SmartGreen Post

News from the environment

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SmartGreen Post

News from the environment

SmartGreen Post is a blog on the green world, from climate change to separate waste collection. You will always be updated on news from Italy and the world, on the environment, green economy and new technologies. In addition, you can find our tips for a more eco-friendly and healthy lifestyle, as well as a section dedicated to sustainable tourism.

SmartGreen Post is part of a larger Green project that includes SmartRicicla, the separate collection app available in Italy, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. You can download the app directly on the Play Store. For more information visit the website www.smartricicla.com

SmartGreen Post wants to be a small contribution to the protection of our planet, because to prevent catastrophe it is necessary to know and then act, each in his own small way, with simple but highly effective gestures.

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We only have 7 years to save the planet: let's not waste them

Piera Vincenti

Editor of SmartGreen Post, she has many years of experience as a journalist and copywriter, alongside which she has added new skills in the digital and social media management sector. With SmartGreen Post she expresses its true ecological nature.

A little over seven years. That's what we have left to stop climate change and reduce CO2 emissions before it reaches a point of no return. Saving the planet is a duty of each of us, no one excluded. Taking to the streets, protesting, organizing conferences after conferences are very important actions to raise awareness among public opinion and individual citizens. But they are not enough.

In this crazy summer that has just passed, we have witnessed extreme weather events, fires that have devastated central-southern Italy, floods and floods that have caused extensive damage, especially in the northern regions. Glaciers continue to melt at alarming rates as the sea level, whose bottoms are covered with plastic, continues to rise. How does all this sum up? In two words: climate change.

Those who still persist in denying the evidence, pointing the finger only at the mismanagement of public affairs, poor maintenance and the malicious hand of man (all contributing causes that should not be underestimated), risk losing sight of the real reason behind it. recent environmental disasters, more or less natural.

But there is more. The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown, which at first appeared as a detoxifying cure for planet Earth, instead risk bringing us back, nullifying part of the sacrifices made so far and moving us away from the goals set for 2030 and 2050.

The most recent data, in fact, say that air pollution did not stop during the months of quarantine; that yes, the nitrogen dioxide levels have dropped but the concentrations of fine particles in our cities have not decreased. What to do then?

In the fourth issue of the SmartGreen Post magazine you will find a series of solutions that help us reverse the course of the problem analysis. The first and simplest are those to be put into practice every day in our quality: reduce the consumption of meat in order to cut emissions produced by intensive farming and to preserve the welfare of animals; buy products from organic farming, both food and cosmetic; invest no longer in petrol cars but in electric and hybrid cars; entrust their savings to financial institutions offering sustainable investments; make a correct separate collection.

Small gestures that, if carried out daily by all of us, have a great ideological and practical value. Simple actions that will allow us not to waste the seven years we have left to save the planet. Our only home.

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Graphic Design: Stefano Pallitto

Burning forests: a challenge for prevention and restoration

Maria Floriana Spatola

Fire intensity and frequency have increased in the last few years, due to anthropogenic land consumption

© Maria Floriana Spatola

Thousands of hectares of forest are burning in the Mediterranean Basin. In Italy and more in general in Europe, several wildfires lead to the destruction and decline of important forest heritages that host a wide variety of vegetal species, each with specific ecological requirements. Fire intensity and frequency have increased in the last few years, due to anthropogenic land consumption, leading to the depletion of natural communities. Evidences showed clearly the increase of arsons as the main cause of wildfires, in order to expand or renew the pasture at the expense of the forest, eliminate agricultural-forest residues and remove vegetation from uncultivated land.

According to the Report on the state of Italian forests "2017-2018", 2017 recorded the largest burned surface area (160.000 ha) since 1980, where 70% was represented by forests. The year 2020 is no an exception: in the post-lockdown period up to today, several wildfires occurred, especially affecting protected areas (National Parks and Natural Reserves), causing damage on biodiversity conservation.

A high inter-annual variability of wildfires was observed in the Mediterranean Region, mainly due to both anthropogenic land use changes and climate change impacts.

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The climate forcing, represented by the increase of extreme weather events such as heatwaves recorded in the last 30 years, have lead on the one hand to an increase in evapotranspiration and on the other to an extension of the high fire risk period.

As specified in the Greenpeace-Sisef report "Un Paese che brucia", winds and droughts play a key role in the fire spreading, for example typical hot and dry winds of Mediterranean summer such as Sirocco and Mistral, or prolonged heatwaves reduce vegetation moisture and consequently increase fire risk. Finally the large burned forest area contribute to increase greenhouse gases emissions affecting air quality and forcing climate change.

© Maria Floriana Spatola

Forest ecosystems show several fire disturbance feedbacks, depending on type of vegetational biomass and environmental condition such as fuel moisture content. Several type of forest vegetation are more affected than other: Mediterranean coniferous stand are generally characterized by high flammability, promoting fire spread and feeding large wildfires. An interesting example is a pine forest wildfire (c.a. 200 ha) occurred in July 2020 within the Special Protection Area "Gran Sasso National Park-Monti della Laga", affecting the Community Interest habitat 4030-Lande secche europee, including an endemic species Genista pulchella Vis. Supsp. aquilana F.Conti&Manzi. Instead, the fire-resistant vegetation such as oak forests characterized by thick bark and resprouting capacity from stumps, are affected by small wildfires that can turn into large fires characterized by high severity when prolonged droughts condition persist.

