2024

ANNUAL **REPORT**

SUSTAINABLE CEDER

www.sustainableceder.org
The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.
Nelson Mandela

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Foreword

Sustainable Cedar's journey began with a simple yet profound understanding: the Clanwilliam cedar trees are an integral part of this region's ecosystem and its cultural heritage. These ancient trees, resilient yet vulnerable, remind us of the deep connections between nature, community, and history—a bond that we are committed to preserving and nurturing.

As I reflect on this year's accomplishments, I am filled with both pride and gratitude. Despite the challenges brought on by climate change, a late winter, and heavy rains, we have made remarkable strides. Together, we planted over 4700 cedar trees and engaged with local communities.

This progress would not have been possible without the support of our incredible donors, partners, and volunteers. Your trust and commitment have fueled our journey, allowing us to expand our reach and impact.

Looking forward, we remain steadfast in our vision: a thriving cedar ecosystem, supported by resilient communities and ongoing conservation efforts. Thank you for standing with us as we work to protect these magnificent trees and the heritage they represent. Each contribution—from financial support to volunteer hours—has been vital to our mission, and we are deeply thankful.

Dawie Burger
Founder

Introduction

OUR MISSION

The Clanwilliam ceder, found only in the Cederberg region 250km north of Cape Town, is a species unique to this remarkable landscape. Over the past two centuries, its numbers have declined dramatically, and today, the Clanwilliam cedar (Widdingtonia cederbergensis J.A.Marsh) is critically endangered.

At the heart of the Cederberg's ecological revival, Sustainable Ceder is leading the effort to re-establish this iconic tree, bringing together conservation efforts to protect and restore the Clanwilliam cedar for future generations.

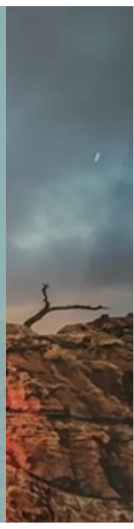
Founded in 2023 as a registered non-profit organization, Sustainable Ceder is driven by a team of passionate individuals living and working in the heart of the Cederberg. With an unwavering commitment to restoring the area's natural habitats, our focus is on conserving and revitalizing the Clanwilliam cedar for the benefit of the entire ecosystem and the people who call the Cederberg home.

Our mission is grounded in a collaborative approach. Sustainable Ceder acts as a central link, connecting a network of organizations, community partners, local stockholders, and visitors who share our vision for a thriving cedar population. By strategically coordinating efforts across sectors, we aim to maximize the impact of conservation initiatives while uplifting and empowering local communities.

Through the integrated conservation model, we not only protect a vital species but also contribute to the well-being and sustainability of the Cederberg region. Sustainable Ceder's work is as much about preserving nature as it is about building lasting relationships, fostering stewardship, and ensuring that the Cederberg remains a vibrant landscape for generations to come.

OUR VISION

A healthy and resilient Cederberg enviroment where the long-term survival of the Clanwilliam Cedar population is secured. We believe that achieving this vision requires close collaboration with local organizations and community members. Together, we can make a lasting impact for current and future generations.



Our Team

Dawie Burger
Founder

Prof.Peter Linder
Environmental Scientist

Andre Gerber
Financial Advisor

PJ Robertson
Marketing Manager

Daleen de Villiers
Conservation Consultant

Lizette Burger
Administration

Steven Bekker
International Volunteer

James Joubert
Local Tree Planter

Dwayne Farmer
Local Tree Planter

Franklin Scheepers
Local Tree Planter

Denville Zass
Local Tree Planter

Sustainable Ceder Launch Event

Sustainable Ceder celebrated a successful launch with an auction to raise funds for conservation efforts in the Cederberg. The lavish summer soirée, held under the stars, was hosted by the renowned filmmaker, cook, traveller, and Cederberg enthusiast, Justin Bonello.

This event, titled "An Evening Dedicated to Conservation and Heritage," was a celebration of the region's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. Attendees were treated to inspiring talks from distinguished guests, including Shihaan Domingo, co-founder of The Domingo Effect; Simon Witbooi, also known as HemelBesem, an acclaimed multifaceted artist; Jeremy Shelton, a freshwater conservation biologist; and Enver Duminy, CEO of Cape Town Tourism. Each speaker shared their unique perspectives and insights on the intricate challenges and promising opportunities that lie within the Cederberg, highlighting the importance of collaborative conservation efforts to preserve this precious landscape for future generations.

