

Desert country Jordan aims for green with 10-million tree campaign

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Eucalyptus and carob saplings are planted near the forest of Kufranjah, north of Jordan's capital Amman, part of a reforestation effort that aims to reach 10 million trees in 10 years

On a bare hill in Jordan's verdant Ajloun region, dozens of people plant saplings as part of a reforestation effort that aims to reach 10 million

trees in 10 years.

"The [trees](#) in our region are beautiful," says 11-year-old Mohammed al-Ananza, helping his father Mustafa plant a carob sapling.

"It's a real shame that we have lost so many to fires... We should work together to protect them," he says as they work near the Kufranjah forest north of the capital Amman.

Forests make up only one percent of the desert kingdom's territory, according to the agriculture ministry, though Jordan also has an estimated 23 million orchard trees, half of them olives.

Forest fires strike almost every year in the Middle Eastern country due to high summer temperatures, in a trend scientists expect to intensify with climate change.

The blazes are often started by picnickers' barbecues or carelessly discarded cigarettes.

There were 499 fires in wood and [forest areas](#) last year alone, according to the agriculture ministry.

"We must make up for what has been lost in the fires," said Belal Qtishat, head of the nature protection department at the environment ministry.

"It's the only way to fight desertification and [climate change](#) and to protect biodiversity."

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