Wildfires effects on forest ecosystem depends on fire severity levels: from low severity with bark slight blackened, moderate severity with bark and canopy black-brown to high severity with tree completely destroyed.

Low severity wildfires allow the post-fire vegetation recovery, without any necessary guided interventions, while forest ecosystems affected by high severity cannot be effectively restored by natural regeneration and the post-fire vegetal succession would lead to the creation of simplified natural communities.

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According to the wide range of feedbacks between fire severity and forest types, scientific community is focusing on wildfires phenomenon and post-fire vegetation recovery based on fire severity levels.

Satellite imagery suitable to identify fires in real-time and evaluate wildfires effects, have been used by numerous studies. Free available satellite data (Landsat and Sentinel) and tools to analyse and process data such as Google Earth Engine platform, provide a rapid response on the state of vegetation communities, by calculation of spectral indices from pre- and post-fire imagery. However, satellite data need to be validated and calibrated against ground-truth data. Few site-specific studies about fire severity estimation from satellite data, are currently carried out in Italy. For this reason, several research projects about wildfire risk, are in progress.

The SISEF (Società Italiana di Selvicoltura ed Ecologia Forestale) Workgroup of Forest Fires Management aims to study wildfire's disturbance prevention and environmental restoration management in burned areas. In this context, it is very important the promotion of information exchange between research and land governance for post-fire recovery management strategies.

United in Science report: Climate change has not stopped for Covid19

Piera Vincenti

Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere are at record levels and the world is set to see its warmest five years

Climate change has not stopped for COVID19. Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere are at record levels and continue to increase. Emissions are heading in the direction of pre-pandemic levels following a temporary decline caused by the lockdown and economic slowdown. The world is set to see its warmest five years on record – in a trend which is likely to continue – and is not on track to meet agreed targets to keep global temperature increase well below 2 °C or at 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.

This is according to a new multi-agency report from leading science organizations, United in Science 2020. It highlights the increasing and irreversible impacts of climate change, which affects glaciers, oceans, nature, economies and human living conditions and is often felt through water-related hazards like drought or flooding. It also documents how COVID-19 has impeded our ability to monitor these changes through the global observing system.

"This has been an unprecedented year for people and planet. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted lives worldwide. At the same time, the heating of our planet and climate disruption has continued apace," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres in a foreword.

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"Never before has it been so clear that we need long-term, inclusive, clean transitions to tackle the climate crisis and achieve sustainable development. We must turn the recovery from the pandemic into a real opportunity to build a better future," said Mr Guterres. "We need science, solidarity and solutions."

The United in Science 2020 report, the second in a series, is coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), with input from the Global Carbon Project, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the UN Environment Programme and the UK Met Office. It presents the very latest scientific data and findings related to climate change to inform global policy and action.

"Greenhouse gas concentrations – which are already at their highest levels in 3 million years – have continued to rise. Meanwhile, large swathes of Siberia have seen a prolonged and remarkable heatwave during the first half of 2020, which would have been very unlikely without anthropogenic climate change. And now 2016–2020 is set to be the warmest five-year period on record. This report shows that whilst many aspects of our lives have been disrupted in 2020, climate change has continued unabated," said WMO Secretary-General, Professor Petteri Taalas.

Environmental and economic benefits of sustainable development

Clean and renewable energy, low emissions, protection of human health and the environment, new jobs: these are the pillars for a green restart

Claudio Ventura

The crisis generated by the pandemic is one of the most serious in the history of modern society. Considering the extent of the economic damages, it is necessary to identify a strategy able to guarantee positive results both in the short and long term. The strategy, however, can't be disconnected from the concept of sustainable development, both for economic and environmental reasons.

For this reason, in order to make possible a development model compatible with the environmental issue, it's necessary to undertake not only an energy transition process, but also interventions in all the most polluting sectors to make human activities less impactful and economically convenient.

Potentials of a green restart

From the report "Will COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages accelerate or retard progress on climate change?" published in the Oxford Review of Economic Policy, which involved world-renowned economists including Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001 and Nicholas Stern, emerges that investments dedicated to a more sustainable and attentive development to issues environmental, climatic and economic, guarantee an increase in employment and higher returns in the short and long term.

In fact, it has been estimated that "every million dollars of expenditure generates 7.49 full-time jobs in infrastructure for renewable energy, 7.72 in energy efficiency and only 2.65 in fossil fuels".

According to the study, therefore, recovery strategies must combine economic objectives with environ-

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mental policies. This is the only way to achieve better growth prospects in the short and long term. The study commissioned by Greenpeace Italia to the Institute for Sustainable Futures in Sydney (ISF) ,also, demonstrates how an energy revolution in the Country could provide enormous economic, employment and environmental benefits.

