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Exclusive By Terry O'Hanlon

THE Queen is furious with President George W. Bush after his state visit caused thousands of pounds of damage to her gardens at Buckingham Palace.

Royal officials are now in touch with the Queen's insurers and Prime Minister Tony Blair to find out who will pick up the massive repair bill. Palace staff said they had never seen the Queen so angry as when she saw how her perfectly-maintained lawns had been churned up after being turned into helipads with three giant H landing markings for the Bush visit.

The rotors of the President's Marine Force One helicopter and two support Black Hawks damaged trees and shrubs that had survived since Queen Victoria's reign.

And Bush's army of clod-hopping security service men trampled more precious and exotic plants.

The Queen's own flock of flamingoes, which security staff insisted should be moved in case they flew into the helicopter rotors, are thought to be so traumatised after being taken to a "place of safety" that they might never return home.

The historic fabric of the Palace was also damaged as high-tech links were fitted for the US leader and his entourage during his three-day stay with the Queen.

The Palace's head gardener, Mark Lane, was reported to be in tears when he saw the scale of the damage.

"The Queen has every right to feel insulted at the way she has been treated by Bush," said a Palace insider.

"The repairs will cost tens of thousands of pounds but the damage to historic and rare plants will be immense. They are still taking an inventory.

"The lawns are used for royal garden parties and are beautifully kept. But 30,000 visitors did not do as much damage as the Americans did in three days.

"Their security people and support staff tramped all over the place and left an absolute mess. It is particularly sad because the Queen Mother loved to wander in the garden just as the Queen and Prince Charles do now.

"Some of the roses, flowers and shrubs damaged are thought to be rare varieties named after members of the Royal Family and planted by the Queen

Mother and Queen.

"Other Royals had their own favourite parts of the garden as children and some of those areas have been damaged."

The Queen's insurers have told her she is covered for statues, garden furniture and plants she personally owns, but the bill for repairing damage to the lawns and the structure of the Palace will probably have to be picked up by the Government.

The Americans made alterations to accommodate specialised equipment. The mass of gadgetry meant the Royals couldn't get a decent TV picture during the visit.

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