

## Unique trees of Montsec and the Àger valley

When we look at a tree perhaps we like to believe that we are in the presence of an eternal being, always growing, big and strong. But a tree can be as fragile as a roadside plant. The tree's life begins as ours does, with the union of two cells which give rise to an embryo: the seed. The challenges and difficulties which it must overcome from the moment it shoots until it becomes an adult tree, are many. It can become ill, be eaten or ploughed up, and after overcoming such vicissitudes a chain saw or a fire can put an end to years of development. A tree is a living being and sometimes we forget that it is born, it feeds and it communicates chemically with other trees. It reproduces, has its own survival strategies and ...it dies too. We are responsible, for the most part, for its destiny.

The monumental status of a tree depends on the conditions of the medium in which it grows, - like the isolation which allows it to develop freely - but also on it being permitted to live.

A single tree is food and refuge for a multitude of animal species, it is oxygen for the Earth and it is beauty. It retains the soil with its roots and is essential for the water economy of ecosystems...and ours.

A single developed beech tree, 25m high and with a leaf surface of 1,600m<sup>2</sup> liberates about 7,000 l of oxygen a day to supply the daily needs of 50 people.

Trees form forests. Forests are important foundations of life and diversity and are a source of balance for the spirit.

This trip through the "Unique trees of Montsec and the Àger valley", will make you smile, will surprise you. We propose that you walk around the tree, that you try to put your arms around it, lean on its trunk and lift your gaze: look at it from within.

Some were born before Columbus set foot on America, and have seen many battles. Others have survived fire or being struck by lightning. And there they are, before you.

But they are not eternal. We rely on your appreciation and respect for nature in order to help us conserve the tree and the forest.



EVERGREEN OAK (*Quercus ilex rotundifolia*)  
Beech family.

Evergreen tree with oval, leathery leaves. Very broad, domed crown, branching at very low height.  
Distribution and habitat: Mediterranean regions up to 2,000 m altitude. Climate: very dry and warm.  
Flowering: spring. Its fruit is sweet and edible, much appreciated by animals.



LUSITANIAN OAK (*Quercus faginea faginea*)  
Beech family.

Deciduous tree up to 20 metres in height. Broad, branched crown with marcescent leaves. Regulates floods and runoff from rainfall.  
Distribution and habitat: shady areas between altitudes of 600 and 2000 metres. Flowering: March and April.



OLIVE. (*Olea europaea*)  
Olive family.

Evergreen tree from 12 to 15 metres in height. Small grey-green leathery leaf. The trunk is wide at the base and very sinuous. It is slow-growing and long-lived. We can find olives of 2,000 years of age.  
Distribution and habitat: present throughout the Mediterranean region, forming extensive cultivated areas.  
Flowering: from June to August.



YEW (*Taxus baccata*)  
Yew family.

Evergreen conifer of 20 metres in height. Needle-like leaves and scaly trunk. They have been known to reach 2,000 years of age. All the tree is toxic except for the red flesh surrounding the seeds.  
Distribution and habitat: shaded locations throughout Europe. Flowering: February - April.

Del Torre Old evergreen oak



Corb of Montardit lusitanian oak. Àger.



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