



**Urban Creep I**

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Johannesburg emerged as a humble village back in 1886. That very year, in July, a discovery of gold on the Langlaagte farm set off a chain reaction. This event marked the inception of the Witwatersrand Gold Rush, a catalyst for an influx of people and the rapid expansion of Johannesburg into the wild, untamed surroundings. The needs of the growing population spurred the city to adopt a European-inspired, grid-based urban planning system, aiming to streamline the urban layout effectively.

The grid-based design in Johannesburg featured streets intersecting at right angles, instilling a sense of order and control onto the natural terrain. While this arrangement boasted infrastructural advantages, it offered little space for indigenous flora like the *Eucomis comosa*, commonly known as the Pineapple Lily, to flourish and gain appreciation amidst the regimented structure. Despite its distinctive inflorescence, the plant was uprooted to accommodate the pursuit of order and optimal efficiency.

Basking under the African sun, the *Eucomis comosa* displays its adaptability to a diverse range of soil conditions. Deeply embedded within indigenous and traditional practices, the Pineapple Lily has upheld its cultural significance and managed to withstand the urbanization of the city. With the gold reserves dwindling and Johannesburg "Golden Age" gradually fading, the indigenous *Eucomis comosa* reclaims its space, gradually taking root and establishing itself amid the urban gardens. It proudly showcases its rosette of vividly coloured green leaves, offering a distinct allure, exuding a sense of hope and rejuvenation, symbolizing the tenacity of nature against the odds.

Text by Dr Laura De Harde

Medium	Mixed media mono print
Height	75.00 cm
Width	56.00 cm
Artist	Sue Martin
Year	2023

