The forestation of agricultural areas in Lombardia region - Italy

The creation of a rural landscape and an advantage for urban people

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In northern Italy, between Alpi’s and Appennini’s ranges, stretches down the river Po valley (PianuraPadana), the largest valley in Italy and comprises many of the most important cities in the valley, like Milano, Torino, Bologna, Venezia.
High population density

- A relevant area of this valley belongs to the Regione Lombardia where the medium population density reaches 409 inhabitants per Km$^2$.
- In both mountainous ranges (Alpi and Appennini) there is a high covering forest layer and a quite low population density owing to the depopulation of rural area and the abandonment of agriculture and cattle activities.

- On the other hand, the Pianura Padana:
  - is urbanized and cereal are cultivated
  - its medium population density is very high; for instance, in the province of Milan it reaches 2,000 inhabitants each square Km
  - it is lacking in woods and natural vegetation

- Besides, the forest layer is keeping on lowered: during 2000 and 2007 it lowering by 2.06 %, while on mountains it increased by 2.29%
Milan and River Po Valley from the Alpi range
Population density per Km\(^2\) in Lombardy (January 1st 2008)

Legenda

- **Provinces**

**Population density per Km\(^2\)**
- < 200
- 201 - 500
- 501 - 1000
- 1001 - 2000
- > 2001
Percentage of the municipalities areas covered by woods (2008)

- < 5
- 6-10
- 11-25
- 26-60
- > 60

Province’s capital
Province’s borders
Water areas
Works carried out in the eighties

- In the eighties some works of urban reforestation were carried out in Milan’s surroundings; the most important ones were “The Parco Nord of Milan”, “The Bosco in città” (that is “Wood in the City”), and “Bosco delle Querce” (Oaks wood) in Seveso, a city where in 1976 a big industrial accident took place.

The reforestation of the “Parco Nord di Milano” was for instance a main work by which a green multifunctional area was realized in Milan’s neighbourhood. Native leafy species where planted in it.
The “Parco Nord di Milano” in the ‘80...
... and in 2000:
In 2002, the Regione Lombardia Administration gave rise to the project “Ten big forests for the Plain” by which up to now eight forest areas have been realized in the neighbourhood of the main cities:

- A minimum area of 40 hectares is foreseen for each of them and moreover the 70% of each one forested;
- The total area comes to 400 about, 325 of which bound to be multiple-functioning woods and the remnant rural recreation sites. The total cost is 19 Million Euros
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A study case: “La Cassinazza” - Gussago
During 2007 the Regione Lombardia started another realization: the “Green Systems” project, aiming at the creation within 2015 (when Expo will take place) of 10,000 hectares about of woods and sites of natural vegetation on the Pianura Padana’s fields.
Responsability for the accomplishment of the regional policy concerning the agricultural and forest field has been transferred to the Provinces and/or to the Mountain Communities.


The turning point was the year **2009**. The Regione Lombardia notified the U.E. of the new measure allowing financing the green systems to private citizens too. In **2010**, 2 M € have been allocated to the Provinces, on the following principles:
- forest area / total area ratio of each Province
- number of projects submitted
Green Systems Project’s difficulties

Due to the transfer of responsabilities, the operative difficulties are on the Provinces and not on Regione Lombardia. Our difficulties have been preliminary ones. That is:
- written roles had to be clear and shared since the beginning.
- the governance process has been shared with stakeholders (Local Administrations, farmers trade unions, professionals, land owners)

- The realization of this project is very difficult owing to the owners’ short willingness to bind their land for many years
- The big town planning pressure requiring more and more free building areas also for facilities and department stores, gives rise to great expectations by soil owners particularly in big cities surroundings
Requirements of the Green Systems’ Project:

Minimum area of 5 hectares: the owner must freely allow the public and free use of his lands to be repopulated during 30 years, that is all the project will be realized without buying or expropriating private lands.

The expenses for the project are financed by a maximum of 20,000 € an hectare; and 30,000 € for an hectare for peri-urban lands.
It is important to be noted that these green sites must be created and run by the farmers themselves, allowing them to become part of the rural surrounding environment and in the same time avoiding desertion and decay, problems characterizing cities surrounding areas.

The farmer / owner:
- is given a financing for realizing and maintaining the forestation;
- must ensure a co-financing of 25% of the total cost;
- may make use of the new wood for the development of recreational activities and touristic use of the country buildings run by the farmer himself. The project concerning the touristic activities of the owner are not included in the financed costs.
Only native forest species are employed for reforestation with a minimum of 1,500 plants an hectare, arranged by sinusoidal lines to make landscape as natural as possible.

Meadow and shrub areas have ecotonal functions and humid areas were reserved with the aim to foster biodiversity....
Works for the realization of an humid area......
.....and the same humid area a few years later
.... Facilities improving the public use like paths, cycle-roads, resting sites, fountains and so on
Multifunctional use and promotion
Thank you for your attention!

...and a specific logo has been created......