

Local plants are best, says Terraforce

Terraforce, Cape Town based retaining block manufacturer, has recently completed work on a comprehensive guide to South Africa's indigenous plants, especially those that require little watering and are adapted to our harsh climatic conditions.

Developed and researched in collaboration with Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens -- especially Ernst van Jaarsveld, well known horticulturalist and author of gardening books -- the guide aims to give the reader an easy to use introduction into the indigenous plants suitable for growing on plant supportive retaining walls and erosion control measures around South Africa.

Part of the motivation behind the project stems from a lack of knowledge the average South African has of indigenous plants. According to Ernst van Jaarsveld "there is an increased demand for indigenous plants but a lack of knowledge on 'where to plant what' and how to establish an indigenous garden."

Holger Rust, Director and Founder of Terraforce, believes that raising awareness of and interest in local plant diversity is imperative if we wish to safeguard of our environmental resources in the future:

"Apart from a string of rights that we all claim to have, there are a number of obligations or responsibilities that we as citizens and consumers have to fulfill. The responsibility that I feel is most important, especially in construction, is the one that obliges each and every one of us to do all we can to leave our habitat as we found it or even better, in an improved condition."

"This requires the courage to shake off all self-serving delusions, face squarely the results of our actions and where necessary change course. The publication of Terraforce is of course good for our business, as it helps to add substance to our products, but we see it also as a modest contribution toward conserving resources and bio-diversity"

South Africa is a dry country, with an average rainfall of less than 500 mm per annum. Often, too little rain brings crippling droughts and too much brings devastating floods. Added to this is an increasing population with legitimate claims to an adequate supply of fresh water to drink, to cook with and for sanitation.

As the demand for this precious resource grows, so will its price as well as legislation to discourage excessive use. The sad fact is that, although gardens are often singled out for water restrictions and bans, *many people overwater their gardens*. That is one of the reasons why gardens consume between 30 % and 50 % of all domestic water used.



This Terraforce wall photographed in Istanbul recently is planted almost exclusively with waterwise plants of S.A. origin. These adaptable plants were also seen on similar sites in Southern California and Australia.

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Water wise gardening or landscaping cuts down on that waste, while preserving the beauty of the garden, the diversity of plants and adds to the value of any property.

With careful planning, correct plant choices and good maintenance, a water wise garden can survive with minimal water during the dry season.

Indigenous plants are also far better adapted to local climatic conditions and should be the preferred choice when you green up your Terraforce retaining wall.

Not only do the leaves, flowers and seeds of most plants contain essential nutrients for many insects and birds, the foliage and stems also provide a perfect habitat for them or are used for nesting purposes.

Guide will be available at all Terraforce Outlets.

Website: www.terraforce.com

Email info@terraforce.com



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The brochure cover features a collage of images: a tall orange-flowered plant, a butterfly on a purple flower, and various other colorful flowers. The Terraforce logo is a stylized white 'T' on a green background.

Did you know?

Aside from pressing problems such as global climate change (global warming), there are strong arguments that water shortages are likely to be the 21st century's most burning environmental issue.

The Environmental Media Services, based in Washington DC, recently asked a few of the USA's most influential environmental thinkers what they thought are the biggest environmental issues facing the 21st century.

Lester Brown, president of the World Watch Institute drew a strong link between overpopulation and water deficits.