

Mediterranean scrub

What to do

Fire, fire!

The Civil Defence suggests some sustainable behavioural rules to prevent fires:

- do not light fires near wood, flammable liquids in general, fuels, paper and garbage
- pay attention to signs showing danger of fires or prohibiting fires
- If you light a fire in a place where it is allowed, make sure it is out before you go away.

In case of fire:

- when sighting a fire, always inform the people in charge (carabinieri, police, the Fire Brigade, the State Corps of Forest Rangers, the Consortium of Municipalities of the mountain area), specifying any useful detail that will be asked
- learn how to use fire extinguishers.

Near a fire:

- move away; don't forget smoke is dangerous for your airways
- cover your nose and mouth with a damp handkerchief

Fire-fighting

When a fire is reported, the Centro Operativo Aereo Unificato (COAU) of the Civil Defence located all over the territory and region concerned uses aeroplanes and helicopters to try to 'stem' the fire. Any point of the country can be reached within 60/90 minutes from take-off. Fire prevention can be addressed and improved through the use of satellite detection systems, which sometimes have already been used. Such systems can monitor fires on wide regions at low costs, even in distant areas. Satellite detection may advantageously help to control fires: forecasting, detection, assessment of effects and drawing up of maps of burnt areas, riskiest areas, etc. Nevertheless, although it is an effective service, if the weather conditions are unfavourable or if there are too many fires which have not been promptly reported, men and means may not be enough. Only through the co-operation of every one can the damages of this frequent phenomenon be limited.

Fighting desertification

Agenda 21 was established as a result of the 1992 Rio Summit and it's a set of actions to undertake at a local level to solve the global problems of our planet, combining economic development with environmental protection and social growth. On December 26, 1996 entered into force the United Nation Convention which suggests international cooperation initiatives; the common goal is enhancing productivity of cultivated lands and provide for their recovery, conservation and for the sustainable management of soils and hydric resources.

Specific projects are under examination for given areas, involving local population, restoring precious traditions and reassessing the role of rural communities to avoid decay of these lands. Moreover, if in the past there was a tendency to find technical solutions, nowadays the problem as a whole is analyzed, as it's produced by continuous growth population but also political and socio-economic causes. On a global scale, various UN agencies deal with desertification and among these are FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Meteorological Organization, UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).