

# SmartGreen

News about the environment **Post**

## MOTHER EARTH IS IN OUR HANDS!



### SCIENCE

Drought and heat waves on Mediterranean forests

### LIFESTYLE

Living Zero Waste: tips for a waste-free life

### HEALTH

Dementia and its risk factors: each step counts!

# SmartGreen

News about the environment **Post**

SmartGreen Post is a blog on the green world, from climate change to separate waste collection. You will always be updated on news from Italy and the world, on the environment, green economy and new technologies. In addition, you can find our tips for a more eco-friendly and healthy lifestyle, as well as a section dedicated to sustainable tourism.

SmartGreen Post is part of a larger Green project that includes SmartRicicla, the separate collection app available in Italy, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. You can download the app directly on the Play Store. For more information visit the website [www.smartricicla.com](http://www.smartricicla.com)

SmartGreen Post wants to be a small contribution to the protection of our planet, because to prevent catastrophe it is necessary to know and then act, each in his own small way, with simple but highly effective gestures.





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## Mother Earth is in our hands!

*A few days after World Earth Day, the twelfth issue of the SmartGreen Post magazine is dedicated to Mother Earth, the source of life. Man's reckless actions and habits are seriously endangering the planet and with it our very survival. We at SmartGreen Post aim to raise awareness of what is happening, promoting more environmentally sustainable lifestyles and actions with the aim of protecting ourselves and our Mother Earth.*

From time immemorial, the Earth has housed, nurtured and cared for us. Myth tells us about the relationship between Nature and the Divinity that governed the cycles of life-death-rebirth and how we wanted to break away from the rhythms of Gaia (also called Gaea), the primordial goddess who personified the Earth in Greek mythology.

The lust for power and the obsession with domination have produced lethal effects on Humanity and the supposed "corrections" produce even more serious imbalances. We cannot delude ourselves that our health, understood as psychophysical well-being, can be entrusted to manipulations that operate outside and against Nature. We must rediscover an understanding of the profound relationship we have with the Earth and tap into its vital energies through a new wisdom.

I am thinking of the Homeric hymn 'To Gaea' (XXX), dedicated to the primordial goddess of inexhaustible creative power, considered in Greek religion to be the very origin of life:

*I will sing Gaea, the universal mother, with firm foundations,  
most ancient, who nourishes all beings [...]  
Thanks to you men are fruitful with children, and rich in harvests  
Lady; it is in your power to give or take life  
of mortal men...*

Despite the progression of the patriarchal view of the cosmos, what makes the Earth holy, its power to generate and preserve Life, continues to be recognised and revered among peoples of different cultures.

Marisa Silvestri

Translator and interpreter (IT, EN, DE, FR, ES), she graduated in languages in Italy and in journalism at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. She wrote for German newspapers, worked as a multilingual copywriter for advertising agencies, collaborated with important publishing houses and with companies in the renewable energy sector. The 15 years of life abroad, in environmentally sustainable countries, such as Switzerland and Germany, shaped her green nature.





## The cult of Mother Earth, a journey to the origins of the myth

Mother Nature is the personification of nature. Also known as Mother Earth, she is the common personification of nature focused around the life-giving and nurturing aspects, embodied in the mother figure.

In prehistoric times, goddesses were worshipped for their association with fertility, fecundity and agricultural abundance. Priestesses held sway over various religious aspects of the Incan, Assyrian, Babylonian, Slavic, Germanic, Roman, Greek and Indian civilisations for millennia before the onset of patriarchal religions.

The Great Mother, also Great Goddess, or Mother Goddess, is a primordial female deity, found in very diverse forms in a wide range of cultures, civilisations and populations in various areas of the world since prehistoric times.

Her figure, which refers to the maternal symbolism of birth, creativity and fertility, continued to be known, for example, to the Phoenicians as Ashtoreth, in Mesopotamia as Ishtar, to the Semites as Astarte, in Arabia as Atar, to the Egyptians as Hathor, to the Greeks and Romans as Cybele, and others.

Connected to the cult of Mother Earth, it expressed the endless cycle of birth-development-maturity-decline-death-regeneration that characterised both human lives and natural and cosmic cycles. In Andean mythology she is known as Pachamama, among Australian aborigines as Kunapiipi.

## Why it is important to dedicate a special day to our Mother Earth

World Earth Day is a day to celebrate the environment and the preservation of planet Earth. The United Nations celebrates this occasion every year, one month and one day after the spring equinox, on 22nd April.



The celebration now involves 193 countries. Earth Day actually originated with the publication in 1962 of the environmentalist manifesto book 'Silent Spring' by US biologist Rachel Carson, a book that represented a watershed moment as it raised public awareness of the worrying environmental situations and the inextricable links between pollution and public health.

But the breakthrough came only in 1969 following the environmental disaster caused by an oil spill from the Union Oil well off Santa Barbara, California. Senator Nelson pointed out at the time that:

"All people, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, income or geographical origin, have the right to a healthy, balanced and sustainable environment".

So it was that on 22 April 1970, at the invitation of the senator himself, 20 million American citizens took to the streets to demonstrate in defence of the Earth.

This is how Earth Day was born, and just think that, even back then, it was called "a question of survival". Today, 52 years later, we can only see that the situation has worsened and there is so much to do to save the planet and ourselves.

We at SmartGreen Post also work every day for the good of our Mother Earth, with the means we have, providing information and suggesting concrete actions to help the planet. One day is certainly not enough, but it's a start, especially if every year on this very occasion we manage to make more people aware of the importance of changing course, adopting a change that must first of all start from our daily lives, through small choices that are only apparently small but that can actually make a difference.

This day should therefore be an incentive to remind ourselves of the ultimate goal, to be achieved gradually day by day: a world in which renewable sources replace fossil fuels, consumption is more sustainable, no more toxic pesticides are used, there is equity in the distribution of resources, animals are not exploited, and intensive farming does not destroy precious forests or indigenous lands.



Public and private educational institutions play a key role in educating children from an early age, and there are indeed many educational projects aimed at eco-sustainability. An equally important role is played by parents and families, who must take responsibility for educating them to love Mother Earth and her children.

We belong to the Earth, it is not the Earth that belongs to us. And like us, all humanity and every form of life belongs to the Earth: plants and forests, fruits and flowers, rivers, mountains, animals of all kinds. St Francis of Assisi called it sister and mother, who governs us and gives us sustenance.

Even Pope Francis in his encyclical “Laudato si’!” strongly invites all humanity to care for the common home that is sister and Mother Earth through the biblical mandate to “guard and cultivate” the garden of the world (LS67).

We forget that our own bodies are made up of the elements of the planet, its air is what gives us breath and its water vivifies and restores us.

In conclusion, harming our Mother Earth is tantamount to harming ourselves, or rather more than harming the Earth – which will somehow continue to exist without the human species – we harm humanity, we destroy human life on Earth. That is why if the Earth is our Mother, we are her Children. We must learn to respect Mother Earth as we respect our biological mothers.

For us at SmartGreen Post, World Earth Day is every day since, for the past three years, we have been contributing to change, convinced that the situation can be changed if each of us makes a personal commitment.

*“Man is the most insane species: he worships an invisible God and destroys a visible Nature. Without realising that the Nature he is destroying is the God he is worshipping.”*

*Hubert Reeves*

## FOUNDER



**Mario Telesca**

Computer scientist, sensitive to environmental issues, he has carried out various green projects including SmartRicicla, the app for separate collection. He has always been looking for the perfect union between science and art.

