

VAN STADENS WILD FLOWER RESERVE

The Van Stadens Wild Flower Reserve is situated 35 km's west of Port Elizabeth adjacent to the N2 National Road to Cape Town. The 600 ha reserve was proclaimed in 1951, making it the oldest in the country which provides a sanctuary for indigenous flora and fauna. The Reserve provides a tranquil setting for outdoor family and educational activities in terms of biodiversity and culture. Two hiking trails can be walked: the river walk of 4 km's through fynbos vegetation and the forest walk of 6km's. The trails are suitable for reasonably fit persons who are advised to wear stout shoes and take a sunhat and drinking-water. **NO DOGS** are allowed.

The area is well known for its diversity of plant life where eco systems exist side by side as half of the area comprises of fynbos and half forest. In these areas a number of endemic, rare and threatened plant species can be found. **Cytanthus staadensis** named after the reserve is endemic and restricted to the Van Stadens catchment area. **Aster laevigatus** also endemic to the reserve was first discovered in 1902 but was rediscovered a century later after a mountain fire. The largest population in the world of **Cape Chestnut** (*Colodendrum capense*) can be found in the forest. **Fynbos** on the reserve supports populations of protea's, erica's and ground orchids in abundance. Van Staden' is also home to the endangered **Smith's Dwarf Chameleon**, found on the Ladies Slipper and the **Hewitt's Ghost Frog**.

Apart from nature a glimpse into Xhosa culture in the form of an interpretive cultural display can be seen which depicts huts, a kraal, maize store and an Iziko (cooking place). There is also a cave with a **Petro Gliff painting** believed to be the most Southerly located engraving in Southern Africa. Excellent views too can be seen of the Ladies Slipper, the river gorge, and the famous Van Stadens Bridge, for many years the longest span in the southern hemisphere.

NOTE: Use of the area is entirely at your own risk