

## NARGS TOUR

# Western Cape Spring Bulbs 2025

A Tour Offered by Greentours

15 DAYS

August 21<sup>th</sup> - to September 4<sup>th</sup> 2025

**Tour Leaders: Paul Cardy & Julia Corden**

**\$7530 USD double, \$8200 USD single**

The Cape Floral Kingdom is renowned for its floral diversity, particularly in its geophytes and succulent flora. This tour will cover a large swathe of this biodiverse area at the height of spring, targeting a wide range of habitats with many endemic and localized species. Starting in Cape Town, with Table Mountain looming over the world-famous Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, we will head up the West Coast to the famous arid plains of Namaqualand where the normally barren landscape transforms into a floral paradise. The granite hills near Springbok are filled with rare bulbs and the plains below beset in a sea of daisies. The isolated Kamiesberg holds a range of endemics which we will seek out before heading south via the quartz plains of the Knersvlakte, rich in localized succulents. Heading up the escarpment, we arrive at one of the most diverse areas for bulbs in the world – Nieuwoudtville. We cross the mighty Cederberg to explore the rich valley full of bulbs and pockets of endemism. Heading out to the coast, the flower fields of West Coast National Park beckon, sandwiched between the Langebaan Lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean. Nearby is the bulb rich town of Darling which we will take in before finishing off our tour in the lush Cape Peninsula where we explore the coastal mountains and their diversity of Proteas and other flora.



*Bulb rich fields at Nieuwoudtville*

Our tour begins with a visit to a local nature reserve in the middle of the city, the last remnants of a much larger habitat.

The following morning, we begin our trip in earnest, heading north along the Cederberg Mountains, stopping along the way to admire the bulb rich mountain slopes with several range restricted *Sparaxis*, *Moraea* and *Gladiolus* species. We make our way further north where the mountains transition into the flat and arid Knersvlakte, covered in distinctive quartz stones and filled with rare succulents and bulbs. Heading into Namaqualand proper we will start seeing the distinctive cerise theme with *Pelargonium incrassatum*, *Lapeirousia silenoides* and *Babiana curviscapa*, all attracting the same long-tongued fly pollinator. The large communal nests of Sociable Weavers are a feature of the region and often cover whole trees and telephone poles. Goegap Nature Reserve has one of the biggest displays of annuals with oranges, pinks and yellows covering the flat plains interspersed with *Babianas*, *Ferrarias* and *Ornithoglossums*. The rocky hills are home to a range of interesting desert adapted plants from towering quiver trees to the large leaved *Massonia bifolia* as well as some interesting wildlife including the strange monotypic Dassie Rat. Exploring more of these rich hills to the West of Springbok, we search for special *Lachenalias*, and marvel at the diversity of mesembs scattered throughout the rocks. The vast Namaqualand National Park is covered with a sea of orange *Dimorphotheca sinuata* which hide a diversity of special bulbs beneath their petals. The regal *Gladiolus equitans* and porcelain petalled *Lapeirousia arenicola* are some of the many species we will search for. To the east of the park the Kamiesberg massif rises to 1700m, towering over the rocky plains and holding a number of endemics including the stunning *Romulea kamiesbergensis*, *Aloe khamiesensis* and *Hesperantha latifolia* all among the inselbergs.



*The desert burst into life at Goegap Nature Reserve*



Heading back south, we will explore another part of the unique quartz strewn Knersvlakte with its unparalleled diversity of succulents before heading up the escarpment to the Bokkeveld Plateau, and the town of Nieuwoudtville, widely regarded as the bulb capital of the world. The dolerite and sandstone soils surrounding the town host over 300 bulb species, many from the *Iridaceae* family. We have two full days to explore the areas around the town where tall yellow *Bulbinella nutans* dominate the fields among many species of *Lachenalia*, *Nemesia*, *Moraea*, *Romulea*, *Ixia* and *Geissorhiza*. The breathtaking *Romulea sabulosa* steals the show although tough competition is provided by the arrow marked velvet petals of *Lapeirousia oreogena* and the tulip-like cups of *Hesperantha vaginata*. The town keeps on providing spectacles, with one of the largest populations of Quiver Trees (*Aloidendron dichotomum*) covering the hillsides north of the town.