## SCIENTIFIC BOARD



**Francesco Ripullone**

Francesco Ripullone is Associate Professor at the School of Agricultural, Forestry, Food and Environmental Sciences of the University of Basilicata, where he holds the chair of the course of Ecology and Dasometry. He is deputy coordinator and Erasmus contact for the degree course in Forest and Environmental Sciences. Prof. Ripullone carries out his research in the field of forest ecology, studying the effects of climate change and natural and anthropogenic disturbing factors on forest ecosystems. He is responsible for several research projects to study the possibilities of forest decline and mortality in the Mediterranean environment.



**Rosa Coluzzi**

She is an Earth Observation researcher (PhD) at the Institute of Methodologies for Environmental Analysis of the National Research Council (IMAA-CNR). She is mainly interested in the study of landscape patterns and the characterization of phenomena and/or processes of the earth's surface. Her main work has been done in the processing of multisensor and multitemporal optical data (satellite and aerial), production of land-cover cartography and measures of ecological parameters from remote sensors. Her keywords: Environmental Engineer; Data Analyst; Life Lover; Visual Thinker.

## EDITORIAL BOARD



**Fanny Petermann-Rocha**

Fanny is a Chilean-Swiss researcher and PhD with a wide international experience and background in Public Health, ageing, and lifestyle topics. She has published or collaborated on more than 150 scientific manuscripts (h-index=23; more than 2000 citations). Additionally, as she recognised that leadership is essential for tomorrow's future public health leaders, since 2016 she has been the deputy director of the international research consortium ELHOC (Epidemiology of Lifestyle and Health Outcomes in Chile). Currently, she is a full time academic at 'Universidad Diego Portales', in Chile.



**Serena Gallanti**

After a BSc in Chemistry in the University of Pisa, I have completed a Master and a PhD in physical and analytical chemistry in Sorbonne Université, Paris to develop green synthesis route of prepare photovoltaic materials. My background in electrochemistry has allowed to use my knowledge in the in the field of the Li-ion batteries applied to the electric vehicles. In the free-time I am a volunteer for Zero Waste Paris, sharing with the people how to switch the everyday life habits to low impact solutions.



**Aurora Chiara Cortese**

Student of Forest and Environmental Sciences at the University of Basilicata. She believes that loving the Earth and respecting it is a duty towards life and everyone, in their own small way, can do their part. She dreams of a world of environmental sustainability and social equality.



**Katia Sepe**

Forestry and Environmental Sciences Student at the University of Basilicata. My interests aim to analyze and evaluate the forest role, the management of the anthropic actions in order to increase their values and the dissemination of knowledge about the forest sector with the purpose of rediscovering its relevance for people and vegetation ecosystem.





## Nature Classrooms coming up for Earth Day

On the occasion of World Earth Day - which is celebrated on 22nd of April all over the world - WWF Italy and Procter & Gamble announce that 24 new Nature Classrooms will be built in as many Italian schools within the current school year. A total of more than 5,250 square metres of green space will be donated to schools, allowing students to experience nature first-hand and understand its value.

*Editorial Board*



The Nature Classrooms are green areas where students can learn about and experience first-hand the biodiversity typical of their local areas. They add to the more than 2,000 square metres of green spaces made available to over 5,000 pupils at the 12 primary schools and Istituti Comprensivi in the cities of Udine, Venice, Codogno (LO), Novara, Genoa, La Spezia, Città Sant'Angelo (PE), Rome, Naples, Taranto and Catania.

For these cities, nature classrooms are already open spaces in which to do maths and grammar lessons or to carry out workshops and projects in a pleasant environment. A living place, rich in biodiversity, which grows in front of the students' eyes: the bushes fill with leaves and clumps of wild herbs bloom. Animals are also increasing, attracted by the water point, the shelters provided and the availability of food: various invertebrates, insects, amphibians, birds.

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The didactic garden, garden and pond lend themselves to a wide variety of educational activities, ranging from perceptual-sensory experiences to experiences based on socio-motor and exploratory activities, to school projects that combine openness to the natural world with technology, all of which are deeply multidisciplinary educational paths.

The aim is to promote pedagogical experiences with an active and engaging approach, using school outdoor spaces as learning rooms.



WWF and P&G have not stopped there, and in addition to the 20 new nature classrooms selected from institutes active in the field of environmental and sustainability education, and announced last December, to cover all Italian regions in proportion to the population and to meet the needs of the regions, they have added another 4.

Another 3,253 square metres of nature given to the schools will be added to those already built, and 10,260 pupils will join the 5,000 students who are already playing with mud, discovering earthworms and titmice, enjoying the scents and flowers to do school in a different and profoundly new way, for a total of over 5,250 square metres and 15,260 pupils involved.

These new nature classrooms will be delivered at two different times, a first group by June 2022 and a second in autumn 2022. The Aula Natura project of WWF Italy and realised thanks to Procter & Gamble has also been very well received by the Ministry of Education.

“The Nature Classrooms are special spaces and are part of the wide-ranging national project of WWF and P&G Italia, which aims to re-evaluate schoolyards as places for outdoor education. The children thus have the opportunity to experience an environment rich in stimuli that allows them to gain an immediate and direct relationship with nature, while also providing spaces for training and promoting a new way of learning,” says the Undersecretary for Education, Barbara Florida. I would like to stress the value of these projects, which go precisely in the direction outlined by the School Re-Generation Plan. Moreover, the collaborations between the school world and private, social and institutional actors represent a virtuous example to be imitated in order to reach as many students as possible. I look forward to visiting some of the nature classrooms soon and congratulate them on this project”.

Giving the gift of a nature classroom does not only mean upgrading a school garden, but it also allows you to take part in an educational project, to access dedicated training materials, training sessions for teachers on One Planet School, WWF’s e-learning platform, and to get in touch with other schools in the circuit.



## Global Recycling Day: focus on circular economy and raw materials

On Global Recycling Day, the focus should be on policies to support the circular economy, which is a central pillar of Italy's ecological transition, especially in light of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the war in Ukraine with the consequent rise in energy costs.

*Editorial Board*



Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the consequent rise in the cost of energy have put the issue of raw material supplies at the centre of the government's agenda. In this scenario, the circular economy represents a strategic response for Italy in terms of diversification of sources and a vector of sustainable growth for the immediate future. On the Global Recycling Day, attention should be focused on policies in support of the circular economy, which represent a central pillar for the national ecological transition, especially in light of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

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## GREEN ECONOMY >

This is the warning issued by UNIRIMA, ASSORIMAP and ASSOFERMET, the main national trade associations in the sectors of collection, recovery and recycling of paper, plastic and ferrous and/or non-ferrous metals, during the event in the Sala Zuccari in the Senate, attended by political representatives, companies and authorities, including the undersecretary for MITE, Ilaria Fontana. This is an increasingly strategic sector, which employs around 45,000 people and has 4,000 plants spread across the country. Suffice it to say that the recycling rate of paper and cardboard packaging in Italy has reached and exceeded, 10 years ahead of time, the European target of 85% set for 2030.

