BOLSA TURISMO LISBOA TRAVEL MARKET
27 - 31 MAIO - MAY 2020

MONCHIQUE
MUNICÍPIO

Life-Relict

Life

NATURA 2000

Preserving Continental Laurissilva Relicts in Monchique Mountain

Monchique Mountain is a Special Area of Conservation in Natura 2000 Network in the European Union

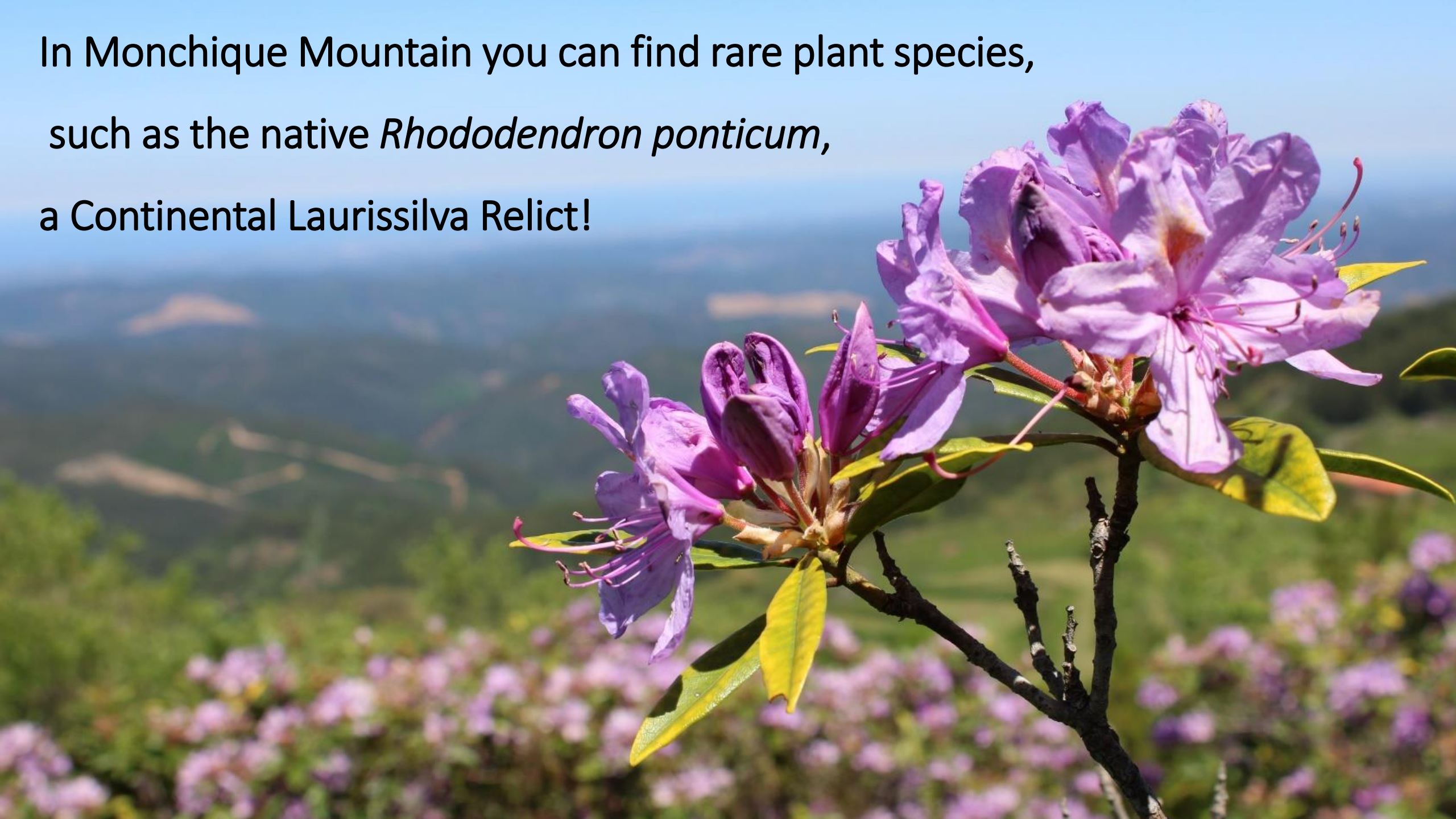
NATURA 2000

Monchique has a remarkable floristic diversity due to it local climate.

