



POWER WALKS: Veld walks led by local experts will form part of Calitzdorp's inaugural Vetplantfees next weekend

Discover world of succulents at fest

THE Klein Karoo town of Calitzdorp is hosting its first yet Vetplantfees next weekend.

The event, to be held at the Calitzdorp Station, will be a showcase for many of South Africa's beautiful and rare succulents together with species collected from all over the world.

Succulent enthusiasts, who visit Calitzdorp from next Saturday to Monday September 23 to 25 will be able to immerse themselves in a big range of activities to discover the fascinating world of succulents for themselves.

Visitors will see indigenous and rare succulents in their natural habitat, and be able to buy specimens that are not commercially available in nurseries.

They will also receive advice on how to propagate, grow and care for succulents in their own gardens.

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The festival will include veld walks led by local experts, educational talks by succulent specialists, a potted plant market hosted by growers, an exhibition of both plants and botanical art, and a rare plant auction.

There will also be a variety of activities for children.

The Klein Karoo is a region, where many of the succulents endemic to South Africa may be seen in their natural environment.

The Vetplantfees is a project of the Calitzdorp Succulent Society, which assists with the conservation and preservation of succulents in the region through public education and promotional events.

A particular highlight will be the six 90-minute veld walks to be conducted by local succulent expert and guide Kevin Koen, at a cost of R150 per participant. The walks, for which bookings are essential, will provide an introduction to the unique succulents of the Klein Karoo.

Also not to be missed is the range of free talks by plant experts on each day of the festival, with seats available on a first come, first served basis.

Only registered ticket holders will be allowed access to these talks and the topics will include:

- Nature Exploration and Appreciation, hosted by Louis Jordaan, at 1pm on Saturday September 23;

- An overview of Mesembs in the Southern Cape, by Priscilla Burgoyne, at 11am on Sunday September 24;

- Invasive Plants in the Veld, hosted by Sue Milton-Dean of Renu-Karoo Veld Restoration, at 11am on Monday September 25, and;

- From the Horizontal to Vertical Gardening with Succulents, with by Eric Harley, at 1pm on Monday September 25.

Next Sunday's rare plant auction at 3pm is expected to be another highlight.

It will be the first auction of its kind in



Calitzdorp and will provide an opportunity for visitors to secure some of the rarest and most impressive succulents available.

Art will also go under the hammer, as will Robin Frandsen's brand new *Succulents of Southern Africa*, published by Honeyguide Publications.

The first printed copy, airmailed from Singapore to Frandsen prior to shipment and the only one of its kind, will be sold to the highest bidder. This stunning publication has been personally signed and authenticated by the author.

Frandsen's book will be launched at the festival earlier on the Sunday, at 1pm, when he will talk about the events that led to its publication.

Copies of the book will be available for purchase on the Saturday and Sunday.

A vast but extremely user-friendly work, *Succulents of Southern Africa* is considered to be the most extensive photographic publication of general succulent plants of this region produced to date.

Every species is recorded and there are more than 2 500 beautifully illustrated colour photographs, with illustrations always on the same spread as the relevant text.

All of the vendors and artists at the *Vetplantfees* will also be contributing items to the auction.

The festival programme will run from 9am to 4.30pm next Saturday and Sunday, drawing to a close at 3pm on the Monday.

- For more information about the Calitzdorp Succulent Society contact Buck Hemenway on 076-298-7337 or e-mail him at buckhem@sbcglobal.net. For bookings and more information about the various Vetplantfees events, visit www.vetplant.co.za