

Meet Report: Sustainable Ceder x MCSA-CT.

Keeping the cedars in the 'Berg: planting trees for Spring Day 2024

By Jess Verheul and Pieter Botha

On the weekend of August 30, 2024, ten enthusiastic members of the MCSA-CT section set out for Driehoek in the Cederberg to participate in a unique conservation initiative—planting cedar seedlings.

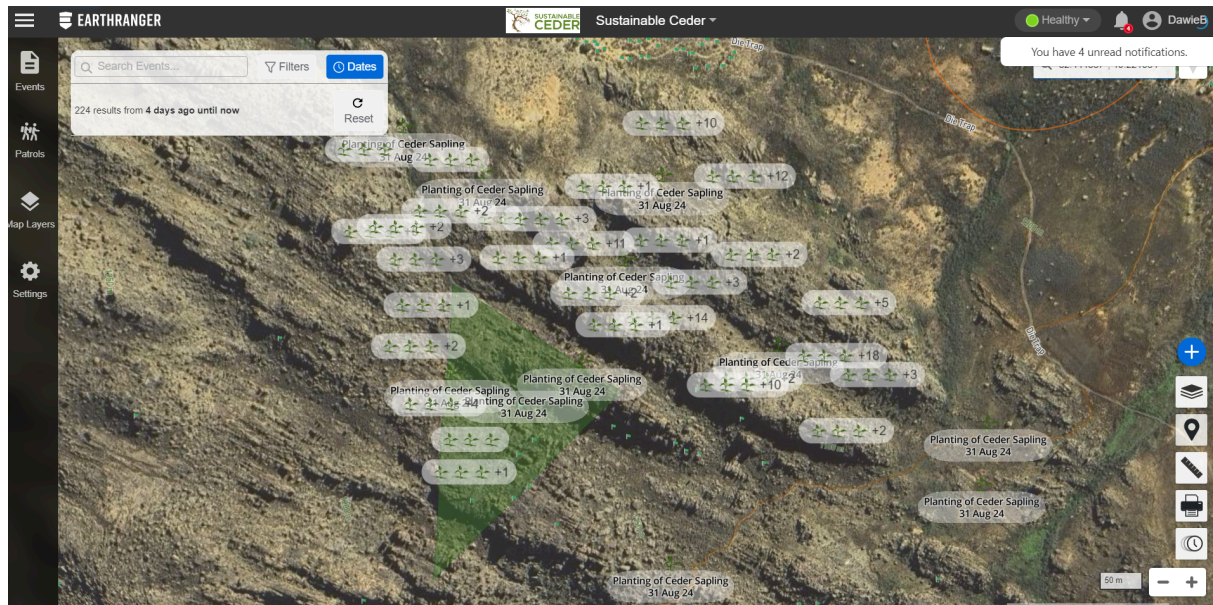
The trees that gave this magical mountain range its name have had a tough time. In the 1800s and early 1900s people cut down huge numbers of [*Widdringtonia cedarbergensis*](#) for its valuable wood. Too frequent and hot fires have further decimated the Clanwilliam Cedar. More recently, climate change caused by people have made conditions hotter, drier and more fiery - and less ideal for these trees that are found nowhere else in the world. The cedars really need a helping hand - and that's where the Sustainable Ceder initiative comes in.

With recent floods leaving the roads in rough condition, our decision to travel in suitable vehicles was wise. Upon arrival at Driehoek Cottages, hosted by Dawie and Lizette, we settled in for the evening. A crackling fire kept us warm as we enjoyed a relaxed Friday night, with members arriving throughout the afternoon and evening.

Saturday morning began with Dawie, along with his team—Shepherd, Joseph, and Denwil—leading us to a designated area about an hour's hike up. Equipped with seed trays, bags, tools, and monitoring equipment, we were ready to do our bit for this important restoration initiative. After a tea break, Dawie and his team demonstrated the planting process and provided insight into the goals and challenges of their conservation work.

The process was straightforward yet fascinating: first, find a suitable spot in the rocky terrain, ideally sheltered from the sun with moisture in the soil. Then, carefully remove a seedling from its tray and, using a cone handle, create a hole in the sandy soil. Then plant, measure, photograph, and log the location of each seedling via a mobile app to ensure their progress could be tracked over time.

We divided into four groups and spread out across an area of about 15 Hectares, successfully planting 224 saplings, aided by Dawie's dedicated crew. See post planting data of our planted saplings from Dawie.



Following the day's efforts, we gathered back at the cottages for a delightful communal braai. Sunday was a more leisurely affair—some of us took a refreshing dip at a nearby waterfall before packing up and heading back to town.

This was an incredibly rewarding outing, and we encourage others to get involved with Sustainable Ceder. Whether joining a planting expedition or becoming a corporate sponsor, this initiative offers many ways to help the Cederberg and its communities to flourish. For more information, feel free to contact Dawie directly or visit the project's website: <https://sustainableceder.org/>.

Pics below from the authors.

