



RESTORATION PIECE

Urban Landscape Solutions took on the challenge of turning the historic Company's Garden in Cape Town into a new facility to educate people on the positive nature of urban food and community gardens →





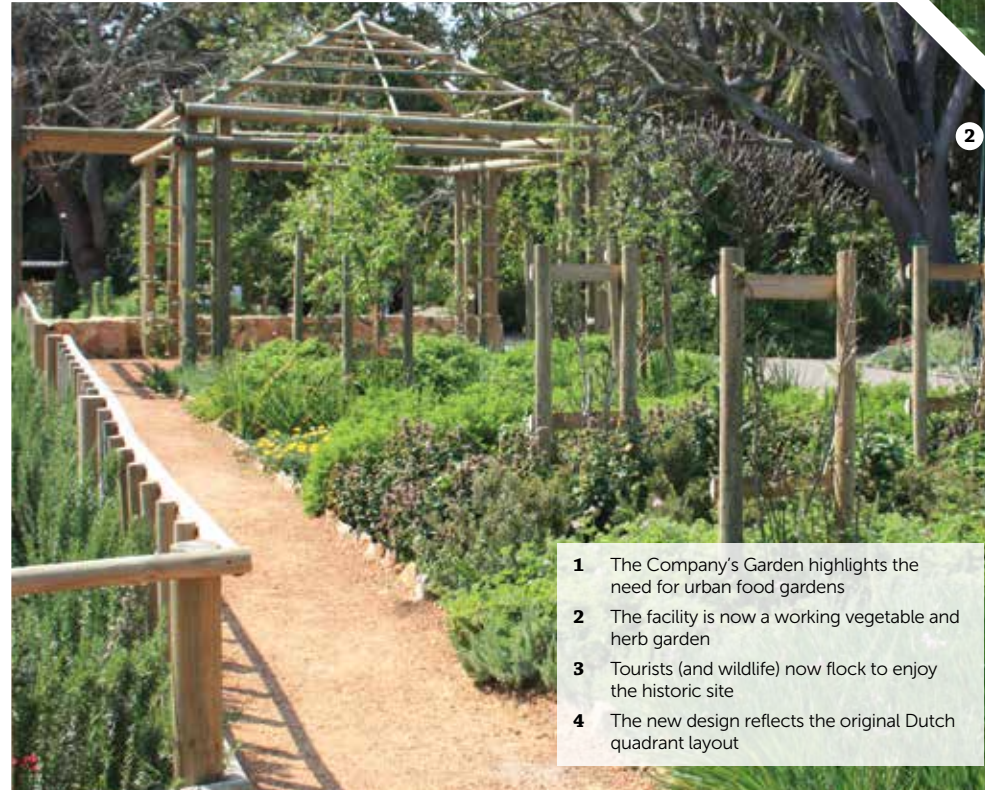
PROJECT DETAILS

The Company's Garden,
Cape Town

INVESTMENT LEVEL
R6 million

TIMELINE
About six months

SIZE
480m²



- 1 The Company's Garden highlights the need for urban food gardens
- 2 The facility is now a working vegetable and herb garden
- 3 Tourists (and wildlife) now flock to enjoy the historic site
- 4 The new design reflects the original Dutch quadrant layout

The Company's Garden is adjacent to the South African Parliament. It takes its name from the Dutch East India Company, which started the garden in 1652 to grow fruit and vegetables for crews of its ships that plied the spice trade route between Europe and the East Indies via The Cape of Good Hope.

Hard work and perseverance paid off and, by November 1653, it was reported that the garden could produce enough food to supply passing ships.

The VOC Vegetable Garden project (VOC stands for Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie – the Dutch translation of the company's name) recreates elements of the original garden, which extended well beyond the limits of the new project.

The garden has been designed not only to be a visitor attraction but also a resource to exhibit and teach urban-agriculture skills and promote food security.

Urban Landscape Solutions, a member of the Little Swift Group, was tasked with the project. The brief from the client was to restore the fruit and vegetable garden to as it was in the days of Jan Van Riebeeck, the Dutch colonial administrator who founded Cape Town.

The gardens used to be beside a harbour, where ships could dock and replenish supplies. The irrigation system Urban Landscape Solutions installed was based on the original flood system, and materials were sourced from

“ THE WORST PROBLEM TO OVERCOME WAS DRAINAGE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH WATER TABLE ”

local suppliers. Plants were sourced through the company's own New Horizen Nursery.

Until recently, the original site was a parking lot in front of the administration buildings, the

size equating to about 480m². Urban Landscape was given about six months to complete the project.

The worst problem the company had to overcome was drainage because of the high water table and water retention. This was overcome by installing sub terrain drainage. The completed works included:

- Demolishing stores and a car park
- Constructing waterways and a pond with a 'leiwater' redistribution system
- Providing clad walls and seating
- Building pathways
- Constructing a large pergola
- Landscaping the vegetable garden

The new design reflects the original Dutch quadrant layout of the Company's Garden. Stone-lined open irrigation channels, reminiscent of the Dutch 'leiwater' or water channels, are still visible and provide water to the vegetable garden. The water is piped from

the Stadsfontein spring in Oranjezicht. The VOC Vegetable Garden is now a working vegetable and herb garden, which includes historical varieties of indigenous traditional medicinal herbs, European culinary herbs, and vegetables and fruit trees, including various berry varieties.

The area is surrounded by rustic wooden pergolas, which have grape varieties and granadilla growing on them, as well as espaliered pear and apple tree species interplanted with heritage climbing rose species. Seasonal varieties of vegetables are also grown, and all gardening methods are based on organic and permaculture principles.

The VOC Vegetable Garden project, Urban Landscape Solutions said, highlights the need for urban food gardens and promotes the development of community gardens in undeveloped open spaces in Cape Town.

It is hoped this will attract the attention of potential investors to support existing food

gardens and stimulate the creation of new ones. Major retailer Woolworths has partnered with City Parks and provided financial support for the maintenance of the vegetable garden, as well as backing educational programmes that invite the public to participate in theoretical and practical vegetable gardening one-day courses.

Programmes are advertised a few weeks before each one commences.

MAIN SUPPLIERS

Plants and trees:
New Horizen Nursery
Tel: 082 221 9824

Timber:
The Pole Yard
Tel: 021 510 4477

Sub base for pathways and concrete:
LaFarge
Tel: 021 508 8000

ABOUT URBAN LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

Multi award-winning Urban Landscape Solutions turns "a client's dream into a stunning, sustainable reality". Under the guidance of Eric Cherry, a highly qualified horticulturist with 30 years of experience, the company and its professional landscapers have a proven, all-inclusive landscaping record. Regardless of style or scope, Urban Landscape has successfully taken on a range of prestigious challenges, including complex designs and the fast-tracking of enormous projects such as the Green Point Urban Park and the One&Only hotel and resort on Cape Town's Waterfront.
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