

Editorial:

The choice is between an aeroplane and a goose: both can fly, but in the first case, unless it flies it falls, while in the latter case, it has to stop flying to lay its golden eggs!

It seems that from the survival point of view we have to choose. Most of Malta and quite a bit of Gozo is now irretrievably destroyed with a mad scramble to build tall buildings of at least seven stories where grass used to grow.

The population has taken on its exponential trajectory, and with it the marked deterioration of the atmosphere that supports us, which uniquely in Europe has taken a marked turn for the worse. Withering heat, whirlwinds or floods will not undermine our determination to bloat ourselves on our winnings and damn the future desertification.

It is good to see that poorer countries have become determined to do something to stop this disaster. Ethiopia has only recently decided on the mammoth exercise of planting 350 million trees in a single day and more than 2.6 billion have so far been planted! Let this be a stimulus



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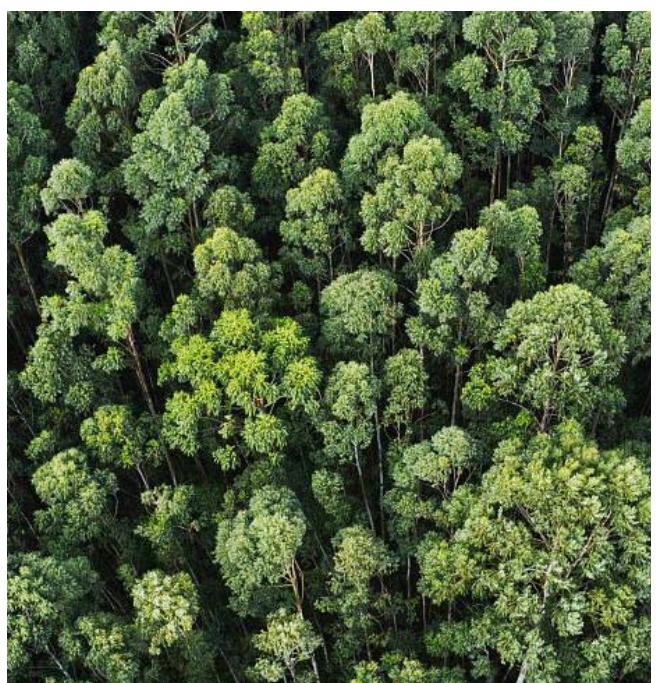
to the whole world. In Malta we prefer to chop them down.

Why cannot we in Gozo emulate such an effort and plant trees where currently there is only barrenness to be admired? Why aren't our well-known seven (plus) hills not flourishing and turning into a green carpet that can be admired from outer space? Why are our coastline and bays not surrounded by trees like tamarisk which are still waiting to be given a chance to take hold and survive?

When our big sister island starts suffocating, maybe we can still be in a position to offer a niche get-away where oxygen is still plentiful and life is still liveable.

The choice is still ours (just!). We can choose to keep on aiming for the stars, flying higher and higher, until our wings get burned and Icarus-like fall to the ground, or we may pause in our mad pursuits and, humbly but wisely, like a good goose, encourage the laying of golden eggs.

Maurice Cauchi



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