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals and organizations who contributed to our success. A special thank you to The Diamond Works and Aimee Kimmel Lentz for their exceptional coordination of a memorable evening. We also extend our gratitude to Cape Nature, Cederberg Conservancy, Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve & Retreat, Kromrivier Cederberg Park, Cederberg Wines, and Driehoek Wines for their invaluable support. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to the talented artisans who generously provided items for the auction: Claylat Studio's Roche & Rachel Muller, Rewild-Art's Nelis Singels, Christina Walters, and Lachlan Matthews. We are also sincerely thankful to our friends Jeremy Shelton, Dom Wills, Geoff Spiby, and Andrew Putter for their ongoing support.

A special acknowledgment must be given to our dedicated board members, Prof. Peter Linder, Andre Gerber, PJ Robertson, and Daleen Burger, whose leadership is invaluable, as well as to Matthew Philogene for his exceptional work in designing our website.

SUSTAINABLE CEDER
sustainableceder.org
THE DIAMOND WORKS
INSTITUTE

SEED VIABILITY

The age of trees affects seed viability. Seed viability testing is conducted using a simple water float test.
All collected seeds are inspected for obvious signs of non-viability, such as discoloration or misshaping.

Viable seeds are stored in a material bag and kept in a freezer to remain dormant until planting in autumn.

FROM SEEDS TO SAPLINGS

In collaboration with Cape Nature,cedar seeds were collected from healthy, mature trees (aged 25-100 years).
This effort involved hiking into remote regions of the Cederberg to access the remaining populations and required careful planning and coordination to navigate challenging terrains.

Optimal seed collection periods:

- Seeds were collected during the seasons of March-May and September to October when the cones on the trees began to turn from brown to a grey colour as they dry and the seeds ripen.
- After the seeds were collected, cones were left to air-dry further until they cracked open, releasing the seeds.

Special attention was given to larger pods, as they typically contain bigger seeds capable of producing stronger saplings.

This year, we successfully collected seeds that are key for reforestation and propagation, built a stronger parthership with Cape Nature through working together in the field, and improved our seed harvesting techniques to grow stronger,healthier saplings.

NURSERY OPERATIONS

Overview

Our nursery serves as the cornerstone of our tree-planting endeavors. It is dedicated to the cultivation of Clanwilliam cedar saplings, ensuring a steady and healthy supply of young trees for planting. By adhering rigorously to sustainable and organic practices, the nursery exemplifies environmental stewardship.

NURSERY DEVELOPMENT

Our main nursery is located at Driehoek Farm in the Southern Cederberg.

Earlier this year, we expanded our network with the establishment and growth of satellite nurseries.

These nurseries are strategically located to serve different areas and communities:

- Dwarsrivier (Cederberg Wines)
- Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve and Retreat
- Heuningvlei: Established in partnership with Cape Nature and Bushmanskloof
- Kleinvlei Community: Serving the Northern Cederberg
- Algeria: Supporting efforts in the Southern Cederberg.

HOW WE CONNECTED WITH THE COMMUNITY THIS YEAR:

- We connected with the elderly community members, who shared their knowledge with the younger generations, helping to build skills and bringing the community together.
- Our nurseries are growing strong, thanks to the teamwork and combined efforts of people from across the community.

PLANTING EQUIPMENT AND MANUFACTURING

To date, our team has successfully built 11 planting backpacks

Our planting equipment is crafted from repurposed backpacks, sourced through either generous donations or strategic purchases. These backpacks are carefully modified to include a single tray capable of holding up to 128 loose capsules. For added versatility, users can easily adjust the number of capsules carried to suit their comfort level by removing excess capsules to lighten the load.

Each tray, when loaded with young saplings, weighs approximately 13–15 kg—designed to mirror the ideal weight of an overnight pack for optimal carrying comfort. To achieve durability without compromising portability, we use lightweight materials such as aluminium square tubing, flat bars, and corner pieces in the construction process.

This attention to detail ensures that our planting equipment remains both robust and lightweight, facilitating efficient and comfortable tree-planting operations across a variety of terrains and environmental conditions.

