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HAF Plants 121,600 Fruit Trees in 2011

By highatlasfoundation.org

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The High Atlas Foundation (HAF) announced that it has planted a record number of 121,600 fruit trees during the January to May 2011 planting season in Morocco's Toubkal region of the High Atlas Mountains and in rural areas outside of Ben Guerir. The plantings raise the Foundation's One Million Tree Campaign to one third of the long-term goal set in 2006.

The announcement came as the season ended with 120,000 almond and walnut plantings in community-managed nurseries neighboring the Toubkal National Park and 1,600 olive plantings in communities near Ben Guerir. 320,000 trees have been planted since the One Million Tree campaign started in 2006, benefiting approximately 30,000 people.


The tree plantings benefit rural villages by providing a sustainable crop that doubles household incomes when the trees are mature. The trees guard against erosion, protecting mountain and arid communities, and are economical to maintain as well as environmentally sustainable because they do not require the use of pesticides and can be replenished by saplings they produce. Finally, planting fruit saplings in community-managed nurseries is the most cost efficient way to meet the major need for trees in Morocco's transitioning rural economy.

The 2011 plantings were made possible by generous contributions to the One Million Tree campaign in 2010-2011, combined with local contributions of land for community-managed nurseries and labor. Donors included the Caterpillar Foundation, the Earth Day Network, Infocore, the OCP Group, and hundreds of individuals. In 2011, HAF signed an agreement with the Regional Office of Waters and Forests in Marrakech to provide land for a community nursery in the Asni Commune of Toubkal. HAF also gratefully acknowledges the continued support of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United States, H.E. Aziz Mekouar, and the Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences of Hassan II University in Mohammedia.

HAF, which was founded in 2000 by former Peace Corps Volunteers, continues to benefit from former Volunteers and is grateful to the family and friends of Kate Jeans-Gail and Tom Tolen, who established funds in their memory to continue to benefit the people of Morocco.

The High Atlas Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to establish development projects in rural communities of Morocco that are designed and managed by local people, in partnership with government and nongovernment agencies. The High Atlas Foundation currently supports projects in the areas of fruit tree agriculture, potable water, irrigation, participatory development training, women and girls cooperatives, and youth and educational development.

For more information and to view photos of the One Million Tree Campaign please visit: <http://www.highatlasfoundation.org>.

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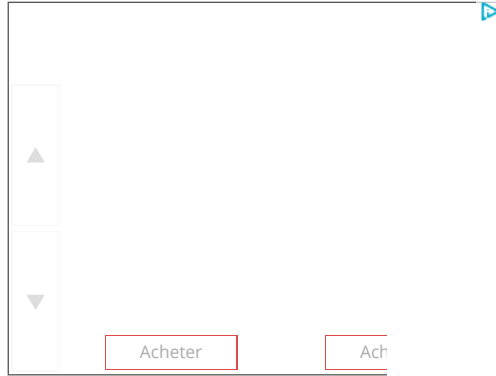
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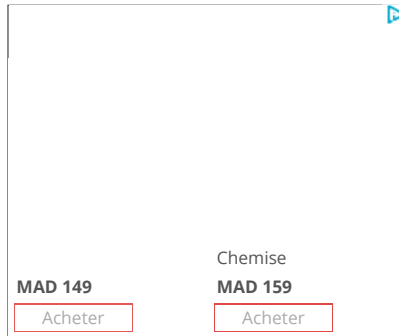
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