

**SECOND MEETING FOR THE FORESTAMI ACADEMY  
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PRADA GROUP**

***“Greener cities, better lives: the role of plant biodiversity and ecosystem-based services  
in urban spaces”***

**Tiziana Ulian, University of Turin, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: “Two in five plant  
species are at risk of extinction. Nature in the city is not a luxury, it is an essential  
infrastructure”**

**Milan, 18 June 2025** – The **Forestami Academy**, the educational program dedicated to exploring the value of urban greenery, created by Forestami in collaboration with the Prada Group, enjoyed great public participation at the second meeting of its third year.

The speaker of the day was **Tiziana Ulian**, an international expert in plant ecology and biodiversity conservation, **Associate Professor of the University of Turin** and **Honorary Research Associate at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (UK)**. With over 25 years' experience in the field facilitating projects in Latin America, Africa and the Mediterranean Region, Tiziana Ulian has demonstrated an insight into the crucial role of **plant biodiversity and ecosystem-based services** in the urban environment, as well as the current and potential role of botanic gardens.

*“Nature in the city is not a luxury, it is an essential infrastructure”, explains Ulian. “Plants not only embellish urban spaces, but they also provide vital services such as purifying the air, bringing temperatures down, supporting mental health, regulating the climate, pollination, and much more”.*

Safeguarding biodiversity is also fundamental for **ecosystem resilience**: greater diversity of species guarantees more stable systems, which are able to adapt to the challenges posed by climate change and human impact. However, an alarming loss of biodiversity is taking place at a global level. Up to **1 million species are at risk of extinction<sup>1</sup>, two in five plant species, or 40%, are threatened globally<sup>2</sup>, a 69% reduction in wildlife populations since 1970 has been recorded<sup>3</sup>, and 75% of landmass has been significantly altered by humans<sup>4</sup>**. Some of the main causes include the change in use of land, including uncontrolled urbanization, climate change, pollution, the spread of invasive non-native species and the over-exploitation of natural resources.

***“What can be done to protect and increase biodiversity and, at the same time, promote the sustainable use of natural resources?”*** One answer comes from **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)**, solutions that make use of natural processes to deal with global challenges – including urban ones, from air quality to water management – while at the same time encouraging biodiversity and human well-being.

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<sup>1</sup> Source IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), 2019

<sup>2</sup> Source Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2020

<sup>3</sup> Source WWF, 2022

<sup>4</sup> Source IPBES, 2019

**Botanic Gardens** also play a vital role in safeguarding biodiversity, acting as hubs for **conservation, innovation, education and connection between science, public administrations and citizens**. International examples of excellence, from the **Royal Botanic Gardens**, Kew in England to the **Jardín Botánico Nacional** of Santo Domingo, and the **Orto Botanico di Torino**, demonstrate how these spaces can function as real **living laboratories that support urban resilience**.

Other projects of global significance also rank in this context, such as the Kew Millennium Seed Bank – the international seed conservation project – developed in conjunction with countries such as Mexico and the Dominican Republic, which contribute to the conservation of native species, the renewal of ecosystems, and the strengthening of means of support to local communities.

*“A paradigm shift is urgently needed. Biodiversity, with its ecosystem-based services, must be integrated in urban planning. Actively involving citizens, choosing native species, and protecting and developing urban ecosystems are vital actions for building more resilient, sustainable and inclusive cities full of biodiversity”, concludes Ulian.*

This second event closed with a walk in **Parco Sempione**. Under the guidance of **Fabio Campana**, Agronomist in charge of Environmental Services at Parco Nord Milano, along with Agrotechnician **Andrea Montorio**, and Forestry Manager and **Riccardo Tucci**, Senior Technical Officer at Parco Nord Milano, the participants explored the urban nature of Milan’s historic park, one of the best-loved in the city.

The Forestami Academy cycle continues with the goal of **spreading knowledge, raising awareness and educating a community that is committed and competent** regarding the value of greenery and nature in urban environments. The third and final meeting in the 2025 will take place in September with an outdoor experience.

For updates on the event date and registration, visit [www.forestami.org](http://www.forestami.org) and [www.pradagroup.com](http://www.pradagroup.com).

**Forestami Academy** is open to citizens, students and professionals who wish to increase their knowledge of urban greenery and actively contribute to transforming the ecology of their area. Participation is free of charge, but registration is required. Each event is expected to last around three hours, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. A maximum of 100 participants per meeting can attend the classes.

### **Prada Group**

Prada Group is socially engaged to contribute to the sustainable development of the communities and stimulate the cultural debate in all its forms of expression. The Group partners with recognized players and international entities to develop educational and training programs, value talent, support scientific research, foster women's empowerment, and promote local culture and artistic heritage. Prada Group operates in the luxury sector through the Prada, Miu Miu, Church's, Car Shoe, Marchesi 1824 and Luna Rossa brands.

### **Forestami**

Forestami was born from an initiative by architect Stefano Boeri, based on research conducted by the Politecnico di Milano, supported by Fondazione Falck and FS Sistemi Urbani, on the potential and benefits of urban forestry in the metropolitan area of Milan. It later evolved into a project promoted by the Municipality of Milan, the Metropolitan City of Milan, the Lombardy Region, Parco Nord Milano, Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, ERSAF, Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione di Comunità Milano together with Fondazione Comunitaria Nord Milano and Fondazione Comunitaria Ticino Olona, as well as the Milanese universities Politecnico, Statale and Bicocca. The project aims to plant 3 million trees by 2030, enhance the natural capital of the urban and peri-urban fabric, help reduce air pollution and improve the quality of life in Greater Milan while also combating the effects of climate change. In April 2025, the Forestami Foundation was established, becoming the Third Sector Entity (ETS) responsible for implementing and developing the Forestami project. The new Foundation continues its work thanks to collected donations and can also develop additional projects both within the Metropolitan City of Milan and on a national scale to help improve the environment.

### **For more information**

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