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Paradise Lost

Page owner: Karen Dickin Last updated: 09 Apr 2013

National Trust Gardeners come to the aid of La Rochelle in Zimbabwe

La Rochelle in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe is the home and botanical garden built by Sir Stephen and Lady Virginia Courtauld in their beloved Africa.

The beautiful house and gardens are now in the care of the National Trust Zimbabwe, but economic and political troubles have resulted in decades of decline.

On behalf of the International National Trusts Organisation, Karen Dickin, People Project Manager, visited Zimbabwe last year to help the National Trust Zimbabwe develop a management plan for the property.

'It was sad to see such a magical place in a state of decay. The team there have only a few hand tools, an old tractor and one rusty old lawnmower. Tourism has completely collapsed and local people have no money, so it is hard to see where resources will come from to start restoring the garden' says Karen.

One of the top items on their wish list was a set of botanical labels for the collection of exotic trees and shrubs Sir Stephen had collected from around the world. Led by Ian Wright, several of our Head Gardeners offered to produce some labels for them. The National Trust Zimbabwe are very grateful to David Bouch, Ed Ikin, Phil Griffiths and Alexis Datta for their kind assistance.


Karen continues: 'Every small improvement helps them believe a future is still possible. The labels will help with their plans to use the garden for educational visits.'

The good news is that plans are now emerging to lease the property to QuestAfrica, an educational establishment which will be able to secure funding for further projects.

For more, read the [La Rochelle blog](#)

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La Rochelle in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe / Karen Dickin

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