



betterSoil

FOR A BETTER WORLD



Pictures and explanations for raising awareness

betterSoil's approach explained in simple terms on 40 illustrated pages.



betterSoil combines soil fertility, climate protection and economic development.

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BRINGING SOIL BACK TO LIFE

Soils are the basis of life on Earth and we simply can't do without them! Living soils can speed up the process of achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and can sequester large amounts of CO₂ from the atmosphere at the same time.

Good soils store rainwater for long dry seasons and preventing flooding. They provide us with a stable environment in the face of global warming by cushioning the extreme effects of a rapidly changing climate. „betterSoils“ are both an adaptation to and a mitigation of climate change.

The world's population is continuing to grow, and there are expected to 10 billion people living on Earth by the end of this century. At the same time, we're losing 10 million hectares of arable land and good soil every year. That's the equivalent of 14 million soccer fields. On the one hand, the quality and fertility of soils are deteriorating, while on the other, greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere are increasing, especially from agriculture. It's shocking to realise just how quickly soils can lose their vitality. A quarter of the world's soils have less humus and fewer nutrients than they did 25 years ago. In other words, our soils are hungry – as hungry as the millions of poor people on our planet.

What we need is simple, and we already know what it is. Farmers, scientists, policy makers, politicians, NGOs and businesses want to act. We just need to bring them together to bridge the gap between the theory, the will to act, and the practitioners.



AZADEH FARAJPOUR JAVAZMI

As the founder of betterSoil, Azadeh Farajpour Javazmi believes that everyone, be they gardener or farmer, can improve the world by improving the soil. Regenerating soil in any way helps close the carbon and nitrogen cycles.

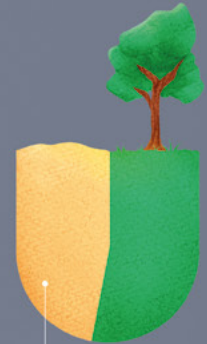
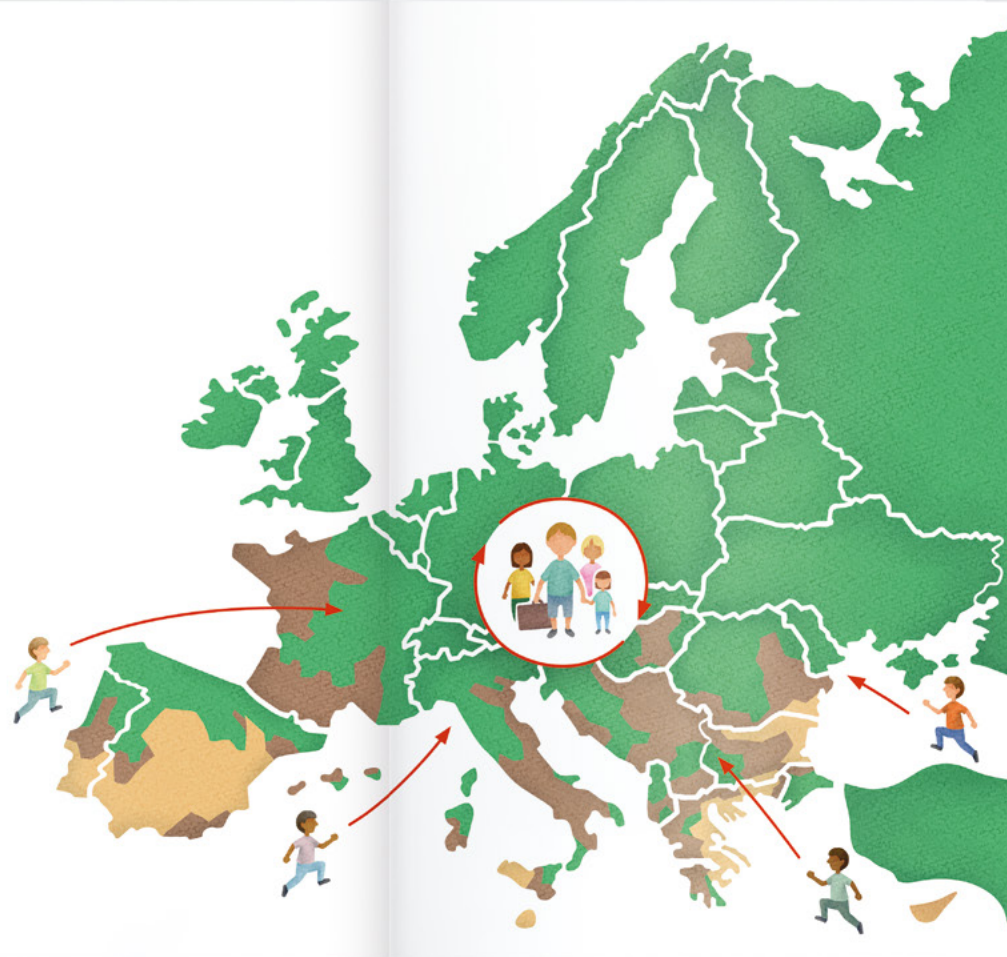
EUROPE'S SOILS

