

Fantastic
FYNBOS



As South African gardeners, we are incredibly fortunate to have the fynbos species as part of our potential planting palette. The rich yellows, oranges, reds, pinks, greens and greys that are available in a variety of spikey, fluffy, strappy, leathery textures make fynbos gardens one of the most beautiful and rewarding to grow. While many plant species are dormant during winter, fynbos puts on a spectacular show and attracts a wonderful array of wildlife.

Many gardeners find fynbos to be temperamental: difficult to establish and notoriously known to die for no apparent reason. We know that by choosing plants that will thrive in the prevailing conditions of your area, your chances of achieving gardening success are increased tremendously. Nevertheless, even though fynbos is endemic to the Cape it has successfully been grown outside of its climatic region, including varieties such as, Proteas, Leucospermums and Leucodendrons.

By understanding how fynbos thrives in the wild, you will greatly increase your chances of successfully growing fynbos in your garden. Here are few simple Do's and Don'ts to assist you.

DO:

- Test your soil to make sure it is slightly acidic (a pH of 5 to 6 is preferable). Soil probes and test kits are available at most garden centres.
- Plant before rainfall starts to give plants the best change to establish root systems.
- In winter rainfall areas, plant in autumn and early winter.
- In summer rainfall areas, plant in spring.
- Position plants in full sun where the air is able to move freely. They are able to tolerate windy conditions.
- Make sure that the soil is able to drain very well. In very sandy or very clayey soils, compost is beneficial as it improves soil structure and moisture retention.



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MY TOP PLANT PICKS FOR CREATING A MAGICAL FYNBOS GARDEN:

- *Acmadenia heterophylla*
- *Aloe plicatilis*
- *Aristea major*
- *Coleonema album*
- *Erica cerinthoides*
- *Eriocephalus africanus*
- *Helichrysum cymosum*
- *Hermannia pinnata*
- *Leucadendron 'Blush'*
- *Leucospermum Cordifolium*
- *Leucospermum 'Gold Dust'*
- *Leucadendron laureolum*
- *Metalasia muricata*
- *Protea compacta*
- *Protea repens*
- *Restio species*
- *Scabiosa incisa*
- *Selago "Purple Turtle"*
- *Watsonia borbonica*



DON'T:

- Do not plant without planning your planting layout first. Make sure that you understand the growth habit and size that each plant will reach to ensure plants achieve their full potential.
- Don't plant close to walls and trees as this impairs free air movement and results in plants scorching in the heat.
- Don't add bonemeal, manure, fertiliser or composts high in phosphorus (like mushroom compost) and nitrogen when planting.
- Avoid planting plants too deep. Ensure that they are planted at the same level they were when they were in their pots.
- Don't disturb fynbos plants' roots. Take care when removing them from pots or bags and ensure that they are planted in the correct position the first time to avoid having to move them at a later stage.
- Don't cut back into old wood or where there are no healthy green leaves.



DO:

- Cover the bed in a thick layer of mulch once planted. This will keep the soil cool, suppress weed growth and assist with moisture retention in the soil. Keep the mulch away from the stems. Pine needles are ideal.
- Water your fynbos plants until they are well established or for the first two to three years, preferably in the mornings. Imitate rainfall when watering: water infrequently but deeply. This will also encourage strong root establishment.
- Prune fynbos to mimic wildfires in nature. This will ensure that plants don't become tall and leggy, but maintain a compact, bushy structure and prolong the plant's lifespan.
- Cover your plants with frost cover in frost areas. Well established plants should be able to tolerate light frost.

