

# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

## 22 MAY 2021 THEME: OUR SOLUTIONS ARE IN NATURE



**B**iological diversity resources, such as plants, animals, natural resources and ecosystems, are the pillars upon which we build civilizations. The economy and human well-being depend on biodiversity for food, clean water, flood protection, erosion control and much more. Over half the world's global domestic products are dependent on biodiversity. It is important to note that the ongoing decline of biodiversity poses risks to society, economy and ecosystems.

While there is a growing recognition that biological diversity is a global asset of tremendous value to future generations, the number of species is being significantly reduced by certain human activities. Given the importance of public education and awareness about this issue, this is the reason why "International Day for Biological Diversity" is celebrated annually on May 22.

Umgeni Water as a water utility in South Africa recognises the important role of biodiversity, particularly ecological infrastructure in supplementing build-up infrastructure by providing nature based solutions to water supply. Under its catchment management unit the organisation has a number of initiatives that promote the protection and restoration of biodiversity. These include:

- Aquatic weeds management at operational sites;
- Terrestrial alien invasive plant management at operational sites;
- Soil erosion and catchment restoration through grassland rehabilitation and sustainable land use management at Upper Mkomazi;
- Wetland assessment and prioritisation for rehabilitation;
- Land-use impact assessment on water resource quality and quantity with recommendation for biodiversity restoration, maintenance and protection and
- Stakeholder engagement to promote collaboration on implementing biodiversity related interventions.

### Benefits of Biodiversity

- Supplements engineering infrastructure in providing water supply.
- Increases the stability and resilience of ecosystems.
- Promotes climate regulation.
- Benefits agriculture. More food = more options for growing food and providing for our growing population.
- Provides an environment rich with medicines and related products.
- Supports ecotourism and recreation.

### Be a part of the Solution:

- Plant only indigenous species to save water and prevent the spread of alien species.
- Donate towards a good cause to support biodiversity research and protection.
- Practice Meat Free Days .
- Reuse, recycle and upcycle waste materials.
- Donate clothes and furniture to a worthy cause like your local welfare society.
- Activate a community enviro watch group to be vigilant about illegal dumping.

### Did you know?

- Across the world, forests are home to about 80% of terrestrial biodiversity. People are dependent on the forest for their livelihood.
- 31% of the Earth's land is covered by forests. One large tree is able to supply a day's supply of oxygen for four people.
- South Africa is the third most biodiverse country in the world.
- South Africa is included in the list of the world's megadiverse countries.

## WE'RE PART OF THE SOLUTION

#ForNature #RestoreAndReviveBiodiversity

**For more information**

<https://www.cbd.int/biodiversity-day>

<https://www.earthday.org>