Equipment Details:

- Planting Tray Backpacks:
  - 128-sapling tray (20 mm capsule)
  - 98-sapling tray (25 mm capsule)
- Digging Tools: Shovels and planters
- Measurement Tools: Sapling rulers
- Communication Devices: Handheld radios
- Data Loggers: Android phones
- Water Backpacks: 16–20 L capacity for early planting (weather-dependent, typically in May)

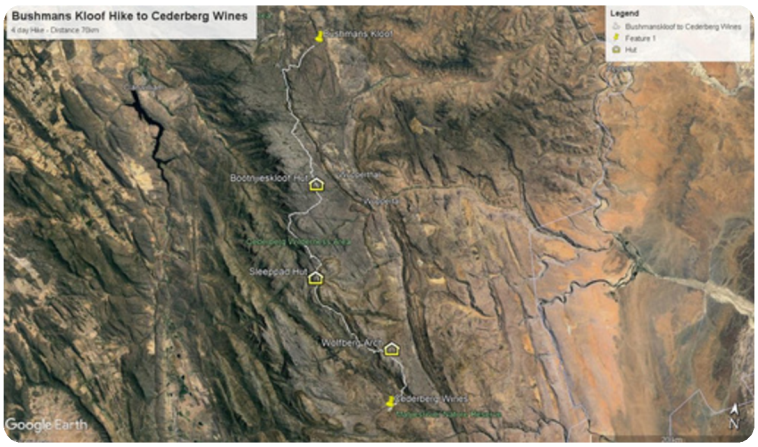
KEEPING IT WILD

A Weekend in the Cederberg

The Cederberg is a place where nature's wild beauty meets the passionate efforts of conservationists and nature lovers. At the beginning of May, the "Keeping it Wild" event brought over 200 guests to the scenic Driehoek Tourist Farm to connect, share, and learn about the vital work being done to protect this unique wilderness. 80 dedicated volunteers gathered before sunrise to plant 1,000 Ceder saplings in the mountains.

While the volunteers trekked into the mountains, the children and some parents stayed at the site for a day filled with fun and educational activities.
The weekend was made even more special by the presence of incredible conservationists who shared their knowledge and passion.

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made this weekend possible. Special thanks to Diamond Works, Mountain Club of South Africa, Driehoek Farm, Cederberg Wines, Cederberg Brewery, Driehoek Wines, Love Our Trails, Black Diamond South Africa, Culturelab Kombucha, and Cape Nature.



The 4-day journey began at Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve and Retreat and traversed the Northern Cederberg Mountain Range through the historic range of this iconic tree.The hike ended at Cederberg Wines in the Southern Cederberg

A JOURNEY TO RESTORE THE CLANWILLIAM CEDAR:

A Four-Day Awareness Hike

This season, we marked Sustainable Ceder's first anniversary with a remarkable 70 km, four-day awareness hike. Led by Gerhard and Michelle Thom of Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve, the group of conservationists and friends trekked through the Cederberg Mountains, planting 100 cedar saplings along the way.

Starting at Bushmanskloof, they traversed rugged trails, planted cedars in rich mountain soil, and explored ancient rock art caves. Highlights included mist-shrouded vistas, cedar-filled slopes, and an inspiring sunset at Wolfberg Arch. The hike ended at Cederberg Cellars, a celebration of their effort to restore the iconic Clanwilliam Cedar.

The students learned about the entire planting process, including the importance of selecting the most suitable locations for saplings. They got hands-on experience preparing soil and setting up a satellite nursery for the local community, enabling them to continue growing cedar saplings and contributing to reforestation effort

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Raising awareness among young people about conservation ensures the next generation understands the importance of preserving the Cederberg's unique ecosystem and its cedar trees.

This year in collaboration with Love our Trails we facilitated several school visits and initiatives to teach students about conservation and sustainable planting practices.

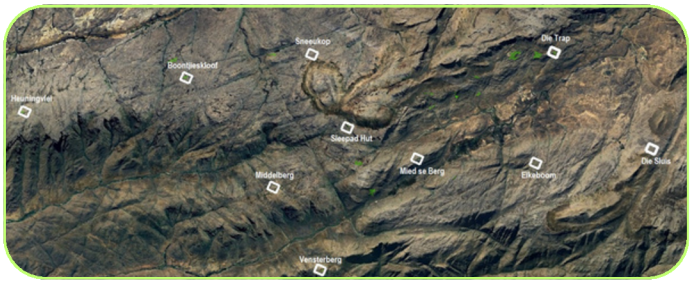
After completing their work, the students had the rewarding experience of planting saplings themselves, leaving a lasting impact on the environment and their community.

TREE PLANTING

A SEASON OF PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Our tree-planting efforts this past season were driven by collaboration with local communities, passionate volunteers, and experienced field experts.
The primary focus was the establishment of 10 monitoring sites strategically plotted between the Northern and Southern Cederberg. With the dedicated support of the Cedar Guardians, a field team appointed by CapeNature and the team from Sustainable Ceder, we planted 100 cedar saplings at each site.