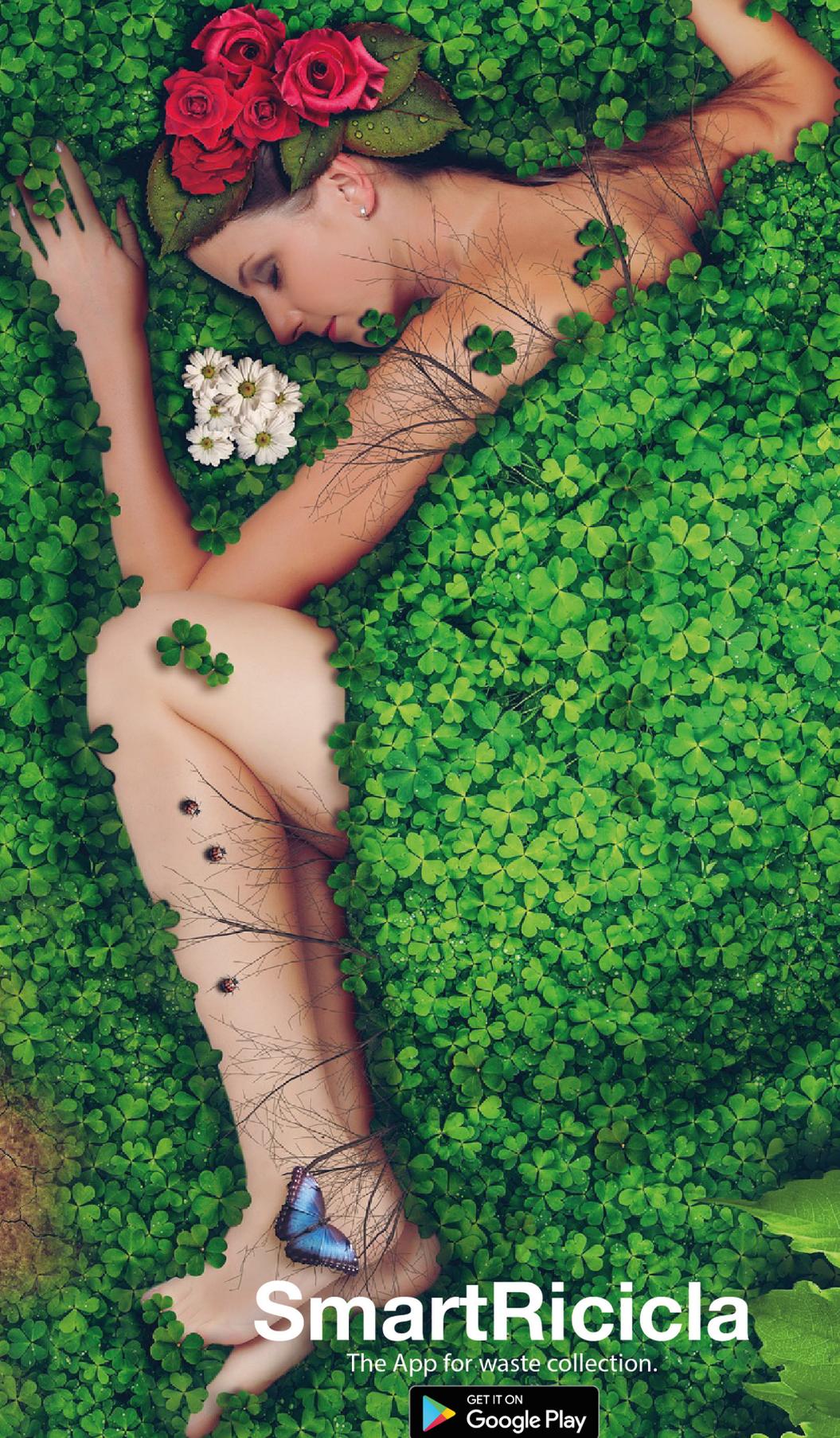
The production of material/end of waste paper is equal to about 6.7 million tonnes, an increase of 3.2% compared to the previous year. In Italy there is an installed capacity of 1,800,000 tonnes of plastic recycling, which represents a huge potential to be exploited. For every tonne of plastic material recycled, 1.9 tonnes of oil is saved, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are reduced by 1.4 tonnes, and significant amounts of electricity are saved. Ferrous and non-ferrous scrap recovery plants collect and recycle around 15 million tonnes of material annually, which is sent to the steel and metals industries to replace virgin raw materials.

The three business associations underline how the enormous criticalities that have hit the global economy are urgently demonstrating the need to develop greater competition, closing the competitiveness gap that still separates Italy from the rest of Europe on many fronts; it is therefore necessary to intervene to reduce monopoly rents by ensuring competitive dynamics and acting on the criticalities related to the lack of full application of the principle of competition, which has a crucial value in the recovery and recycling sector. The simplification of the regulatory and administrative framework and investment in innovation in secondary raw material/end-of-waste recovery plants are therefore among the main objectives.

With regard to the soaring cost of energy bills, the three associations that are at the heart of the circular economy point out that spot measures to be applied periodically are no longer sufficient. Instead, structural measures should be studied to benefit companies that actively contribute to the goals of the ecological transition through material recovery.

All in all, we need to create the conditions for the circular economy to fully establish itself as a lever for sustainable development in Italy. It is no coincidence that among the 14 resolutions adopted in Nairobi by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), one is specifically dedicated to supporting the circular economy. The aim of the text is clear from the title: "Strengthening the circular economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production". A principle that – the three business associations hope – should be the compass to guide future choices in an increasingly complex season.

We are all butterflies.  
Earth is our chrysalis.  
(LeeAnn Taylor)



**SmartRicicla**

The App for waste collection.





## World Water Day, prototype to irrigate with purified wastewater coming soon

*Editorial Board*

On the occasion of World Water Day which is celebrated today 22nd March, ENEA presents a hi-tech prototype able to purify waste water and use it to irrigate and fertilize cultivated fields, with benefits in terms of greater water availability, supply of nutrients, reduction of chemical fertilizers, environmental sustainability and quality of the purification chain.



ENEA and the University of Bologna, in collaboration with Gruppo Hera and Irritec, have developed a technologically advanced prototype capable of purifying wastewater in order to use it to irrigate and fertilise cultivated fields, with benefits in terms of greater water availability, nutrient supply, reduction of chemical fertilisers, environmental sustainability and quality of the purification chain.

The innovation is part of the Value CE-IN project, financed by the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Development and Cohesion Fund, and will be presented on World Water Day, which is celebrated every year on 22nd March.

The demonstration prototype was built at the Hera Group's purification plant in Cesena and was tested on an experimental field with 120 crops, including 66 peach trees and 54 processing tomatoes. The results collected after the experimental phase confirm the quality of the purified water for agricultural purposes.



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“The results obtained within the project, coordinated by ENEA, could support the application of the prototype scheme to all wastewater treatment plants and the dissemination of reuse practices to the benefit of all stakeholders in the supply chain – from plant operators to drainage consortia and the automation sector, with the aim of guaranteeing a non-conventional and safe source of water and, at the same time, supplying nutrients to the crops, in line with the new EU guidelines in force from 2023,” stresses project coordinator Luigi Petta, head of the ENEA Laboratory of Technologies for the efficient use and management of water and wastewater.

According to recent studies, in Italy per capita withdrawals of fresh water for agricultural use account for about 50% of total water requirements. In addition, the increasingly frequent phenomena of water scarcity due to climate change pose a serious risk to more than a third of national agricultural production, with damage to the quantity and quality of crops, estimated at an average of one billion euros per year.

The results of industrial research, to be confirmed by further campaigns, highlight the feasibility of circular economy and industrial symbiosis practices that favour the conversion of purification plants into true biorefineries from which primary water resources can be recovered, secondary products with high added value, such as soil conditioners and fertilisers able to guarantee a supply of nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, and reduce the use of synthetic chemical fertilisers.

“The research carried out has highlighted the high potential of reusing purified wastewater for fertirrigation purposes, both in terms of quantity and nutrients, exploiting smart technologies and materials that allow irrigation and precision fertilisation management. Moreover, the verification of the effects of the direct reuse of secondary and tertiary effluents on the “soil-plant” system has shown, in the studies conducted so far, the safety and sustainability of this practice,” says Attilio Toscano, professor of agricultural hydraulics and coordinator of the experimental activities conducted by CIRI FRAME, the Interdepartmental Centre for Industrial Research on Renewable Sources, Environment, Sea and Energy at the University of Bologna.