*Romulea sabulosa* at Nieuwoudtville

We next head to the mountainous Koue Bokkeveld, rich in orchids and many more Iridaceae including the spectacular *Moraea villosa*, *Moraea galaxia*, *Gladiolus recurvus*, *Gladiolus hyalinus* and more! Orchids could include *Batholina burmanniana*, *Disa biflora*, *Satyrium coriifolium* among others. The following full day we will continue to explore sites around the area including those in the Tulbagh valley, where the deep purple petals of *Sparaxis grandiflora grandiflora* beckon along with the crimson *Babiana villosa* and scarlet *Geissorhiza erosa*. Heading out into the plains we make a special stop among the farmlands for the rare *Geissorhiza tulbaghensis* and with *luck Moraea tulbaghensis* as well. We have the rest of the next day to explore the West Coast National Park which will be covered in flashy *Asteraceae* displays and harbouring specialized endemics in the mix of coastal sands and granite outcrops that surround the large lagoon. This is also our best chance to encounter several antelope species including the graceful Bontebok and imposing Eland. The park supports a diversity of



avifauna including the endangered Black Harrier and striking Southern Black Korhaan. The following morning will see us travelling through the sandy coastal plains of the West Coast before arriving at the small town of Darling, rich in spectacular endemic bulbs including the localized *Geissorhiza radians* and similarly striking *Babiana rubrocyanea*.



*Flowers, mountains and the sea – West Coast National Park*

An exploration of the rich Cape Peninsula will be a fitting end to the tour with a recent burns providing an opportunity to discover rare bulbs that only flower in the first year after a fire.



*The Quiver Tree Forest at Nieuwoudtville*

## ITINERARY Cape SPRING FLOWERS 2025

### August 21th –September 5th

Day 1, Aug. 21: Arrival Cape Town

Program: Group arrival at Cape Town International Airport. Transfer to B&B. Afternoon visit to local nature reserve.

Expect to see: *Moraea aristata*, *Sparaxis bulbifera*, *Leucadendron floridum*, *Protea scolymocephala*

Day 2, Aug. 22: Cederberg Bulbs

Program: Head north to Vanrhynsdorp stopping for bulbs along the way.

Expect to see: *Gladiolus venustus*, *Lachenalia mutabilis*, *Lapeirousia jacquini*, *Babiana ecklonii*

Day 3, Aug. 23: Goegap Nature Reserve

Program: Drive up to Springbok stopping along the way for roadside specialties. Afternoon in Goegap Nature Reserve.

Expect to see: *Pelargonium incrassatum*, *Lapeirousia silenoides*, *Ornithoglossum vulgare*, *Ferraria ferrariola*

Day 4, Aug. 24: Nigramoep-Namaqualand Hills

Program: Drive from Springbok through the hills towards Nigramoep, botanizing along the way

Expect to see: *Geissorhiza namaquensis*, *Cyanella cygnea*, *Tromotriche aperta*

Day 5, Aug 25: Namaqualand National Park

Program: Explore the vast Namaqualand National Park and the many habitats in the surrounding hills

Expect to see: *Dimorphotheca sinuata*, *Gladiolus equitans*, *Lapeirousia arenicola*, *Lachenalia anguinea*

Day 6, Aug 26: Kamiesberg

Program: Full day exploring the inselbergs of the Kamiesberg massif and around Leliefontein

Expect to see: *Romulea kamiesbergensis*, *Aloe khamiesensis*, *Hesperantha latifolia*

Day 7, Aug. 27: Nieuwoudtville

Program: Drive to Nieuwoudtville, stopping in the Knersvlakte for unique succulents. Visit the Nieuwoudtville Wildflower Reserve.

