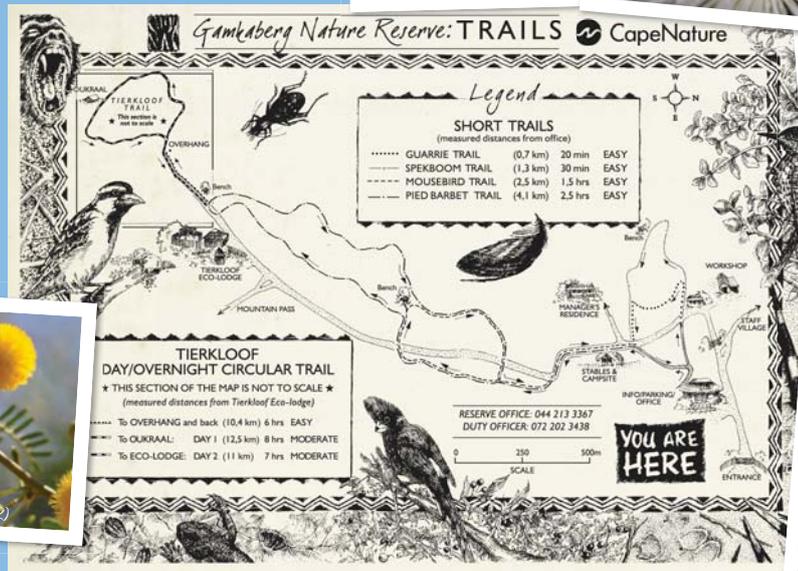


Gamkaberg

Bossie Identification Guide

The Klein Karoo falls within the Cape Floral Kingdom and is one of the botanical wonders of the world. It harbours five biomes namely: Renosterveld, Afromontane forest, Fynbos, Succulent karoo and Subtropical thicket. The Gamkaberg day trails take you through Succulent karoo and Subtropical thicket.



Compared with other arid areas on earth, the Succulent karoo is unequalled in terms of its high plant diversity!

SPEKBOOM



SPEKBOOM (N° 3) is the indicator plant for Subtropical thicket. It is considered a "wonder plant" due to its ability to thrive in arid conditions but at the same time to regulate the earth's atmosphere.

THE TWENTY COMMON PLANTS LISTED BELOW WITH SOME OF THEIR DAILY USES, WILL BE ENCOUNTERED ALONG THE DAY TRAILS AND ARE IDENTIFIED IN THE FIELD BY MEANS OF NUMBER PLATES.

