

Introduction

The establishment of a botanical garden network is one of the most important goals and an ethical obligation of the Department of Forests. The first botanical garden was created by Theophrastus (Greek: Θεόφραστος; 371 BC – 287 BC), a successor to Aristotle (Greek: Αριστοτέλης; 384 BC – 322 BC) in the peripatetic school in ancient Athens. Theophrastus is considered today as the father of the botanical science.

The Troodos Botanic Garden "A.G. Leventis" is located in the Troodos National Forest Park, within the boundaries of the old Amiantos asbestos mine by the site of the "Karvounas" – Troodos road at the altitude of 1400 m. The area is included in the «Natura 2000» network of protected areas of Cyprus. The garden is a member of the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI). It is one of the three botanic gardens established by the Department of Forests. The other two are located at Athalassa (Nicosia) and Akamas (Baths of Aphrodite).



Waterfalls

The establishment of the botanic garden started by the Department of Forests in 2004 and is still in progress enriching the area with new flora species, sections and services. Around 150 flora species can be found today at the Garden but in the near future this number is expected to be greater than 500. A visitor can see common, rare and endangered flora species.

Goal

The Troodos botanic garden is targeting towards the conservation and promotion of the Cypriot botanical heritage, focusing on the Troodos native flora. It aims to be a research, educational and recreational platform and at the same time it is an important restoration part of the abandoned asbestos mine.

Garden Sections

At present the garden consists of the following sections:

- Visitor center and *Herbarium*
- Endemic plants
- Riverine vegetation
- Arboretum



Central pond



Central square

- Aromatic and traditional garden plants
- Educational yard
- View point
- Sanitary facilities and
- Parking place

The following sections are expected to be completed in the short run:

- Traditional fruit cultivar section
- Conservation section and
- Seed bank

Visitor center and *Herbarium*

For better information and education the visitor center was established to provide high quality services. A well trained staff is ready to guide and provide any assistance to the visitors. Troodos flora is the main theme of the visitor center and is presented through a variety of displays including high



Visitor center

technology devices. A documentary film (15 min.) about Troodos flora is presented on request in the presentation room in Greek or English languages with or without subtitles. The *Herbarium* provides the opportunity to visitors through the use of stereoscopes and other equipment to study in detail a great variety of fresh or dry plant material and get any information they need further from the specialized library. The visitor can buy souvenirs and selected books from the small shop. The presented exhibits include the following:

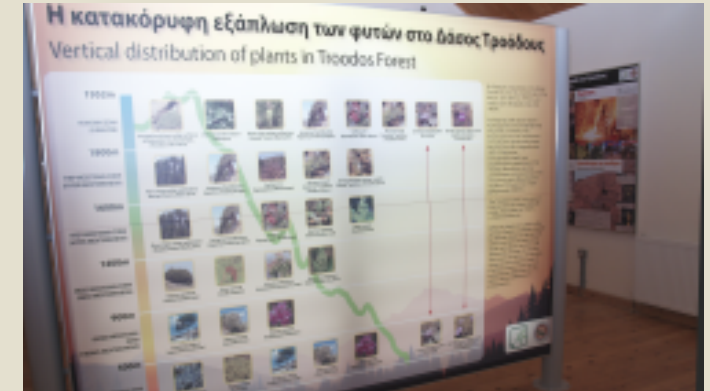
- Garden diagram
- The history of the Amiantos mine and restoration through photographic documentation
- Image representation of the vertical distribution of Troodos vegetation
- A 15 min. documentary about Troodos flora
- Electronic database of the Cyprus flora
- Electronic presentation about flora seasonal changes



The *Herbarium* of the visitor center



Visitor centers' exhibition



Visitor centers' exhibition

- Flora threats
- Forest fires
- Plants named after Troodos
- Woody plants of Troodos
- Troodos mushrooms

Endemic Plants Section

The endemic plants constitute one of the most interesting sections of the botanical garden. This section is located in the central plane of the garden and it is designed to promote the unique endemic flora of the area. The visitor gets in touch with those species walking around the central trails or comes closer through narrow adventurous paths.

