Life-Relict

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The Life-Relict Project intends to substantially improve the conservation state of Pontic rhododendron and Portuguese laurel communities in three Portuguese mountains, including here, in Monchique. These two plant species are Laurissilva relicts, currently threatened and rare, present in just a few shelters in mainland Portugal. For these reasons their communities are protected under the Habitats Directive, classified by the European Union as a priority habitat for conservation.

Pontic rhododendron in flower

Pontic rhododendron without flower

Special Area of Conservation in Monchique

Monchique Mountain is a very special place from a bioclimatic point of view. It has a temperate climate influence (wetter in summer), within a marked mediterranean climate territory (drier in summer). This circumstance allows the existence of several species and habitat types of Community interest, including the Pontic rhododendron communities. For this reason, Monchique Mountain was classified as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), included in the European network of nature protection areas (the Natura 2000 network).

Information on other routes - http//pt.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/user.do?id=893982
www.cm-monchique.pt

Project Information

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http://www.liferelict.ect.uevora.pt/?lang=en

Beneficiary Coordinator:

UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA
ESCOLA DE CIÊNCIAS E TECNOLOGIA

Associated Beneficiaries:

ADRUSE · seia · MONCHIQUE MUNICÍPIO · CICYTEX CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS Y TECNOLÓGICAS DE EXTREMADURA

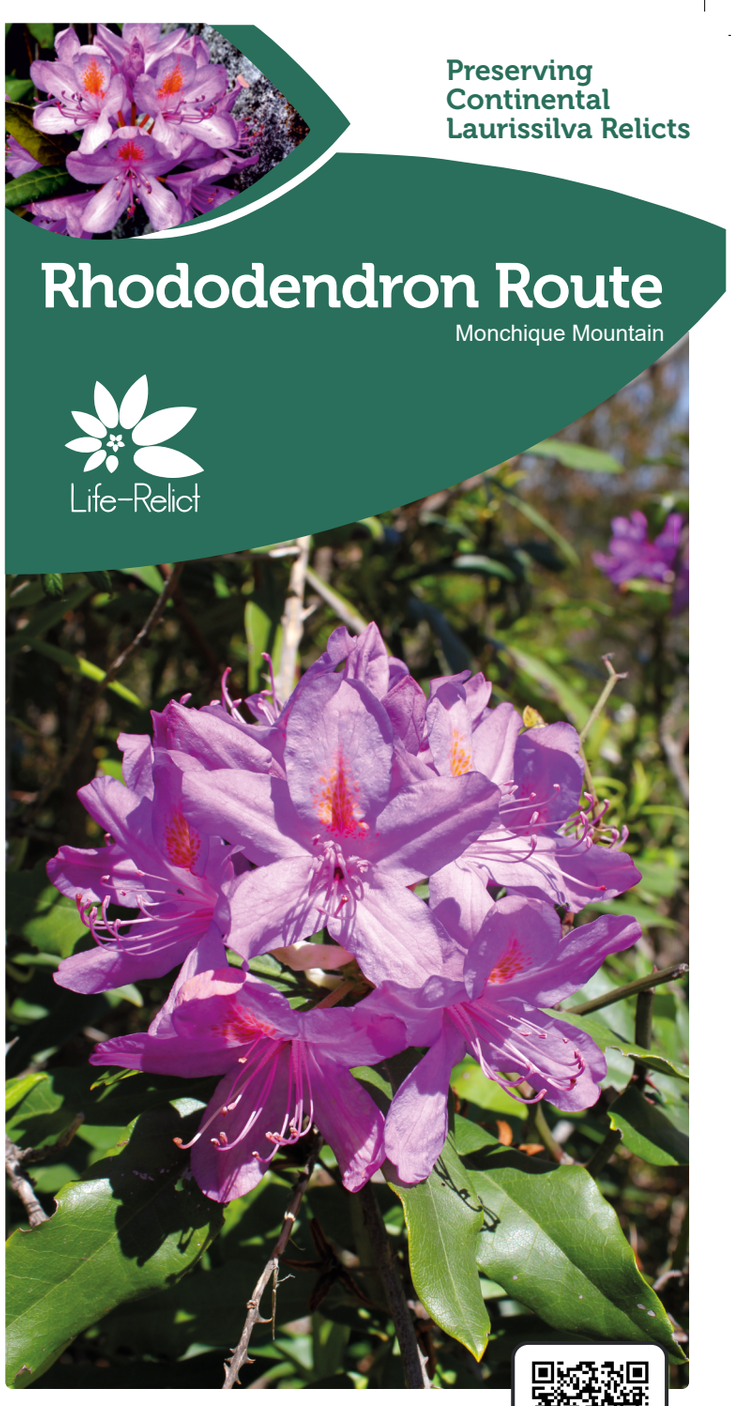
With financial contribution of LIFE Program from European Union

Preserving Continental Laurissilva Relicts

Rhododendron Route

Monchique Mountain

Life-Relict



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Rhododendron Route

Monchique Mountain

Commom Holly
(Ilex aquifolium)

Strawberry tree
(Arbutus unedo)

