

Inaugural Hogsback Reforest Fest well-supported

Approximately 250 people gathered to plant 2,400 trees at the Greenpop Hogsback Reforest Fest which took place from 12-14 September at Hogsback in the Eastern Cape.



Image by Kate Janse Van Rensburg

In addition to the tree-planting, the Reforest Fest included a host of fun and stimulating eco-activities, educational workshops, walks and talks and live music. Terra-Khaya Family and Eco Lodge and Reliance Compost partnered with Greenpop to make this project a reality.

In an effort to work on the invasion of black wattle alien species that have severely affected the area and its water systems, wild olive, Cape ash, Outeniqua yellowwood, real yellowwood, pompom trees and white stinkwood were planted.

"By managing the invasive trees in the area over time, and bolstering the indigenous populations of trees, the festival aimed to take the first step in a long term process of mitigating the damage caused by invasive species," explains Matthew Koehorst, head of Planting and Sustainability at Greenpop. "We are restoring the planting sites and catchment one tree at a time."

Food source

The indigenous trees planted serve as a habitat and food source to the severely endangered Cape Parrot. "This will hopefully assist in the restoration of the tributaries in the area that provide habitats for other endangered species including the Amatola Toad and other freshwater species," says Koehorst. By removing the water thirsty and dominant black wattle trees, and replacing them with indigenous trees, the event will also positively affect the water table, biodiversity and nutrient profile of the area.

As important as the ecology of the land, are the connections with people. "There is something very powerful about feeling part of a greater whole, of experiencing a group consciousness and actively using your hands to see the difference you can make," says Rhian Berning, founder of Eco Atlas.

"There is nothing quite as satisfying as seeing a freshly planted tree, with the sense of time and hope stretching into the future that brings. Especially when you are planting with your children and envision them as young adults visiting the forest they helped to plant," Berning says.

Greenpop will definitely be continuing work in the Eastern Cape and the organisation hopes to contribute to the ecology of the area. "The overwhelming response from the Eastern Cape community in getting active around eco-system rehabilitation has been an inspiration. I'm very excited for our next event in Hogsback and hopefully further afield in the Eastern Cape," says Misha Teasdale of Greenpop.

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