

**THE FORESTAMI ACADEMY'S FIRST MEETING OF THE THIRD YEAR,
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRADA GROUP**

**Plants and the invisible network under the soil: a journey through roots, cities and
microorganisms**

Milan, May 15, 2025 – The Triennale Milano hosted the first event of the third year of **Forestami Academy** – the educational initiative created by **Forestami** in collaboration with the **Prada Group** to raise awareness of the importance of nature in the cities, reaching out to citizens, specialists and enthusiasts who wish to know more about urban greenery.

This year's cycle opened with the event entitled **"Plants in the city"**, introduced by **Maria Chiara Pastore**, Scientific Coordinator of Forestami and Associate Professor at the Politecnico University in Milan, and given by **Paola Bonfante**, Professor Emeritus of Plant Biology at the University of Turin and member of the Accademia dei Lincei, one of the leading Italian experts in plant microbiology.

During the morning, Paola Bonfante led participants in a fascinating exploration of the unseen world of plants, taking an in-depth look at the central role they play in our everyday existence and in the operation of urban ecosystems. Starting with the observation by biologist Edward O. Wilson – *"Let's give more space to nature, actually, let's give it half the earth"* – there was a discussion on how to manage the presence of greenery in urban areas, where the majority of the world's population now live.

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main", wrote English poet, John Donne. The same statement, Bonfante remarked, also applies to plants: since the time they colonized the Earth, 470 million years ago, they have not lived alone, but within complex networks of relationships: with other plants, animals, and above all, with invisible yet essential microbial communities that live in the soil and among the roots. A concealed, yet vital coexistence, currently threatened by climate change and urban transformations.

The discussion also touched on crucial issues such as the absorption of CO₂, the impoverishment of urban soil, the choice of the most suitable plant species and the importance of plants and microorganisms as integrated systems, whose evolution is closely interconnected. Bonfante also highlighted that "urban greenery cannot be considered as decoration alone: it is a living, dynamic and multifactorial system", which requires scientific attention and political vision. Also because, as it turned out, greenery can be a factor of inequality, if not fairly distributed among a city's communities and districts.

The day concluded with a walk in Parco Sempione during which the participants tried to recognise the different species of trees under the guidance of **Fabio Campana**, Agronomist in charge of Environmental Services at Parco Nord Milano, along with Agrotechnician **Andrea Montorio**, and Forestry Manager **Riccardo Tucci**, Senior Technical Officer at Parco Nord Milano.

With this first event, the Forestami Academy issued a clear message: understanding plants and their unseen networks is one of the most urgent scientific, social and environmental challenges of modern times.

The second meeting of the 2025 educational program will take place on **Wednesday, June 18, 2025** at the Triennale Milano, while the third and last session will be held in **September 2025**, and will include an outdoor experience.

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 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A maximum of 100 participants per meeting can attend the classes. All the details can be found at www.forestami.org and www.pradagroup.com.

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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