“This experiment is part of the Hera Group’s strategies aimed at an increasingly efficient use of resources, with reduced consumption, circularity and reuse solutions. The Cesena wastewater treatment plant is, in fact, a concrete example of circular economy within the water cycle, both in terms of a tangible and secure possibility of reusing purified wastewater for agricultural purposes, and in terms of the valorisation and recovery of secondary products from sewage sludge,” points out Susanna Zucchelli, Hera Group Water Director.

“By virtue of the results achieved, the project aims to act as a catalyst for agreements between institutions and companies in the supply chain, already involved in project development, to implement these practices on a real scale, starting from the best practice developed in Cesena as part of the project,” concludes Petta.



## Drought and heat waves on Mediterranean forests

*Rosa Coluzzi*

A study published on the international journal *Land* (MDPI), conducted by researchers of the LCD&D (Land Cover Dynamics and Degradation) group of CNR-IMAA together with some researchers of the University of Basilicata, explores the response to a prolonged dry period (summer 2017) of five different forest areas in Basilicata. In particular, the work analyzes the relationship between the trend of the NDVI (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index) values elaborated from data coming from the Sentinel-2 satellite sensor and the in situ observations conducted on trees through the Mannerucci and Raunkiær methods.



In recent years, Mediterranean areas, although considered rather resistant to drought events, have been characterised by increasingly frequent and important drought events. In particular, forests are among the ecosystems most significantly impacted, especially if drought occurs during a prolonged period of abnormal heat. Several studies have shown that forest species respond differently to extreme events depending on the intensity and duration of the event. Often this response is aggravated by specific local environmental conditions and is even more complex where vegetation cover is very heterogeneous. However, the high cost of in-situ measurements does not allow the collection of sufficient data to assess the large-scale effects of the natural event.

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This exploratory study analyses the response of five forest areas located in Basilicata (South of Italy) following a long period in the summer of 2017 characterised by low rainfall and high temperatures. It highlights a substantial consistency between the decrease in the mean NDVI value in the study areas (estimated with the Sentinel-2 sensor) in the post-event period and the vitality of individual trees and other non-trees (meadows, shrubs, etc.) assessed by the Mannerucci and Raunkiær methods, respectively.

In particular, the comparative analysis between satellite and in situ data was carried out considering the percentage of damaged trees (assessed by the Mannerucci method), regardless of species.



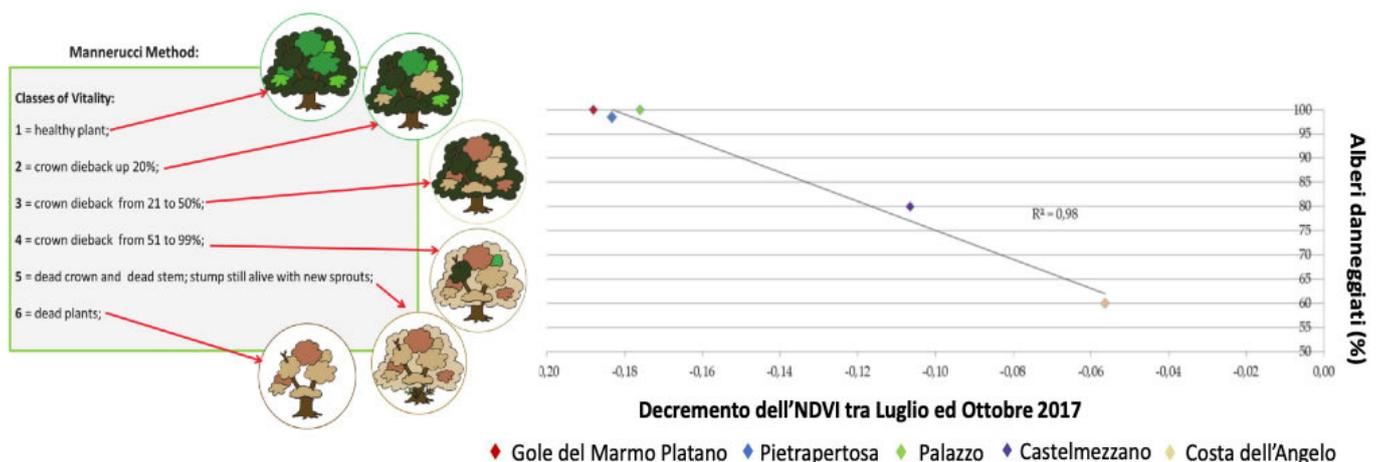
© Francesco Ripullone – Oak groves (Gallipoli-Cognato Park, Basilicata, South Italy) heavily damaged by the prolonged dry season of 2017





The results show that the tree layer appears to be decisive in the decrease of NDVI values; in fact, the latter is proportional to the number of damaged trees ( $R^2=0.98$  for the period July-October 2017). However, the analysis of the remaining vegetation layers can not only be considered a valid support in interpreting the response of forest ecosystems in the analysed period, but it also shows that the structure/composition of the undergrowth represents a crucial element in the recovery phase.

In general, the work shows the suitability of the Sentinel-2 NDVI index in estimating the damage suffered by vegetation at an adequate spatial resolution (10 metres) and in accounting for the damage suffered by other types of vegetation (undergrowth) that make up forest areas. This is an important result because it shows how Sentinel-2 data, distributed free of charge and with a good acquisition frequency (about 5 days), are particularly useful in the continuous monitoring of forests, especially during extreme events, as they are able to provide information on large areas while taking into account the specific characteristics of local variability.



© Rosa Coluzzi – (a) viability classes according to the Mannerucci method; (b) percentage of damaged trees according to the Mannerucci method (classes 2-6) and Sentinel-2 NDVI values observed in the period July-October 2017.

For more information: [Coluzzi, Rosa; Fascetti, Simonetta; Imbrenda, Vito; Italiano, Santain S.P.; Ripullone, Francesco; Lanfredi, Maria. 2020. "Exploring the Use of Sentinel-2 Data to Monitor Heterogeneous Effects of Contextual Drought and Heatwaves on Mediterranean Forests" Land 9, no. 9: 325.](#)

The article was included in the list of "notable articles" compiled by Land MDPI magazine to mark International Forest Day on 21st March 2021.



## Dementia and its risk factors: each step counts!

Up to 5 million deaths a year could be averted if the global population was more active. Physical activity is very important for human health and sedentary behaviour can cause a lot of healthy problems. Everyone, of all ages and abilities, should be physically active and every type of movement counts. The lack of physical activity is even one of the risk factors for dementia.

*Fanny Petermann-Rocha*



Dementia is a heterogeneous syndrome characterised by a progressive deterioration of cognition and the ability to perform activities of daily living. Dementia also has a huge emotional, economic, and psychological impact on families and society. The last report of dementia prevention, intervention, and care (published at the end of 2020) highlighted the 12 major risk factors that are responsible for ~40% of dementia cases: diabetes, hypertension, head injury, smoking, air pollution, midlife obesity, depression, alcohol consumption, hearing impairment, no social contact, low education levels and lack of exercise.



Physical activity is widely acknowledged as associated with several health benefits and reduces the risk of adverse health outcomes throughout the life cycle. As a result, the World Health Organisation has highlighted that 'each step counts', encouraging people to increase their physical activity levels.

Unfortunately, according to the latest PA report, 27,5% of the worldwide population is physically inactive, and these numbers are likely higher considering how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the people worldwide.



Regarding the association between physical activity and dementia risk, a recent study identified a dose-response relationship between device-measured physical activity and risk of incident dementia, independent of sociodemographic, lifestyle and health-related confounding factors; in other words, higher physical activity levels were associated with a lower risk of dementia incidence.

