



2026 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo by Noel Schläfli



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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

This past March, Forest Europe published its 2025 State of Europe's Forests report, detailing the state of European forests: cover, diversity, and trade. Since its previous report, Malta has shown tremendous growth with total forest cover rising from 1.1% in 2020¹ to 1.5% in 2025². Although the absolute figures remain small, the rate of change is significant in just a five-year span. Most interestingly, over 25% of Malta's forest is from afforestation and regeneration by planting and/or seeding³, matching the European average. I'm proud of the work that Sigar has done, and proud of our collective efforts as Maltese citizens, residents, and environmental stewards in contributing to that growth.

But we have a long way to go.

2026 marks the second season of Sigar — and what a season it's been! I'm delighted to share with you by way of this report some of our amazing achievements, more than doubling the total number of trees Sigar has planted in Gozo. I would like to specifically thank our sponsors The Alfred Mizzi Foundation, Environmental Innovation and Greening Directorate of Ministry for Gozo, as well as all of our volunteers and community partners for their ongoing support.

Stéphane Croce

PRESIDENT

¹ FOREST EUROPE, 2020: State of Europe's Forests 2020, 232.

² FOREST EUROPE, 2026: State of Europe's Forests 2025, 38.

³ FOREST EUROPE, 2026: State of Europe's Forests 2025, 115–116, Table 4.2.1.

Rooted in Purpose

01. Vision and Mission

Malta has less than 2% forest cover — Afforestation is a key priority.

Sigar (Maltese for 'trees') is a registered voluntary organisation (VO/2518) dedicated to **greening Gozo** through planting and education activities with local groups, councils and schools. Our emphasis is on education and ensuring trees are watered consistently after being planted.

02. Our Approach

01.

Right Tree

Locally grown, indigenous species from the Ministry for Gozo Dawwara Nursery

02.

Right Place

Schools & local council lands for maximum impact

03.

Right Way

With irrigation, mulching, and long-term aftercare



Together, We Grow

Our Team of Volunteers

Stéphane Croce
President

Simon Wallace
Secretary

Luke Said
Treasurer

Joseph Bonello
Chief Botanical Officer

Anne Aquilina
Miranda George

Sarah Heard
Dorine van Heerd
Elliott O'Brien

Brenda Shanahan
Maurice Sterling
Stefan Wessels
Keith Woodcock
Juliana Zapata



Government Partner

ENVIRONMENTAL
INNOVATION AND
GREENING DIRECTORATE



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR GOZO

Provides trees, materials & operational support

Corporate Sponsors



Tools, plaques & supplies



GOZO REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Regional development funding

Community Partners

Gozo College Schools
Nadur, Sannat, Victoria Middle School, Xewkija

Local Councils
Fontana, Għajnsielem, Nadur, Qala, Xagħra, Żebbuġ

EkoSkola committees
of participating schools

Victoria & Xagħra Scout Groups

Impact at a Glance

Total Trees Planted

133

Previous
36



% Change
270%

Planting Events

16

Previous
11



% Change
45%

Education Visits & Clean-Ups

7

Community Partners

10+



Total statistics represent cumulative total from inception through July 2026.
Previous statistics represent cumulative total from inception through July 2025.

First tree planted: 1 November 2024.

Events

Sigar's Planting Events form the backbone of our impact. Each event represents a partnership with a community organisation, whether a local scout troop, a local council, or a school. In this manner, not only do we plant trees, we also plant the seeds of knowledge, environmental stewardship, and community engagement. In addition to planting events, Sigar volunteers perform maintenance visits, check-ins and clean-ups throughout the year.