In Monchique Mountain you can find rare plant species,

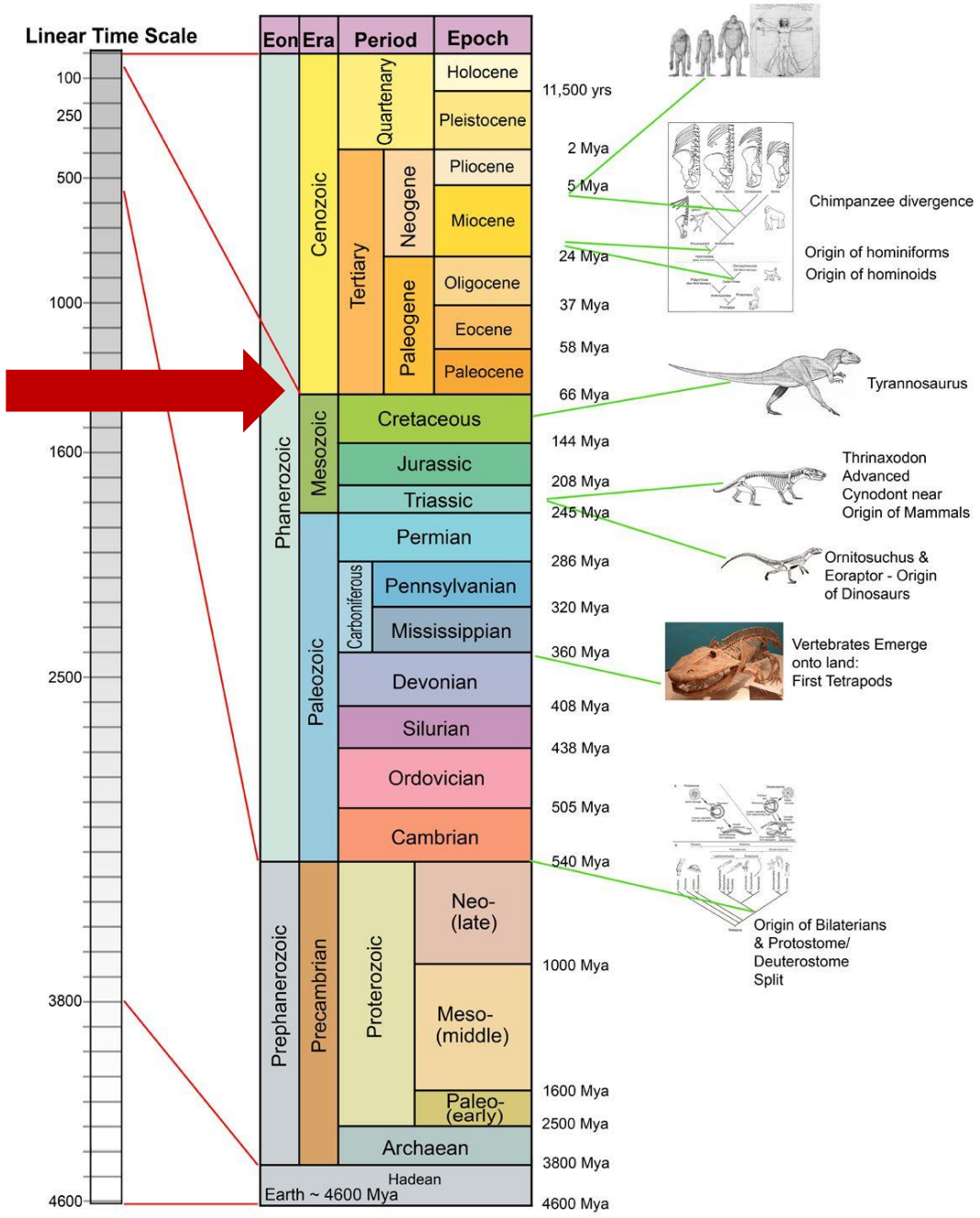
such as the native *Rhododendron ponticum*,

a Continental Laurissilva Relict!