The scenario promoted by Greenpeace Italy, which is consistent with the Paris Agreement, demonstrates the feasibility of a scenario of total decarbonisation for our Country by 2040 and provides for the achievement of a share of renewable electricity production equal to 75% in 2030 and 100% in 2040.

Considering an increase in the share of electricity produced from renewable sources, the goal will be to revolutionize the transport system, electrifying consumption, investing more in public transport and in forms of shared and alternative mobility.

To make this scenario possible, major investments in the electricity sector of 37 billion between 2020 and 2030 are required, but it is also necessary to consider a saving on fossil fuel costs of 36.5 billion (and that the savings between 2030 and 2050 would exceed the investment costs). From an employment point of view, by 2030, 163000 jobs could be generated in the energy sector.

Possible interventions for a more sustainable future

In order to be consistent with the principles of sustainable development, it isn't only necessary to proceed with a process of decarbonisation and energy transition, but it is necessary to intervene in those particularly polluting sectors to make them more compatible with environmental protection.

For example, interventions could be dedicated to reduce environmental impacts in the construction sector, promoting the regeneration of urban areas and the spread of the principles of sustainable architecture. In particular, the use of low impact materials, but also with high performance in terms of thermal insulation, should be encouraged to create zero net energy structures and buildings, capable of producing energy equal to the energy consumed in a year, with consequent economic benefits (savings in utility bills) and environmental benefits (less energy consumption).

Furthermore, investments can be directed in the agricultural sector, using digital technologies, to minimize the consumption of water and other resources. This is agriculture 4.0 which offers the opportunity

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to optimize crop yields, avoiding waste and reducing production costs.By combining the experience and knowledge of the farmer with digital technologies, the typical problems of the sector (diseases, pests, incorrect dosage of fertilizer, etc.) could be prevented by making agricultural production more reliable, less expensive and more sustainable.

So, for Italy and for the other countries affected by the inevitable crisis generated by the pandemic, paradoxically a new opportunity arises to create a development model in which economic growth and environmental protection are not unrelated factors, but inevitably connected between them. In other words, it is about creating a truly sustainable development model.

Clean and renewable energy, low emissions, protection of human health and new jobs, therefore, should be the pillars for a sustainable restart and to overcome the post-Coronavirus economic crisis, not to make mistakes of the past and to believe in a healthier future.

Organic farming is more profitable than traditional farming

Organic is liked and and is more efficient, especially when it comes to agriculture. This is stated in a report by France Stratégie. According to the study, the French conventional agricultural model, while contributing to food security, harms the environment without guaranteeing sufficient income for all producers. Agriculture accounts for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions, not to mention its contribution to the erosion of biodiversity and pollution of water and soil.

It's also bad from an earnings point of view. A quarter of French farmers, in fact, live below the poverty line despite the aid. Organic farming, on the other hand, would be more profitable first of all because the companies that practice it save on input costs and the prices of organic products are higher.

Agrochemicals impact soil, surface and groundwater, biodiversity, bees, other beneficial insects and wildlife. Not using them means protecting biodiversity and natural resources. France Stratégie also suggests ways to speed up the adoption of more sustainable techniques. These include crop rotation, the maintenance of permanent meadows and the construction of agroecological infrastructures.

Recently, with the Farm to Fork strategy, the European Commission has urged the start of this transition in member countries, with ambitious goals to be achieved by 2030: at least 25% of European agricultural land with organic cultivation, cut by 50% of pesticides and antibiotics used on farms, 20% reduction in chemical fertilizers. According to Eurostat data, the annual quota of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides is 23.5 kilos for each European: 12 million tons are poured into European fields every year.


Nature is painting for us, day after day,
pictures of infinite beauty.
(John Ruskin)
Protect our environment.
SmartRicicla
The App for waste collection.
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Sustainable finance, what is it and what are the best green investments

Sustainable finance is linked to an ethical vision of investment that gives an economic profit and at the same time has a positive impact on a social and / or environmental level

Ingrid Leka

Lately we often hear terms like Green Finance, financial sustainability, social impact bonds, SRI etc: why so many names? So what is sustainable finance?

Sustainable finance is linked to an ethical vision of long-term investment. These are investments in activities or companies that give an economic profit and at the same time have a positive impact on a social and / or environmental level. Sustainable finance is not a new concept: the first ethical banks appeared already towards the end of the 1970s. There are several models to explain this phenomenon, many of which have points of intersection:

• Socially responsible investments (SRI). This is the prevailing approach at the moment. SRI stands for Sustainable and Responsible Investment and considers the impacts of investments on the environment, society and corporate structure (known as ESG criteria). This approach leads to a responsible economy by encouraging selection companies to include in their evaluations not only the classic financial criteria but also the extra-financial ones. In general, the analysis is conducted starting from the financial statements or sustainability reports and the information provided by the company and other organizations such as trade unions, consumer associations, environmental associations and NGOs. Global net worth, according to a Morningstar research, exceeded $ 1 trillion, with a growth of 72% in the second quarter of 2020.

