

Unit 2. Forests and Climate Crisis

Courelas de Guadalupe and Carrascosa



Legend: *volunteering activity to manage the planted trees in Courelas de Guadalupe property.* Source: Courelas de Guadalupe and Carrascosa database

Description

Courelas de Guadalupe and Carrascosa are two adjoining properties located in the parish of Vila de Frades (municipality of Vidigueira) which are jointly managed under a stewardship agreement by Desafio das Letras (DDL) a consultancy SME with recognized work in leveraging funding from the LIFE Programme for various environmental, nature conservation, climate adaptation and rural development projects throughout Portugal, for a diversity of organizations (public, private and non-profit). The properties are managed as part of DDL's own strategy and aims towards nature and biodiversity conservation, without a productive goal, but having in mind the opportunity to develop, essay and demonstrate solutions that can be more widely applied, by all those interested in ecosystem restoration in dry areas, conservation of threatened species, and overcoming climate change (especially droughts and erosion).

Goals

The main objective of the project is to ensure a climate resilient and diverse mosaic of ecosystems (including but not limited to forest habitats) that not only allow for a full recovery from the wildfire of 2016 but also ensure an "island of biodiversity", with aims for conservation, within 20 years.



Legend: *alternative technique for water retention applied in the property.* Source: Courelas de Guadalupe and Carrascosa database

Activities

- planting of native trees and shrubs - promoting a mosaic of diverse forest and non-forest habitats;
- to support better survival rates and increase water retention on the soil, installation of diverse climatic adaptation solutions, with a major emphasis on the use of rock- mulching, organic mulching, swales, and tree protectors;
- to support conservation goals, reinforcement of populations of threatened wild flora species/populations, rescued from nearby sites where agricultural intensification is inducing their extinction within a short-term.
- sowing of various herbaceous species of flora from regional origin, including especially those that were once used by resident population as a source of wild-edible food or flavour, or for cultural or medical uses;

Impact

- Increase in overall flora diversity from 78 species (in 2016) to 131 species (in 2022, still to increase);
- 2 local populations of threatened species of flora installed or reinforced;
- complementary increase of diversity of fauna species (as for records in iNaturalist) including at least 62 known/observed until 2022;
- adoption of the "rock-mulching" technique successfully essayed
- replication of the engagement model of young people, through the use of Solidarity Projects, to ongoing nature conservation projects
- increased acceptance and use of direct sowing - as opposed to planting - for Quercus species, as it presents a higher resilience to the first critical Summer, by Plantar uma Árvore (as agreed with their sponsors).



Legend: *alternative technique for water retention applied in the property.* Source: Courelas de Guadalupe and Carrascosa database

Social Media

https://www.instagram.com/courelas_de_guadalupe/

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/242782536592508>