



Forests on Tenerife – An emerald island in the Atlantic

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There are various conservation measures that could improve the situation and improve the forests' health. Most importantly, there needs to be more funding for nature conservation. Any measures aiming at conserving forests more effectively cost money such as having more forest rangers patrolling forests. One way of generating more funding would be to introduce a tourist tax. Tenerife is one of the few places where there is not a tourist tax. Even a tourist tax of only 1 euro per week could already generate millions of euros as there are 5 million tourists yearly visiting Tenerife.

Second, after forest fires have happened, we should focus on the recovery of forests and we should act quickly to avoid invasive species from settling and soil erosion. A seedling bank should be set up to maintain genetic diversity of the species that are less resistant to fire so they can be replanted after the fires. The restoration of forests entails replanting trees and monitoring their growth to make sure that they survive. Furthermore, it is extremely important to prevent new fires as young forests need enough time to establish themselves.

In the case of the Laurel Forests, fragmentation needs to be addressed to improve the health of the forests. The two Laurel forests - Anaga and Teno Rural park should be connected through replanting forests on the North side of the island enlarging the area of Laurel forests on Tenerife. This would also mean replacing some of the old pine plantations with Laurel forest to reduce the fire risk as the Laurel forest is more resistant to fires.

Finally, environmental education is an important part of nature conservation as the awareness of environmental issues is rather low among the population. Environmental education has the potential to change how people think about and treat forests. It is important that people respect the rules like not littering and staying on the paths as well as being aware of the risk of fires. Current efforts are going great but it should be upscaled so more people can be reached.



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