Site Selection and Preparation:
Each of the 10 monitoring sites was carefully chosen to represent a range of environmental conditions, including varying moisture levels, temperature ranges, and soil types. Locations were typically situated between 1,200 and 1,400 meters above sea level, often amidst rocky outcrops with sparse vegetation. These areas were selected for their low fuel loads, reducing fire risks, and their natural features, such as large rocks providing shade and sandstone substrates that retain moisture, essential for the saplings' survival.



Ten monitoring sites were strategically established, spanning the northern and southern regions of the Cederberg

Planting Process and Use of Technology:

To ensure precision and sustainability, advanced tools and technologies guided the planting process:

- Sentinel-2 Satellite Platform: Used to identify planting sites with optimal soil moisture for improved survival rates.
- Cape Farm Mapper: Provided detailed data to refine site selection and planting strategies.
- EarthRanger: Enabled tracking and monitoring of each sapling, with GPS coordinates and measurements logged for future analysis.

Every sapling was planted with care, measured, and recorded in EarthRanger for long-term monitoring. By strategically planting in diverse conditions, we aim to gain valuable insights into survival rates and adapt our approaches accordingly.

The Cedar Guardians and team from Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve and Retreat

Seasonal Challenges

Winter arrived late this year, and while the optimal planting period typically spans May to September, persistent rain delayed initial planting efforts. Despite these challenges, with the support of Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve & Retreat and CapeNature, we successfully completed planting at all 10 sites by August.

The final two sites, Heuningvlei and Sneeukop in the Northern Cederberg, proved the most difficult. Severe flooding had damaged routes, leaving trails wet and vegetation dense. The trek was grueling, with rough terrain testing the team's endurance at every turn. Yet, the perseverance and collaboration of all involved ensured the mission's success.

Looking Ahead

Through monitoring and ongoing care at the 10 sites, we hope to learn more about how to optimize survival rates and expand efforts in the future.

MONITORING,DATA CAPTURING, AND ANALYSIS WITH EARTHRANGERTECH

Our data-capturing process is integral to our mission, beginning 6 and 12 months after the cedar saplings have been planted, with subsequent monitoring conducted annually to gather essential management data.

Sustainable Ceder make use of the #EarthRanger platform and mobile app to track key details, including the exact location, date, altitude, sapling orientation, soil conditions, and more, to enhance the survival rates of Clanwilliam cedar saplings. This no-cost platform empowers conservationists to make data-driven decisions and optimize outcomes.

This systematic approach will enable us to:

- Monitor the survival percentage of cedar saplings.
- Identify areas with higher success rates.
- Analyze underlying factors influencing variations in survival rates.

Through meticulous data collection and analysis, we uncover patterns and correlations to refine planting strategies and conservation efforts.

Additionally, our data initiatives provide unique opportunities for university researchers to engage in collaborative projects. Beyond monitoring sapling survival, EarthRanger serves as a platform for research on broader aspects of cedar ecology and conservation, fostering a deeper understanding of these vital ecosystems.

Data Platform

- EarthRanger Platform: PC and mobile app loggers capture data for each planted sapling.
- Additional Data Points: Records may include existing cedars, invasive plants, erosion on trails, overgrown paths, illegal fire sites, or other observations.
- Seedling and Sapling Monitoring: Tracks survival and growth rates in both nursery and field settings to improve recruitment rates and long-term population sustainability.

To collect this data, individuals hike to the planted sites to monitor and document sapling progress. EarthRangerTech provides a robust, accessible platform to empower these conservation efforts.
Milestone and Upcoming Work

This May, we celebrated a key milestone with the planting of our first trees. In the coming weeks, we will initiate the first round of monitoring across our 10 designated sites, paving the way for informed conservation strategies and meaningful progress.

VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGMENT: PLANTING SEASON 2024

The success of our 2024 planting season would not have been possible without the contributions of our dedicated volunteers. Their hard work, enthusiasm, and commitment were key in achieving our goal of planting cedar saplings across the Cederberg.

Volunteers dedicated hours of their time, navigating rugged trails, preparing soil, and carefully planting each sapling despite adverse weather and difficult terrain. Together, we planted over 4,700 cedar saplings.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Cedar Guardians, local community members, and individual volunteers who joined us on this journey. Special recognition goes to those who braved the final, most challenging planting days in the northern Cederberg, demonstrating extraordinary dedication and teamwork.