• Green Finance. Generally seen as the arm of the SRI, it brings together all those financial transactions that favor the transition to renewable sources and fight climate change. One of the main instruments are Green Bonds, bonds issued with the aim of financing ecological initiatives. While this market was almost non-existent in 2010, in 2019 alone Green bonds were issued for about 257.7 billion dollars (+ 51% compared to 2018). A complementary approach in Green Finance is decarbonisation: financial managers limit exposure in their portfolios to companies that have a negative impact on pollution.

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• Social finance. A "social impact" is defined as finance that supports investments linked to measurable social objectives capable, at the same time, of generating an economic return for investors. Two macro-phenomena are involving the Social Services sector in an important way: the average aging of the population and the economic crisis. Social finance, therefore, seeks to bridge the gap between necessary and available resources by financing projects that would not obtain funds from "classical" finance. Among the various social finance tools we find:

1. Social Impact Fund: a form of social shareholding that is achieved through funds that invest risk capital in companies or organizations with the aim of generating a measurable social or environmental impact together with a financial return.

2. Social Impact Bond: also known as Pay for Success Bond, a 'bond' where the repayment and remuneration of the loan is conditional on the achievement of a specific social result. Applied by the Public Administration for the collection of private loans, it is particularly complex in its implementation and involves a number of actors including an independent evaluator.

3. Social Bonds: traditional bonds specifically addressed to NPOs both in the sense of collected masses and the flow of donations destined for them.

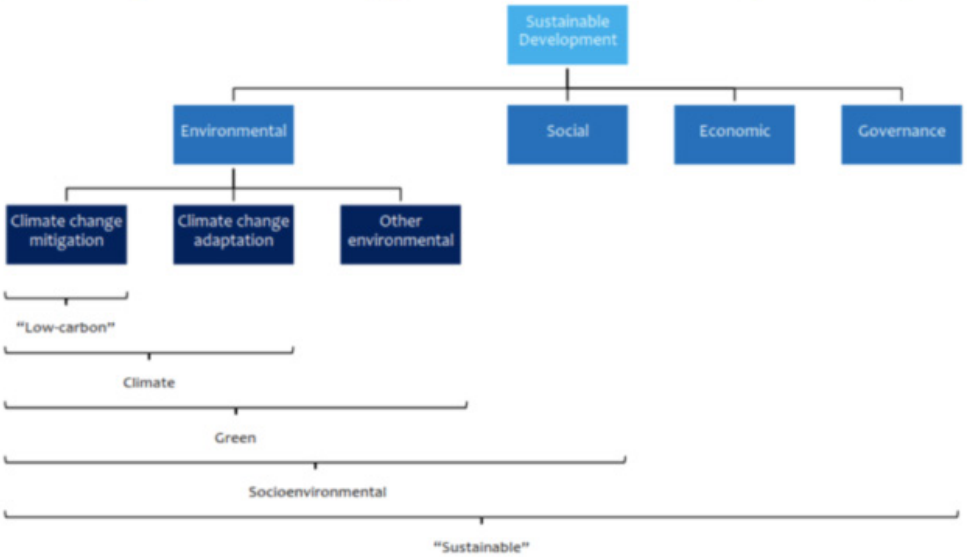
4. Mini Bond: bonds the issue of which does not require listing on the market. Developed with the aim of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, they have a real potential for use also for cooperatives.

5. Crowdfunding and Social Lending: forms of widespread-based financing using web platforms. They are suitable for projects, even of a certain size, promoted in particular by NPOs.

6. Microfinance: small loans to non-bankable entities suitable for small private initiatives. Micro-credit has also been available for some time and used by the Third Sector.

A United Nations survey visually summarizes the link between sustainable, social, Green and climate-related finance: in essence, the term "sustainable" embraces all these areas, trying to create a positive impact on an environmental, social and economic level.

Figure 1: Linkages between climate, green and sustainable finance (UNEP Inquiry 2016a)



Electric cars: a new graphene battery charging in 15 seconds

Editorial Board

Skeleton and KIT are developing a new graphene battery charging in 15 seconds

Electric is the future of the car but, before this technology can establish itself on a large scale, there are still some small knots to be solved. One of these is related to battery life and charging times, which may soon no longer be a problem thanks to the new graphene battery that recharges in 15 seconds.

Skeleton Technologies, the global leader in graphene-based ultracapacitor energy storage, has partnered with the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, one of the largest research and educational institutions in Germany, to complete the development of the SuperBattery, a groundbreaking graphene battery with a 15-second charging time.

This extra fast charging time coupled with charging cycles counted in hundreds of thousands make the SuperBattery a perfect solution for the three main issues affecting electric vehicles: slow charging times, battery degradation, and range anxiety.

