

# RESPONSIBLE LAND MANAGEMENT



Compliance with environmental planning and building regulations is essential to protect biodiversity and natural beauty.

Residents and property owners in the Greater Wilderness Area must prioritize responsible and eco-sensitive development to safeguard the region's unique landscape and biodiversity. Even minor departures from regulations gradually erode the area's wildness and charm. Collectively, these changes threaten the distinctiveness of Wilderness and its surroundings.

## Building on your Land

### Regulations

The Wilderness Local Spatial Development Framework sets out guidelines to prevent the overdevelopment of the area.

The George Integrated Zoning Scheme aims to prevent overdevelopment by assigning specific zoning regulations to each property, which govern the development rights within each zone.

For example, some properties cannot be subdivided or are restricted in the number and size of dwellings that can be built. Some properties have topographical features that limit the available building space (it is illegal to build on slope that has a 1:4 steepness ratio).

#### What can we do?

- Do your due diligence in terms of your property and know your building rights and building restrictions.
- Find out under which zone your property falls and stick to the rules.
- Adhere to the environmental and building regulations that apply to your property.

**How to find out what regulations cover your property?**  
Contact WALEAF at [waleaf@langvlei.co.za](mailto:waleaf@langvlei.co.za).

### Best Building Practices

Building in an environmentally responsible manner, which reduces your impact on indigenous forests and wildlife, is a key aspect in keeping the magic of Wilderness alive.

Large houses with concrete walls, extended lawns and paved driveways are slowly destroying our natural environment.

#### What can we do?

- Design around nature and keep the footprint of your house small to minimise the clearing of indigenous trees and plants.
- Reduce the footprint of lawns and paved areas and embrace having a wild garden.
- Use reclaimed and recycled, instead of new, materials.
- Ensure your home is insulated to reduce energy use for heating and cooling.
- Create an eco-pool instead of a chlorine or saltwater pool which can be a great water source for animal life.
- Install rainwater tanks and grey water recycling systems.
- Mature indigenous vegetation should be incorporated into the design of new houses or structures. Choose suitable indigenous plant species that occur in the Greater Wilderness Area and that are endemic to your site. (See indigenous landscaping)

*Select local architects and landscapers with knowledge of landscape and climate, and whose designs are based on pre-design site visits*

## How to Live with Wildlife

One of the joys of living in The Greater Wilderness Area is the rich diversity of wildlife and the thrilling sightings that you will encounter in your garden. Let's help them thrive by providing safe habitats and avoid negative impacts.

#### What can we do?

- Fence your house if absolutely necessary, not your land.
- Encourage birds, insects and animals into your garden with indigenous plants and water sources dotted around your property.
- Reduce lawn coverage.
- Don't use poisons in your home or garden. There are effective natural pesticides and herbicides on the market.
- Pets can be a threat to wildlife. Abide by the pets by-law: the limit is 2 dogs and 2 cats in a residential area. Put a bell on pet collars to alert wildlife.
- Grow your vegetables in a cage to protect them from hungry animals and birds.
- Grow a food forest for the local wildlife to enjoy.
- Create accessible water sources for the wildlife around your property.

#### Unwanted Visitors?

Don't kill snakes or other animals, contact your local snake catcher or Cape Nature to remove them from your property



## Fencing your Property

**In terms of the 2023 George Zoning Scheme By-law, fences are not a right, and have to be approved before they can be constructed.**

**Fences are a threat to wildlife, hindering the safe and easy passage of animals through wildlife corridors. Animals and birds can also get trapped in the wires.**



#### What can we do?

- Check with the municipality if you are allowed to erect a fence.
- Fence around your home building footprint, not your property. This will allow space for Bushbuck and other animals to feed and breed and help create wildlife corridors in your neighbourhood.
- Remove all non-essential fences.
- Make fences more visible.
- Use animal friendly fencing – with spaces for small animals to fit through.
- Avoid barbed wire or replace the top two barbed strands with smooth non-barbed wire.
- Routinely re-tension loose wires (especially after fires).
- Increase spacing between strands (minimum 30 cm).