Sigar has led 16 planting events between November 2024 and July 2026

2024–25 Season Planting Events



October
2024

First Tree Planted

Partnership with Nadur Nadif and Local Council

November
2024

Qala Local Council

Lentisk & Judas trees planted with Qala Mayor
Ministry for Gozo partnership

December
2024

Fontana Local Council

Five Cypress trees planted with Fontana Mayor
Ministry for Gozo partnership

January
2025

Nadur Primary School

Arbor Day 2025
EkoSkola partnership

March
2025

Victoria Middle School

Five trees planted
EkoSkola partnership

April
2025

Primary & Special Unit Sannat

Pupil-led fig tree planting and watering
EkoSkola partnership

May
2025

Żebbuġ Local Council

Primary school and local council volunteers

Events

2025–26 Season Planting Events



October
2025

Nadur Primary School

Pupil-led tree planting and ongoing watering
EkoSkola partnership

November
2025

Xagħra Scout Group

Scout-led planting and ongoing watering

December
2025

Nadur Local Council

Four shrubs planted

January
2026

Xewkija Primary School

Arbor Day 2026 with EcoGozo team
EkoSkola partnership

March
2026

Nadur Primary School

Planted 5 trees
EkoSkola partnership

April
2026

Għajnsielem (Loreto Students)

Trees planted by Erasmus+ students from Italy

June
2026

Victoria Scout Group (Rooftop)

Pocket forest – 10 indigenous trees

June
2026

Għajnsielem – 65 Olive Trees

With school pupils & local council

Education & Community Engagement

7 Education Visits

Interactive sessions at Gozo College primary schools – teaching pupils about indigenous trees, biodiversity, and why Gozo needs more green cover.

Youth in Action

Scouts from the Victoria and Xagħra Scout Groups took ownership of their trees – watering, maintaining, and installing irrigation at their headquarters.

Ongoing Aftercare

Sigar returns to every site for mulching, weeding, irrigation checks, and plaque maintenance – ensuring every tree thrives long-term.

Project Photos

Nadur Primary School



Loreto Students in Ghajnsielem



Ghajnsielem Olive Trees



Xaghra Scouts



First Tree Planted (Nadur)



Project Photos

Student Visit to Argotti Botanic Gardens



Victoria Scouts Rooftop



Nadur Primary School



Arbor Day at Xewkija Primary School
With Environmental Innovation and Greening Directorate



Nadur Local Council



Project Photos

Fontana Local Council



Żebbuġ Planting



Primary & Special Unit Sannat



Victoria Middle School



Qala Local Council



Arbor Day at Nadur Primary School



The Trees We Plant

Every tree we plant is chosen with purpose. Sigar focuses on indigenous Maltese species, alongside carefully selected archaeophytes that have formed part of our islands' natural and cultural heritage for centuries.

Adapted to Gozo's climate, these trees support wildlife, strengthen fragile soils, and help restore the landscapes that define our islands.

From the iconic Ġhargħar (*Tetraclinis articulata*), Malta's national tree, to heritage species such as the Carob, Olive and Almond, every tree planted contributes to a greener, more resilient Gozo.



Sigra tal-Ġhargħar
Sandarac Gum Tree

Tetraclinis articulata

Malta's national tree and one of its rarest native conifers. A flagship species for conservation and ecological restoration.



Deru
Lentisk

Pistacia lentiscus

A hardy evergreen of Malta's native maquis, its berries and foliage provide food and shelter for birds and other wildlife.



Alaternu
Mediterranean Buckthorn

Rhamnus alaternus

A resilient native shrub or small tree that thrives on rocky hillsides. Its spring flowers and berries support pollinators and birds.



Ulmu Selvaġġ
Mediterranean Elm

Ulmus canescens

A native deciduous tree whose broad canopy provides shade and habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife.



Sigra taż-Żebbuġ
Olive Tree

Olea europaea

One of the Mediterranean's oldest cultivated trees, prized for its longevity, resilience and cultural significance.



Ħarruba
Carob

Ceratonia siliqua

A defining feature of the Maltese countryside, valued for centuries for its resilience and nutritious pods.



Sigra ta' Ġuda
Judas Tree

Cercis siliquastrum

Known for its vibrant pink spring blossoms, the Judas Tree provides valuable nectar for bees and other pollinators.



Lewża
Almond

Prunus dulcis

Among the first trees to flower each year, the almond has been part of Malta's landscape for centuries.

Thank You

Your continued support means everything to us, whether through continued donations, volunteerism, or partnership. Please feel free to share this report with any interested parties – whether corporate sponsors, future volunteers, friends, family, or colleagues, our mission benefits from broader awareness.

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Photo by Luke Friggieri

