*Press release no. 27*

**Bamboo walls and willow domes. Plants become building materials**

***The use of plant-based materials instead of cement and synthetic materials is gaining ground, not only for a new philosophy of living, but also for the functional characteristics that these matrerials can offer.***

The fairy tale of *The three Little Pigs* is based on a lie: a house made of straw is not at all fragile, and it even withstands earthquakes.

This is a claim by a university professor, **Mirko Maraldi**, of the department of **Agri-food sciences and technologies** at the Statale di Bologna, who gave a lecture on "**Building with natural materials**", during *EDP*, *EIMA Digital Preview*.

He presented images of buildings constructed in this way and inhabited for several years in absolute comfort.

"The most interesting experience is perhaps that of the Convento House - explained Maraldi - built in Ecuador after the 2006 earthquake and designed by two Italian architects. More recently, after the L'Aquila earthquake, Eva, a self-built Eco Village, was established in Pescomaggiore. In both cases, straw was chosen precisely because it can absorb the vibrations of an earthquake without damage and, at the same time, maintain a high degree of insulation from the surrounding environment".

A meeting was then dedicated to the use of straw as a building material (**Building with straw**) organized by ***BioHabitat***, the foundation created in 2016 to promote the green culture and the multifunctional role of farms. As part of EDP, the foundation organized several in-depth meetings and workshops on these issues. Another plant-based product considered an excellent building material is bamboo, which Italy has only been discovering for a few years, while in many foreign countries it is nothing new.

"The product must be subjected to some treatments that make it resistant to various kinds of attacks - explained Maraldi - but it represents a solution that reduces environmental impact and ensures the structure's solidity".

A design choice, as well as one motivated by the desire for contact with nature, is the one proposed by **Tullio Zenone** during the seminar "**Building with willow**".

"The idea was born to give my daughter a gazebo in which she could play with her friends - he explained - and being a nurseryman, I decided to use my raw material, namely plants. I decided that willow was the most versatile because it takes root very quickly and provides excellent insulation: in summer, a dome built with willow offers up to three degrees below the outside temperature, without using any air conditioner".

Zanone's domes thus arrived at *Furniture expo* in Milan and are now made for very different spaces, such as the gardens of private homes, playgrounds for children, and a large amusement park, such as Gardaland. This last structure has been in place for five years.

All seminars taking place within the EIMA Digital Preview can be reviewed in the EIMA TV space, located in the platform's Agorà.

**Rome, 12 November 2020**