The most important plants established in the garden include the following: *Cedrus brevifolia*, *Quercus alnifolia*, *Alyssum troodi*, *Asperula cypria*, *Astragalus echinus* var. *chionistrae*, *Micromeria chionistrae*, *Arabis purpurea*, *Chionodoxa lochia*, *Crocus cyprius*, *Crocus hartmannianus*, *Cyclamen cyprium*, *Cynoglossum troodi*, *Euphorbia veneris*, *Nepeta troodi*, *Odontides cypria*, *Onosma troodi*, *Ornithogalum chionophilum*, and *Thlaspi cyprium*. The intention of the Department of Forests is to enrich the section including all endemic plants of Troodos.

Riverine Vegetation Section

Riverine vegetation is located around the two ponds as well as along their connection stream. The water starts from the higher pond, passes through a waterfall and, finally rests in the central pond to be reused again through a pump system. A freshwater spring supplies the system to replenish any losses.

Riverine vegetation consists of indigenous as well as endemic and some exotic plants. The species planted include among others oriental alter (*Alnus orientalis*), oriental plane (*Platanus orientalis*), black poplar (*Populus nigra* var. *afghanica*), common myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), holy bramble (*Rubus sanctus*), storax (*Styrax officinalis*), chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) and tamarisk (*Tamarix smyrnensis*).

Arboretum

The majority of the trees are located in the arboretum. Grouping based on the family was not always successful due to the different ecological demands and habits as well as different dimensions of the various species.

The visitor may come in touch with a large diversity of trees including calabrian and black pine (*Pinus brutia* και *Pinus nigra* subsp. *pallasiana*), cilician fir (*Abies cilicica*), Cyprus cedar (*Cedrus brevifolia*), cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), junipers (*Juniperus excelsa* J. *oxycedrus* J. *foetidissima*), coastal restwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*).

Aromatic and Traditional Garden Plants

This section is located around the visitor center and contains aromatic and medicinal plants that traditionally are used in medicine or in cooking. Moreover, traditional garden plants were planted there.

Educational Yard

The primary goal of the Department of Forests fulfilled by the construction of the garden is the dissemination of the



The educational yard



The educational yard

knowledge to the public especially children and students. The educational yard contains five large tables and a board and other infrastructures to support outdoor educational activities. The yard can be used by school and other educational groups provided that it is reserved in advance.

View Point

It is located at the eastern part of the garden. The visitor can rest under the kiosk and at the same time enjoy the beautiful view as well as observe the vicinity. The picturesque landscape extends from Troodos, Madari and Papoutsia peaks up to Amathous, Limassol and Akrotiri seashores.

A permanent telescope is provided for more detailed and interesting observation.

Perspective

The garden has been already activated in various directions targeting the efficiency as well as its continuous upgrading. It is an active partner in European projects (LIFE+) and it is cooperating with various universities on actions such as threatend plants in-situ and ex-situ conservation as well as the establishment of a genetic material and seed bank. Seeds will be stored appropriately at low temperatures to maintain their viability for many years.

The botanical garden is a cornerstone in the attempt of the Department of Forests towards the conservation of the Troodos flora and the knowledge expansion regarding the species and the habitats of the area. Consequently, the continuous upgrading of the garden is necessity to the success.

Biodiversity conservation is a holistic process and each one of us must play its role according to his or her discipline. The primary mission of the Department of Forests is forest protection and expansion as well as forest biodiversity conservation. Prerequisite for the success is the respect for the natural environment and forests as well as the cooperation of all stakeholders and public.

Please Notice

- Forest fire hazard is extremely high especially during summer time. Lighting of fire is strictly prohibited at any place of the National Park including the garden.
- Keep outside the planted areas. Otherwise rare plants may be destroyed by trampling.
- Avoid stepping on wet rocks along the stream. They are extremely slippery and dangerous.
- Avoid approaching the sides of the ponds due to the danger of falling. Children must always be under supervision.
- Do not make noise. Please respect wildlife as well as other visitors.
- During days of dead calm and high relative humidity in summer, the numbers of mosquitoes can be very high. In such days, you are advised to use insectifuge. During working hours you can find insectifuge at the visitor center.
- Do not uproot or cut any plants.
- Do not litter the site, take the refuse with you or use litter bins.
- Access in the garden is free of charge. You are advised to visit the garden during working days and hours (09:00-14:00), when the visitor center is open for better service and information.
- For organized visits and information please get in touch with the visitors center (tel. 25550091, tel./fax: 25550092, email: troodosbg@fd.moa.gov.cy) or the Platania Forest Division (tel. 22924219, fax: 22923222, email: troodosdiv@fd.moa.gov.cy).



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Troodos Botanical Garden «A.G. Leventis»



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