SOUTH AFRICA

Wildflowers & National Botanical Gardens Tour

Led by Laurence Nicklin

August 15-29, 2016

Home to the world’s most diverse floristic kingdom, South Africa is a treat for garden enthusiasts. During August and September, the Western and Southern Cape regions explode into a symphony of colors as abundant wildflowers blanket the landscape. From the scenic mountains of Springbok to exciting wildlife and some of the country’s finest nature reserves, South Africa’s unique flora and natural habitats will take your breath away.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Tour the renowned Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and Stellenbosch Botanical Gardens.
- Sample fine wines and cuisine at a Cape wine estate.
- Observe the vibrant floral colors of the Namaqualand region.
- Explore the town of Clanwilliam, a showcase of the wild flower season.
- Escape from the pressures of modern life to enjoy the silence and starlit skies of the peaceful southern Cederberg Mountains.
- Experience spectacular views of Cape Town from the top of Table Mountain.

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AUGUST 15 - DEPARTURE
This evening depart Miami for your flight to Heathrow.

AUGUST 16 - HEATHROW/EN ROUTE
Upon arrival at Heathrow Airport, you will proceed via walkway to the Hilton Heathrow Airport Hotel to check in at your day room. Take the opportunity to relax after your cross-Atlantic flight, enjoy a relaxing and therapeutic swim in their pool, and rest before your next flight to Cape Town. Check in for your flight no less than 1.5 hours prior to departure, meeting up with your fellow travelers. Day room at Hilton Heathrow Airport Hotel.

AUGUST 17 - CAPE TOWN
You will arrive in Cape Town during mid-morning. After clearing customs and collecting your luggage, you will be met and transferred to your hotel (early check-in guaranteed). You will have the remainder of the day to rest, catch up on your sleep, and explore your new surroundings, which are electric! The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront is the most visited place in South Africa! Overnight at Victoria & Alfred.

AUGUST 18 - CAPE TOWN
This morning you will be given a guided tour of Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden. This amazing garden lives up to its reputation as the most beautiful national garden in Africa, and one of the great botanic gardens of the world. Few gardens can match the sheer grandeur of the setting of Kirstenbosch, against the eastern slopes of Cape Town’s Table Mountain. Enjoy lunch on the grounds at Myo Kirstenbosch. If weather permits, before or after your tour of Kirstenbosch, you will have the opportunity to ride the cable car up to Table Mountain for a walk about on the trails on the mountaintop, with gorgeous views at every turn. This activity is weather dependent, so cannot be guaranteed. Enjoy one of the many restaurants on the V&A Waterfront Pier on your own for dinner. Overnight at Victoria & Alfred. (BL)

AUGUST 19 - CAPE TOWN
This morning you will travel to the Winelands east of Cape Town, leaving the city behind you. En route, visit the Stellenbosch University Botanical Garden. The botanical garden is located in the historical center of Stellenbosch and is the oldest university botanical garden in South Africa. This compact garden houses an enormous diversity of plants, both indigenous to South Africa and exotic. After a tour of the garden, you will continue to Franschhoek and Grande Provence Heritage Wine Estate. Grande Provence Estate wears its 300 year history with dignity. Lush vines spread across 30 hectares with gentle vistas over the valley floor, at odds almost with the rugged mountains beyond. Capturing the essence of the heritage of this gracious estate are Grande Provence’s owners and design team. The honest simplicity of its Cape Dutch architecture, in harmony with the precision and clarity of modern design, brings a new pièce de résistance to the Franschhoek Valley. Framing the entry road are rows of vineyards, heavy with the promise of next year’s vintage. Here, one bears witness to the duality of old and new settling into an elegant coexistence: old trees take root amongst the 300-year-old oaks, and manicured hedges blend with the free form of the natural surroundings to create a landscaped Eden. From the entrance to your exit you will be dazzled by the beauty of this estate. Enjoy a tour of the beautifully manicured grounds, with serveral statues and waterworks that are each pieces of art. Tour the wine shop, art museum, and gift shop, followed by a delicious lunch and informal wine tasting. This is not the typical winery visit, as it is more about the estate and experience than wine production. Return to Cape Town. Dinner is on your own this evening. Overnight at Victoria & Alfred. (BL)