The key differentiator for the SuperBattery is Skeleton's patented Curved Graphene carbon material, enabling the high power and long lifetime of ultracapacitors to be applied in a graphene battery. Ultracapacitors are increasingly emerging as the ideal complementary technology to lithium-ion batteries, as also shown by Tesla's acquisition of ultracapacitor manufacturer Maxwell Technologies in the hopes of improving batteries used in Tesla's electric vehicles.

"The SuperBattery is a game changer for the automotive industry. Together with Li-ion batteries, they have it all: high energy and power density, long lifetime, and 15-second charging time", Skeleton Technologies' CEO Taavi Madiberk comments.

The SuperBattery has already garnered a lot of attention in the automotive and transportation sectors. Recently, Skeleton Technologies signed a 1 bn EUR Letter of Intent with a leading automotive OEM to bring the technology to the market. The development of Curved Graphene has been supported by EIT InnoEnergy, the innovation engine for sustainable energy across Europe which is also the first backer of Northvolt, the Swedish battery manufacturer.

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Walking from Bolsena to Orvieto: discovering the beauties of the past

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli

An ideal path for those who can dedicate a few days to holidays and do not want to give up an unforgettable experience

Linked since the late Villanovan period, the centers of Bolsena and Orvieto present a vast wealth of natural landscapes and historical-cultural treasures. The union between the natural element and the anthropic element is very close, which will make the trip even more pleasant.

Starting from Bolsena, you can not help but stroll through the historic center, where you pass from typically Renaissance buildings and buildings to the medieval alleys of the Castello district. Above all, the Rocca Monaldeschi della Cervara dominates, built between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; at first the main tower and the north wall were built, later more towers were added, the perimeter walls and the interior.

Since 1991 it has been the home of the Territorial Museum of Lake Bolsena, where finds relating to the Etruscan era are preserved, mostly from the necropolises in the area, and evidence relating to the ancient Roman city of Volsinii, with pottery, lamps, funerary epigraphs and Roman votive and much more; a geological section with several samples of rocks and a naturalistic section with a large freshwater aquarium in which to admire a reproduction of the underwater life of the lake complete the visit to the museum.

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Also worth visiting is the Collegiate Church of Santa Cristina, built in the 11th century in Romanesque style, famous for the Grotto of Santa Cristina, where a basaltic stone with the footprints of the martyr is preserved, having stepped on the stone before being pushed into the waters of the lake with a boulder tied to the neck, by order of his own father, Roman prefect, who had not accepted his conversion to Christianity; from the cave there is a complex of catacombs, dating back to the II-V centuries AD. C.

The Collegiate is also famous for the Eucharistic miracle, which would have occurred in this church in 1263, when a priest, who had doubts about the real presence of Christ in the host and in the wine, in celebrating mass saw the host bleed on the corporal. The event is noteworthy because following this the Corpus Christi feast was established and the majestic Cathedral of Orvieto was built to guard the corporal.

After having dedicated a relaxing walk to the lake shores, you can continue on foot through a path on a paved Roman road, which climbs into the bush and continues to offer surprising and picturesque glimpses of the lake. Along the road there is the Etruscan necropolis of Lauscello, where it is possible to visit, with the help of a torch or a front lamp, some of the open tombs.

Arriving in Orvieto, the route could start first of all on a journey around the spectacular cliff on which the city stands. Along this path are located both the Etruscan necropolis and the sanctuary of Cannicella and the Etruscan necropolis of the Crocifisso del Tufo, with rectangular chamber tombs. They can be accessed by going down a few steps and on the lintel of the doors you can see engraved the name of the deceased and the family they belong to.

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A short visit must include some fundamental stages within the historic center of Orvieto: the Pozzo della Cava from the Etruscan era must certainly be seen, but adapted by Pope Clement VII in 1527. Furthermore, the Pozzo di San Patrizio, a work designed to provide water in case of calamity or siege at the behest of Pope Clement VII, it offers a descent for hundreds of steps to the bottom, with many windows open in the barrel. The Albornoz fortress, with its towers and walls, now houses the main public gardens of the city and offers a beautiful panorama of the valley below.

You cannot do without a visit to the Palazzo del Popolo with the beautiful square in front and the Torre del Moro, from which you can have one of the most beautiful views of Orvieto. Finally, the most precious jewel, the Cathedral of Orvieto, with the facade of indescribable beauty, decorated with bas-reliefs and mosaics, as well as numerous statues; the interior will amaze with the Corporal Chapel of the miracle of Bolsena, the monumental pipe organ and the Chapel of San Brizio, whose pictorial decoration was started

in 1447 by Fra Angelico. Entering the latter chapel leads the visitor to get lost in the paintings, completely surrounded and sensorially impressed by the colors and images placed in every single corner of the walls.

For those who have more time, Orvieto offers much more with its museums, its beautiful churches and palaces; another small pearl is hidden under Orvieto: by booking you can get to know the underground Orvieto, which still reserves many surprises.

Trips where time spent does not count, but the quality and depth of moments lived.

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September diet, to get back in shape after the summer excesses

A healthy and balanced diet is enough to shed the extra pounds accumulated during the summer and get back in perfect shape

Maria Carmela Padula

Worried about having gone too far with aperitifs and meals out during the summer and especially in the last month?

