



FLORA

of the Olympus National Park



Flora zones

In Olympus there are generally four sequent flora zones, but not clearly separated:

- **Mediterranean vegetation zone**
- **Forest zone of beech, fir and mountain coniferous**
- **Boreal coniferous zone**
- **Treeless high mountain zone (Alpine tundra)**

Mediterranean vegetation zone

Oak

In the altitude between 300 and 500 metres occurs the evergreen broadleaf trees' zone (maquis). Along with oak (*Quercus ilex*) and Greek strawberry tree there occur kermes oak, strawberry tree, *Phillyrea latifolia*, bay laurel, cedar and others. Of the deciduous species most common are *Fraxinus*, *Ulmus*, Montpellier maple, Judas tree, terebinth, *Cotinus coggygria* and others.



Forest zone of beech, fir and mountain coniferous

Black Pine

The evergreen broadleaf trees' zone is gradually replaced by ecosystems of European black pine, that forms compact clusters, with no intermediate zone of deciduous oaks, although trees of these species occur sporadically within clusters of black pine. On the northern slopes of Xirolakos valley, at altitude between 600 and 700 metres, there is a high forest of downy oak of about 120 hectares.

The black pine dominates on the eastern and northern side of the mountain, between 500 and 1,700 metres. In this zone there is also hybrid fir in small groups and scrubs or small clumps, particularly in the lower region and in the sites Naoumi (west) and Stalamatia and Polykastro (east), where it is mixed with black pine and Bosnian pine. In this zone there is also beech.



Boreal coniferous zone

Typical species of this zone is Bosnian pine. This rare kind of pine occurs sporadically higher than 1,000 metres and gradually replaces the black pine, while over 1,400 metres it creates an almost unmixed forest. Over 2,000 metres the forest becomes sparser, reaching to 2,750 metres, thus creating one of the highest forest tree line limit (limit of forest growth) in the Balkans and Europe. Another feature of this zone is that over 2,500 metres the trees appear in a crawling form. The region, where Bosnian pine grows, is mostly dry and its slopes are rocky. There are no springs or water streams. The vegetation growing there is adapted to specific local conditions and represented by typical shrubs, graminaceous, chasmophytes etc., while the flora includes many endemic species of the Balkans.

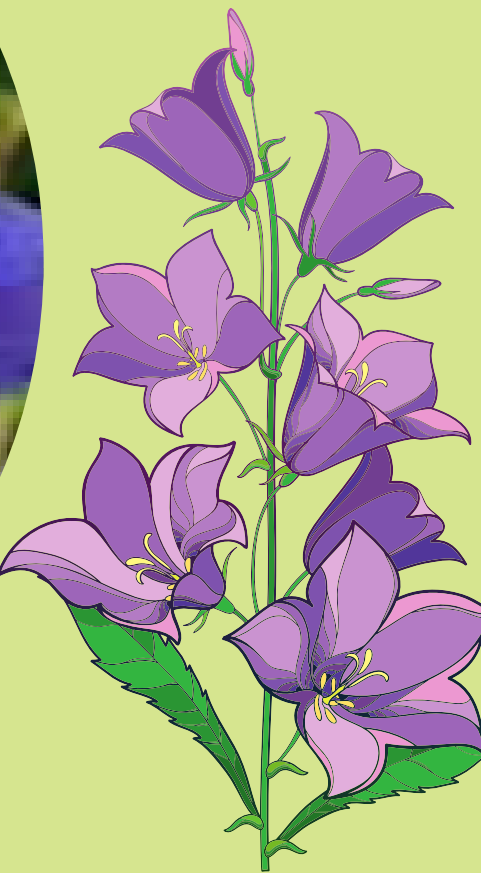
Treeless high mountain zone (Alpine tundra)

Beyond Bosnian pine's zone follows an extensive zone, without trees, with alpine meadows, consisted by a mosaic of grassland ecosystems, depending on the topography, the slope and the orientation of the ground. In general, this alpine flora with more than 150 plant species, contains snow accumulation meadows, grassy swamps, alpine scree and rock crevices. On the meadows, the rocks and the steep slopes live most of the endemic Olympus' plants, among them some of the most beautiful wildflowers in Greece. Half of them are found only in the Balkans and 23 only in Olympus and nowhere else.

Local endemic plants

Plant Life More than 1,700 plants are found on Mount Olympus—representing 25 percent of all Greek flora. Diversity is high here because of the mountain's different elevation zones and its proximity to the sea. Deciduous trees and bushes dominate to about 1,640 feet (500 meters), then give way to stands of black pine and fir. Higher on the mountain are cold-tested conifer forests, including the rare Bosnian pine (*Pinus heldreichii*). Above the tree line, at about 8,202 feet (2,500 meters), forests give way to low vegetation and, in season, wide expanses of wildflowers.

Campanula



Flowers examples

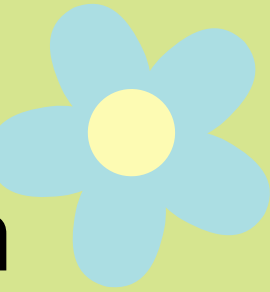
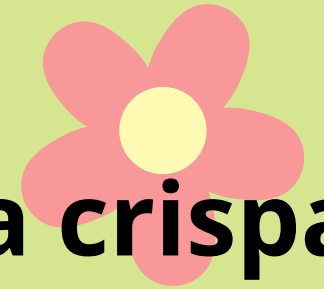
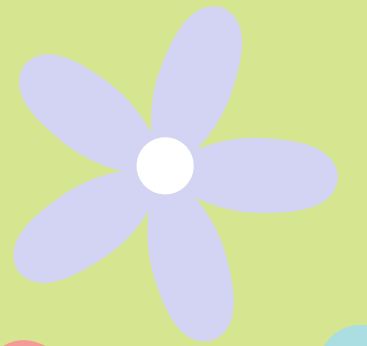
Globularia cordifolia



Asperula muscosa



Gentianella crispata



Trees in Olympus park



The variety of flora in the forests on Mount Olympus is seemingly endless. The trees are a mix of deciduous and evergreen, with peaches, apples (both cultivated and wild), pears, almonds, figs, and apricots being among the more abundant fruit-bearing trees. Oaks also grow in abundance as well as walnut trees; there are numerous types of pine trees - some of which are used for harvesting turpentine.



Mount Olympus

The flowers of Olympus are renowned, the mountain being a famous place of study for botanists from all over the world.

The flowers of Olympus are identified by the international names, which are registered in the European Flora list (Flora Europaea). A registered sign of the mountain is a purple flower, *Jankaea Heldreichii*, which grows among the rocks and can only be found on Olympus. It was named after the pioneer German botanist Th. von Heldreich, who discovered several plants during their excursions on Olympus, in mid 19th century. Many of the mountain's endemic flowers were given by researcher botanists the names of places and mythological characters of Olympus, in order to emphasize their unique origin. As a result, wondering around on Olympus, especially early in the summer, one can meet gods' *Potentilla* (*Potentilla Deorum*),



Video unavailable

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Thank you for attention.

The presentation was made by Błażej Artur Wiktor Brunon

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