

1,000 trees for Stellenbosch - restoration campaign launches

Following the intense storm that downed trees and [damaged infrastructure](#) in the Western Cape earlier this month, Stellenbosch wineries have launched a tree planting campaign in an effort to restore the affected landscape.



Supplied image: Big Oak Tree at 170 Dorp Street

Under the leadership of Stellenbosch Wine Routes, wine estates and vineyards in the area have committed to planting over 1,000 trees in the '[City of Oaks](#)' this year. Preference is being given to Turkish, Pin and Water Oak trees.

The storm not only swept across the town and farmlands, but also led to a fire that razed the historic Manor House and Jonkershuis at Blaauwklippen, notable for its cultural heritage and architectural significance. The storm destroyed Stellenbosch's oldest tree, a landmark on the corner of Dorp and Ryneveld Streets, planted more than 200 years ago, along with more than 200 trees throughout the town and on farms.

"Oak trees are synonymous with the Stellenbosch landscape," says chairman Michael Ratcliffe on behalf the Stellenbosch Wine Routes board. "Not only do they line the streets that bring thousands of local and international visitors every year, but their magnificent presence is at the heart of every local's love for the place."



Image: Francois Lombard

Since its foundation in 1679, when Governor Simon van der Stel noted the valley’s “clear river... adorned with fine and lofty trees,” Stellenbosch has been home to some of the oldest living oaks in South Africa, marking it an important custodian of a rich history.

The planting of trees will take place in phases with contributions from Stellenbosch Wine Routes’ 130 members, including Kaapzicht, Taaibosch, Pink Valley and Le Chant, Remhoogte, Overgaauw and Kleine Zalze, each having already committed to plant 10 or more trees in the coming months.

“We are co-ordinating all our members to join this effort in the lead up to South Africa’s National Arbor Week, from 29 August to 4 September,” says Elmarie Rabe, general manager of Stellenbosch Wine Routes.

Furthermore, the remnants of Stellenbosch’s historic oldest tree will be incorporated into an art installation to be erected in the heart of town and unveiled in October.