

No Xenophobia in my garden...

Contributed by Jackie During
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It's true; the different species live in happy cohabitation in my small garden. There is a definite pecking order, no denying that. But the rules are simple: the bigger the bird, the closer to the front of the bird feeder queue it gets to stand. Doves are first in line, then Cape Weavers, then the Cape Bulbuls and Pied Acacia Barbets, followed by House and Cape Sparrows, then come the little guys, Cape White Eye and yes even the occasional Southern Double Collared and Malalchite Sunbird eat the pears I put out. (My sister helped herself to one of the pears, which I keep in a beautiful, Italian hand made glass bowl. She spat out the mouth full with a "yak, they are floury". I primly told her the pears were bird food, not human food.)

The bird bath has the same pecking order, except here the queue is far longer as Cape Scrub-robins and Canaries, Karoo Scrub-robins, Karoo Prinia, Karoo Thrush, Grey Tits and Speckled Pigeons join in; no prizes for guessing which bird heads this queue. But there is a discrepancy in this happy coalition, albeit a happy one. Of course, me being a bunny hugging vegetarian, and the fact that my big white cat is one too (he will only eat exorbitantly expensive, vet prescribed, imported food; sticks his nose up at anything less) has lead to the garden having a huge mouse population. Striped field mice adorn the feeders, birdbaths and every bush with a flower on it, or should I say which HAD a flower on it. Mice reeeeeeally like flowers...sigh. But the mice and birds eat, bath and live happily...ever after. Or at least in my garden they do.