

# DDS Projects takes home six SALI Awards of Excellence

Along with the trophy award for the Best Environmental Landscape Work, DDS Projects has walked off with six awards at the annual South African Landscaping Institute (SALI) Awards of Excellence.



Vrede & Lust Wedding Garden

The awards aims to encourage emerging trends in landscaping, including sustainability and ecological aesthetics. According to owner Danie Steenkamp, the awards are definitely a feather in their cap. “It is especially important for us to be recognised for ecologically friendly work that also carries a strong indigenous and water-wise component. The SALI Awards are considered to be the pinnacle in our industry and we are delighted to have so many projects acknowledged by an industry body.”

The trophy was awarded for a veld garden established by DDS Projects in Robertson in 2015. The almost one-hectare project involved blending the landscaping into the natural environment surrounding the private residence utilising species naturally found in the endemic renosterveld. Large plantings of indigenous grasses were used to create a seamless transition between the natural setting and man-made structures. The grasses also then form the biome for the veld to further seed and reinstate the original natural renosterveld over time. In addition, local stone and compacted earth was laid for permeable walkways flowing through the landscape.

## Rehabilitating the surrounding veld

According to the SALI judging panel, DDS Projects managed to effortlessly achieve the brief of the client, which was to rehabilitate the surrounding veld into the garden. “In an area of the Little Karoo that is renowned for its poor soil and huge variations in climatic conditions, these obstacles have been overcome by the correct use of plants and their suitability for the site.”

Three other projects received double gold, gold and merit awards for category wins and in the Water Wise rankings. The Robertson Veld Garden project took the honours in the Environmental Landscape Work category, while the Vrede & Lust wedding garden was recognised in the Landscape Construction with Design by Others category and a Bischopscourt Garden in Landscape Construction with In-House Design. The Vrede & Lust project also received a gold award for Specialised Landscape Construction. The SALI judging panel described this as a stunning well-installed world-class design, equal to the best international gardens.

Steenkamp is of the opinion that water wise landscaping is the way forward and therefore appreciates the recognition in this category even more. "In view of the current water restrictions and the potential of this becoming an ongoing issue, I reckon that this creates an ideal opportunity for landscapers to embrace a change of thought on water usage. We need to consider the long-term water needs of the landscapes that we create. With this in mind, I am particularly excited about a current project that we are establishing this winter at the Ou Handelshuis in Simondium in collaboration with Franchesca Watson. Our aim is to create a garden that will need no water once established and be able to thrive in our climate," concludes Steenkamp.

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