Laurissilva forest

To better understand the story of the Rhododendron habitat, we need to go back around 66 million years, right after the great extinction of dinosaurs, when **the climate in the Iberian Peninsula was subtropical.**



Regression of the Laurissilva Forest over time

1

Subtropical at 66 million years ago (hot & Wet)

2

Gradual cooling at the end of Tertiary

3

Quaternary glaciations

4

Mediterranean climate Today (hot & Dry)

Laurissilva has found refuge in Macaronesia…

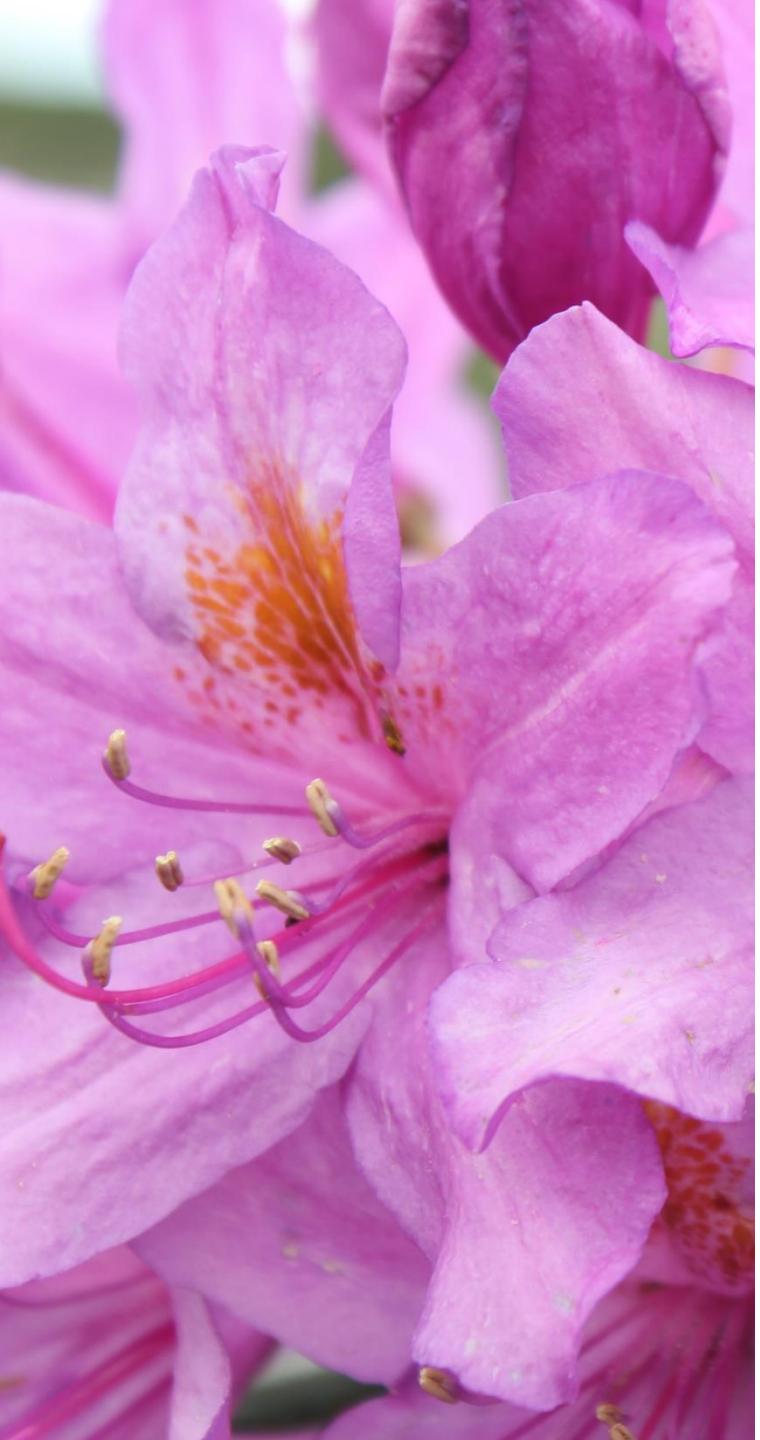








…but there are still some Laurissilva relicts in
Monchique Mountain that are being preserved!



Life-Relict

Beneficiary Coordinator:

UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA
ESCOLA DE CIÊNCIAS E TECNOLOGIA

