

EVALUATION OF THE MONTADO IN THE REGION OF ALENTEJO IN SOUTHERN PORTUGAL BY USERS OF NON-PRODUCTION FUNCTIONS

Diana Surová & Teresa Pinto-Correia

Group on Mediterranean Ecosystems and Landscapes/ICAM, University of Évora,
7 000 671, Évora, Portugal, e-mail: dj@uevora.pt, tel.00351967292217, www.icam.uevora.pt

Abstract

The aim of the present work is to contribute to knowledge about potentials of traditional, evergreen oak woodland in Southern Portugal, Montado, for the recreational and leisure activities demanded by society. Study of this issue pretends to help in managing the alternative use of traditional cultural landscapes aiming in their maintenance. Up to now, little attention has been devoted to the evaluation of the Montado by users of the non production functions. In this study a qualitative research method based on the 232 individual face-to-face interviews with several user groups of rural areas (urban dwellers, rural inhabitants, tourists, hunters, mushroom pickers, beekeepers, and landowners) was applied. As the visual stimuli, seven color photos of main land uses in Southern Portugal were used: eucalyptus forest, stone pine forest, maritime pine forest, Montado, olive orchard, vineyard and irrigated agricultural crop system. The identification of land users' preferences was carried out by quantitative analysis and subsequently, the values of surveyed landscape type perceived by respondents were detected by content analysis. From seven landscape types, the Montado was the most preferred for 61% of all respondents. The content analysis of explanations of preferences revealed several values assigned to the studied system. These were related with tradition and identity, restorative experiences, and with ecological, aesthetic and economic values. The results uncovered the enhanced potential of the Montado, within other land uses in the region, for the non production functions demanded by today's society, which should be appropriately considered in its future management.

Key Words

Montado, landscape preferences, non production functions

Key References

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