

UNITED NATIONS **FORESTS FOR PEOPLE** AWARDS



HAYRETTIN KARACA, Turkey

Forest Hero | Europe

Hayrettin Karaca, born in 1922, built a successful textile business. However, in the 1970s, as he traveled across Turkey he became very concerned about the environmental degradation that he saw, especially the soil erosion. Hayrettin realized he could not remain silent and began to document the situation and warn authorities and the public about the threats facing Turkey's natural environment.

In 1980, Hayrettin established an arboretum on his land in Yalova, which today holds over 14,000 species and subspecies of trees, and 3,800 herbaceous plants and perennials. The Karaca Arboretum has become the in situ breeding ground of endangered plant species endemic to Turkey and is open to the public.

In 1992, together with Nihat Gökyiğit, Hayrettin founded the TEMA Foundation to raise public awareness of environmental problems -- specifically soil erosion, deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change.

Today TEMA is one Turkey's leading environmental NGOs with over 460,000 volunteers across the country. TEMA has planted more than ten million seedlings and launched numerous public campaigns to influence the practices of government and business on sustainable rural development, reforestation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management.

Hayrettin, considered the 'grandfather' of the Turkish environmental movement, has received a number of awards for his work, including the UNEP 500 in 1992, the Eminent Services Award of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1998 and the Right Livelihood Award in 2012.

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