

## Nemesias

Nemesias like sun and well-drained sandy soils, making them perfect for the Cape. Flowering occurs around August and promises to impress with a shimmering colourful display.

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Nemesias are easy to grow and require little effort. They promise a range of showy colours from late winter through to spring. Not only do they fit in well with other garden plants, these annuals are great for window boxes and container gardening.

Nemesias are native to Africa, with many species endemic to the Cape. They became well-known to the outside world by accident. Cookery book author Hildagonda Duckitt came across some *Nemesia* seeds after leaving her farm near Darling one day in 1890. She collected these seeds and sent them to the English nurserymen of Suttons, who further developed them into the Nemesias we have today. The seeds were those of *Nemesia strumosa*.

Because of their characteristic petals, Nemesias are popular garden plants. Here in the Cape, our wild Nemesias are extremely attractive, even though the flowers are rather small. The common mountain species, *Nemesia versicolor*, appears in mixed shades of blue, mauve, white and yellow.

The spring-flowering Bloubekkie (*Nemesia barbata*) is also endemic to the Cape but less common on the slopes. *Barbata* means bearded in Latin and it gets its common name from the appearance of the lower lip of its petal. It has also been known in horticulture for some time.

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No need to get those winter-blues, there is enough colour available at Starke Ayres Garden Centre to keep you smiling.