In the northwest of central Portugal lies a true natural and cultural gem in the Buçaco National Forest. Walking through the forest, the paths will lead you past centuries-old convents and chapels and the Bussaco Palace that are all beautifully settled in the lushly green surroundings. This area at the size of no more than 105 hectares in the Aveiro district is home to 250 species of trees and shrubs and holds a rich collection of the region's historical, architectural and religious heritage.

Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F.P. (Fundação Pública), Bussaco Forest Foundation, P.F. (Public Foundation) takes pride in managing this conservation forest and in the protection of its biological diversity, cultural legacy and natural environment. Conservation is the primary objective here but the Foundation manages to combine this endeavor with sustainable use of the forest. Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F.P. uses the Buçaco National Forest for non-productive forest activities such as tourism and recreation, educational projects and science as well as sustainable forestry operations. Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F.P. belongs to a FSC certified group that has 171 members in total.

Certified products from the forest

FSC certification stands as verification that Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F.P. is able to reconcile conservation and sustainable commercial use of their forest because the forest products are extracted in a responsible way.

Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F.P. make a virtue of using the Buçaco National Forest’s full potential. Lately they have had a great influx of timber resources due to a number of big storms that affected about 40 percent of the forest in 2013 and 2014. Hence, they use these trees that have fallen naturally and do not need to cut down trees at the moment. Meanwhile, the Foundation is implementing sustainable forest management mechanisms that will ensure a stable supply of lesser-known timber species in the future. For example, there are some old-growth areas in the Buçaco National Forest that need selecting and felling and the new clearing originated by the storms will also be under strict management to combine conservation and production, ensuring constant supply of quality lesser-known timber in accordance to plans prepared by the Foundation.
FACTS

Certificate Holder
Unimadeiras-Produção, Comércio e Exploração Florestal, S.A. / Grupo Unifloresta (Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. is part of this group certificate)

Certificate details
SGS-FM/COC-005081

Size of certified area
105 hectares (group’s total area is 5,622.02 hectares)

Products
Roundwood
Firewood
Teaching kits
Wood materials for handicrafts and furniture
Herbs and essential oils
Nursery seedlings

Main timber species
Abies spp.
Acacia spp.
Castanea sativa
Cedrus spp.
Cupressus lusitanica
Fraxinus spp.
Juglans spp.
Pinus spp.
Pittosporum undulatum.
Quercus spp.

Herbs
Achillea millefolium
Aloysia citrodora
Anthriscus cerefolium
Apium graveolens
Artemisia dracunculus
Coriandrum sativum
Crataegus monogyna
Erica spp.
Hypericum androsaemum
Hypericum perforatum
Laurus nobilis

Lavandula spp.
Lavandula stoechas
Melissa officinalis
Mentha spp.
Ocimum basilicum ‘Purpureascens’
Origanum vulgare
Petroselinum crispum
Pimpinella anisum
Portulaca oleracea L.
Rosa spp.
Rosmarinus officinalis
Ruscus aculeatus
Stachys byzantina
Thymus spp.
Tilia spp.
Umbilicus rupestris
Viola tricolor

Essential oils
Cedrus spp.
Cupressus spp.
Eucalyptus spp.

Seedlings from nursery
Abies spp.
Aechmea fasciata
Araucaria bidwilli
Asparagus densiflorus ‘Meyersii’
Asparagus densiflorus ‘Sprenger’
Asparagus setaceus
Aspidistra elatior
Callistemon speciosus
Camellia japonica
Chlorophytum comosum
Clivia miniata
Crassula ovata
Cupressus lusitanica
Ilex aquifolium ‘Variegata’
Magnolia grandiflora
Magnolia x soulangiana
Monstera deliciosa
Ocimum basilicum
Ocimum basilicum ‘Purpurascens’
Paulownia tomentosa
Phoenix canariensis
Pilea cadierei
Prunus laurocerasus
Rhapis excelsa
Schefflera arboricola
Thuja spp.
Conservation and sustainability are the Foundation's primary objectives. This has motivated them to focus on utilizing all parts of the trees from which they make a diverse range of products namely; round wood from many species of hardwoods and softwoods, timber for furniture, firewood, biomass for energy production (not yet FSC certified), handicrafts and a variety of aromatic, medicinal and condiment herbs collected from the forest.

The Foundation owns a shop where they sell the handicrafts and the variety of aromatic, medicinal and condiment herbs. Their main customers at the shop are the visitors to the forest, international tourists and local consumers.

With funds received from the European Union, the Foundation bought forest machinery for extraction of the high quality timber and sawmilling as well as safety equipment. Timber is therefore, processed in the Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. Sawmill. Round wood, logs and roots are traded to Portuguese sawmills, carpentries, furniture manufacturers and individual private buyers.

Firewood is sold to private customers as ready-to-use product after being prepared by the Foundation's own log splitting machine, while the biomass is sold to the energy plant at Mortágua about 20 kilometers from Bussaco where it is converted into electricity. In the near future, Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. intends to have the biomass FSC certified.

The Foundation is looking to establish business with high-end furniture manufacturers and the retail industry because their forest is capable of supplying more timber and non-timber forest products mainly herbs and essential oils of which the production processes are currently under implementation.

Social and environmental responsibility

Preservation of the vitality of the forest ecosystems is top priority for Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. along with the maintenance of the forest’s sustainable productive functions. The Foundation is very careful not to send the wrong message about their forest production and to effectively communicate the fact that the forest is conserved and managed responsibly in the marketing of their products. At the same time, socio-economic issues are taken into consideration. Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. has consistently increased their work force and they offer jobs to people in the local area, including detainees from the nearby Coimbra prison. The Foundation secures the right working conditions and safety precautions for their employees as well as making a virtue of educating and training the workers, because skills are required in the forest and in the processing of products.
Promoting Science and Education

Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. sees great potential in promoting the forest for its scientific and environmental values and works to make it a place of learning and discovery. Due to this foresight, the forest area is divided into different zones; namely conservation, tourism, forest management and monitoring, to serve the various purposes.

The foundation makes teaching kits and education materials such as nesting boxes and a herbarium of dried flowers and plants for school children. They also offer workshops and courses in environmentally sound forestry and the flora of Buçaco National Forest.

This focus on science and education has led Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. to enter into partnerships with schools and professional training centers as well as forestry science units at a number of reputed Portuguese universities. The foundation has also as part of its work in sustainable forestry, developed strong ties with numerous organizations, including Portuguese businesses, NGO’s, local political institutions and members of the food service sector.

The name of the Buçaco National Forest has the potential to become a nationally and internationally recognized brand because of its cultural and environmental heritage and the quality and diversity of the services and products the Fundação Mata do Buçaco, F. P. offers. Furthermore, the Foundation’s efforts to reconcile social and environmental aspects in the protection of the forest and the commercial production, serves as a focus of orientation and source of inspiration for other organizations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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