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APHRODITE
BEACH HOTEL



Adonis Nature Trail

*From Pyrgos tis Rigaenas to the main road Polis-Baths of Aphrodite, 200m
before the Tourist Pavilion*

- B25. PHOENICIAN JUNIPER** *Juniperus phoenicea*. This is the commonest species in the Akamas region, growing at altitudes as high as 700m. It is one of the dominant species and is characteristic of the so-called “high maquis”.
- B26. STRAWBERRY TREE** *Arbutus andrachne*. This beautiful small tree or shrub is quite common and found up to 1300m. It is, however, one of the dominant species and characteristic of the high maquis.
Its reddish fruits, reminiscent of strawberries are edible but not very palatable. Check earlier reference.
- B27.** Eroded site.
- B28. THORNY GORSE** *Genista sphacelata var. sphacelata*. This is a common constituent of maquis, forming impenetrable thickets.
- B29.** The trail now joins a forest road, constructed by the Forestry Department to serve a forest nursery, which has now been abandoned. Remember, however, that forest roads serve against fire, the worst enemy of forests.
- B30.** As you walk on, notice to your right the thick stand of Calabrian Pine. Relatively speaking, this is an example of a good quality site.
- B31.** Notice now to your left an example of a poor quality site. Not only are the trees scattered but also look at their height, shape, and robustness. But how come? The demarcation line between the two sites is just a road! The answer is not that difficult. It is due to the existence of moisture, one of the factors controlling tree growth, which is in fact the

limiting factor in the case of Cyprus. Erosion left little or no soil behind and thus moisture is almost nonexistent, a situation aggravated by the southern aspect of this site.

B32. Have you met this species earlier? Yes, just check No. 11 (from the common part of the trail).

B33. The site here, an abandoned forest nursery, is again an example of a good quality site. The significance of moisture is self-evident.

B34. Potable water.

B35. MYRTLE *Myrtus communis*. This decorative shrub is common near water sources and in moist places all over the island up to 1700m. Myrtle is one of the “old species” which have survived the ice ages.

As a symbol of love and peace, Myrtle was held sacred and it has been used to decorate the entrance of churches, schools and other public buildings during celebrations. It was also a traditional bridal flower in the Orient, a symbol of virginity. The bark leaves and flowers produce oil known as “Eau d’ Agnes” used in perfumery. A little myrtle oil in a hot bath water is very relaxing and good for the skin.

B36. As you walk along this steep limestone rock, depending of course on the time of year you are visiting the area, notice, at its lower part, different species characteristic of this rocky and rather damp habitat such as **Cyclamen** (*Cyclamen spp*), **Stonecrop** (*Sedum spp*), **Squill** (*Scilla cilicica*), **Venus navelwort** (*Umbilicus rupestris*) Fern, Mosses etc.

B37. Notice on your left, along the stream, Cypress, (*Cupressus sempervirens*). This plant is very common in Cyprus; it grows both in the wild, especially on limestone hillsides and as a cultivated tree in gardens and cemeteries. Legend says that the island was probably named after it. What we know for sure, however, is that the stream was named after it!

B38. TEREBINTH *Pistacia terebinthus*. A common constituent of the maquis and pine forest, found from 300 up to 1200m. One of the peculiarities of this species is the great variation in leaf-form and size among individual examples and the perfect constancy of the leaf-form on any one.

B39. ZOULATSIA *Bosea cypria*. This decorative plant, which is endemic, forms an attractive hedge or wall covering. It is frequently found in hedges in the villages or towns and also on rocky outcrops in forest and maquis in the lower altitudes.

B40. CHAMAEPEUCE *Ptilostemon chamaepeuce* var *cyprius*. Endemic.

B41. You should have been familiar with the species. If not check No. 3 (from the common part of the trail).

B42. VALLOTI *Ballota integrifolia* Endemic.

B43. CYCLAMEN *Cyclamen persicum*. This is the wild parent of our cultivated winter-flowering cyclamen. The considerable range of variation shown in the wild species has been selected by horticulturists to produce the many forms available to the gardener. Cyclamen tubers contain “cyclamine” which is used in medicine although it is a poisonous compound (picture 11).

B44. KERMES OAK *Quercus coccifera ssp. calliprinos*. This shrub, which occasionally grows into medium sized trees, is one of the dominant species and characteristic of the high maquis. It is found in middle and lower regions in most parts of the island and exists in a great number of varieties, all showing minor morphological differences. Its acorns are used as pig fodder and its wood as fuel.

B45. Green-brier suppressing both Carob Tree and Aleppo Pine.

B46. This is another example of “Kafkalla”. See No. 13 (from the common part of the trail).

B47. You have heard about the maquis. Here we would like to tell you just a few things about this plant community which is in fact the most important vegetative feature of the Akamas region. But to begin with what is the maquis? You will have been looking at examples on your walk of a very dense cover of xerophilous, sclerophyllous evergreen shrubs or small trees.

This plant community can be found in all environments with a Mediterranean climate. Its geographical distribution, however, is so vast that the vegetation of the maquis varies greatly from place to place. In most cases it is undoubtedly originated from the deterioration of tree formations as a result of man’s work on the evergreen sclerophyllous forests. There are many causes of deterioration but the most significant are tree felling, pasturing, and fire. Only in a few special cases is there an undisturbed climax community, and so, “primary maquis”.

Although, the maquis shows a bewildering number of variations, two broad variants are easily distinguished. These are:

“High maquis” is characterised by the presence of a number of trees and shrubs which may grow as high as 4-5m. The most important trees are Strawberry Tree, Holm and Kermes Oak, Phoenician Juniper, Olive Tree, Carob Tree, Aleppo Pine, and larger shrubs such as Myrtle, Tree Heather, Wig Tree and Spanish Broom.

There are gradations between this and “Low maquis” where the bushes are 1-2m high and there are no tree-forming species. The commonest species are Lentisk, Thorny Broom and Gorse, Sage and Rock Rose.

- B48.** Is this a species you met earlier? Yes, it is. Check, however, No.19 (from the common part of the trail) to make sure.
- B49. ROCK ROSE** *Cistus monspeliensis x parviflorus*. A hybrid resulting from cross-breeding between two different species, that is between *Cistus monspeliensis* and *Cistus parviflorus*.
- B50. VIEW POINT**
- B51.** A cairn again.
- B52. ALATERNUS** *Rhamnus alaternus*. This is found here and there in the lower and middle regions a constituent of the maquis but never in large numbers.
Its Greek name “Chrysoxylo” is derived from the golden-like colour of its wood, which is hard and durable.
- B53. SMALL LEAVED MARJORAN** *Origanum majorana var. tenuifolium*. This is endemic and an excellent culinary and medicinal plant. An infusion (tea) made from its dried leaves is regarded as very beneficial in cases of the common cold, tonsillitis and pharyngitis.
- B54.** Does this species look familiar to you? If not, check No.7 (from the common part of the trail).
- B55. THORNY BROOM** *Calycotome villosa*. This is a typical member of the maquis and garigue, from sea level to about 1200m. In early spring, in areas where it is abundant, it makes a pretty show with its aromatic yellow flowers.