Moreover, compared to individuals physically inactive, performing physical activity could decrease the onset of dementia up to 12 years.

Read more about this article here:

<https://bmcmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-021-02172-5>



## Living Zero Waste: tips for a waste-free life

Recycling one's own waste is certainly a big step towards protecting the environment. However, independent sources show that recycling alone is not enough to give energy-intensive materials a second life. In this article, we will give you some tips on how to reduce waste production through 5 simple daily actions, thereby also saving money.

“Don't forget to take out the rubbish!”. This phrase, so steeped in everyday life, deserves further reflection. *Serena Gallanti*



How many of us are struck by feelings of desolation when we open the communal rubbish bin and notice that our dear neighbour still makes extensive use of plastic cups without separating them or, worse still, does not separate glass, paper or plastic for – I quote – lack of time? Leaving aside the unpleasant sight of certain types of rubbish in apartment blocks, the problem of waste is real and deserves to be resolved as soon as possible.



Sometimes recycling is not enough: Zero Waste Europe says so, its figures clearly show that despite all our good intentions, only a small proportion of waste is actually recycled.

How can waste production be reduced as much as possible in everyday life?

**1 – Refuse what you do not need:** This rule is taught to us directly by Bea Johnson, pioneer of the Zero Waste lifestyle and minimalist mother of a family. “Refuse” applies to everything you don’t really need, but take anyway because it’s free, from the plastic bag to that gadget from the mushroom festival. Speaking of the plastic bag, nice Tote Bags are now available all over the place and taking them with you will prevent you from ending up with drawers overflowing with bags of various sizes and materials.

**2 – Buy something using your own container.** It is also important to bear in mind that there are in most countries laws regulating this, such as the two Italian decree-laws 111 of 14th October 2019 and 141 of 12th December 2019, Article 7 authorize consumers to use their own containers upon request to the shopkeeper. This is an easy action whose effect can be seen immediately! There are several levels. Basic level: buy bread or fruit in your own bag. Intermediate level: buy sausage and cheese, meat and fish using your own container. Intermediate/advanced level: look for a specific shop for loose items.

**3 – Make a shopping list and a weekly meal plan.** Obviously this rule is flexible depending on one’s lifestyle, but if you decide to apply it, the results will be almost immediate. Obviously this alternative can be very gradual and can be modulated by using the freezer. I recommend cooking large quantities of pulses and freezing them in jars to cope with last-minute hummous cravings or just a quick lunch at the office.

**4 – Bring a container for leftovers to the restaurant:** this seems like a very shrewd alternative, but it is a super effective action against waste!

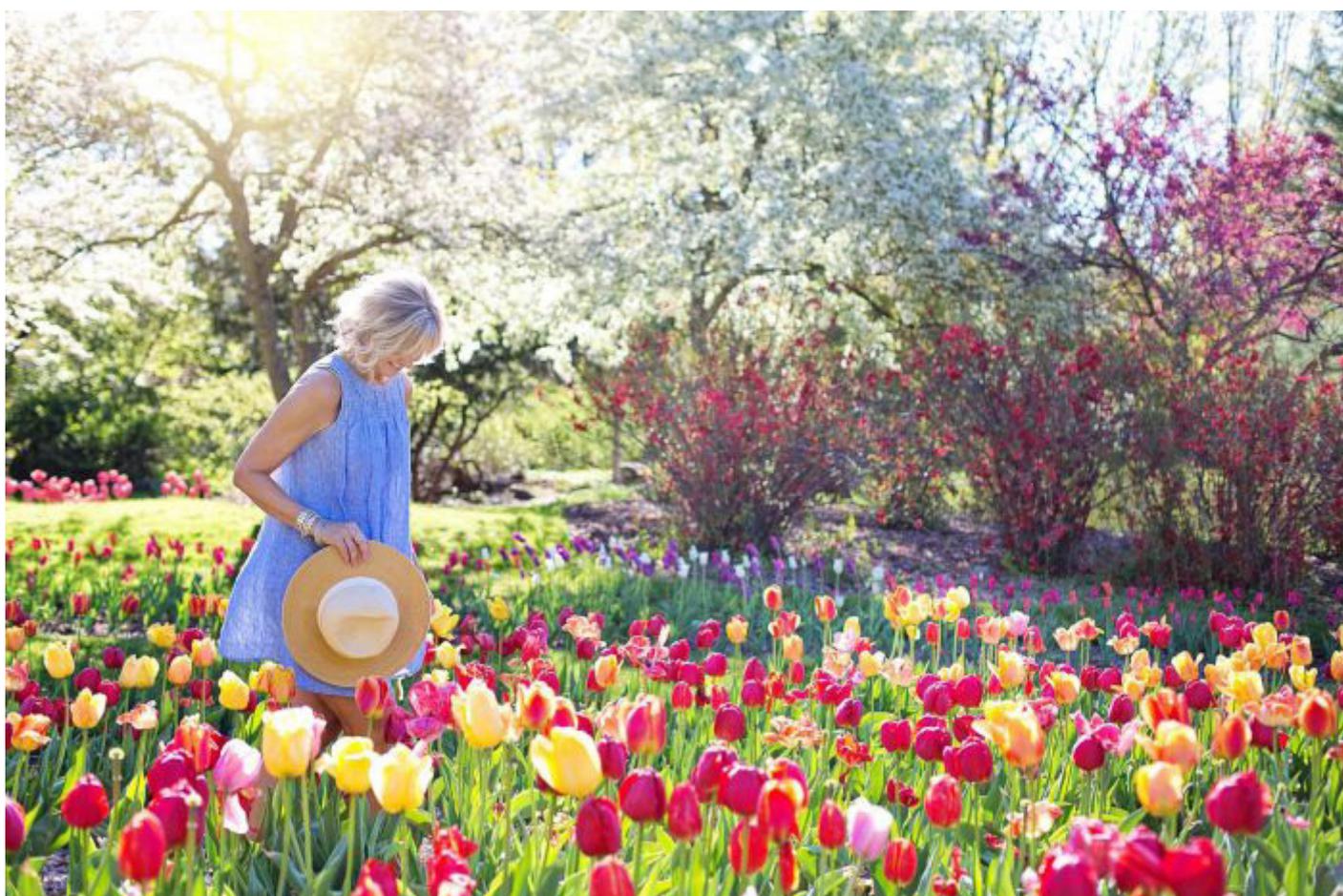
**5 – Be indulgent** if you just haven’t made it for a week and the rubbish has filled up quickly. I borrow a phrase from Zero Waste Paris, an association very effective in actions to reduce waste production: It is not necessary for a few to follow the Zero Waste lifestyle perfectly, but it is much more important for many to do it imperfectly!



## The tulip, the spring flower between history and legend

Spring has finally arrived! And when spring arrives, we think of snoozing meadows, singing birds, bright afternoons and above all flowers, flowers and more flowers! But what are the flowers that bloom in this season? There are so many, but the spring flowers par excellence are perhaps tulips. Tulips are very versatile flowers with a lot of positive meanings. Few people know about its health and personal care properties.

*Marisa Silvestri*



The tulip grows in a wide geographical area from the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa, from Greece to the Balkans, Turkey, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, Ukraine, South Siberia, Mongolia and as far as Northwest China. It was brought to Europe for the first time in 1554 and the botanist Carolus Clusius was responsible for the development of many varieties in a wide variety of colours and shapes that found their way into the Dutch royal gardens. Its cultivation in the Netherlands started around 1593. It is used to decorate parks, gardens, flowerbeds, lawns and is grown in pots on terraces or in flats.