## Embrace the Darkness

**Light pollution adversely affects animals, birds, insects, and plants, disrupting their natural behaviors and ecological roles.**

For plants, artificial light disrupts photoreceptors, affecting flower bud production, while nocturnal insects crucial for pollination decline due to light pollution, impacting plant reproduction.

Additionally, artificial light confuses nocturnal pollinators and migrating birds, leading to exhaustion and fatalities.

Minimizing light pollution is vital for preserving ecosystem balance and species survival.

#### What can we do?

- Use fewer lights and buy lights with low lumens. The lower the watt the lower the lumen (visible light emitted).
- Use directional lighting, aim lights downwards and put a cover on them.
- Install motion detectors.
- Join the call for bylaws to regulate lighting to minimise light pollution.
- Spread the word and educate your neighbours



# OSCAE and Other Permits

## Required when building or clearing vegetation

If your property falls within the **Outeniqua Sensitive Coastal Areas Extension** (OSCAE) area, the disturbance and/or clearing of any vegetation and earthworks requires a permit from the local municipality.  
Apply for an OSCAE permit or report illegal activity:  
Nosisa Bulose on nbulose@george.gov.za or Tel: 044 801 9156.

If you wish to trim or clear any protected vegetation covered in the **National Forest Act**, apply for a permit or report illegal activity: mkoen@dffe.gov.za or Tel: 044 302 6900



The Keurboom is the fastest growing tree in South Africa, with an average growth of 2.6m per year. This makes it a good choice for planting in conjunction with invasive alien clearing.

## Gardening Tips

**Know the vegetation** on your property – both indigenous and non-indigenous and work with what your land has to offer.

Use **Xeriscaping** techniques to design water wise gardens.

Dedicate areas for **nectar producing** (indigenous) flowers, this will encourage birds, butterflies, bees and other forms of wildlife by planting species that will attract them.

Create landscapes that require **minimal lawn** and use of lawnmowers and avoid grass-blowing – limits noise pollution.

Adopt a range of **permaculture principles** on your land if you grow your own food.

Plant **endemic indigenous** trees (i.e. trees that are naturally found in the area) as these will thrive better than trees from other parts of the country.

**Don’t clear indigenous forest** to plant non-endemic trees, grasses, flowers and other non-indigenous plants.

Use **recycled water** where possible to water your garden.

If your property falls under a **Critically Biodiverse Area** (CBA) “Ecosystem Threat Status” or “Ecological Support Area Status”, under the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) you will require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for any clearing.

Report illegal clearing: Johan Oelofse  
Johan.Oelofse@westerncape.gov.za.

**How to find out what regulations cover your property?**  
**Contact WALEAF at waleaf@langvlei.co.za.**

## Plant an Indigenous Garden

Why planting an indigenous garden is essential:

- Crucial for supporting biodiversity and maintaining healthy ecosystems.
- Native species provide essential habitats and food sources for local wildlife, while their adaptation to local conditions reduces water and resource needs.
- Conservation of the local flora preserves the natural heritage and protects endangered species.
- Indigenous plants help prevent soil erosion, improve water conservation, and require less maintenance compared to exotic species, promoting ecological balance and contributing to the health and beauty of the local environment.

By choosing indigenous plants, gardeners play a vital role in sustaining ecosystems and conserving natural resources for future generations.

