

An ancient woodland surrounding a UNESCO heritage site recovers from a severe storm

The extensive storm damage required the clearing of massive trunks and fallen trees to restore a historic park in Tuscany.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Tuscany, Italy

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P4 – Ecosystems management

Focus Area: Biodiversity restoration, preservation & enhancement

Measures: M08 – Investments in forest areas

Funding:	Total budget	48 731 (EUR)
	EAFRD	15 665 (EUR)
	National/regional	20 665 (EUR)
	Private/own	12 401 (EUR)

Timeframe: 20.12.2017 to 08.10.2018

Project promoter: Quarrata Municipality

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setting. All young trees planted were from the same species as the trees that were already in the park.

- 380 metres of fencing was put in place to protect the growth of the new trees.



Quarrata Municipality

Key lessons and recommendations

- Project implementation was smooth. There was a positive attitude among those involved, as all the stakeholders were aware of the damage caused by the storm. Everyone was keen to achieve concrete results in a short amount of time, which was accomplished.
- The most challenging action was the removal of some very big trunks (approx. one tonne each) that blocked some of the paths in the park.
- The reporting of the project's activities also proved to be straightforward and easy, thanks to the support offered by the provincial authority that managed the RDP on behalf of the Tuscany region.

Context

Magia Villa is a remarkable architectural complex built in the late XIV century, in the southern part of Pistoia province, some 50 km west of Florence, Italy. This public property is owned by the municipality of Quarrata and was recognised as a Unesco world heritage site in 2013. The property has been surrounded by a 40-hectare mixed woodland area since the end of the Renaissance period.

On the 5th of March 2015, an exceptional storm hit the area, bringing down dozens of monumental trees and causing considerable collateral damage to the area. Due to the extent of the damage caused, support was needed to clear the area from the fallen trees and to restore the

Summary

The Quarrata municipality in Tuscany, Italy, applied for RDP funding to restore an ancient local park surrounding a Unesco heritage villa. The woodland park was badly affected by a heavy storm in 2015, during which many massive, ancient trees fell or were seriously damaged. There was a need to clear the debris and to restore the park to a safe status. The project also included the replanting of indigenous tree species. The outcomes of the project were greatly appreciated by the local population..

Project results

The following results were obtained:

- Across a total area of 3.4 hectares, 60 massive bases of fallen trees were removed, and another 45 damaged trees were felled and cleared.
- Around 1 000 plants (mainly downy oak, turkey oak, maple, rowan trees) were replanted in an irregular pattern to resemble a natural



estate to its former beauty. It was hoped that relevant interventions would also have an educational impact for the future. This is why the municipality of Quarrata applied for RDP funding from the Tuscan regional authority in 2016.



Quarrata Municipality

Objectives

The key objective of the project was the restoration of the woodland part of the Magia Villa park that had been heavily damaged by the storm. A further ambition was to learn from the operations and make the estate more resilient for the future.

Activities

The following activities were undertaken:

- Clearing 3.4 hectares of land from fallen trees and pruning and/or removing those trees that were severely damaged.
- Restoring the internal viability of the woodland.
- Restoring parts of the woodland by replanting indigenous tree varieties.

Main results

The following results were obtained:

- 60 massive bases of fallen trees were removed and another 45 damaged trees were felled and cleared.
- Around 1 000 plants (mainly downy oak, turkey oak, maple, rowan trees) were replanted in an irregular pattern to resemble a natural setting. All young trees planted were from the same species as the existing trees in the park.

- 380 metres of fencing was put in place to protect the growth of the new trees.

Key lessons and recommendations

The following key lessons were learnt:

- Project implementation proved to be smooth. There was a positive attitude among those involved, as all the stakeholders were aware of the damage caused by the storm. Everyone was keen to achieve concrete results in a short amount of time, which was accomplished.
- The most challenging action was the removal of some very big trunks (approx. one tonne each) of older trees that blocked some of the paths in the park.
- The reporting of the project's activities also proved to be straightforward and easy, thanks to the support offered by the provincial authority that managed the RDP on behalf of the Tuscany region.

"We managed to achieve very positive results even with a limited amount of public funding, thanks to careful project planning and implementation."

P.Petruzzi



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