

ENVIROMENT

Fight against pollution, how much does each plant “eat”?

A fundamental strategic value. This is how Coldiretti has defined the contribution of every single plant in the fight against pollution



How important is each tree? “An adult plant,” explains Rita Baraldi, CNR researcher in Bologna at the Istituto di Biometeorologia, “within twelve months **satisfies the oxygen requirement of 10 people and is capable of absorbing from 20 to 50 kg of carbon dioxide, depending on the species.** The most “smog eating” are larches, cypresses, willows, poplars, birches, lindens, alders and maples. And so, for example, an oak tree in the space of half a century can store over 5 and a half tons of CO₂ in the form of biomass.” Also, plants are fundamental for stopping pollution. “In Milan,” according to data from Baa, “in the Gardens of Porta Venezia, a horse chestnut can stop on

yearly average 225 grams of particulate matter PM10, a Linden exceeds 250, an English oak 170 and a magnolia 111, while a Norway Maple nearly 190 grams per year. In practice, each hectare more of plants,” calculates Coldiretti Lombardy, “means about 20 kg less dust and smog annually.”

The importance of plants is also within the walls of houses and offices. If in general the pollution in Milan kills on average 800 victims a year, house pollution is the third risk factor of death (after hypertension and smoking) and may be countered with some essences: “the ficus, ivy and ferns, for example, are good against formaldehyde, benzene and cigarette smoke,” says the researcher.

Not to be neglected is the economic aspect, and therefore environmental: **a home placed in a green setting with trees save between 80 and 200 euros a year due to lower costs for heating and cooling.** An important assessment element since 2016 was ranked as the hottest year ever worldwide with the average temperature recorded in the first nine months on the Earth’s surface and oceans even higher to 0.89 degrees celsius compared to the average of the twentieth century. A terrible year, the one that starts at the end, since the World Meteorological Organization raised the alarm on the average concentration of carbon dioxide **in the atmosphere that has reached the milestone of 400 parts per million.**

For this “encouraging, even fiscally, plants,” conclude the Coldiretti Lombardia and Assoflora conference organiser, “in addition to improving the quality of life and help the environment, would serve as the economic driver and employment for an industry that, despite the recession, there are still nationally 30 thousand companies which employ 158 thousand employees for a turnover of 2.7 billion euros. While in Lombardy the realities are more than five thousand, although down compared to 6,500 a decade ago. “

di Translated by Prof. Robert Clarke

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