



Nurseries for Nature: Increasing Capability at St Helena's Endemic Nurseries

Targeted territory: Saint Helena

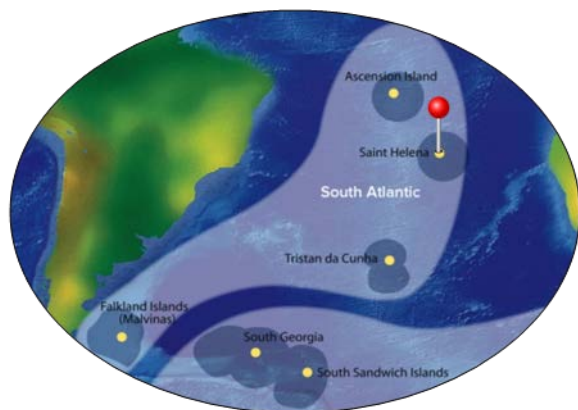
Total project budget: 90,789 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 90,789 Euros

Duration: January 2018 – January 2019 (12 months)

Lead organisation: St Helena National Trust (SHNT)

Partner organisation: St Helena Government,
Environmental and Natural Resources Directorate (ENRD)



Background:

St Helena is home to almost a third of all endemic biodiversity found in the UK and its Overseas Territories.

Of the vascular plants, 10 have less than 100 individuals remaining in the wild, and most are listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Their survival requires safeguarding the fragments of remaining habitat on which they rely, as well as habitat restoration.

Restoration success depends on large scale planting of nursery grown natives, as the natural regeneration of St Helena's endemic species is not sufficient to compete against massive regeneration of weeds. The rate at which native species can be produced by nurseries is the key factor limiting the area of habitat under active restoration.

In order to increase the diversity and abundance of plant species grown in the island's nurseries it is necessary to increase capacity by expanding nursery space, maximising productivity through improving collective skill levels and developing more efficient production systems whilst minimising costs.

Description of the Project:

The project will increase the capability of Saint Helena's conservation nurseries to produce much larger numbers of healthy, genetically diverse endemic threatened plants by upgrading the facilities and expanding the work of the island's three leading conservation focussed nurseries: the Environmental Management Division's (EMD) Peaks nursery which grows cloud forest species; EMD's Scotland nursery which grows some dry-land, moist upland and cloud forest species; and St Helena National Trust's nursery at the Millennium Forest which grows dry-land and desert species.



This will deliver a significant increase in the output of some of the world's most threatened plants.

Each of the three nurseries are already accustomed to working with Critically Endangered plants as categorised by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and have a successful track record of taking species from seed to field. Building on the wealth of knowledge held by the entire conservation community on Saint Helena, the focus will be on building knowledge within committed nursery teams with an emphasis on partnerships and collaboration.

The project will further demonstrate on Saint Helena and throughout the South Atlantic island conservation network, that collaboration, focus, and local commitment are key to conservation success.



Intended results:

- The construction of two new shade houses - one at the Millennium Forest and one at the Peaks nursery - and the establishment of production cycles for six Endangered plant species will lead to a 3-fold increase in the number of healthy seedlings produced.
- A fern propagation facility will be established at the Scotland nursery and propagation methodologies will be trialled for three species.
- The capacity of nursery staff will be increased through training in all aspects of the production cycle.
- Awareness of St Helena's population about the island's endemic species, the threats to them and the work being done to rescue them will be increased.

CONTACT

Martina PETERS

St Helena National Trust

martina.peters@trust.org.sh