Soil degradation caused by intensive, unsustainable agriculture leads to erosion and desertification and has become a global challenge that is threatening the livelihoods of many people – not only in Europe, but around the world.

About 45% of Europe's arable land has insufficient organic matter content². 13 out of the 27 member states of the EU are seeing increases in desertification – and not only in the Mediterranean basin, but also in Central and Eastern Europe³. Europe is facing the prospect of its soils becoming infertile and eroded, and offering little resistance to climate change.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

Aside from dangerous food and water shortages, poverty will ultimately force people to migrate – both to Europe and within the EU.^{4,5}



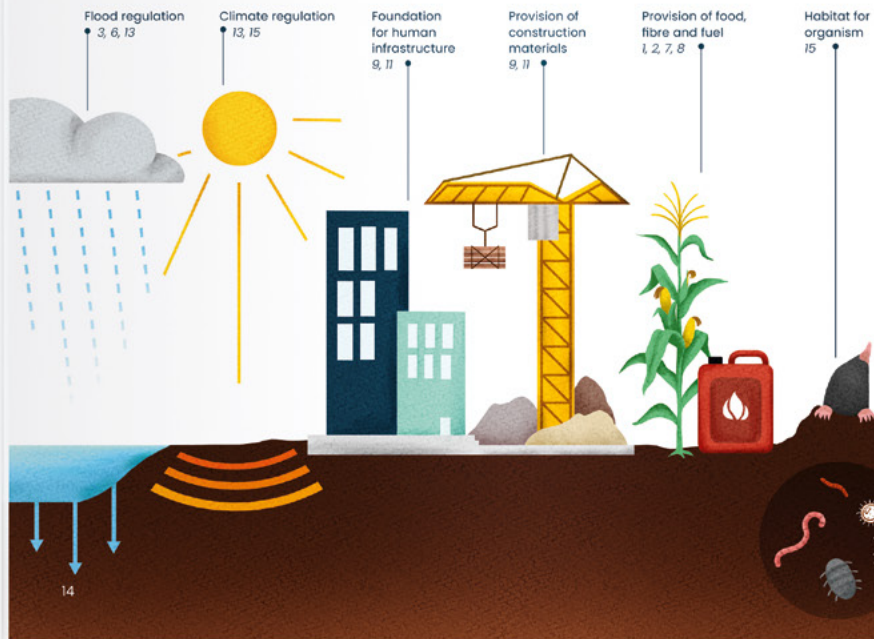
Growing desertification in 13 of the 27 EU member states



