



Matorral and reclamation. The contribution of scrubs and dwarf shrubs to soil and water conservation in Spain

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The Mediterranean Matorral (scrubs and dwarf shrubs) was seen by John Thornes as a protective vegetative cover of semiarid lands. His studies on matorral triggered the research, vocations and scientific work of researchers and contributed with a relevant knowledge to the environmental studies in Spain. This research reviews the changes in land use and the use of matorral in Spain. A review of the research done on the effect of matorral on soil and water losses is presented. Books, scientific papers, book chapters and research reports are being reviewed to report how matorral control the soil and water losses under different climatic conditions in Spain. The main conclusion is that scrubs and dwarf shrubs are very efficient in controlling the soil and water losses under semiarid climatic conditions were trees are rare. Nevertheless, scrub has been neglected by the Spanish forestry policy-makers and sometimes the shrubs cover is removed to develop afforestations, mainly with Aleppo pine. Palabras clave: Matorral, Soil, Water, Losses, Spain, Land use, Land management.