AUGUST 20 - LAMBERT’S BAY
This morning you will have some time at leisure to enjoy the harbor, and your last day in Cape Town. This afternoon, you will travel north through the Western Cape to Lambert’s Bay, near Clanwilliam. Enjoy late afternoon tea in Clanwilliam, to give you a chance to see this quaint town. Owing to the tremendous differences in topography (Cederberg, Karoo, Sandveld, Wetlands, and Coastal area), Clanwilliam is blessed with an exceptional variety of wild flowers. The greater part of the district falls within the world renowned Fynbos Biome. Certain species in the district are found nowhere else in the world. These include the yellow Leucospermum reflexum (geel perdekop), Protea cryophila (Snow Protea), blue Lobophyllum filamentosum (Blou Bergaster), Widdringtonia wallichii ( Clanwilliam Cedar), Aspalathus linearis (Rooibos), yellow Sparaxis (Botterblom), pink Cynanella alba (Pienk Handjie) and the Protea glabra (Kreuwel Waboom). Overnight at Lambert’s Bay Hotel. (BD)

AUGUST 21 - LAMBERT’S BAY
After a leisurely breakfast, pick up a boxed lunch from the hotel, and then travel to Ramskop Wild Flower Garden. The nature reserve was established in 1960. Cared for and nurtured by workers (from the Cederberg municipality) and volunteers. One tenth of the 66 hectares is planted. The rest is Nama Karroo, by nature. Enjoy a picnic in the reserve. Dinner on own this evening. Overnight at Lambert’s Bay Hotel. (BL)

AUGUST 22 - NIEUWOUDTVILLE
This morning, after an early breakfast, enjoy a visit on Bird Island Nature Reserve. The world’s most accessible Cape gannet colony can be found on Bird Island, linked to Lambert’s Bay by a breakwater wall. Bird Island also gives shelter to thousands of cormorants and penguins, whilst Cape fur seals can still be found on the rocks on the sea side of the island. Following your time on the island, return to the hotel to refresh up and perhaps pick up a snack before traveling the short distance to Nieuwoudtville. Enjoy lunch in town. Nieuwoudtville is extremely popular during the wild flower season, and indeed, because of its unique placement in the Karoo plain known as the Bokkeveld, where the Hantam Karoo meets Cape Fynbos. It has a reputation as the bulb capital of the world. During spring, bulbs (known as
the land of contrasts, where the rigorous climate has created a myriad of life forms superbly adapted to their specific habitat. Fields of flowers, star-studded nights, quiver trees, enormous granite outcrops, and the icy Atlantic are but a few wonders that await the visitor to what is truly nature's playground. You will have a boxed lunch so that you can picnic during your day in the park. This evening, dinner will be at your hotel. *Overnight at Kleinplasie Gastehuis. (BLD)*

**AUGUST 23 - NIEUWOUDTVILLE**

Today you will visit the Hantam National Botanical Garden. During flower season the garden is a feast of flowers and this is one of the loveliest places to explore the bulbs on the Bokkeveld Plateau during spring. You will also visit the Nieuwoudtville Wild Flower Reserve, an area that encompasses 115 ha and consists of renosterveld and dolerite dyke. The flora is particularly rich with 306 species and 199 genera identified. If time permits, also visit Akkerendam Nature Reserve. Enjoy a picnic boxed lunch during your day in the garden and reserves. *Overnight at Van Zijl. (BLD)*

