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“Sidewalks with trees”

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Abstract

In most of our cities pedestrian are excluded from the main ways of the streets, concentrated in narrow corridors, alongside the buildings, where they live and contact in critical conditions. Often, the street is the only public open space available at a walking distance but where is difficult to walk and to grow a trees.

The lack of free space for people to move is paralleled by the absence of permeable and fertile soil for root systems to develop or the open clean air for the crown to spread. As a consequence a constant conflict and malfunction occurs between urban trees and urban life, currently solved at the expense of the weakest.

Side walk spaces are limited and increasingly requested by a myriad of private companies that provide services to city life. Pipes, cables, facades parking spaces, publicity devices more and more determine the aggressiveness of roots, branches, leaves flowers, seeds and pollen; even the birds, attracted by urban trees may be considered a nuisance as they cannot be switched of when the urbanite wants to rest or park the car below their “sleeping grounds”.

It is therefore necessary to raise the attention for such problem and find out some solutions. Sizable tree pits and trenches well articulated with walking corridors and buildings, “right species in the right place”, seem to be the way out.

This talk will discuss further alternatives applicable to the Portuguese cityscape, with particular emphasis to the Atlantic Region.

Biography

Paulo Farinha Marques is a Landscape Architect, licensed in 1988 by the Technical University of Lisbon; in 1998 he got his PhD from the University of Sheffield (UK).

Since 1988 he worked as a private practitioner in his own office, covering a wide range of projects mainly concerning landscape planning and landscape design.

Since 1996 he has also been involved in teaching at the University of Aveiro, University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro and the University of Porto.

Currently he is an Auxiliary Professor at the University of Porto – where he teaches landscape design and planting design.