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## Environment authority in fight against alien species

Thousands of Maltese trees have been planted and the reintroduction of previously eradicated trees has been initiated as part of the Environment and Resources Authority's strategy to combat alien species



6 March 2019, 6:16pm  
by **David Hudson**



A joint-project between the University of Malta and Italy, co-financed by the EU, project HARMONY aims to eradicate alien and invasive species

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The fight against alien and invasive species is everyone's fight, Environment Minister Jose Herrera said as he invited importers, landscapers, pet shop owners and supermarkets to be part of the national strategy piloted by the environment authority.

The Environment and Resources Authority has drafted a national strategy to combat alien and invasive species.

Herrera told Parliament on Wednesday that the strategy will be up for public consultation and invited various stakeholders to participate. He was replying to a parliamentary question by Democratic Party leader Godfrey Farrugia.

"A leaflet showing species which are illegal to sell has been handed out to various shops and stakeholders. All this while the ERA continues to investigate reports received with regards to the illegal selling and purchasing of such invasive or alien species," Herrera said, adding that four reports were currently being probed.

Herrera confirmed that, currently, ERA was undertaking work to remove several of these species from Natura 2000 sites such as the acacia, rats, 'Swaba tal-Madonna', 'Pjuma' and 'Sabbar tal-Amerka'. He added that ERA had applied for EU financing to implement project Harmony, a joint project between Italy and the University of Malta to rid the island and Maltese waters from invasive species.

"ERA has also planted and strengthened thousands of Maltese trees. It has also reintroduced some Maltese trees in the wild that had been previously eradicated," the environment minister said.

The ERA strategy, Herrera said, will include public meetings with all interested sectors and public entities as well as a media campaign. A book on Maltese trees and their natural environments will also be issued.

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David Hudson is an IGM press awards (Investigative stories) winner of 2019

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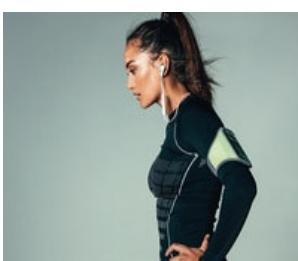
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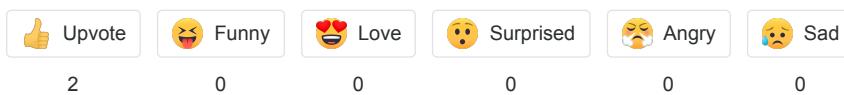
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