

Flora Conservation and Awareness

Nature Trust (Malta) has been active in the field of floral conservation and awareness for a number of years and has been doing so by making use of two major tools:

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

1. Guided Tours for Nature Trust (Malta) Members and Schools

The importance of outdoor education is stressed by NTM and in fact organises many guided tours for its members and for schools, not only in the sites it manages but also in other areas of ecological importance. Walks tend to focus on a variety of aspects but mainly deal with the natural vegetation and topography of the site while school activities and events focus both on the biodiversity of the area and also on interactive learning and experiential learning through educational games, quizzes and even voluntary work.



2. Publications

Through the years, NTM has published a number of books, journals and other publications both in Maltese and in English, for every age group. The *Archipelago* series, which is aimed for students and adults, includes general information on the natural history of specific sites while the *Ballottra* series is aimed for children and deals with specific environmental issues, specific species and specific sites of ecological importance also through characters such as iż-Żring Kolombu. NTM also deals with the scientific community and publishes a peer reviewed journal called the Central Mediterranean Naturalist which includes information of discoveries of floral and faunal species in detail.

PROPAGATION OF TREES AND PLANTS

With respect to floral conservation on sites, several species of native trees and shrubs have been planted to increase the local biodiversity and reduce soil erosion.

Wied Ghollieqa, in particular, has flourished with young and tall trees in the last 20 years after a number of indigenous and rare trees were planted in the entire valley. Abandoned agricultural fields are now dominated by the Aleppo Pine, Holm Oak, Sandarac Gum Tree, Mediterranean Dwarf Palm, Mediterranean Buckthorn and the Carob. The scarce Jerusalem Sage and Rosemary and the rare Narrow Leaved Ash, Judas Tree and Myrtle are also found in the valley. Interestingly, thanks to voluntary planting, Wied Ghollieqa now holds the largest population of the Sandarac Gum Tree in the Maltese Islands. Currently, many oak trees are being planted close to the Għorfa area, close to our nursery.

Xrobb I-Għaġin has also been forested, especially the northern half of the peninsula. Trees and large shrubs have been planted in separate fields respectively at Xrobb I-Għaġin and the area now hosts two types of habitats: woodland and maquis. Other natural habitats on site have been left untouched to regenerate naturally and close to the Sustainable Development Centre, gardening patches were filled with indigenous and endemic shrubs. Proper footpaths have also been implemented to restrict trampling on vegetation.

As of 2012, plantations at the nurseries and on sites will be focusing more on native shrubs and plants rather than on trees, though rare trees are still a priority. This is to enhance our horticultural biodiversity and to make indigenous and endemic plants available to the public without harming wild populations

NATURE TRUST (MALTA)

▶ E-CIRCULAR 003

▶ JANUARY 2012

Nature Trust (Malta) was officially launched by His Excellency the President of the Republic on Friday 8 January 1999 following the merger between the Society for the Study and Conservation of Nature, Arbor and Verde. In 2001, the Marine Life Care Group also merged with Nature Trust (Malta)



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NATURE TRUST MALTA is proud to inform its members that 2012 is the year of its 50th anniversary.

All events commemorating this occasion will be uploaded on our Facebook page and sent to all members by email.

An ongoing event for the whole of 2012 is the Nature Photography of the Year Competition. For more information view our Facebook page