



ABH  
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APHRODITE  
BEACH HOTEL



## The common part of the two nature trails (from Baths of Aphrodite to Pyrgos tis Rigaenas)

1. **CAROB TREE** *Ceratonia siliqua*. Carob, Olive, and Lentisk are “old species which survived the ice ages from Tertiary times. These plants have few or no relatives, indicating that they diverged from main stock a long time ago and all closely related species have become extinct. The Carob for example is the only species in the genus *Ceratonia*.

Carob, Olive and Lentisk are important constituents of the maquis too. This important type of Mediterranean vegetation – a very dense cover of xerophilous, sclerophyllous evergreen shrubs or small trees – resulted largely from man’s work on the evergreen sclerophyllous forest constituting the climax community.

Carob is one of the most characteristic trees of the drier parts of the Easter Mediterranean region and is most commonly cultivated. The pod, which was locally known as “black gold” due to its contribution to the National Economy (at least in the past) in addition to its other uses, is valuable fodder for animals. The wood is hard and it is used as firewood, a practice which may endanger this species.

2. **OLIVE TREE** *Olea europaea*. Olive has its origin in the Orient, yet by the end of the pre-Christian era was cultivated throughout the whole Mediterranean region; it was derived most probably from the wild form (*Olea europaea ssp. oleaster*). The wealth of many Mediterranean civilisations since the Minoans was based on the cultivation of olives.

An olive branch has been used as the emblem of peace. Olive branches are also part of the emblem of the Republic of Cyprus. Olive oil has been used for cooking, lighting and anointing the body during festivities since the earliest times: it is considered by many people as contributing to longevity.



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We ask you now to keep the image of this species in mind, as we want you to recall it later and to compare it with the wild form.

3. **LENTISK** *Pistacia lentiscus*. Lentisk is known for its “mastic”, a resin obtained from punctured stems and used as a chewing-gum for preserving the gums and sweetening the breath.

4. **BRAMBLE** *Rubus sanctus*. Bramble usually grows abundantly near water sources.

5. This romantic spot, as we noted earlier, is associated with Aphrodite. According to legend, here in the cool, clear pond, the Goddess of Love took her bath.

5A. **FIG TREE** *Ficus carica*. This is the wild form of the well known cultivated variety.

6. **EUCALYPT** *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. The number of species in the genus Eucalyptus exceeds 600, most of which are native to Australia. Today, these beautiful and fast growing trees can be found all over the world.

7. **SAGE** (*Salvia fruticosa*) One of the commonest members of the so-called “low maquis”. Also a member of the garigue - it is an important type of Mediterranean vegetation distinguished by its low scattered bushes, rarely more than 0.5m high, dotted over the hillsides, with bare pitches of rock or stony ground between.

A popular infusion (tea) made from its dried aromatic leaves is believed to have medicinal properties.

8. Cairns are permanent signs to delimit forest land.



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**9. GOLDEN DROP** *Onosma fruticosum*. Endemic; native only to Cyprus.

**10. GROMWELL** *Lithodora hispidula ssp. versicolor*.

**11. HEADED THYME** *Thymus capitatus*. It is a typical member of the maquis and garigue. Its aromatic leaves produce oil, which has medicinal properties and is used in perfumery and cosmetics. Honey produced in areas where this shrub is abundant has a characteristic flavour and is highly valued.

## **12. VIEW POINT**

**13.** As you walk, notice the hard crust of calcium carbonate which is locally called “Kafkalla”; it was formed years ago when calcium carbonate was washed downwards and accumulated in thin layers on top of secondary depositions of calcareous materials.

Shallow red soils of Terra rossa are usually found on the top of “Kafkalla”; they are red in colour due to the presence of the reddish coloured iron. Notice that, as a result of erosion, the soil is found only in pockets. Note that both “Kafkalla” and Terra rossa are characteristic of the Mediterranean region.

**14. CALABRIAN PINE** *Pinus brutia*. Calabrian Pine is the commonest of the conifers on the island and it is in fact the principal forest tree.

**15. GREEN BRIER** *Smilax aspera*. This woody climber is common in thickets and hedges all over the island.





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16. You have already been made familiar with this species. Simply, try first to identify it by yourself and then back-check to No.1 to make sure.

## 17. LIMESTONES

## 18. VIEW POINT

19. **ROCK ROSE** *Cistus monspeliensis*. *Cistus* species are among the dominant and characteristic species of the low maquis. They are also members of garique. This pretty shrub, which is common elsewhere in the Mediterranean, is found from sea level to about 650m in isolated patches only in the western part of the island.

*Cistus* species exudes the gum “ladanum” which is collected by dragging a kind of rake with leather prongs through the shrubs. “Ladanum” is a dark brown fragrant and bitter gum used today in perfumery and medicinal plasters.

20. **WICK WEED** *Phlomis cypria* var. *occidentalis*. Endemic.

21. **ROYAL OAK** *Quercus infectoria* ssp. *veneris*. Isolated trees or groups of Royal Oak are frequently found in cultivated fields particularly in the western part of the island; they are found occasionally in the forest, but never form pure forest stands.

22. The ruins of “Pyrgos tis Rigaenas” (the shelter of the Queen), as we mentioned earlier, are associated with both history and mythology. History, supported by the existence of frescoes, tells us that this was a medieval monastery.

23. A fountain built by the Forestry Department. We are positive that you are in need of its cool and potable water.



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**24. STORAX** *Storax officinalis*. The Latin word “officinalis” means “medicinal” which indicates the usefulness of this shrub. The gum, storax, obtained by making incisions in the stem and branches, is also used in perfumery. Moreover, at one time, its fruit was ground to a powder which was then thrown into streams. A froth was produced, capable of stupefying eels which come half-stunned to the surface where they were easily caught.