Route Description

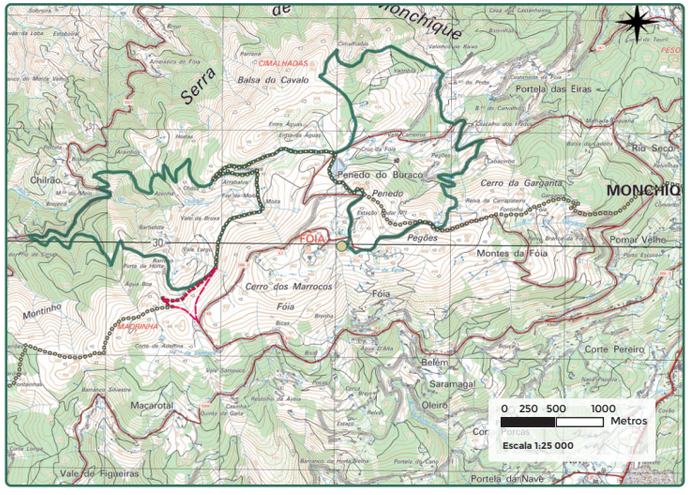
In this small thematic route it is possible to observe a rare habitat, dominated by the Pontic rhododendron *(Rhododendron ponticum* subsp. *baeticum)*. This plant community is of high conservation value due to its Laurissilva relict species that remained here as a result of the local microclimatic conditions. During the route, it is possible to observe an enormous floristic treasure, including Common hollies, Cork oaks, Strawberry trees and the rare White lavender. To better interpret the vegetation and landscape along this route, there are signposted points where you can access to the audio guide.

Campanula *(Campanula alata)*

White lavender
(Lavandula viridis)

Common foxglove
(Digitalis purpurea)

Algerian oak
(Quercus canariensis)



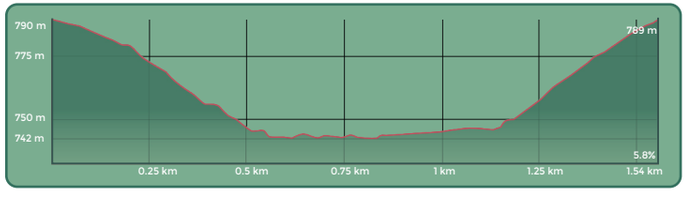
PR5 MCQ - Pedestrian Waterfall Route (16,60 km)

GR13 - Via Algarviana (Setor 11) - Via Algarviana (Sector 11) - Monchique and Marmelete (14,70 km)

Rhododendron Route (1,54 km)

Suggested Season:

All year. However, spring offers better climatic conditions and is the flowering season.



TECHNICAL ROUTE INFO:

Typology: Circular
Length: 1,54 km
Total unevenness: - 70 m
Mode: on foot or by bicycle
Duration: about 1h

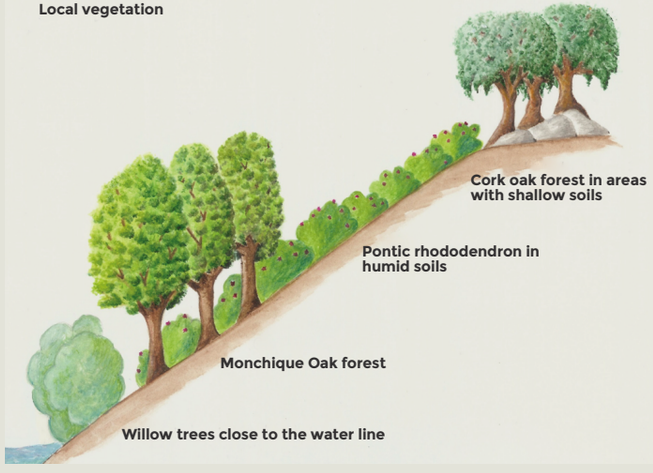
USEFUL CONTACTS:

Emergency - 112
Monchique GNR - 282 912 629
Monchique Fire Department - 282 910 000
Monchique Town Hall - 282 910 200
Monchique Tourist Office - 282 911 189

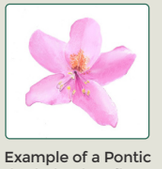
RULES OF CONDUCT

The Continental Laurissilva

About 66 million years ago, right after the great extinction of dinosaurs, the climate in the Iberian Peninsula was subtropical. At that time, commonly named Tertiary, the vegetation was made by large evergreen plants (Laurissilva type), adapted to a hot and humid climate. However, during the Tertiary, the climate started progressively to cool down and to have a drier season (becoming Mediterranean). With no adaptations to survive to this new climate, subtropical plants started to disappear and replaced by others similar to those we currently know in the Mediterranean region. However, sheltered in special places of the Iberian Peninsula, some of those ancient plants managed to survive (Continental Laurissilva). Nowadays, these relict communities are generally in a poor conservation state.



The Pontic rhododendron appears spontaneously in mountain areas, in two distinct ecological positions: along waterways (riparian position) and in the edges or groves of Monchique Oak forests *(Quercus canariensis)*. They are always in acid and humid soils.



Example of a Pontic rhododendron flower

Closed Fruit of Pontic rhododendron

Semi-open matured fruit, displaying its seeds