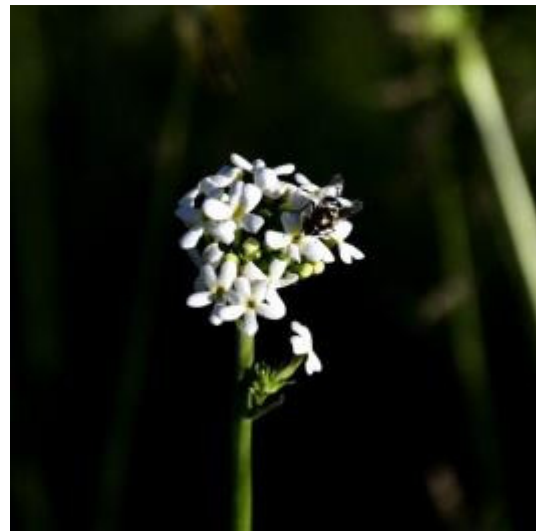
A striking wild blue flower often seen around the Rhodes area but not listed in local guides on the region. Captured in the north east camp of the Rhodes Common



GLADIOLUS SAUNDERSII
The Lesotho Lilly, or Saunders' Gladiolus, one of the endemic flowers of the eastern mountain region of the Drakensberg, including Rhodes. Often seen around the village as scattered specimens, mostly alone. Their bright crimson flowers are conspicuous amongst the grassy vegetation. This example captured on the north east camp on the Rhodes Common



WAHLENBERGIA KREBSII at the Tintern reservoir Falls



A variant of Cape Valerian:
VALERIANA CAPENSIS, probably var. **LANCEOLLATA**. Found in a large drift on the slopes of the Rhodes Common. The flowers are actually very small, 5-6mm in diameter. A delicate meadow plant indeed



HARVEYA PULCHRA

High-altitude parasitic plant endemic to the Eastern mountain region of the Drakensberg. This specimen captured at around 2100m deep into the Tintern Valley on a gritty slope near Rhodes Village



HARVEYA SPECIOSA

The tall white ink flower described as a showy parasitic herb up to 700mm tall. Turns blue-black when bruised. This specimen captured beneath the cliffs at 2500m behind Rhodes Village



SELAGO GALPINII. Named after Ernest Galpin, 1858-1941. Endemic to the Eastern mountain region of the Drakensberg. The flowers are tiny, around 5mm in diameter and the plants are often seen on moist grassy slopes between 1500m and 2400m. This one located in the north east camp of the Rhodes Common



The stunning honey-scented **PELARGONIUM SIDOIDES** with its glorious dark reddish purple flowers. Often seen in exposed rocky areas on the Common. Specimen found amongst a large drift of these plants in the north east camp of the Rhodes Common



SILENE BURCHELLII. A wild variant of the Campion flower. Also known as the gunpowder plant. Found in grasslands up to 2400m. This specimen captured on the Rhodes Common. Flowers are small, +-10mm diameter and are typically held to one side. The plant is used in traditional medicine



POLYGALA HOTTENTOTTA. A slender perennial deciduous herb typically found in grasslands up to 2400m and widespread. The flowers are winged and conspicuously veined. This plant is used in traditional medicine to treat abdominal pains, anthrax and also used as charms. This specimen found on the north west camp of the Rhodes Common



A wet gully on the Rhodes Common channelling a small brook in the rainy season and providing an ideal habitat for a wide variety of flowers in the summer



KNIPHOFIA CAULESCENS. Also known as the Lesotho Red Hot Poker. This small colony was found tucked into a wet cliff of a gully leading into a brook on the Rhodes Common. The plant is often grown around rural homesteads as a charm against lightning



PHYGELIUS AEQUALIS. A robust herbaceous perennial often seen along rocky stream banks. Captured here on a rocky outcrop of a brook running through the north east camp on the Rhodes Common. It is related to *P. capensis*, also seen in this region, but is distinctive for its crimson flowers with bright yellow throats. This plant is found at lower altitudes (1200-2200m) than its cousin, often found higher up in the valleys



Detail of the inside of the PHYGELIUS AEQUALIS showing the yellow and red colouring of the flowers

For those who'd like to venture a little further:



Delicate pink and white flowers of SATYRIUM LONGICAUDA captured on the Tenahead escarpment plateau at 2600m, where it occurs in striking colonies. The plant is used in traditional medicine and the genus is named after the two horned Satyr which it resembles



The patterned LOBELIA FLACCIDA, or Wild Lobelia, found in large colonies on the Tenahead plateau and escarpment at 2600m. The small blue flowers characteristically have two crests in the mouth of its tube and flowers appear from November to June



Detailed view of the charming ZALUZIANSKYA MICROSIPHON or Short-tubed Drumsticks flower. Many specimens of this geometrically intricate flower are found along the Tenahead escarpment at 2600m. The genus is named after the Polish botanist Adan Zaluziansky von Zaluzian (1558-1613). Approximately 13 species of this genus are found in the Drakensberg, of the 55 found in Africa



DISA FRAGRANS
Highly scented orchid found at high Altitude up to 3000m. Captured amongst a large drift on the Tenahead escarpment, 2600m



WURMBEA ELATIOR
Common name: Pepper and Salt Flower
This must be one of the most exquisite flowers of the local high-mountain region, typically found in marshes or streambanks between 1200-3000m. Distinctive for its musky smell and reddish-purple patches in the middle of each tepal. This group was found amongst an unusually large drift on the Tenahead Farm near the Lesotho border at 2650m



The Lesotho Carnation or DIANTHUS BASUTICUS is used as a love charm and to increase fertility of bulls by the local cultures. Its distinctive pink flowers are found abundantly in the meadows and escarpment slopes around Tenahead, where this specimen was captured



The tiny golden yellow flowers of SEBAEA MARLOTHII make a bright impact on the Drakensberg escarpment. It is an endemic mat-forming herb of the eastern mountain region of the Drakensberg belonging to the Gentian family. This striking little flower is named after the botanist HWR Marloth, 1855-1931. Captured on the escarpment at Tenahead



This vibrantly purple and yellow LOTONONIS GALPINII is widespread along the escarpment at Tenahead. A small ground-hugging shrub belonging to the pea family, forming mats along the steep rocky slopes of the eastern escarpment and is endemic to the region



A beautiful drift of BERKHEYA PURPUREA captured at the Tenahead reserve. This particular purple Berkheya is endemic to this area and is usually seen in large colonies along the roads and ungrazed fields



White MORAEA ALBICUSPA belonging to the Iris family with its yellow nectar at the base of the large outer sepals, 3cm. The inner tepals end in a characteristically sharp point (hence its Latin species name). Endemic to the Eastern mountain region of the Drakensberg and was recorded on the Tenahead escarpment



Detailed images of the flowers of **GLUMICALYX NUTANS** with its reflexed lobes that are relatively tiny at 7-8mm at the end of short tubes. The flower is endemic to the eastern Drakensberg mountain region. This specimen captured on the Tenahead escarpment

Plan a magical wild flower trip to Rhodes before the frost arrives, or alternatively you may prefer to plan ahead for our next spectacular flower season.

Guided flower tours are available.

Call or email me for a wide range of accommodation options, (catered or self-catering, in the village or on a farm), as well as Wild Flower Guides:

045 971 9003 / contact@rhodesinfo.co.za

I look forward to seeing you.

Take care,
Margie

RHODES
INFORMATION CENTRE

Margie Murray
082 773 8576 (C)
045 971 9003 (L)
contact@rhodesinfo.co.za