

Naturalised and invasive succulents of southern Africa

Succulent plants are usually highly esteemed for horticultural reasons, be it as garden and landscaping plants in suitable climates, or for indoor cultivation elsewhere in the World. Millions of plants are produced each year by the international horticultural industry for amenity purposes, and hobby collectors throughout the World cheer this group of plants for their multitude of shapes and colours.

The present book has a very different focus, and it might come as a surprise for many that succulents - often originally cultivated for pleasure, food or other uses - can also be problematical invasive weeds. The example of the 'Prickly Pears' (*Opuntia* spp.) naturalising in Australia more than 100 years ago, and the probably first successful biological control campaign initiated in the early years of the last century are well known.

The team of authors responsible for the compilation of the present book shows us that the Prickly Pears are only the "tip" of an iceberg, so to say, and that there are numerous other succulent plant species that are already naturalised in Southern Africa, and that pose the threat of becoming problematical invasives.

The authors of this study are to be congratulated for their effort in bringing together this beautifully illustrated synthesis of available botanical and historical information relating to the many succulents that have become naturalised in Southern Africa.

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