No fear … or rather less fear than you might believe! Why? Because most of the weight gain may be due to changes in the water sector … therefore water and not fat. Another aspect to consider is the frequency of "excesses". It is the repeated and constant excesses that have negative effects, certainly not the ice cream, the aperitif or the dinner out.

In any case, it is essential not to make mistakes due to "corrective maneuvers" with questionable effectiveness and to rely on the September re-start with small tricks with great positive effects:

- Restore the circadian rhythm: it is essential to recover the correct sleep-wake cycle, which is put to the test

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during the summer. This first step is essential for the optimal control of hormones and the hunger-satiety balance.

• Setting plausible goals: healthy and lasting weight loss or the acquisition of healthy eating habits are processes that take time. It is not always appropriate to rejoice in seeing the scales go down so many kilos, as this can mean loss of lean mass and not fat mass.

• Do not skip meals: balance throughout the day is always essential, both in terms of the breakdown of macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats), and in terms of the distribution of the meals of the day (breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, dinner).

• Do not eliminate carbohydrates, an exclusion often mistakenly implemented to lose weight quickly, functional, on the other hand, to create nutritional imbalances and to return more easily to an unbalanced diet, especially if bread, pasta, pizza and the like are particularly welcome foods.

• Reduce seasonings: raw extra virgin olive oil is the main ideal seasoning for our dishes. Reducing salt by relying on spices and aromatic herbs, where not contraindicated, to give strong flavors to dishes, can be an excellent strategy.

• Do not forget the crucial role of water, to purify the body and keep cells adequately hydrated, and of fibers, which are essential above all for the proper functioning of the intestine, the "second brain" and center of wellbeing.

• Do not rely on fat burners and various slimming: nutritional balance and consistency of correct behaviors are the only guarantees of achieving the goal.

• Do not overdo physical activity, aiming for greater energy expenditure, especially if you have reduced movement during the summer. Instead, it is useful to plan the training and resume the same gradually.

There is no single food plan for everyone, the "best diet", but healthy habits at the table must take into account biochemical and anthropometric parameters, as well as organizational and working needs, such as a tailored suit, which cannot fail to include most loved foods, without guilt. This flexibility makes healthy habits a sustainable and lasting lifestyle, guaranteeing well-being and health.

Cutting back on meat consumption will prevent the next pandemic

A reduction in meat consumption not only would prevent the risk of future zoonotic diseases, but also have immediate benefits for the environment

Gaia Lamperti

Industrial production of animal products is a source of diseases and the next pandemic might spark from poultry, say the world's leading authorities in emerging zoonotic diseases.

Already in 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) had declared that the primary cause of pandemics is to be found in "increasing demand for animal protein" which leads to an escalation in animal intensive farming.

Particularly, the current growing demand for white meat and thus the intensive chicken production threat the next looming pandemic in the poultry sector, according to global health experts.

"Industrial production of, and growing demand for, animal products carries a far greater risk than specifically wet markets," said Dr Talia Raphaely, author and research supervisor at the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute in Perth, in an interview with SmartGreen Post.

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The American Public Health Association recently called for a de-intensification of intensive animal factory farming to prevent future pandemics risks, and a paper in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences suggested to lower densities of animals within factory farms.

"Yet, bizarrely, despite the global scientific community's recognition that both the current pandemic and forecasts of even worse future pandemics are directly linked to intensive production of animal products, ceasing to eat meat, or at least radically limit the quantity eaten, remains largely ignored as a preventative measure," Raphaely added.

In fact, despite the FAO's prediction that COVID-19 will cause the biggest retreat for global meat-eating in nine years, experts have not witnessed a real drop in demand.

"There is no clear evidence or reason to believe the current pandemic has in any way made a meaningful impact on the way humanity considers the consumption of animal products," continued Raphaely. "This wide-spread general lack of awareness and connection I find terrifying because individual food choices don't just affect our personal health but our global health."

A reduction in meat consumption not only would prevent the risk of future zoonotic diseases, but also have immediate benefits for the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, land use and water pollution.

Professor Dora Marinova, director of the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, explained to SmartGreen Post that livestock is a major source of methane, a greenhouse gas which has an estimated 84 times higher global warming potential than CO2.

Also, over 27% of the available land on this planet has been converted for animal grazing and animal feed production, compared to only 7% of land used for direct human consumption.

"By doing this land conversion, humanity is encroaching and destroying the habitat of other species," said Marinova. "We have little respect for their needs and also how important biodiversity is for us and this planet."

However, an increase in food innovations and meat substitutes shows that the change might come from within the industry. Even the world's major meat producers, such as Perdue, Tyson, Cargill and Smithfield, recently joined the meat-reduction revolution by launching on the market new plant-based alternatives.

Particularly during COVID-19 'faux meat' consumption spiked with sales in America increasing up to 264% since March. In fact, while farmers and slaughterhouses were struggling to respond to the outbreak, companies like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat could scale up their production of meat substitutes.