- Botterboom** (*Tylecodon paniculatus*)
Family: Crassula
If this plant is eaten by stock it can cause severe stomach ache (krimpsiekte) and even death.
- Guarrie** (*Euclea undulata*)
Family: Ebony
The wood of this tree is used for firewood, joinery as well as for fence posts. The berries are edible and an infusion of the roots is used as medicine for heart disease, toothache and headaches.
- Spekboom** (*Portulacaria afra*)
Family: Portulaca
The fresh leaves make an excellent snack and a leaf held in the mouth will combat heat-stroke, over-exhaustion and dehydration. They are also an excellent remedy for a sore throat. The application of the leaf sap on an insect sting or bite will relieve the pain.
- Vygie** (*Mesembryanthemum spp.*)
Family: Ice plant
The stems of the vygie were stacked in a semi-circle to form a kookskerm (or lapa) and the alkali ash was used in the making of soap.
- Scholtzbos** (*Pteronia pallens*)
Family: Daisy
This plant contains a liver poison and any animal grazing on this plant will show signs of jaundice, weakness and apathy.
- Kunibos** (*Searsia undulata*)
Family: Mango
The berries are edible and were used to flavour mead (honey beer). You can also rub the berries between your hands to get rid of any hard skin.
- Kraalbos** (*Galenia africana*)
Family: Ice plant
An infusion of leaves is used as a mouth rinse, twice a day, against toothache. It can however blister the mucous membrane if used too often.
- Karoooemnoem** (*Carissa haematoarpa*)
Family: Oleander
The fruit is edible. It does however stain the teeth pale blue to black. Bees produce an excellent honey from the nectar. During times of drought game and domestic stock will browse on the plant.
- Pruimboom** (*Pappea capensis*)
Family: Litchi
Also known as the Indaba tree, this tree is traditionally used as a meeting point. The seed oil is edible but was also used to oil guns, make soap and restore hair.
- Geelgranaat** (*Rhigozum obovatum*)
Family: Jacaranda
It is heavily browsed on by stock as well as game. For this reason the plant rarely gets a chance to grow over a height of one meter.
- Klapperbos/Chinese lantern** (*Nymania capensis*)
Family: Mahogany
These flowers and seed-pods are excellent for use in floral arrangements and attract bees and a variety of nectar-seeking birds. Porcupines find the bark irresistible.
- Soetdoring/Sweet thorn** (*Acacia karroo*)
Family: Legume
The gum is edible and the roasted seeds can be used as a coffee substitute. It is also a good fodder tree and a decoction of the bark is given to cattle that have eaten from the poisonous iris family. The thorns can also be used as needles.
- Geelmeelkbos** (*Euphorbia mauritanica*)
Family: Euphorbia
The application of the white latex makes corns and warts disappear.
- Bitterbossie** (*Chrysocoma ciliata*)
Family: Daisy
A decoction of this plant is used for washing sores and wounds and is also a remedy for rheumatism and gout, gastric fever, jaundice, constipation and appendicitis.
- Kriedoring/Honey thorn** (*Lycium cinereum*)
Family: Potato
By drying all the parts of the plant, including the roots, and grinding to a powder you can create a wonderful perfume. The plant can also be used to form an impenetrable hedge.
- Skilpadbos** (*Zygophyllum morgansii*)
Family: Twinleaf
All parts of the plants can cause serious diarrhoea if used when in flower. Ostriches however find the flowers irresistible. A decoction of the root, when the plant is not in flower, is used to treat kidney problems and to ease backache.
- Olienhout/Wild olive** (*Olea europaea subsp. africana*)
Family: Olive
The fruit is edible and the leaves make a palatable tea and lowers blood pressure. It is also believed that to wash with a large bunch of leaves will release all the impurities from the body.
- Plakkiesbos** (*Cotyledon orbiculata*)
Family: Stone crop
The Khoi would eat a leaf of this plant after eating meat from an animal that has died from anthrax. A single leaf is also eaten to expel worms and once a day the juice of a leaf is swallowed for a sore throat. This plant is toxic to animals.
- Sosatiebos** (*Crassula rupestris*)
Family: Stone crop
Flowers are lightly honey-scented but this plant is not browsed on by stock.
- Karoovoeltjie** (*Aptossimum indivisum*)
Family: Sutura
An infusion of the whole plant is used to treat severe stomach ache (krimpsiekte) in sheep and an infusion of the roots is used to treat burns and scalds as well as scalp problems.



Gamkaberg Labyrinth

Labyrinths have been created widely across the globe in different subtle variations. In many ancient cultures, the circular shape is a symbol of unity and wholeness and represents nature. In the shape of a labyrinth this circle has been opened out to express the cyclical rhythm of nature and to copy natural spiral forms.

When compared with a maze, the labyrinth has one path leading to the centre and then out again. A maze hides its secret turns and dead ends, and employs multiple paths. The emotions stimulated by entering a maze are much more distracting than when compared with a labyrinth.

The most widespread use of the contemporary labyrinth is as a walking meditation. In the developed world we have created an intense leisure orientated society, but one that is too hectic and overloaded with choice to ensure a truly balanced lifestyle. Labyrinth walking can give us respite and also allow intuitive knowledge to suggest how to cope better with ourselves and the world around us.

An additional use is for problem solving where you essentially take a problem with you on a walk. This might be a challenging thought or the need to decide between several options. On the inward journey you ask a series of questions to deconstruct the problem and the outward journey is used to affirm positive action upon leaving the labyrinth.

You can also do it in the spirit of a child just to see where the path takes you.

We hope you have an enlightened visit to Gamkaberg.