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The name tulip comes from the Turkish 'tullband', which means turban, probably because of its characteristic shape. It is a flower that is very present in Turkish culture and also in many fairy tales, the most famous of which is 'The Thousand and One Nights'.

In Persian tradition, the red tulip was given by the lover to his beloved. This symbolism stems from the legend of an unhappy love affair. The legend of the Tulips tells of a young prince of Persia, named Farhad, who was deeply in love with one of his maidens named Shirin. One day the prince was given the false news that his beloved had been murdered, so he ran to his horse and galloped off to the highest mountain in the entire empire. Blinded by grief, he let himself fall into the void. His blood spilled all over the ground and many red tulips sprang up. This is why the red tulip is associated with love and passion.

### **Symbology**

The meaning of the tulip is true love. In the Ottoman Empire, it was synonymous with wealth and power as the sultans organised sumptuous feasts in their royal courts to celebrate the first blossoming of the tulip. Emotional meanings are attributed to the tulip according to the colour of each flower. In the case of yellow tulips, they represent the positive, i.e. everything that has to do with joy and happiness. White tulips are used in religious rituals, as they are closely linked to peace, innocence and purity. Red tulips represent fire, passion and eroticism. Purple is associated with economic prosperity, elegance and refinement. Black tulips are associated with mourning, death and sadness. Pink tulips are pure love and femininity. Blue tulips are used to show loyalty, friendship, trust.





## The tulip in cooking

Tulip petals are edible and have a taste reminiscent of peppered lettuce, more or less intense. The use of these flowers in cooking seems to date back to the 16th century. The coloured tulip petals alone can be used in salads or stews with vegetables to make a tasty floral side dish.

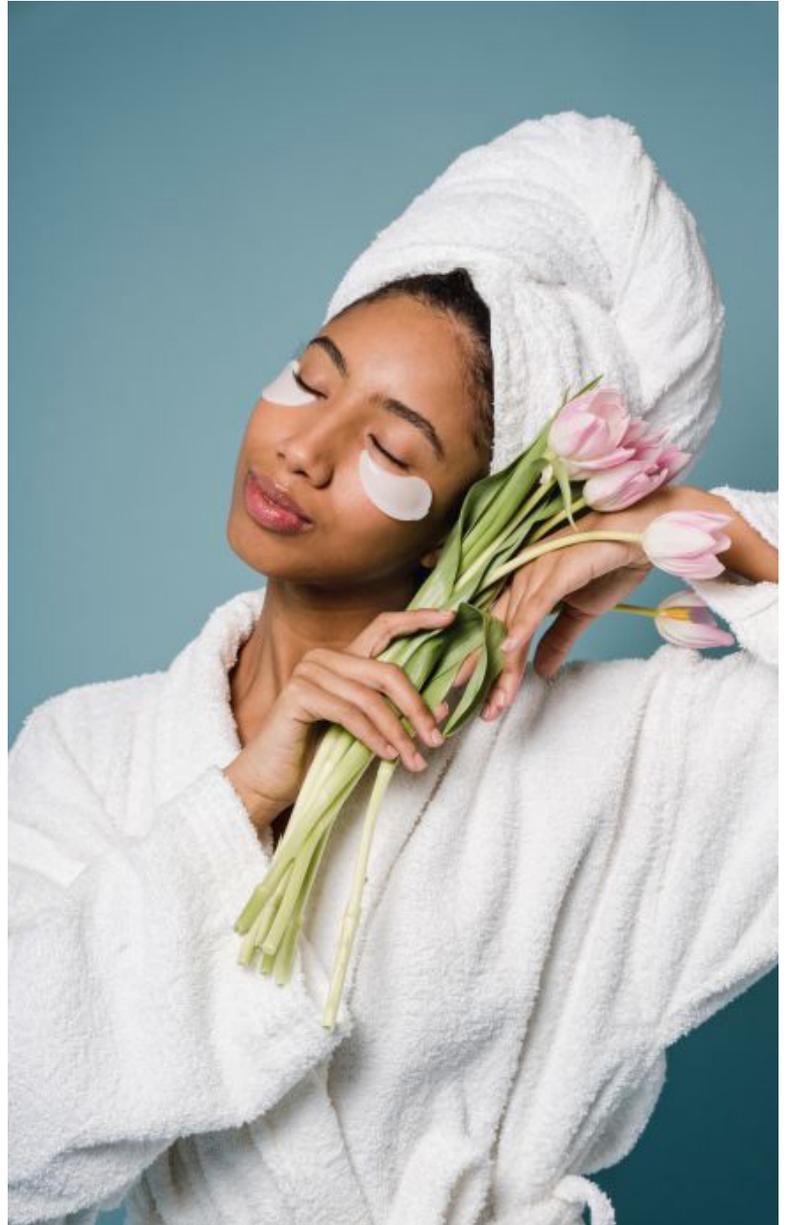
## The tulip in medicine

The tulip is said to have laxative, emollient and analgesic effects. Its leaves can be used to treat fever. In some places its leaves can replace spinach and the bulb can also be consumed for the amount of fibre it contains. Research is currently underway to find out more about its contributions to fighting cancer cells. The tulip is also thought to have aphrodisiac properties, which is why in many civilisations it is consumed as an infusion to increase sexual desire.

## The tulip in cosmetics

This beautiful and exuberant flower has a large number of properties not only related to medicine but also to beauty and care treatments. It is used to treat scalp conditions, as it strengthens the scalp and prevents hair follicles from falling out. Its chemical compounds also help with skin care, keeping the skin moisturised, relieving acne, sunburn and wounds.

In ancient times, it would also appear that tulip flower petals were used as a soothing compress for insect bites, burns and rashes. In the 18th century, girls were also said to use the petals of red tulips to create a paste which they spread on their cheeks as a beauty treatment.



*Art could not feign a simpler grace,  
nor nature a more beautiful line.  
(James Montgomery, on tulips)*



## Trees and their multiple symbologies

The cultural column dedicated to alberology (or better “treeology”, from the Italian “alberologia”) by forester and naturalist Antonio De Bona continues to discover the symbols that for centuries have placed the tree at the centre of the most ancient cultures and religions, through history, literature and mythology, but not only...

*Aurora Chiara Cortese*

My research with forester and naturalist Antonio De Bona on the fascinating and mysterious world of trees continues. Today we want to take you on a journey to discover the many symbologies that have for centuries placed the tree at the centre of the most ancient cultures and religions, through history, literature and mythology, but not only...

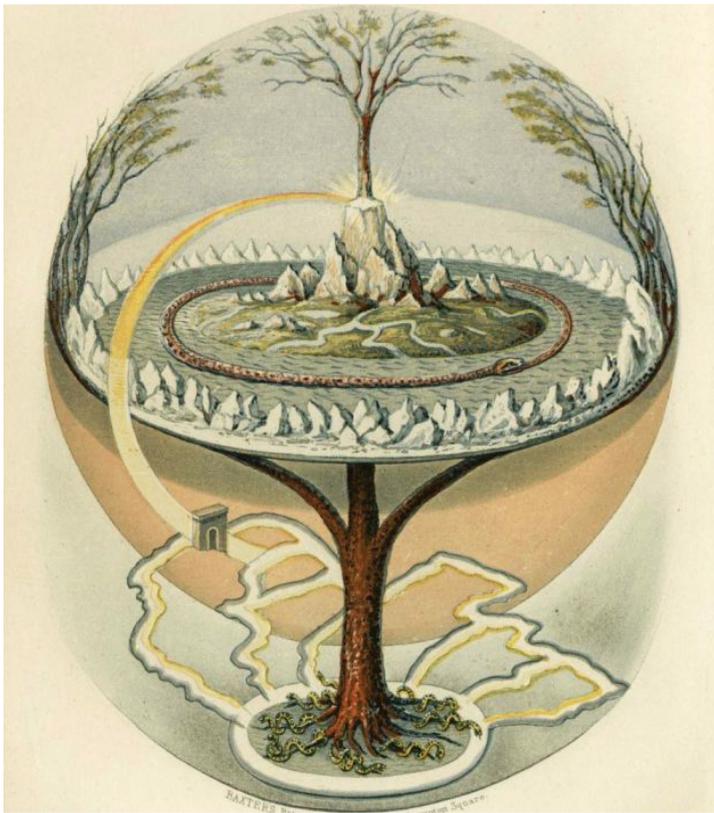
Trees have always had sacred and symbolic meanings: human beings, observing their growth and death, the elasticity of their branches, the annual decay and regrowth of their foliage, have considered and worshipped them as symbols of growth, decay and resurrection.

