

Wild-harvesting fynbos flowers: Still a viable business? # 474

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Abstract:

The economic viability of businesses involved in fynbos flower wild-harvesting is assessed. The model promoted by Flower Valley Conservation Trust assumes that payment for picking rights creates an incentive for landholders to conserve untransformed fynbos vegetation, and that this arrangement creates opportunities for small business development in an area where work is scarce. Any breakdown in this model is concerning, as the most threatened fynbos land is privately owned and wildflower harvesting is a source of employment in impoverished communities. Using data from the Flower Valley harvest team between 2008 and 2015, it is found that harvesters face stagnant and falling real prices for all wildflower species except for *Brunia laevis*—a valuable species which has surged in popularity—leading to several potentially harmful environmental practices. As a result, industry bodies are calling for a harvesting ban on this species. It is shown that should a ban occur, these harvest teams will become unprofitable at current market prices, which could compromise the sustainable wild harvesting of other fynbos species used in floristry.

Reference: Fainman, M. and Conradie, B. 2019. Wild-harvesting fynbos flowers: Still a viable business?
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Full text: [FainmanConradie.pdf](#)



UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP

The UCT Knowledge Co-op facilitated this collaborative project with
Flower Valley Conservation Trust.

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