**AUGUST 24 - SPRINGBOK**

Today you will travel north to Namaqualand and the town of Springbok. En route, enjoy lunch at a typical South African restaurant. The town of Springbok lies nestled in a valley of the Klein Koperberge, in the heart of Namaqualand, an area renowned for its natural beauty. The Klein Koperberge, meaning “Small Copper Mountains” were named after the primary reason the settlement was initially established to mine the rich copper reserves in the area. During the months of August to October each year, Springbok is bursting at the seams with tourists who have traveled from far and wide, drawn by the amazing transformation of the dry scrubland into the multicolored carpet of flowers which has made Namaqualand famous. The oddly shaped Kokerboom, or Quiver tree, which derives its name from the San people's practice of using its tubular branches to make quivers for their arrows, is another common sight in South Africa’s Northern Cape region. Enjoy dinner this evening is at the top rated Tauren Steak Ranch, where you will enjoy a cozy, welcoming atmosphere and the sensational smell of steaks sizzling on the open grill. Vegetarian? They can accommodate you too! *Overnight at Kleinplasie Gastehuis. (BLD)*

**AUGUST 25 - SPRINGBOK**

This morning you will depart to Namaqua National Park (including Skilpad Nature Reserve). This 103,000 hectare Namaqua showcase captures the full grandeur of the flower seasons. Every turn in the road paints an unforgettable picture: valleys filled with Namaqualand daisies and other spring flowers that pulse with sheer energy and joy. Next to some eye catching succulents, a porcupine, and a tall aloe, pay witness to a baboon overturning a rock and pouncing on a scorpion. During early August and September, seemingly overnight, the dusty valleys of Namaqualand are transformed into a wonderland, carpeted with wildflowers. With its winter rainfall, Namaqualand is home to the richest bulb flora of any arid region in the world and more than a 1,000 of its estimated 3,500 plant species are found nowhere else on earth. Escape to the land of contrasts, where the rigorous climate has created a grandeur of the flower seasons. Every turn in the road paints an unforgettable picture: valleys filled with Namaqualand daisies and other spring flowers that pulse with sheer energy and joy. Next to some eye catching succulents, a porcupine, and a tall aloe, pay witness to a baboon overturning a rock and pouncing on a scorpion. During early August and September, seemingly overnight, the dusty valleys of Namaqualand are transformed into a wonderland, carpeted with wildflowers. With its winter rainfall, Namaqualand is home to the richest bulb flora of any arid region in the world and more than a 1,000 of its estimated 3,500 plant species are found nowhere else on earth. Escape to the land of contrasts, where the rigorous climate has created a sensatio...
PROGRAM PRICING

$4,095 (minimum 20 participants)

Includes $450 donation to The Kampong.

Does not include international airfare (estimated at $1,675 from Miami), gratuities or items of a personal nature.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room add $875. A $200 per person deposit and enrollment form is required by April 17, 2016 to hold your space on the trip. Deposit is refundable until April 17, 2016 excluding a non-refundable $100 cancellation fee. Cancellations after this date will result in loss of full deposit. Final payments are due no later than May 12, 2016. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel’s agency number is 15849.

MEET YOUR LEADER

Laurence Nicklin

A native of Cape Town, South Africa, Laurence Nicklin started his career in horticulture at Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden. While at Kirstenbosch, Laurence studied the plants of the Fynbos, a tiny area of South Africa, equivalent in size to Portugal, where there are more than 9,000 plant species of which 70% are endemic. He spent many years in the field studying these plants in their native habitat. Laurence turned his love of Fynbos species into a wholesale nursery and landscape design company in South Africa which supplied over a million plants per year to the Cape metropolitan area, greater South Africa and Namibia. In 1988, Laurence was hired to install a 265-acre garden dedicated to South African and Australian plants in Southern California. After many years traveling back and forth between California and Cape Town, Laurence moved his family to Ojai, California in 1999. Laurence has been a consulting horticulturist with many California gardens including Santa Barbara Botanical Garden and Lotusland. He currently designs and builds estate and public gardens in Southern California.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:
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