
The “benefits” of tree plantations: shattering the myths

International Day against Monoculture Tree Plantations is a good opportunity to expose the myths being spread around about the so-called “benefits” of these plantations. Such myths have not arisen on their own but are the result of a long process during which people and institutions related to the corporate-plantation sector have invented arguments to convince both the general public and governments and institutions of the advisability of mass tree plantation.

The fact that none of these arguments has the slightest scientific foundation has not prevented their dissemination as “scientific truths,” not only by those who directly benefit – corporations – but also by the technical-bureaucratic apparatus – national and international – placed at their service. In this process, local wisdom has been ruled out as “ignorance” and true ignorance has been placed on the pedestal of “science.”

Throughout the years, WRM has echoed the voice of those negatively impacted, who have repeatedly proved that the “scientific truths” regarding tree plantations are no more than falsehoods. In this respect, our publications and articles have disseminated the testimonials of people who have suffered from the degradation of all the resources they depended on – soil, water, flora, fauna – as a direct effect of the establishment of monoculture tree plantations in their regions.

We have also disseminated the voice of those forestry professionals and students that oppose the expansion of monoculture tree plantations. Last year they declared that “not only are monoculture tree plantations not forests, but such plantations result or have resulted in the destruction of our native forests and of other equally valuable ecosystems that they substitute.” (See complete declaration at <http://www.wrm.org.uy/plantations/Declaration-Foresters.pdf>)

However and in spite of all the accumulated evidence, corporate interests have continued to prevail and plantations continue to benefit from the positive image invented by their promoters.

In this bulletin we have aimed at complementing local testimonials with those of people having wide experience and involvement on a global scale in the struggle against monoculture tree plantations. We have asked them to give a brief answer to the main myths disseminated by the plantation sector. Here below we find their answers that will no doubt serve to strengthen – with more arguments – those who are waging an unequal struggle against the advance of the plantations. To all those who made a contribution: our warmest thanks!