The earliest symbolic representation of the construction of the universe is the concept of the ‘World Tree’ or ‘Cosmic Tree’, which acts as the axis of the universe (Axis Mundi) and thus the link between Heaven and Earth, through branches and roots.

According to Hungarian mythology, the world is divided into three spheres (Upper World, Middle World and Underworld) connected by a tall tree, called Világfa, the ‘World Tree’, which in some stories also bears fruit, namely golden apples.

In Scandinavian mythology, however, the cosmic tree is Yggdrasill, an ash tree whose mighty branches support the nine worlds (which make up the entire universe) and is the source of life, knowledge and destiny. The world tree is also present in Slavic and Finnish mythology in the form of an oak, in Siberia in the form of a birch and larch, in Islam as an olive tree and in Hinduism as Ashvatha or sacred fig (*Ficus religiosa*).





The analogy with the tree of life is similar: its structure, firmly bound to the earth by its abundant roots, but reaching towards the sky with its luxuriant branches, is a symbol of life, the world and knowledge for many peoples. With its strong, gnarled trunk, it is often enclosed in a circle, mainly due to the shape of its crown and root system, which almost touch each other.

Although there are many interpretations, the tree of life represents, in a sense, all the stages of existence: the roots are what anchor us to the past and give us solidity, allowing us to grow and prosper, and therefore represent family, affections and values; the trunk, robust and resistant, represents the path of elevation from the earth to the sky, but also the strength that must be put into facing the many challenges and pitfalls of life; the many leaves of the foliage, on the other hand, are the future, green and full of hope, and the ripe fruits, rare and precious, could represent new lives coming into the world, but also

the opportunities that arise in our lives and that we must not let slip away. Thus, the tree of life holds many symbolic meanings, ranging from rebirth to peace, prosperity to family, and strength to faith.

In biblical tradition, the Tree of Life appears in Genesis alongside the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In fact, for some authors, these two trees are said to be a single symbolic tree that refers to God himself as the source of life (the Tree of Life) and to his ultimate meaning (the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil).

Plato, in his *Timaeus*, describes man as a plant, not terrestrial but 'celestial', an upturned tree whose roots reach towards the heavens and whose branches reach towards the earth: '[...] holding up our head and root right there, from where the soul drew its first origin, the divine element keeps our whole body upright'.

Even Dante, in *Purgatory* (canto XXII), speaks of an overturned tree, with fruits of a sweet and pleasant perfume, which gradually became sparser and sparser towards the bottom, perhaps to prevent someone from climbing it. From the way Dante speaks, in fact, one deduces that the tree may be the reflected and inverted image of the Tree of Life, on which the souls in *Purgatory* cannot eat and on which they cannot climb.





The tree, according to the founder of analytical psychology Carl Gustav Jung, is one of the symbolic archetypes of the collective unconscious, present in all cultures. Jung noticed that the image of the tree appeared to his patients in moments of crisis, as a support in the process of integration and growth. Although they were unaware of the symbolic meaning behind the figure of the tree, they dreamt or painted tree motifs spontaneously and benefited from them. The image of the tree, therefore, has an evocative and therapeutic power of deep resonance in our psyche and becomes a symbol of the person, his or her history and evolution.

Trees are also depicted on many flags, coins, banknotes and heraldic coats of arms, elected as symbols of the different states of the world. The green cedar (*Cedrus libani*) in the centre of the flag of Lebanon, symbolising immortality and steadfastness, or the mahogany tree (*Swietenia humilis*) on the coat of arms of Belize, symbolising the importance of the mahogany trade in the country in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Or the stylised red leaf of the sugar maple tree (*Acer saccharum*) on the flag of Canada, famous for its maple forests throughout the country and the syrup made from these plants.

A reference to the emblem of the Italian Republic is a must at this point: the cogwheel, representing work, and the Star of Italy are enclosed by an oak branch (on the right) symbolising the strength and dignity of the Italian people, and an olive branch (on the left) symbolising the nation's desire for peace, understood both as internal harmony and international brotherhood.



*Flag of Lebanon*

An oak branch is also depicted on the German 1, 2 and 5 cent coins, while the French 1 and 2 euro coins depict the tree of life, enclosed in a hexagon symbolising the nation's borders.

Trees have fascinated mankind for thousands of years: their longevity, strength and majesty have made them, and still make them, sacred to many peoples. Their symbolic value is manifold all over the world, linking beliefs, traditions and cultures that are extremely diverse and, apparently, very distant. This must make us bear in mind that our existence has always been closely and indissolubly linked to that of trees and that a return to nature is more necessary than ever to rediscover that magical and archaic connection with these beings, as mysterious as they are essential to our survival on Planet Earth.

*Since ancient times, the tree has been the symbol  
and expression of life, balance and wisdom.  
(Jean Giono)*



Every flower is a soul blossoming in nature.  
(Gerard De Nerval)

**SmartRicicla**

The App for waste collection.





## Trash art: contemporary visual art meets the nature

“Recycled art” is the current trend of the international artistic scene. The aim is to harness creativity for the benefit of waste reuse: what would be destined for landfill is revitalised through green and original creations.

*Katia Sepe*



*Henrique Oliveira, “Baitogogo”, hosted until 9 September 2013 at Palais de Tokyo on the occasion of “Nouvelles Vague du Palais de Tokyo”.*

Art has always been a reflection of reality. The artists express their everyday life with their works, accentuating their particular conditions. The socio-cultural changes (and also climate, now) are reflected in the art that depicts the salient and most representative aspects. The environmental pollution and the climatic crisis arouse the attention of the artists, known and not, of our century and the development of the “Trash Art” (garbage + art) is evidence of this.



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Trash Art is considered an evolution of an art form called “Fragment Art” founded in 1918 by Kurt Schwitters: collages and assemblages of bus tickets, pieces of wood, fabrics, various labels and wastes replace the normal paints in the works of the German artist.

Nowadays many artists have been inspired by the “greats” of the past in recovering waste products to give them the opportunity to be, also, revalued and appreciated. The noble trend aims to carry out an “artistic struggle” against environmental degradation and especially against the accumulation of waste, sometimes difficult to dispose of. The materials – addressed to the landfill – such as plastic, wood, paper and various waste are revitalized in innovative and green works of art, that is close to nature through recycling.

ISPRA (Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale) data on the Urban Waste Report for the year 2020 show a decrease of 3.6% compared to 2019: urban waste produced in Italy in 2020 amounted to 28,9 million tons compared to 30 million tons in 2019. On average, every citizen produces 488 kilograms of waste per year in Italy.

These seemingly encouraging figures are influenced by the limited socio-economic activities that have taken place over the last two years and are therefore determined by the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Let’s discover together how art meets the environment thanks to the creations of artists who, using urban waste, combine business with pleasure: expressing their emotions taking care of the environment.