"COVID-19 is a warning and a call for humans to reconsider and re-conceptualise their relationships with nature," said Marinova, "to re-embed and re-integrate ourselves back in nature and live psychologically and technologically within the Earth's natural systems, including our food production."

Both her and Raphaely have faith in the changes in the industry, grassroots groups, and new generations' awareness, but they agree that governments play a crucial role in directing consumers' food choices.

They believe that the issue has not been addressed with appropriate urgency and call for a more transparent communication about the link between diet, climate change and pandemics.

"Only when governments, global leaders, and leadership bodies have the courage to step up and communicate the science and the truth and stimulate and incentivise change, will there be widespread responsible, ethical dietary choices and increasing global environmental and human wellbeing," concluded Raphaely.


Only when the last tree has been cut down,
the last fish been caught,
and the last stream has been poisoned,
will we realize we cannot eat money.
(Sitting Bull)
Protect our environment.
SmartRicicla
The App for waste collection.
GET IT ON
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Sustainable packaging for Ciomod, the good chocolate for environment

Quality ingredients and ecofriendly packaging are the pluses of this Sicilian product: the story told by Innocenzo Pluchino

Piera Vincenti

In the heart of Modica Alta, Sicily, is Ciomod a delightful Modica chocolate shop. The location is striking – right next to Pizzo Belvedere, where you arrive after a tiring walk – and the poster next to the entrance. It says: "Save the Earth … it's the only planet with chocolate". It is this sign that pushes me to enter and immerse myself in a world made of new and particular flavors.

Here I meet the owner of the company, Innocenzo Pluchino, disguised as a salesman for a day, who explains to me why his chocolate is different from all the others.

"Ciomod, in its most obvious declination, means Modica chocolate but the "mod" also stands for trend (moda in italian) because for us it is important to keep up with the times – says Pluchino – Our premium line is made with the highest quality cocoa and packaged in a sustainable and design packaging that respects the environment. We could define it zero impact as it is made from recycled cardboard and colored with natural colors. For example, the green of the Evo oil chocolate package is obtained with 15% of olive processing by-products. We try not to use chemical dyes and leave nothing to chance throughout the entire supply chain, from production to packaging".

There's more: in addition to using recycled cartons, Ciomod tablets are hand-wrapped one by one to enhance the work of local people. Tradition and innovation meet in Pluchino's chocolate, which has the authentic right of the past.

"The goal of our bean to bar line is to recover traditional, hand-made processing. Modica chocolate – says the owner of Ciomod – is cold worked, according to the ancient tradition imported from the Spaniards, at a temperature of about 43 degrees. In this way, the cocoa does not go through the conching phase: the granulated sugar added to the mixture is unable to dissolve or blend, giving the bars the characteristic rough appearance, with a grainy texture".

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Innovation lies not only in ecological packaging but also in the search for selected raw materials. In synergy with the Sicilian Slow Food presidia, Ciomod offers quality ingredients, such as the IGP salt from Trapani or the late mandarin from Ciaculli, rich in essential oils. For the bean to bar line, or from the bean to the bar, the company has chosen Colombian cocoa, with all its magic and contradictions.

"The choice takes into account the extraordinary qualities of this variety of cocoa but also the history behind its production. A few years ago, during a trip to Colombia, I had the opportunity to meet small producers who had made the courageous choice to convert the coca plantations into cocoa and I strongly wanted to support their business".

Environmental and social sustainability enclosed in a single chocolate bar, which also tells the story of Sicily. Not surprisingly, the bars are wrapped in what look like old newspaper sheets. "The theme was not chosen by chance, it is a true work of design – explains Innocenzo Pluchino – It is a tribute to the old Sicilian newspapers but above all it recalls the times when chocolate was first wrapped in greaseproof paper, so as not to exude the 'cocoa butter oil, and then in the newspaper, which had insulating properties and did not let the chocolate absorb external odors".

Thanks to its green packaging, made by the Favini paper mills, Ciomod has also activated a partnership with Legambiente: "In unsuspected times I got to know the current president of the association, Stefano Cianfani, with whom a relationship of esteem and affection. It was he who pushed me to apply for certification for sustainable packaging".

The choice of the point of sale, in an area of Modica little frequented by tourists, was courageous and counter-current. "We wanted to redevelop the Pizzo Belvedere neighborhood, enhancing its beauty and the hospitality of the people. Because, as I often repeat, the good thing is also the right one".

Green cosmetics: natural ingredients for the beauty routine

Ste Vi

Products that respect the environment and human health are becoming more and more popular: what are they and what characteristics should they have

The term "green" is often used as a synonym for "natural" and "eco-sustainable" and gives us the idea that that product or service is good for the environment and our health. This is only partially true, especially in cosmetics. The confusion is so great because, on a commercial and communicative level, the word "green" is also used improperly in the most varied sectors including Green Cosmetics which, taking advantage of the images that represent the plant world, has started to use high-sounding slogans type "100% natural", "of plant origin", "eco-bio".

