

Flora

The particular geology and climate of the municipality, its geographical location in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, and its proximity to the Straits of Gibraltar and Africa, have allowed it to play host to a remarkable variety of flora and fauna.

The variety of flora and vegetation also reflects the ways in which vegetation typical of a warm and humid Mediterranean climate adapts to different circumstances. The different types of vegetation have been conditioned both by environmental factors (mainly abiotic factors such as climate, geology and soils) and by the action of animals and man since times remote. Given the wide variety of species, we will be talking mainly about tree types growing in the wild.

The rare Pinsapo (Mediterranean Fir) appears in the shady parts on the north sides of the mountains and on various soil types. In these areas rainfall is the highest in the area, which favours the development of these species.



The Maritime Pine (*P. Pinaster*) is widely represented in the northeastern part of the district by the municipality of Estepona. An enclave of these Pines houses a group of Pinsapos. The condition of these trees varies considerably, from the few in good condition to others which are in decline. This is one of the species most affected by fires and misuse by man.

The Aleppo Pine (*P. Halepensis*) and the Umbrella or Stone Pine (*P. Pinea*) are seen amongst the Maritime Pine and Pinsapo, and the distribution of both is much influenced by the microclimate and the nature of the underlying soil. Neither species is particularly abundant. They tend to appear in association with others or in the odd copse.

Among the evergreens the presence of the Cork Oak (*Q. Suber*), Holm Oak (*Q. Rotundifolia*), the Carob (*Ceratonia Siligua*) and Wild Olive is especially noteworthy.

The Cork Oak is mainly located at altitudes of between 200 and 800 meters on a calcium substrate, although there are some in the Genal Valley. The Holm Oak is abundant, occurring even in the higher altitudes in the district. These trees usually appear with Cork Oaks.



The Cork Oak appears spontaneously amongst other species or in small stands on rough terrain and in very poor condition. To conform to the climatic requirements of this tree it ought really to be planted at low levels and sheltered from cold winds.

The Wild Olive appears on the southern slopes of limestone mountains (such as the Sierra Crestellina) and low-lying land. Like the Mastic Tree, it is quite indifferent to the nature of the soil.

Of the deciduous trees in the area, the Portuguese or Gall Oak (*Q. Faginea*) and the Chestnut (*Castanea Sativa*) are worth special mention. The first is represented mainly by the subspecies (*Q.f. Baetica*) which is quite indifferent to soil type although it is strongly influenced by climate. It requires high rainfall, so is found mainly at altitudes of between 400 and 900m, although appearing also in valleys and shady areas of mountains. The Chestnut appears on siliceous soils in areas of significant rainfall, forming patches of limited size amended by the requirements of those picking its fruit.

The Eucalyptus (*E. Globulus*) occurs mainly on the slopes of the Rio Manilva, below the access road to the Baños de la Hedionda. It appears sporadically as a feature of land that has been worked. In the coastal zone on both sides of the CN-340 can be seen formations of these trees aimed primarily to protect crops from the east wind. In places the crops have now disappeared and the trees have lost their purpose.

The Mediterranean scrub is represented by species such as “Matagallos” (*Phlomis Purpurea*), the Mediterranean Dwarf Palm (*Chamaerops Humilis*), a wild asparagus (*Asparagus Albus*), the Kermes Oak (*Q. Coccifera*), and the Mastic Tree (*Pistacia Lentiscus*). These plants occupy marginal areas, where the slope of the ground or the presence of rocks and stones have prevented use of the ground for agriculture and the only influence has been grazing or fires.

