

Wild Rooibos - Understanding the position of *Aspalathus linearis* within the fynbos biome

The Fynbos is one of South Africa's Biodiversity Hotspots. For many decades the wonder of this ecosystem has attracted the attention of botanists, plant scientists, ecologists and other researchers, as well as farmers, government agencies and land managers.

Over a lengthy period of time many individuals and institutions have collected valuable information and shared this with their particular communities. Increasing volumes and complexity of data present the user with tremendous opportunities, but also massive challenges. SynBioSys Fynbos – Rooibos has been developed to help users understand the best management options of this precious eco-system. It is an ever-growing and flexible information system, with software designed to use current



Wild rooibos is currently sustainably harvested by the Heiveld Co-operative Ltd. - South Africa

public data to contribute to the best possible management decisions - using the most up-to-date information to create a powerful analytical tool.

A One-Stop System for land managers in rooibos areas

As a pilot we have developed the Rooibos Module for use in the western fynbos regions that are home to wild and cultivated populations of *Aspalathus linearis* (rooibos). Rooibos tea plantations are economically important, but are also a threat to local biodiversity. Large areas of the habitat of naturally occurring

wild rooibos has been destroyed - and with it the accompanying fynbos species.

The rooibos module focuses on the conservation of wild rooibos - and on increasing an improved understanding of spatial patterns and processes and thus to make improved management decisions.

Contact

Noel Oettle

Environmental Monitoring Group
dryland@global.co.za

Joop Schaminee

Alterra / University of Wageningen
Joop.Schaminee@wur.nl

www.synbiosysrooibos.org

Synergies for Conservation:

The information system brings together a wide range of data on the ecology, geography and sustainable use of rooibos at the levels of species and habitat.

The entire system is data driven, open ended and large datasets can be analysed.

It incorporates a GIS platform for the visualisation and analysis of layers of information on both levels.

An integrated information system

SynBioSys Fynbos

An information system on sustainable management of biodiversity in the Cape Floristic Region



Rooibos Module

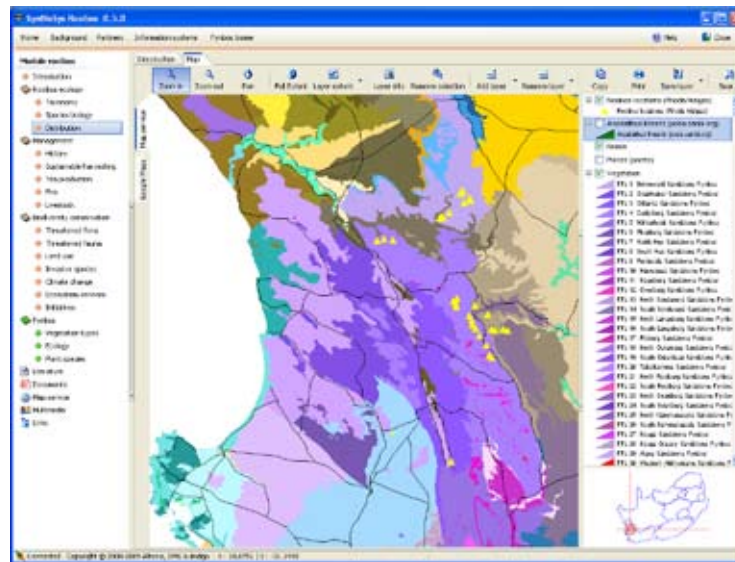


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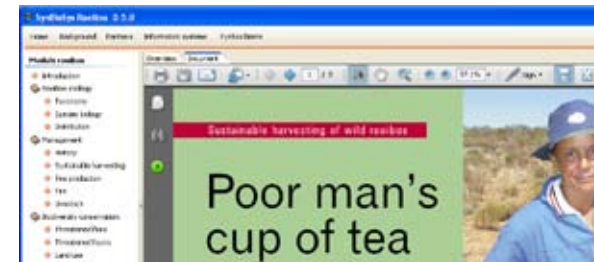


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Creating synergies



The GIS functions are key component in the system and can be customised and printed



Documents can easily be accessed: relevant articles, papers, presentations and multimedia is stored as part of the system



The system includes access to various external functions such as Google Earth

Explore

SynBioSys Fynbos - Rooibos allows you to explore the complex interactions between plants, physical environment, spatial patterns and people in a variety of formats: text, papers, presentation, GIS functions, multimedia etc.

Analyse

The integration of data bases and applications such as Google Earth, combined with access to the ALUKA specimens creates unprecedented opportunities for thorough and innovative analysis of a wide range of issues.

Manage

The application allows the user to create own maps and to export and print synergic data sets and results of analysis. The results can be practically used by land managers and conservation agencies.

Access

SynBioSys Fynbos stores a wide range of documents, from pdf files to PowerPoint presentations. This allows easy access to public "grey" literature, and thus fosters enhanced networking and synergies.



Vegetation data is stored in the system-allowing for comprehensive analysis

Partnerships

This data portal is the result of collaboration between Alterra Wageningen, Indigo development & change and the Environmental Monitoring Group, and is supported by the University of Stellenbosch, SANBI, CapeNature, GCBC, Department of Agriculture Western Cape, CAPE and the Council for GeoScience.