**Plants planted at Princess Vlei on August 4**

**By Stuart Hall**

Seventeen different plant species were chosen to include in planting up the area between the new wooden deck and the carpark area. Five Milkwood trees (Sideroxylon inerme) were planted around the carpark. Milkwoods occur naturally along the coastline of the Peninsula, and are relatively hardy and tolerant of the conditions experienced on the Cape Flats, as well as attracting birds and other animals with their fruit. Three Milkwood trees are also provincial heritage sites, and like Princessvlei this species is important in terms of our natural and cultural heritage.

The other species planted include three tall shrubs, four typical Cape Flats Sand Fynbos shrub species more typical of seasonal wetland habitats, seven shrub species and two hardy groundcover species common in drier strandveld vegetation on the Cape Flats. The tall shrubs were planted just behind the bench on the wooden deck to provide a backing and windbreak, and included Searsia lucida, Bitou - Osteospermum moniliferum and Thatching reed - Thamnochortus spicigerus.

Behind these plants in a bit of a depression in deep sandy soil the Cape Flats Sand Fynbos species were planted, which included Cape Flats Conebush - Leucadendron levisanus, and Rondevlei Spiderhead - Serruria foeniculacea, both critically endangered species that were historically more widespread in this part of the Cape Flats. The strandveld species included shrubs such as Wild Rosemary - Eriocephalus africanus, and Wild Sage - Salvia africana-lutea and Salvia chamelagnea, as well as Tortoiseberry - Muraltia spinosa, which are all edible plants with attractive flowers.

Otholobium bracteatum is a member of the pea family with clusters of small purple flowers in early summer, and Phylica ericoides has a pleasant growthform with small white flowers. Ruschia macowanii is a hardy sprawling groundcover vygie with pink flowers, that together with Kooigoed - Helichrysum patulum, was planted between shrubs to fill the gaps.