Associated Beneficiaries

ADRUSE

seia

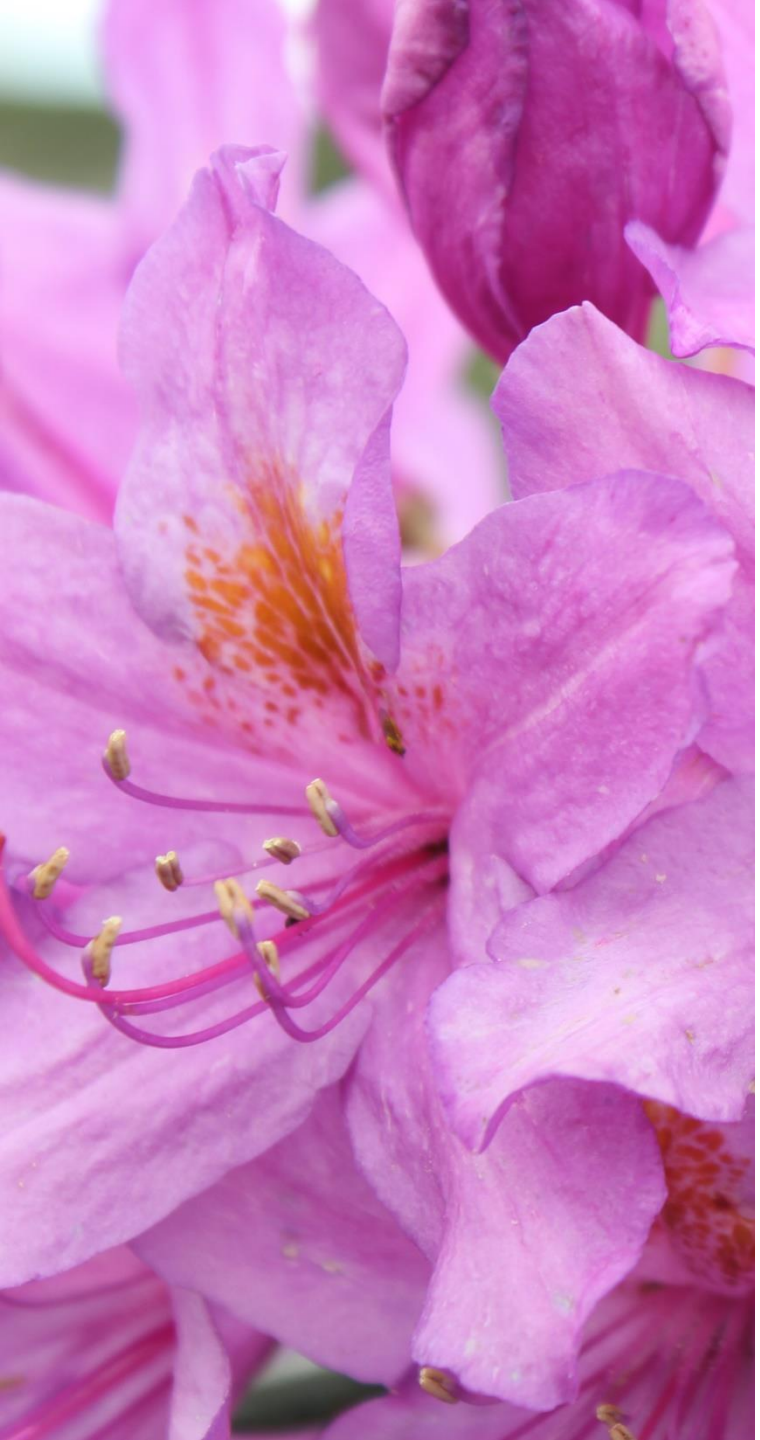
MONCHIQUE
MUNICÍPIO

CICYTEX
CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS Y TECNOLÓGICAS DE EXTREMADURA

Life

NATURA 2000

With the financial contribution of LIFE Programme from European Union



To improve substantially the conservation status of Continental Relict laurel-leaved communities within the Portuguese Natura 2000 Network.