But when can a cosmetic be considered truly "green"? First of all when its formulation contains active ingredients derived from plants, such as minerals and plants, and not similar active ingredients chemically reproduced in the laboratory.

The downside, when we talk about organic cosmetics, is that plants as living beings can cause slight irritations and / or allergies, unlike what happens for chemicals designed ad hoc and tested in the laboratory.

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Sustainability is the key word when it comes to green cosmetics. The products must be obtained through nature-friendly processing methods and the plants must be bred according to organic crops. To reduce the environmental impact, moreover, it is advisable to cultivate them at zero km, or in land near the production laboratories, or to make them travel with sustainable means of transport.

Another thing that makes the cosmetic "green" is that its packaging, primary and secondary, is all recyclable and comes from other recycled packaging. Yes to glass, aluminum and bamboo packaging to reduce the use of plastic and plasticized paper that today are the masters. Many companies are already working on this.

Another evaluation parameter when buying an ecological cosmetic is the presence of the bunny symbol with the word "cruelty free" which indicates that the product has not been tested on animals. However, this symbol is not always present as it is not mandatory to insert it.

Being ecological and respecting nature, in cosmetics also means reducing waste, i.e. the quantities of product that we use daily for hygiene and personal care. As much as a product can be organic, in fact, if used in large quantities it still ends up polluting and damaging the environment.

A "green" shampoo, for example, needs to be done only once. The second step is harmful for three reasons. The first is cheap: we consume a quantity of product that we don't need, with the consequence that we will have to buy double the shampoo. The second reason concerns the health and beauty of our hair: when too much of its natural hydrolipidic coat is degreased, the scalp will produce more quickly and with more vigor the natural fat that protects it with the consequence that our hair will get dirty first. The third reason concerns the environment more closely: to rinse the head and hair from the second step, we have introduced other surfactants into our purification systems and we have wasted other liters of drinking water.

The really important thing, when shampooing, is to take the time necessary to wet the hair, wash the scalp carefully, massaging with the fingertips with light circular movements and then rinse. It does not matter if it takes five minutes longer, it is time we dedicate to ourselves, to derive feelings of well-being from the cosmetic and to protect the environment we live in.

Waste collection: recycling codes and symbols

The recycling symbols are international codes that uniquely identify the material from which an object is made and are a fundamental tool for correctly separating waste

To make a correct separate collection, it is important to know the material from which the objects are made. Some are easily identifiable and we have no doubts about where to give them; others, such as polylaminates, always leave some doubts. For this reason, on the product packaging there are distinctive symbols that help us decipher the material from which they are formed and, therefore, the correct way in which to divide them.

The recycling symbols are international codes that uniquely identify the material from which an object is made and are a fundamental tool for citizens who want to understand how to make a perfect separate collection.

In the previous article we explained that packaging is recycled exclusively, or almost exclusively, or those products that have the function of protecting, containing and transporting the goods. This is already a good yardstick when we have to decide in which container to give a waste but, for the purpose of a correct and effective separate collection, it is important to also know the distinctive codes and symbols that uniquely identify a material.

When we talk about the recycling symbols we immediately think of those printed on the garbage cans but there are many other no less important codes that are found on the packaging and containers of the products we buy and which help us differentiate correctly.

The packaging, in fact, are often made with innovative or multi-coupled materials and can leave some doubts about their transfer. Here the symbols of the differentiated come into play, which exactly report the material of which an object is composed.

Below you will find a table realized by SmartRicicla with the most common identification symbols of the materials and their destination in the separate collection operations.

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PLASTIC:

	Code 1 – PET – Polyethylene terephthalate or arnite: Bottles of water, bottles of drinks, bottles of shampoo.
	Code 2 – PE-HD – High density polyethylene: yogurt containers, detergent bottles.
	Code 3 – PVC - Polyvinyl chloride: Food containers.
	Code 4 – PE-LD - Low density polyethylene: Frozen food bags, squeezable bottles.
	Code 5 – PP – Polypropylene or Moplen: Ketchup bottles.
	Codice 6 – PS – Polystyrene or Polystyrene: Disposable glasses.
	Codice 7- OTHER – All other plastics.

METALS:

	Code 40 – FE – Steel, Iron.
	Code 41 – ALU - Aluminum.

TEXTILE:

	Code 60 – TEX – Cotton.
	Code 61 – TEX – Jute.

PAPER:

	Code 20 – PAP – Corrugated cardboard: Boxes containing furniture in kit.
	Code 21 – PAP – Non-corrugated cardboard: Packs of sandwiches in fast-food.
	Code 22 – PAP – Paper: Packaging of fries in fast-food, newspaper, paper bags.

GLASS:

	Code 70 – GL – Transparent / colorless glass: Bottles of water.
	Code 71 – GL – Glass of green color: Bottles of wine.
	Code 72 – GL – Glass of brown color: Bottles of beer.

WOOD:

	Code 50 – FOR – Legno.Wood
	Code 51 – FOR - Cork.

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