

The Dunas del Odiel Botanical Garden and Fundación Cepsa raise environmental awareness

- **Fundación Cepsa, in collaboration with the Regional Office of Sustainable Development, has once again run an extensive program of environmental workshops that saw more than 300 participants.**
- **By applying strict hygiene measures we were able to continue successfully running this environmental awareness program**

The Dunas del Odiel Botanical Garden and Fundación Cepsa successfully completed the program of environmental activities in 2020 despite the pandemic-related restrictions and limitations that forced part of the schedule to be reorganized.

This space of great ecological importance, which belongs to the Andalusian Network of Botanical and Mycological Gardens in Natural Areas (RED), is located in front of the *Lagunas de Las Madres y Palos* Natural Park. Its purpose is to embody the typical flora and vegetation of the Cadiz-Huelva and Algarve Biogeographic Sector.

The path running through Dunas del Odiel gives us the opportunity to learn about the close interaction between the vegetation/landscape and the climate and geological characteristics of the Andalusian Atlantic coast. The installation, which is open to the public and located at kilometer 13.7 on the Mazagón road, hosted workshops throughout the year that taught visitors how to create a garden using potted plants, about birds, local animal tracks and footprints, how to play in the forest and combine art and nature; autumn in the botanical garden also gave visitors the change to appreciate the biodiversity of the Park and the Laguna Primera de Palos with a visit organized in November.

The 2020 program closed out with a workshop based around crafting Christmas decorations with natural materials. 12 activities were held throughout the year and reached a total of 329 participants.

In the words of Teresa Millán, head of Fundación Cepsa in Huelva, "the aim of this program is to promote environmental restoration projects and research while informing people about the public use of the facilities and raising awareness about the importance of natural areas in our immediate surroundings." "It is a priority among the actions that Cepsa and its Foundation carry out and was founded through the agreement with the Regional Office of Sustainable Development and other entities that we collaborate with," she added.

Fundación Cepsa, together with the Huelva environmental and cultural education company "Platalea Naturaleza y Patrimonio," emphasizes the importance of the Dunas del Odiel Botanical Garden through a collaboration agreement with the Regional Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development of the Regional Government of Andalusia; this agreement includes actions to highlight the importance of our natural spaces and to raise environmental awareness, which are essential for understanding the typical vegetation of the Andalusian Atlantic coast which also lives in close proximity to industrial areas.

A tour of the Dunas del Odiel Botanical Garden guide visitors through riverside vegetation, cork oak groves, fresh water lagoons, dune systems, swales and costal cliffs, reeds, stabilized sands, salt water marshes and peat bogs. This botanical garden is home to more than 30,000 specimens of some 85 tree and shrub species, many of them exclusive to Andalusia and some of which are endangered.

Fundación Cepsa is a general interest, nonprofit entity whose aim is to carry out initiatives that serve the needs and priorities of the local communities where its founder, Compañía Española de Petróleos S.A. (Cepsa), conducts its activities. The areas of action for Fundación Cepsa are social, environmental and scientific-educational.

Huelva, January 22, 2021

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