Expect to see: *Argyroderma delaetii*, *Lapeirousia oreogena*, *Hesperantha inaequalis*, *Bulbinella latifolia*, *Daubinya capensis*

Day 8, Aug. 28: Nieuwoudtville

Program: Full day exploring the sites around Nieuwoudtville, visiting the Quiver Tree Forest, Trekpad and Hantam Botanical Gardens.

Expect to see: Quiver Trees, *Romulea sabulosa*, *Bulbinella nutans*, *Gladiolus watermeyeri*, *Romulea monadelpha*, *Hesperantha vaginata*

Day 9, Aug. 29: Ceres Valley

Program: Explore Matjiesfontein Farm and head south towards Ceres via Pakhuis Pass, Middelberg Pass and Gydo Pass

Expect to see: *Romulea pudica*, *Gladiolus uysiae*, *Gladiolus speciosus*, *Wurmbea variabilis*, *Satyrium coriifolium*

Day 10, Aug. 30: Ceres Valley

Program: Explore burn sites in the Ceres Valley with potential for many orchids and bulbs

Expect to see: *Bartholina burmanniana*, *Satyrium erectum*, *Gladiolus hirsutus*, *Satyrium pumilum*

Day 11, Aug. 31: Tulbagh

Program: Drive across to Langebaan via the Tulbagh Valley and Swartland renosterveld

Expect to see: *Moraea villosa*, *Geissorhiza erosa*, *Sparaxis grandiflora*, *Babiana hirsuta*, *Geissorhiza tulbaghensis*

Day 12, Sept. 1: West Coast National Park

Program: Full day exploring the diverse West Coast National Park with fields of daisies and special bulbs.

Expect to see: Fields of *Dimorphotheca pluvialis* and *Arctotis hirsuta*, *Ferraria crispa*, *Lachenalia pallida*, *Babiana tubiflora*

Day 13, Sept 2: Darling

Program: Drive to the town of Darling and explore the local lowland and hillside reserves, finish the day in Cape Town



Expect to see: *Geissorhiza radians*, *Babiana rubrocyanea*, *Ixia abbreviata*, *Ixia maculata*, *Gladiolus meliusculus*

Day 14, Sept. 3: Cape Point/Scarborough Burn

Program: Make our way back down the Cape Peninsula to the large burn near Scarborough, and visit Cape Point

Expect to see: *Geissorhiza humilis*, *Mimetes hirsutus*, *Witsenia maura*

Day 15, Sept. 4: Kirstenbosch

Program: We have a morning to visit the world famous Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens on the slopes of Table Mountain

Expect to see: *Leucadendron argenteum*, *Protea nitiida*

While in the Cape Town area, if weather permits, we will visit Table Mountain.

Day 16, Sept 5: Departures



*Aloe arborescens*

## **TOUR LEADERS**

Paul Cardy & Julia Corden

## **WHAT'S INCLUDED**

All meals from dinner on Aug. 21 to lunch on Sept. 9. Services of your leaders. Please note: Drinks, tips, and items of a personal nature such as travel insurance, are not included. If you decide to arrive before Aug. 21 or leave after Sept. 5, you can contact Greentours to book additional accommodations - [enquiries@greentours.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@greentours.co.uk)

## **WALKING**

Most of the botanising will be close to the road with just a few miles of walking on some days – ideal for photography. Altitude will not be a problem. The best flower viewing is usually in fairly flat areas, with some mountain paths being explored.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Mostly three star local guesthouses with warm showers. In some small towns, the group will be split across nearby establishments.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transport for the duration of the trip will be via minivan and other vehicles as required.

## **GRATUITIES**

Gratuities are included for meals but tips for bus driver and the guides are at your own discretion.

## **CLIMATE & EQUIPMENT**

We are visiting the area in spring, which brings mild temperatures ranging from 5-27 °C. Some days can be really chilly, sometimes with rain, and other days can be really hot. The mountain peaks can sometimes be dusted with snow. It's often around 10-15 degrees. We advise taking a warm jacket, walking boots, and also lots of sun cream!

