

SMOOTH BLOODLILY



Haemanthus sanguineus

Smooth Bloodlily/Veldskoekblaar

PLANT TYPE: BULB

SA DISTRIBUTION: EASTERN CAPE, WESTERN CAPE

SOIL TYPE: SANDY, CLAY, LOAM

FLOWERING SEASON: LATE SUMMER, AUTUMN

PH: ACID

FLOWER COLOUR: RED, PINK

ASPECT: FULL SUN

This March, we celebrate the *Haemanthus sanguineus*, commonly known as the Smooth Bloodlily. A striking and unusual bulbous plant native to South Africa, it is well-suited to the natural landscape of the Garden Route. With its vibrant blooms and adaptability, this species is an excellent choice for local gardeners and an essential contributor to the region's biodiversity.

VELDSKOENBLAAR



Characteristics

Haemanthus sanguineus is most recognizable during its flowering phase, which typically occurs from late summer to early autumn. Its distinctive blooms resemble a shaving- or paintbrush. The flowers are bright red to crimson and are held on short, sturdy stalks. These are surrounded by fleshy, bright green bracts that add to the plant's dramatic appearance.

The leaves of this species emerge after the flowering period and are broad, leathery, and often tinged with red margins, making it an attractive plant throughout its growing cycle. The plant can reach heights of 15–25 cm, making it a compact yet striking addition to gardens.

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Why the Smooth Bloodlily?

Haemanthus sanguineus is naturally found in rocky slopes and sandy soils, thriving in areas with seasonal rainfall. It prefers well-drained soils and benefits from being planted in sunny or partially shaded spots. This plant is drought-tolerant, relying on underground bulbs to survive dry periods, making it ideal for low-maintenance, water-wise gardens.

For residents of Outeniquasbosch, the Smooth Bloodlily is an excellent addition to rehabilitation areas. Its low water needs align with the estate's focus on sustainable landscaping and the use of locally indigenous plants. Its vibrant red flowers will add a pop of color to the natural scenery, enhancing the estate's visual appeal.

By incorporating *Haemanthus sanguineus* into your garden, you celebrate the beauty of South African flora while supporting the natural ecosystem. This plant reminds us that even the smallest additions can make a big difference in preserving our local environment.

VELDSKOENBLAAR



The More You Know...

The Smooth Bloodlily follows a fascinating and highly adaptive lifecycle aligned with the seasonal rhythms of its native habitat. Its lifecycle begins in late summer to early autumn when its vibrant crimson flower head emerges directly from the soil, a striking display that appears before any foliage. This flowering phase is brief but impactful, attracting pollinators like bees and beetles. Following pollination, the plant produces its broad, leathery leaves, which lay flat against the ground and persist throughout the cooler, wetter months of autumn and winter. As temperatures rise and the dry summer season approaches, the leaves wither, and the bulb retreats underground, entering a period of dormancy to conserve energy. This dormancy ensures the plant's survival during harsh conditions, allowing it to reemerge year after year with its iconic flowers, a true spectacle of nature's resilience.