

# New species of iris discovered in the Langeberg Mountains, South Africa

October 3 2022, by Wiida Fourie-Basson

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A beautiful new species in the Iridaceae family was discovered in the Langeberg in South Africa. The species name '*Geissorhiza seracina*' (common name: Cherry Satin flower), is inspired by the deep cherry-pink color of its petals—with seracus meaning cherry. Credit: Brian du Preez

South African botanist Brian du Preez has discovered a beautiful new

species from the Iridaceae family high up in the Langeberg Mountains of the Western Cape, South Africa.

The name of the new species, *Geissorhiza seracina* (common name: Cherry Satin flower), is inspired by the deep cherry-pink color of its petals—with *seracus* meaning cherry.

Brian says he was hiking a two-day long trail of 40 km with friend and mentor, Prof. Peter Linder, on the Boosmansbos Wilderness trail to Grootberg, when he first found the plants in early December 2021.

"I took photos, but did not collect a specimen. It was only when I got back home and sent the photos to Dr. John Manning, an expert on the iris family, that we realized it is likely a new species," he explains. Dr. John Manning works at the Compton Herbarium at the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

A week later Brian went back up the mountain, hiking 34 kilometers in nine hours, to collect a [herbarium](#) specimen for examination and description of the morphology of the species. Some bulbs were collected for ex situ conservation in the Stellenbosch University Botanical Garden.

Together with another leading expert on the iris family, Prof. Peter Goldblatt, senior curator at the Missouri Botanical Gardens in St Louis in the U.S., they recently published a description of the new species in the *South African Journal of Botany*.

Brian says it is one of his most exciting finds over the past ten years. "New Iridaceae species are rarely found, and I mostly find new legume species. It is not often that a new species turns out to be so beautiful."

Brian is currently pursuing a Ph.D.-degree in botany at the University of Cape Town (UCT) under the supervision of Prof. Muthama Muasya

(UCT) and co-supervisor Prof Léanne Dreyer at Stellenbosch University (SU).

With the latest discovery, the number of *Geissorhiza* species from South Africa now stands at 106, of which 24 were discovered since 1985. While the genus is taxonomically relatively well-understood, [new species](#) continue to be discovered in outlying or less accessible parts of the Greater Cape Floristic Region.

For now, this beautiful species is known only from this one locality.

**More information:** P. Goldblatt et al, *Geissorhiza seracina* (Iridaceae: Crocoideae), a new high-altitude species from the Langeberg in southwestern Western Cape, South Africa, with notes on *G. outeniquensis*, *South African Journal of Botany* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.sajb.2022.09.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sajb.2022.09.014)

Provided by Stellenbosch University South Africa

Citation: New species of iris discovered in the Langeberg Mountains, South Africa (2022, October 3) retrieved 23 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-10-species-iris-langeberg-mountains-south.html>

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