## **Information Related Registration, Payments, and Cancellation**

You must be a NARGS member to register. If you need to renew your membership or to join the society, please do so via the NARGS website ([www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org)) or contact Bobby Ward at [nargs@nc.rr.com](mailto:nargs@nc.rr.com) if you have questions or need help.

The cost for the tour is \$7530 USD per person based on double occupancy; single occupancy \$8200 USD.

Registration will be on a first come, first serve basis. Space on this tour is limited to 20 guests. Your space is not guaranteed until a deposit is paid. The deposit is \$1500 USD.

Before submitting your deposit, send an email to [tour@nargs.com](mailto:tour@nargs.com) to confirm space availability.





The spectacular orchid - *Bartholina burmanniana*

### **Deposit Payment**

To pay the deposit for the tour, use the PayPal link on the NARGS website ([www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org)). After logging onto the website, click on the "Donate" button at the top of the homepage. Then type Western Cape Tour in the "Purpose of Donation" box, select Educational trips from the "Program" picklist, select Other for the "Amount" list, then fill in the \$1500 USD deposit amount, and then click the "Add to Cart" button. On the next page, check that the amount is correct and then click the "Checkout" button. On the next page, select "Secure checkout" with Credit Card or with PayPal account as the "Payment method" and confirm your address. You will then be routed to the PayPal website where you can pay via either a PayPal account (if you have one) or select Pay with Debit or Credit Card.

### **Final Payment**

NARGS will email a reminder regarding final payment information. The preferred method for final payment is by check from a U.S. bank denominated in USD. The check should be payable to NARGS, note Western Cape Tour on the memo line of the check, and be mailed to NARGS, POB 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619-8604. Payment can be made via credit card, PayPal, postal or bank money order, or a check from a non-U.S. bank but must be denominated in USD and must include a 5% surcharge to cover banking fees. Failure to make final payment by the specified date (TBA) will result in reservation cancellation and full loss of the deposit.

## **Cancellation**

Cancellation requests must be submitted in writing to NARGS by the person making the reservation. Cancellations after deposit is paid but prior to the final payment due date will forfeit 50% of deposit. Failure to submit final payment by due date will result in forfeiting 100% of deposit. Cancellations after final payment is made but more than 30 days before start of the tour will forfeit 50% of tour cost. No reimbursements or credits will be given for cancellations within 30 days of start of tour unless another person can be found to fill the space. Each registrant is urged to obtain private trip insurance to cover any exigencies requiring cancellation. If the tour is cancelled by NARGS for any reason, all payments minus banking fees and incurred expenses will be refunded to registered participants. If the tour is cancelled by NARGS, any person who had previously cancelled will not be entitled to this refund.

## **Information Related to Insurance, Waivers, and Public Health Requirements**

### **Insurance**

The tour price does not include insurance to cover costs associated with medical treatment, repatriation, flight cancellations, baggage loss, travel interruptions, cancellation fees, or other expenses. Each registrant is urged to assess their personal situation and to obtain private insurance to cover these costs if needed.

### **Waiver of Liability and Use of Photos**

By submitting a tour deposit, you are acknowledging that you are aware of the risks associated with travel and that you will not hold NARGS or others associated with the tour responsible for any delays; changes in itinerary, staffing, or accommodations; injuries, illnesses, or deaths; or any circumstances beyond the control of NARGS. At the time of final payment, you will be required to sign a waiver releasing NARGS and others associated with the tour, from any losses, liability, or claims associated with your participation in the tour and allowing use of any photos taken during the tour.

### **Public Health Requirements**

All participants must comply with public health requirements for international travel in their country of residence and in the tour host country. During the tour, participants may be in close contact with other participants and the general public. To the extent possible, participants should comply with U.S. and local public health guidelines, and must comply with all local public health requirements. If you do not feel well during the tour, let the tour guide know. The guide will assist in locating medical services, but these services may be distant and less extensive than those available at home. Each participant will be individually responsible for paying the cost for these services and associated transportation.

### **QUESTIONS?**

If you have any questions, please contact Julia Corden at [julia.corden@icloud.com](mailto:julia.corden@icloud.com)