As we prepare for the next season, we celebrate the profound impact our volunteers have made this year. Their contributions have paved the way for ongoing research, monitoring, and future planting initiatives that will continue to protect and restore the Cederberg's cedar trees.

Thank you to all our volunteers for making this planting season a resounding success. Your efforts inspire us to keep moving forward, one tree at a time.

Our dedicated volunteers hard at work.

www.sustainableceder.org

4700
Trees Planted

515km
Walked

145
Volunteers

18
Community Members Involved

150
Learners and adults reached

Our main goal is to actively re-establish a self-sustaining population of the critically endangered Clanwilliam cedar (Widdringtonia cedarbergensis J.A. Marsh), ensuring its long-term survival in the Cederberg Mountain region of the Western Cape, South Africa

Our Goals

Goal One	Conservation & Reforestation: Our goal is to enhance our main nursery and satellite nurseries while engaging retired community members to grow cedar saplings, which are planted annually by local youth. This project invites universities, students, and researchers to contribute, encouraging collaboration in restoring and monitoring the Clanwilliam cedar population.
Goal Two	Community Involvement: Increase Environmental Education initiatives with schools within and surrounding the Cederberg area.
Goal Three	Financial Sustainability: Secure Sustainable Cedar's financial future by diversifying income sources, including monthly contributions, donations, auctions, and offering hiking and planting experience and to develop a range of Sustainable Cedar merchandise to create awareness while generating financial support.
Goal Four	Tree Planting: We have planted 4700 saplings this year and would like to plant 10 000 next season (2025) .

Supporting Our Mission

We extend our deepest appreciation to all our partners, friends, donors, and fellow conservation organizations who have empowered us to make a meaningful impact this year. Your unwavering support and shared commitment to conservation inspire us to push forward in realizing our vision.

To every donor who supported us—whether with a large gift or a small contribution—we are deeply grateful. Each act of generosity, no matter its size, has played a vital role in driving our mission forward and protecting the Cederberg's cedar trees.

A special thank you goes to the organizers, donors, and participants of our launch event, whose financial contributions and support through the auction have made remarkable contributions to our project over the past year.

Donors, Sponsors, and Conservation Partners between October 2023 - December 2024

- The Diamond Works
- Red Cederberg
- Claylat
- Nelis Singels (Rewild Art)
- Geoff Spiby , Penny Mustard , Dom Wills
- Lachlan Matthews
- ArtSource
- Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve & Retreat
- The Tollman Family
- Cederberg Wines
- Driehoek Wines
- Cederberg Park & GonnaFontein Forum
- New Wood Trees
- South African Reforestation Trust
- Tourvest Destination Management
- True Wild Safaris
- B.Kannemeyer
- S.Bekker Family and Friends (Netherlands)
- Ultra-Trial Cape Town (UTCT)
- Rand Merchant Bank (RMB)
- Summit Events
- Honest Chocolate
- Veldskoen shoes
- Cape Nature
- The Cape Leopard Trust
- The Cederberg Conservancy
- Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor
- Mountain Club of South Africa
- BGCI
- Paleo Cedar Project
- Love our Trails
- Earth Ranger (ECO)
- University of Stellenbosch
- Explorer.land
- Slackpacker SA
- Wild Cape Hikes - Rob French
- Stu Summerfield-Trailheads
- Outdoor Addicts - Yvette Eberthsohn

Financial Overview

Statement of Income and expenses for the period ending 30 September 2024

Total Income (Cash received)	264 609,96
Total Expenditure (Cash paid)	(242 304,70)
Cash in bank at 30 September 2024	22 305,26

Top 5 biggest expenses	
Fundraising	(34 334,00)
Wages	(21 350,00)
Small equipment for planting	(50 485,45)
Marketing	(16 782,70)
Repairs and maintenance	(17 096,66)

The figures above are based on the management accounts and have not been audited as the first year end of the company is 28 February 2025.

Acknowledgments and Advisory Support

We also wish to recognize the invaluable guidance of our advisors, whose expertise and insights have helped shape our strategies and strengthen our efforts.

- Tr1P Consulting – Matthew Philogene
- DSI services - Zaid Israel
- Simon Pocock & Damien Schoeman
- Jay Caboz Photography
- Penny Mustard
- Emeritus Professor William J. Bond
- Emeritus Associate Professor Edmund February
- Dr Jasper Slingsby
- Dr Joe White (Kew Gardens)
- Helen Smyth

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