

No Chelsea Flower Show for Kirstenbosch without immediate sponsor

The Kirstenbosch-SA Chelsea Exhibit will not be going to the Royal Horticultural Society's prestigious annual Chelsea Flower Show in London this year, after 35 years of award-winning exhibits, following its loss of corporate sponsorship.

Its awards have put South Africa on a global stage of great influence and showcased the country as a land of natural wealth and beauty and a haven of unique biodiversity. It has also gone a long way towards marketing South Africa as a highly attractive tourism destination of choice for those seeking unique experiences.

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) has held fundraising events and activities at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens to fund the exhibit but this is no longer a practical or possible option.

Double centenary in doubt

Designers David Davidson and Ray Hudson, who have designed the exhibit 17 times, have consistently explored aspects of South Africa's floristic beauty and presented innovative interpretations of our natural heritage.

Davidson said, "This is a great disappointment in the lead-up period to what would have been a once-in-a-lifetime double centenary event in 2013 when Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden and the Chelsea Flower Show - both established in 1913 - will celebrate their 100th birthdays."

Fairy Godmother needed

The exhibit found itself in a similar situation in 1994 when its source of funding ended. Fortunately, when the news was announced to the media, a sponsor immediately stepped in to save the exhibit.

Participation in this event has afforded practical training and experiential learning opportunities for many aspiring South African horticulturists, botanists, landscapers, environmental scientists, designers and floral artists.

After going to London, the exhibit has toured major centres around the country, allowing South Africans the opportunity to view the exhibit on home ground.

SANBI calls on any interested potential partners and sponsors to contact Sarah Struys, Kirstenbosch events manager, on +27 (0) 21 799 8775 or email s.struys@sanbi.org.za.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>