Insufficient organic matter content in 45% of arable land

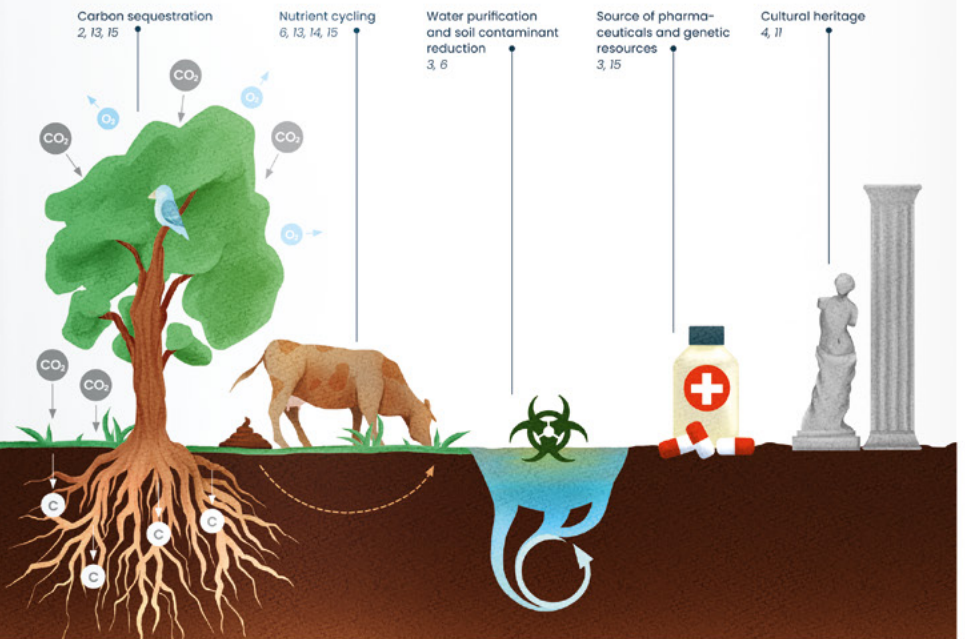
HEALTHY SOILS

Essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDGs):

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 No poverty | 7 Affordable and clean energy | 13 Climate Action |
| 2 Zero hunger | 8 Decent work and economic growth | 14 Life below water |
| 3 Good health and well-being | 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure | 15 Life on land |
| 4 Quality education | 10 Reduced inequalities | 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions |
| 5 Gender equality | 11 Sustainable cities and communities | 17 Partnerships for the goals |
| 6 Clean water and sanitation | 12 Responsible consumption and production | |





D. AGROFORESTRY

Just plant (suitable) trees! Agroforestry is the combination of agriculture and forestry. By planting trees and shrubs in your garden and fields, you're protecting the soil and plants from all kinds of damage. The ecological and economic benefits are enormous; the soil is protected against pests, diseases, heavy rains, winds and storms. You'll be increasing fertility and crop yields and providing a habitat for numerous animals, plants, insects and microorganisms. And trees and woody plants provide us with clean air as well as (ground) water and remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. So, if you have problems in your garden or on your farm with soil that's too wet or too dry, simply plant trees and shrubs.



SUMMARY

Sustainable agriculture is all about enhancing humus. Some effective methods for this include:

- ✓ appropriate reduced tillage
(careful ploughing)
- ✓ green manuring instead of winter fallow
(e.g. legumes, catch crops)
- ✓ Crop rotation
(e.g. corn-cereal, cereal-corn, or winter barley-soybean)
- ✓ Intercropping
(e.g. corn and beans, wheat and camelina sativa, sunflower and buckwheat)
- ✓ Undersown crops
(e.g. white clover under corn or cereals)
- ✓ Compost and biochar
- ✓ Cultivation of perennial crops
- ✓ Agroforestry systems
(combination of trees and/or shrubs with agriculture)

Humus formation (or humification) in agriculture can also be referred to as humus management. When agriculture is designed to remove more CO₂ and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere than it emits, it's called climate-positive agriculture.

SO, YOU CAN SEE:

Humus management and climate-positive agriculture have enormous potential to achieve some of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals formulated by the global community (e.g. no poverty, no hunger, health, clean water, climate mitigation).¹⁶

This is how „betterSoil for a better world“ can work!



DR. MAMPHELA RAMPHELE

Medical doctor and Co-President of the Club of Rome

»betterSoil works on mindset change but also on putting modern scientific knowledge into good practice, combining it with millions old science we call indigenous knowledge.«



PROF. DR. HANS JOACHIM (JOHN) SCHELLHUBER

Founder of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and founder of Bauhaus der Erde gGmbH

»That is why my initiative “Bauhaus der Erde” and “betterSoil” are working together. We hope that this booklet will inspire many people to get involved in the magic trinity.«



PROF. DR. ERNST ULRICH VON WEIZSÄCKER

Former member of the German Bundestag and Honorary President of Club of Rome



CHRISTINE VON WEIZSÄCKER

President of ECOROPA

»The “betterSoil” initiative has arrived at the right time! Our sincere thanks go to Azadeh Farajpour and her team. This book shows just how important and how diverse healthy soils are. They play an exceptional role in preserving biodiversity, in particular by paying attention to the oft-forgotten natural communities in the ground.«

Use “We Dig It” as an individualised give-away for customers and members of staff or to show your company’s commitment to sustainability.

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