

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

### THE MEDITERRANEAN MAQUIS: STRUCTURE, SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

#### Using the presentation

This presentation helps students understand what the Mediterranean maquis is, why it is important for biodiversity, and which environmental challenges affect Mediterranean ecosystems.

- Teachers can read the following notes before the lesson or use them as guidance while presenting.
- Recommended duration: 20–30 minutes

#### Slide 1 – Cover

Explain to students that the lesson will focus on a natural environment that is very common in the Mediterranean: the Mediterranean maquis.

It is a typical landscape found along many coastal and hilly areas in Sicily and Malta.

You may ask the class:

- ✓ Have you ever seen this type of vegetation?
- ✓ Where have you encountered it?

#### Slide 2 – Why the Mediterranean maquis is important

The Mediterranean maquis is not just a group of plants: it is an **ecosystem**, meaning a system where plants, animals, soil and climate are interconnected.

Explain that this environment:

- ✓ protects the land
- ✓ hosts many living species
- ✓ contributes to environmental quality

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#### Slide 3 – Sicily and Malta: a shared ecosystem

Sicily and Malta are located in the same Mediterranean basin and share similar climatic conditions.

This means that many plant and animal species are found **in both territories** and that environmental challenges are often shared.

Highlight the importance of **cooperation between countries** to protect ecosystems.

#### Slide 4 – What is the Mediterranean maquis

The Mediterranean maquis is vegetation mainly composed of evergreen shrubs and small trees. It is adapted to:

- ✓ hot and dry summers
- ✓ strong sun exposure
- ✓ soils often low in water

These plants have developed strategies **to survive drought conditions**.

#### Slide 5 – Structure of the Mediterranean maquis

Explain that vegetation is organised **in different layers**:

- ✓ a higher layer of small trees
- ✓ a dense shrub layer
- ✓ a lower layer of plants and climbers

This structure creates many **shelters for animals**.

#### Slide 6 – Main plant species

Introduce typical Mediterranean maquis plants such as:

- ✓ holm oak
- ✓ mastic tree
- ✓ myrtle
- ✓ strawberry tree

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- ✓ broom

Explain that many of these plants have:

- ✓ small, thick leaves
- ✓ deep roots
- ✓ strong resistance to drought

### Slide 7 –Biodiversity and fauna

The Mediterranean maquis hosts a wide variety of animals, including:

- birds
- reptiles
- pollinating insects
- small mammals

Biodiversity is important because it makes **ecosystems more stable and resilient**.

### Slide 8 – Ecosystem services

Ecosystem services are **the benefits that nature provides to people**. In the case of the Mediterranean maquis, these include:

- ✓ soil protection from erosion
- ✓ water regulation
- ✓ CO<sub>2</sub> absorption
- ✓ reduction of landslide and land degradation risks

### Slide 9 –Why it is important for people

The Mediterranean maquis also contributes to **human well-being**:

- it helps stabilise the land
- improves environmental quality
- supports activities such as nature-based tourism

It is therefore a natural heritage that **must be protected and valued**.

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#### Slide 10 – Common challenges

Explain that this ecosystem is threatened by several factors:

- ✓ wildfires
- ✓ invasive species
- ✓ climate change

These challenges are common across many Mediterranean areas and require **protection and management actions**.

#### Slide 11 – The role of young people

Highlight that young people can also contribute to environmental protection. Examples of responsible behaviour:

- ✓ respecting nature during outdoor activities
- ✓ not leaving litter
- ✓ learning about and valuing their local environment

#### Slide 12 – Final question

This slide encourages class discussion and reflection:

- ✓ What can we do every day to protect nature?
- ✓ Which behaviours help the environment?

#### Slide 13 – MedMaquis Project Credits