

Preservation of Biodiversity in the Emilia-Romagna Region: Sustainable development and social promotion

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The July 6, 2007, Legislative Assembly of the Emilia-Romagna Region approved the “law on production and marketing of forest plants and their propagation materials.”

The new law makes it possible to know the forest plants' origin. This is necessary for many different improvements, such as increasing the success rate of reforestation actions, introducing nonnative material without polluting the local forest plants' genetic heritage, and reducing the risk of introducing new harmful organisms in the intervention areas.

In order to develop a “sustainable forestry,” it is necessary to further the use of local-origin material with a good environment adaptability. Doing this will improve the quality of the forest resources, helping forest resources to survive the increasingly unfavorable environmental conditions that they will have to face.

In this context, forest garden centers have a central importance as a starting point of the entire forestry chain. It is necessary for them to be able to produce good-quality materials.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to pick out suitable seed trees and arrange for an effective certification and control technical-regulatory system, as well as plants for the reforestation of the whole regional territory.

Since the first draft of the law project, the regional government involved all the interested parties, particularly garden center companies. Their views have been useful in defining the norms regarding the collection of propagation materials, in order to not create any seed scarcity as a result of the new law's taking effect. In fact, the areas where today the forest propagation material harvest takes place have been provisionally designated as “land areas of forest

seeds harvest." While waiting for the controls provided by the new law to be implemented, the plants grown from these materials will be considered suitable.

Biodiversity preservation is important in many ways, especially in the preservation of local species, and also in areas that are threatened by the city's development. The importance of biodiversity preservation can be summarized in few key points:

- Keeping the quality and the flow continuity of water assets for public use;
- Weather control in the interested areas;
- Uptake of air pollution;
- Soil fixing, fighting ack phenomena like coast and river basin erosion;
- Reducing flood effects; and
- Preserving a richly varied flora and fauna.

Meanwhile, our Regional Administration is carrying out other actions, in addition to the provisions of the law just described, aimed at promoting, in many different areas around the world, environmental preservation through the development of a new economic and social model that includes organic farming. Good examples are the cooperation projects in the Balkan region and in Brazil.