Henrique Oliveira creates large installations, paintings and sculptures from woody scraps of all kinds: fences, decaying wood, processing waste, wooden furniture abandoned near the bins.

Attracted by the fascinating and typical wood veins (similar to those of man), the Brazilian artist is known for the creation of “plant installations” that he considers as the impetuous effort of nature to escape urban constraints, to which it is subjected and for which it is often destined to perish.



*Annarita Serra, The Mad Hatter, (cm 90 x 90) Plastic from the Sea 2012.*

These seemingly encouraging figures are influenced by the limited socio-economic activities that have taken place over the last two years and are therefore determined by the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.





*Bordalo II, The Bear, Turin.*

wants to launch a message: focus on sustainability, ecology and biodiversity conservation strongly threatened by the environmental crisis of which man – prone to consumerism and the intensive exploitation of the resources offered by nature – is certainly responsible, recreating nature by means of those materials that, paradoxically, compromise its balance. In degraded areas, Bordalo II reproduces large animals, colored and three-dimensional, known as “Trash animals” and the work “The Bear”, in Turin, is an example of this.

The listed and briefly described works contain a meaning far from trash. Contemporary art, devoid of rules, tries to smooth out the negative effects of the excessive exploitation of materials through the recovery of the same. It is difficult to make beautiful what pollutes and that is no longer needed, but man with his ingenuity and his creativity is also capable of this.

*All great art comes from a sense of indignation.*  
(Glenn Close)

Annarita Serra has managed to reconcile the need to express her art (through paintings and sculptures) with the need to protect the marine environment from pollution caused by the deposit of plastic waste: “I had two dreams in my life: working with art and saving the sea. I’ve discovered over the years, that one of them helps me realize the other, that art helps me save the sea. I know that I am doing this because today, after twenty years, I am no longer alone”, says the Italian artist of Sardinian origins.

Arturo Bordalo, aka “Bordalo II”, uses old pieces of cars, bicycles, small appliances no longer working and, in general, all the waste that can be found on the street, to witness the idea of art as a symbol of a consumer world to which he, With his Street art, he



## Ministry of Tourism relaunches mountain tourism

The Ministry of Tourism has made 5 million euros available to the Italian Alpine Club for mountain policies: from digitalisation - with the possibility for anyone to activate the GeoResq app on their smartphone to be geolocated in the event of an accident in the mountains - to mountain therapy, without forgetting the role of refuges as sentinels of the climate and the enhancement of hiking and mountaineering trails. Particular attention was paid to the Sentiero Italia CAI and the Italian Rochers route on Mont Blanc.

*Editorial Board*



The Minister of Tourism, Massimo Garavaglia, met on February 14th with the General President of the Italian Alpine Club (CAI) Vincenzo Torti. At the center of the interview, the activities and initiatives that the CAI will put in place in the face of the new important resources, 5 million euros, made available by the ministry. It was the first time that a minister of the Republic visited the headquarters of the Italian Alpine Club.

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During the meeting, Minister Garavaglia emphasised to President Torti 'his appreciation for CAI's activities, which are considered strategic for the relaunch of mountain tourism, both hiking and mountaineering'. He also emphasised 'the common concern for the mountains as a heritage to be defended also in terms of sustainability, with not sporadic but structural interventions, and with a long-term vision'.

He also acknowledged "the great value of the CAI Sentiero Italia, which with its 7200 kilometres crosses the Italian mountains, from Santa Teresa Gallura in Sardinia to Muggia in the province of Trieste, and which will be included in the new national tourism portal". In conclusion, he praised "the commitment and voluntary work of the members of the association in the field of hiking and training".

Among the topics of the meeting, there were also the activities implemented by the Italian Alpine Club to relaunch mountain tourism and in line with the constitutional reform that included the protection of the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems among the fundamental principles of the Constitution (amendments to art. 9 and art. 41). Another dimension of the Sodality's interventions is education on the environment and sustainability in schools, with training courses for teachers, looking at the new generations and young people to be introduced to the mountains. Data were also provided on the CAI's activities in 2021, which, still in the midst of the pandemic and in compliance with anti-Covid regulations, organised 11,127 initiatives (including hiking and mountain biking, climbing, mountaineering and ski mountaineering ascents, snowshoeing, caving and canyoning outings) and 485 training courses for accompanying persons and instructors who, on a voluntary basis, lead excursions and ascents.

"In thanking Minister Garavaglia for this meeting, the first of a Minister of the Republic at the Headquarters of the Italian Alpine Club in its 159 years of history", said General President Torti "I would also like to stress the commonality of intent in the use of the resources made available by MITUR, an important economic-financial commitment that we will use, in coherence with our vision of mountainity and in particular for the activities related to safety in the mountains, with the free activation for all the visitors of the Terre alte of the app GeoResQ, realized by the National Alpine and Speleological Rescue Corps of CAI".

The meeting with the press was attended by the general vice-presidents Lorella Franceschini and Francesco Carrer, as well as Alessandro Molinu, vice-president of the CAI's National Alpine and Speleological Rescue Corps, and Martino Peterlongo, president of the National College of Italian Alpine Guides. Doing the honours, the director of CAI, Andreina Maggiore, who thanked the minister also on behalf of all the employees of the Headquarters.

## < TIME TO RECYCLE



### Where do I throw the Easter egg wrapper?

*Editorial Board*



The chocolate egg is one of the symbols of Easter, the feast of rebirth and, in a broader sense, of the new life that materials can acquire with recycling and, therefore, with proper separate collection. For this reason, once all the chocolate has been eaten, it is necessary to separate the various waste according to the materials that compose them and place them in the appropriate bins, as SmartRicicla teaches us.

#### **Where to throw the Easter egg card?**

Don't be fooled by the name. What we commonly call "paper" is in fact metallized plastic made of polypropylene and, as such, it must be thrown into the plastic bin, as well as the plastic cup on which the eggs are commonly placed.

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## TIME TO RECYCLE >

Unlike the case of eggs wrapped in aluminum or fabric wrappers, which must be placed respectively in the metal container together with the aluminum and steel packaging and in the undifferentiated container.

Even the ribbons used to close the package must be thrown in the undifferentiated while the cardboard with the brand and the list of ingredients must be thrown into the paper container.

And the surprise? Let's face it, many times the little things we find in Easter eggs are ugly and useless, so if we really can't use them in any way, their destiny is the bin of the undifferentiated.

### **Recycle the chocolate egg paper in a creative way**

The best waste is the one that is not produced, so before you get rid of the Easter egg wrapper, think about all the constructive and creative uses you can make of it. Here are some suggestions:

- **Covers for books and notebooks** – An idea for recycling Easter egg paper is to transform the material into a colorful cover for books and notebooks. For the processing you need scissors and glue, to cut the paper of the shape and size of the chosen book: you will avoid it from being damaged and, at the same time, you will have found a way to customize their school texts in an original and low cost way. .
- **Bookmarks** – Leftover cutouts can be turned into bookmarks by gluing the colored strips to stiff card stock to finish the job and make the enclosed stories even more fun.
- **Drawer lining** – Use the Easter egg wrapping to line the drawers in which to store sweaters and clothes: a way to decorate the interior of the furniture, especially if old, and prevent them from being damaged if new.
- **In the garden** – The sparkling Easter egg casings can become scarecrows to protect your vegetable garden from the incursion of birds. Alternatively, you can use them to line plant pots.

### **Gift baskets and packages: what to do with them?**

At Easter it is also customary to give baskets containing various products placed on the straw. The latter is usually made of plastic and as such must be thrown into the corresponding bin. If it is made of natural material, however, it goes organic. As for the wicker baskets, if you cannot reuse them at home or in the garden, you can give them to the ecological island or to separate wood collection.



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