

## Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens – 24 May 2021 -- South Africa

Today was a day to stretch our legs and begin our self-education on South African plants. We arrived at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens by Uber a few minutes before 9:00 am and left a little after 3:00 pm. We did stop for lunch.

Let me begin with why we are here. Seven years ago, when putting together our *Drive Around the World* one of the things to see on my list were the world's best Botanical Gardens. Nancy and I both enjoy flowers, plants, cactus, succulents, trees, where they grow and botanical gardens. You would be hard pressed to look at any list of the world's best botanical gardens and not find Kirstenbosch on the list.



One of the many walkways and path or even sky walks at the top of the trees.

I am going to get the scientific stuff out of the way early. South Africa has over 140 of the 200 natural orders of plants in the world and over 25,000 species of flora, including a floral kingdom found nowhere else in the world. The Cape Floral Region Protected Areas is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is recognized as one of the most special places for plants in the world in terms of diversity, density, and number of endemic species.



In short, South Africa's is one of the most unique flora locations in the world.



Each pathway was lined with plants we hadn't seen before.





Although these were new flowers, etc. to us they were similar to flowers and plants we saw in Australia. This makes sense once you know that Australia and Africa used to be connected and the combined continent was known as Gondwana.



The mountains above the Gardens are a portion of the Table Mountain range.





Walking the sky bridge at the top of the tress within the Gardens.



A bloom on a Red Conebush/Leucadendron discolor.





In the foreground and back upper left of this photograph are Silver Trees a kind of Protea. They grow wild on the slopes above Kirstenbosch and are unique to Table Mountain. The Silver Tree is classified as Rare, because it has a small wild population and a small distribution range.





Due to Covid we basically had the Gardens to ourselves. When we stopped for lunch there was only one other person in the café beside us – the receptionist.





The trunks of several Natalse Boskiepersol Natal Forest Cabbage Tree Umsenge or *Curronia sphaerocephala* found on the subtropical coast of South Africa.





This is a photo of the base of a Wild Almond tree. It's a member of the Protea family (Proteaceae). Its closest living relative is the Australian Macadamia Tree. It points back to a time, millions of years ago, when Australia and Africa were part of an ancient continent called Gondwana.





Looking up into the tree canopy.



Blooms from South Africa's tallest aloe, the Tree Aloe and a member of the Aloidendron.. The Tree Aloe may reach a height of 22 meters/66 feet.





While I was walking around this pond, Nancy was trying to take a photo of a mouse. Mice outside are OK, an inside mouse and I hear screams.



I took advantage of the bench on the right. We covered a lot of ground this day.





Inside the display greenhouse were a number of interesting plants. Above is A Wild Almond Betteramandel Ghoe or *Brabejum stellatifolium*. This tree is found near streams.

As are most gardens today, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens tagged/signed a great majority of their plants. Hate to disappoint you because I know you all thought the above information came directly from me.

We missed the flowering season by two or three months, but it was still an enjoyable day and garden to explore. Fortunately, we stayed in South Africa long enough to catch the spring flowering season especially the flowers of the Western Cape.