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Putting the Cedar back in the Cederberg



The Cederberg in the North West Cape with its rugged mountains, flowering fynbos and ancient, indigenous landscape is a spectacular sight but, ironically, the endemic Clanwilliam Cedar tree – (Widdringtonia Cedarbergensis) after which the area is named – is virtually nowhere to be seen.

Historic manipulation of the natural veld through frequent burning to stimulate grass growth for livestock grazing, indiscriminate felling for buildings, furniture and telephone poles and more frequent fires (owing to environmental changes and climate change), has nearly wiped out these beautiful trees, and the species is classified as endangered on the global Red Data List and faces a high risk of extinction. However, a partnership between business and conservation hopes to address the plight of the Cedar by committing to replant the species back into the environment.

The Cedar Restoration Project: Restoring Cedar trees to the area

Just Trees – the largest wholesale specimen container-grown tree nursery in South Africa – and sister company, red espresso® – pioneers of the world's first Rooibos tea espresso – have given their long-term commitment to assisting CapeNature in an effort to save the endangered Clanwilliam Cedar tree from extinction.



“The endemic Clanwilliam Cedar occurs only in the Cederberg Mountains, some 250km north of Cape Town, and it represents one of 1000 surviving conifer species in the world.” says Fanie Bekker, Executive Director of Operations: CapeNature.

The Cedar grows in fire-prone fynbos vegetation which burns every 11-15 years. The tree depends on seed germination for regeneration of the species, but only reaches seed-bearing maturity after 20 years. The impact of global climate change, concomitant with too frequent fires are inhibiting this process,

While CapeNature is well-positioned to care for Cedars that have been planted into the Cederberg, they rely on partnerships – like the one with Just Trees and red espresso® – to help sustain the project.

Dedicated to preserving and restoring the home of Rooibos tea that is sourced for red espresso®, both companies became aware of the plight of the Cedar tree and wanted to be involved in helping to restore it. It seemed only a natural fit for Just Trees – with its state-of-the-art nursery, expertise and commitment to support the protection of South Africa’s indigenous flora – to undertake propagating the seeds and replanting them into the wild.

“On our 42-hectare nursery outside Paarl, the first batch of 2000 seeds has been sown and these saplings are already 5-10cm high. We undertake to re-establish one Clanwilliam Cedar for every twenty trees Just Trees sell. This will equate to at least 1000 trees this year, which more than doubles the current number of Cedars being planted out each year.” explains Carl Pretorius, who is the Founder of both red espresso® and Just Trees. “It’s really great that we’ve been able to find a worthy cause to support that fits so well with our two businesses. We trust that our customers will enjoy participating with us in assisting CapeNature in restoring the Clanwilliam Cedar into the Cederberg.”

More about Just Trees

Just Trees is known for having revolutionised the traditional nursery business in South Africa with its modern, scientific approach and massive scale of operations. The team at Just Trees rigorously maintains the quality and consistency of all their trees in stock – which are grown in 10L, 40L, 100L, 400L and 1000L recyclable containers and currently number over 50 species.

www.justtrees.co.za

ENDS





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