



ARC INFRUITEC-NIETVOORBIJ

LNR INFRUITEC-NIETVOORBIJ

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ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij Horticulturists maintain two genebanks

Horticulturists at ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij maintain two living genebanks, namely the fynbos and olive genebanks. While the fynbos genebank is totally indigenous, the olive genebank consists of only imported genetic material.

The fynbos genebank is a collection of plants of mostly Proteas, Leucospermum (pincushions) and Leucadendron (cone bushes). Currently having 1219 accessions, the collection is not static as living plants are prone to pests and diseases, as well as drought and other environmental incidences. This genebank is used to conserve and have valuable genetic material (pollen and stigmas in the flowers) that can be used in the breeding programme to develop new improved cultivars for use by the South African flower industry.

People may wonder why the genebank is not conserved in the form of seed. Proteaceae seed lose its viability very quickly and can therefore not be stored for many years.

The olive genebank, of which the ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij Horticulture Division is a custodian, aims to have the majority of the cultivars used in the industry, established in an orchard. Twenty three table cultivars and 37 oil cultivars, as well as some wild ecotypes are in the field collection currently. Olive products used in the culinary (food) industry and for cosmetic and herbal purposes originate mostly from Mediterranean countries and have been imported during the last century. The Western Cape with similar climate conditions is thus a good area for maintaining a collection of olive trees.

For more information, contact Dr Emmy Reinten, Programme Manager: Horticulture on (021) 809 3375 / ReintenE@arc.agric.za

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