## Local Indigenous Plants



Keurboom | Virginia oroboides



Bietou | Osteospermum moniliferum



Common Wild Currant | Searsia pyroides



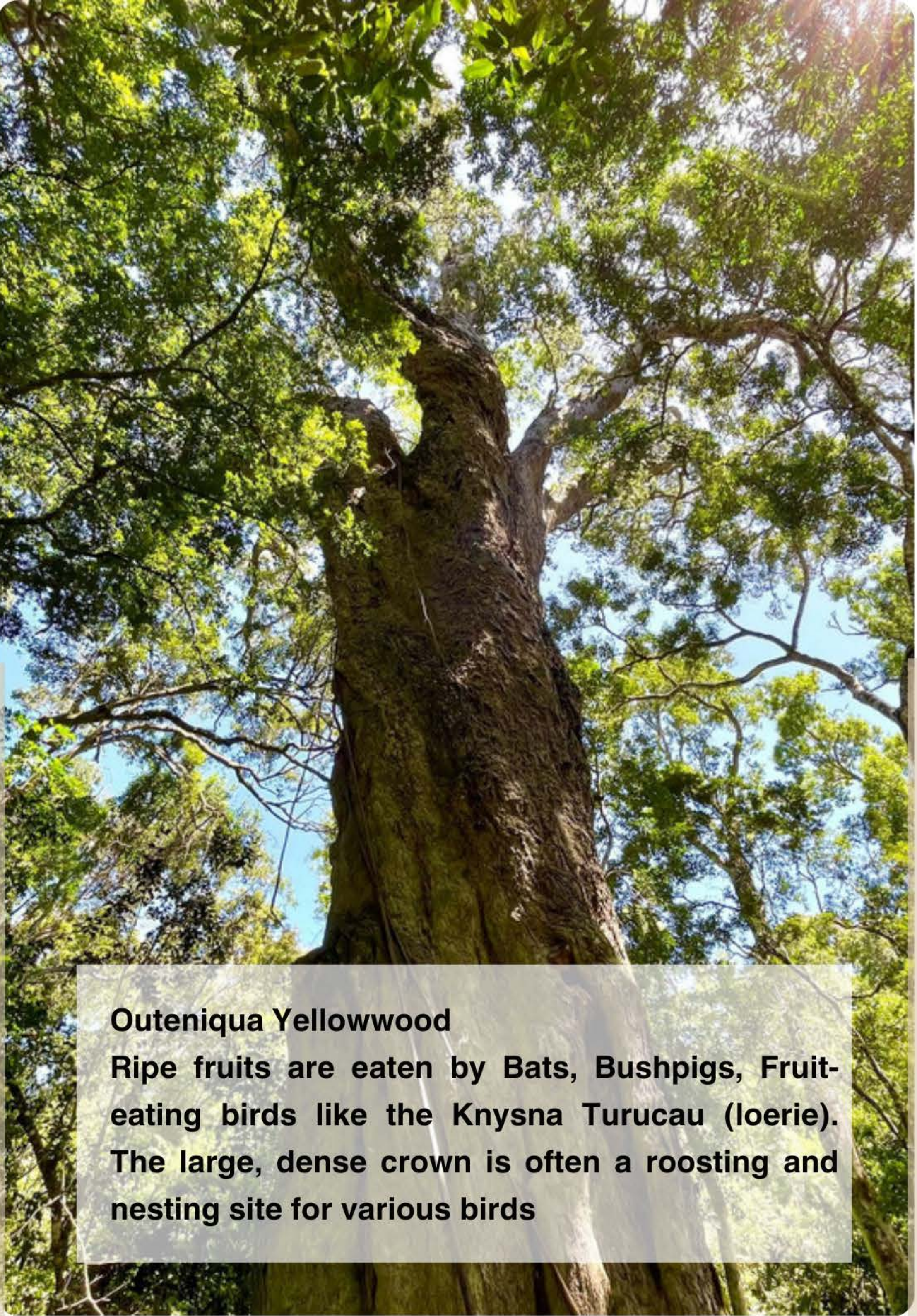
Sagewood | Buddleja salviifolia



Tree fuchsia | Halleria lucida



Outeniqua yellowwood | Afrocarpus falcatus



**Outeniqua Yellowwood**  
**Ripe fruits are eaten by Bats, Bushpigs, Fruit-eating birds like the Knysna Turucau (loerie).**  
**The large, dense crown is often a roosting and nesting site for various birds**

## Remove Invasive Vegetation

**Our Responsibility**  
According to the National Environment Management: Biodiversity Act (NEM:BA), landowners are legally responsible for clearing alien trees, bushes, etc.on their land.

Declaration of Invasive Species: when you purchase your property you must be given a list by the seller of any alien invasive species present. This means that you are now responsible for the clearing of those invasive plants from your property.

**Why?**  
Clearing invasive alien plants **reduces your fire risk** as they burn hotter and faster than indigenous plants. Hotter fires destroy indigenous seeds that are waiting to germinate under or on the soil. Clearing invasive alien vegetation **saves water** e.g. one adult eucalyptus tree can use up to 1000l of water per day!

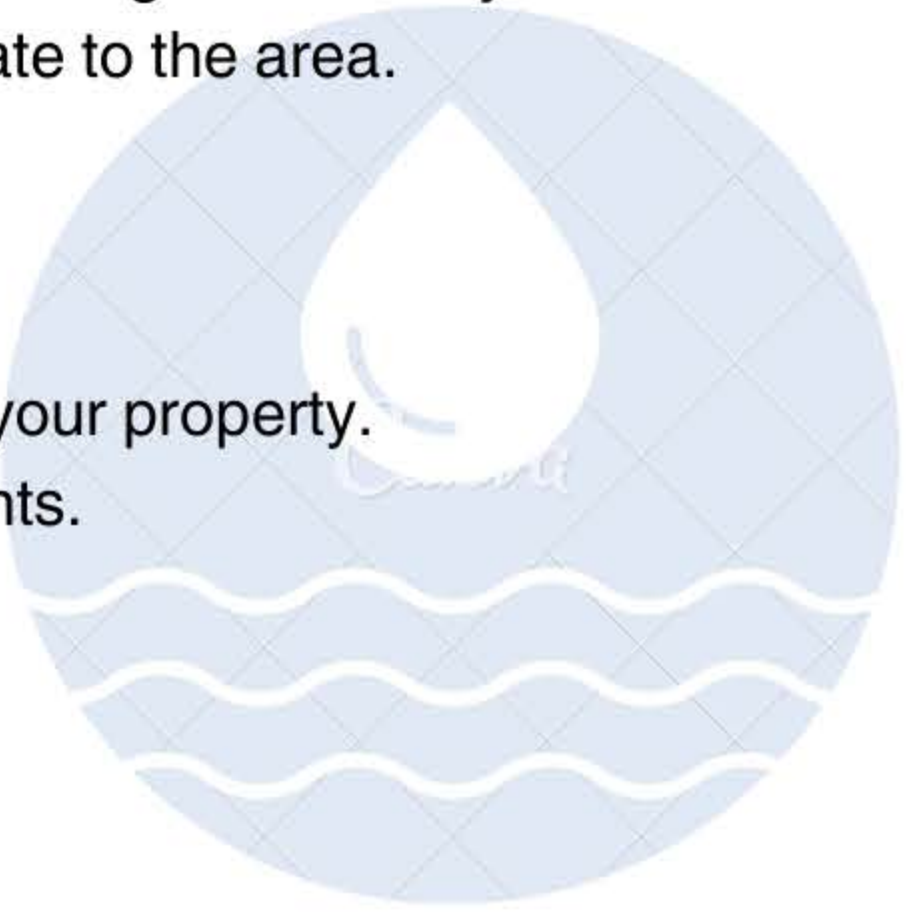
**What can we do?**

- Ring barking is a good way to control invasive alien trees. Frill around the tree with an axe so it dies standing. The tree will die off slowly and create a nursery environment for new, indigenous pioneer trees to grow.
- Use mechanical saws, loppers or chainsaws and cut the tree as low as possible to prevent coppicing.
- After the initial clearing revisit the site after six months for maintenance and hand pull any new growth.
- Revisit again in 12 months for more maintenance.

## Be Waterwise

Wilderness is in a water stressed area and this situation will be further impacted by climate change and by increased development as more people relocate to the area.

- What can we do?**
- Install rainwater tanks.
  - Reduce the amount of lawn on your property.
  - Plant indigenous waterwise plants.
  - Reuse water in your home.



## Protect & Restore Indigenous Forests

Under the National Forest Act, Milkwoods, Yellowwoods, Cheesewoods and many other trees are **protected** and require a permit to prune or transplant.

If you wish to trim or clear any vegetation covered in the National Forest Act, apply for a permit or report illegal activity: mkoen@dffe.gov.za or Tel: 044 302 6900

You can help **reforestation** by planting indigenous trees on your land to assist the regenerative process where aliens have been cleared.

**Planting diverse trees** is important, bring in pioneer species first like Keurbooms, and Bitou. This will encourage birds to come in and start spreading seeds for other trees. Plant pioneers in the middle with slow growing species around them.

## Identify Invasive Species



Black Wattle Tree



Black Wattle leaves and flowers



Black Wattle Bark



Rooikrans Tree



Rooikrans Leaves and Flowers



Rooiktans Bark