Portuguese Laurel

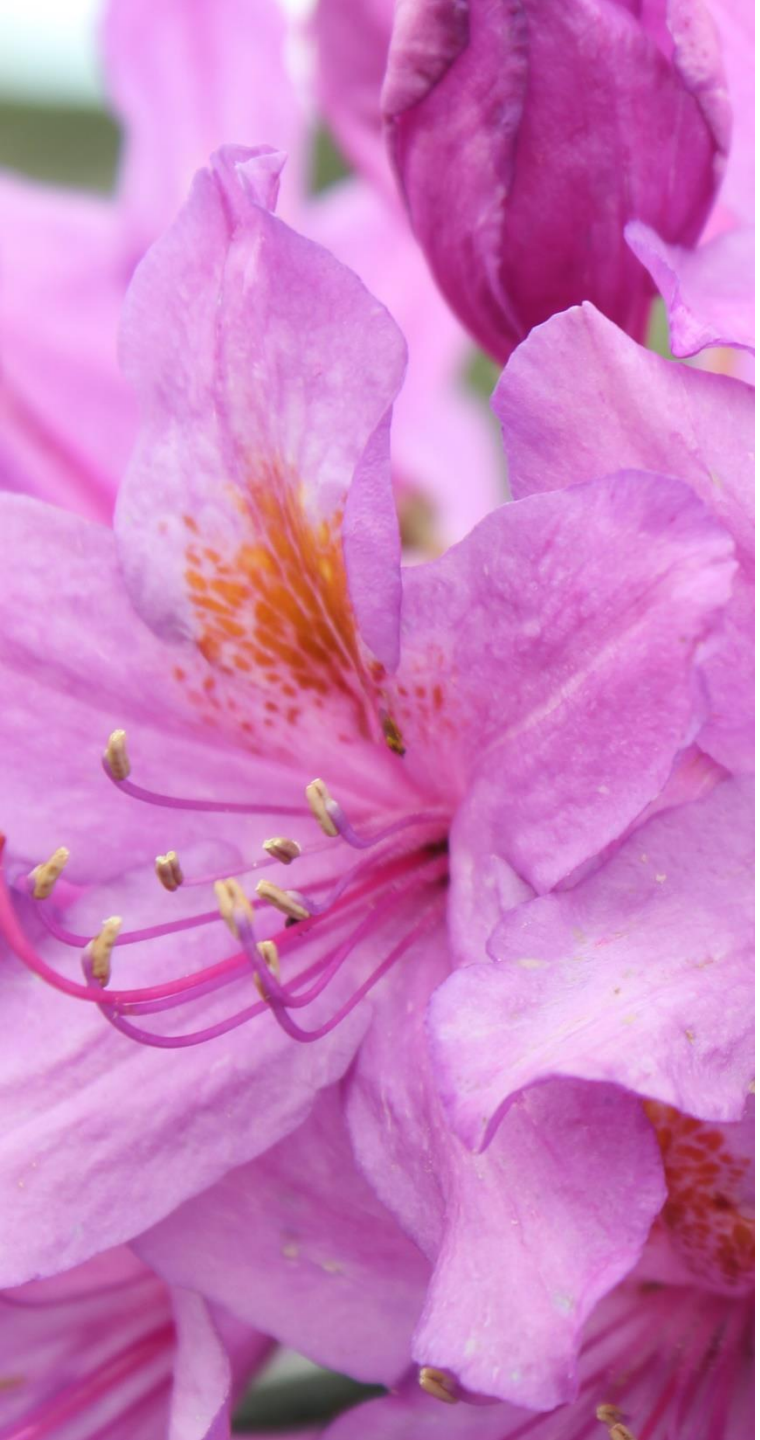
Prunus lusitanica subsp. *lusitanica*

Rhododendron

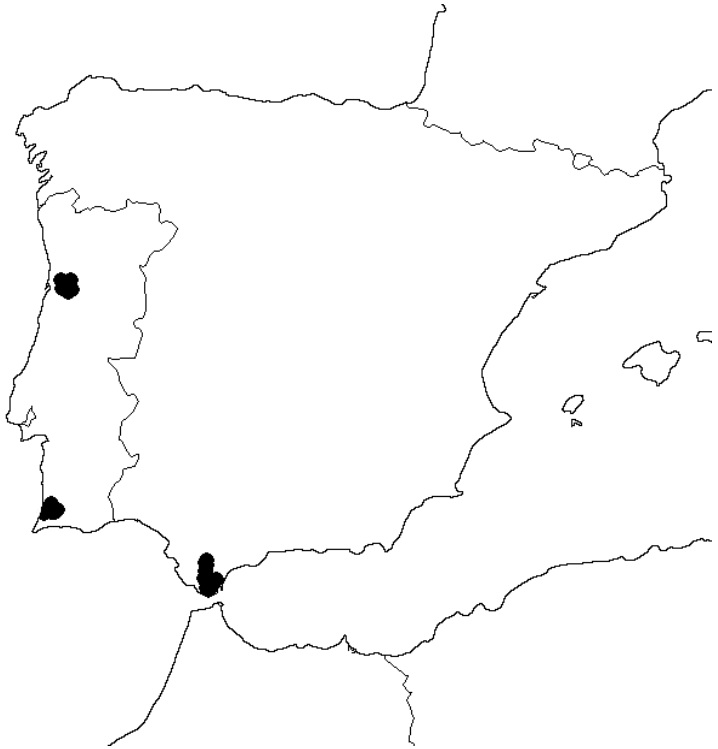
Rhododendron ponticum subsp. *baeticum*

Conservation Status is Unfavourable Bad with the

Conservation Trend of Unfavourable Decreasing



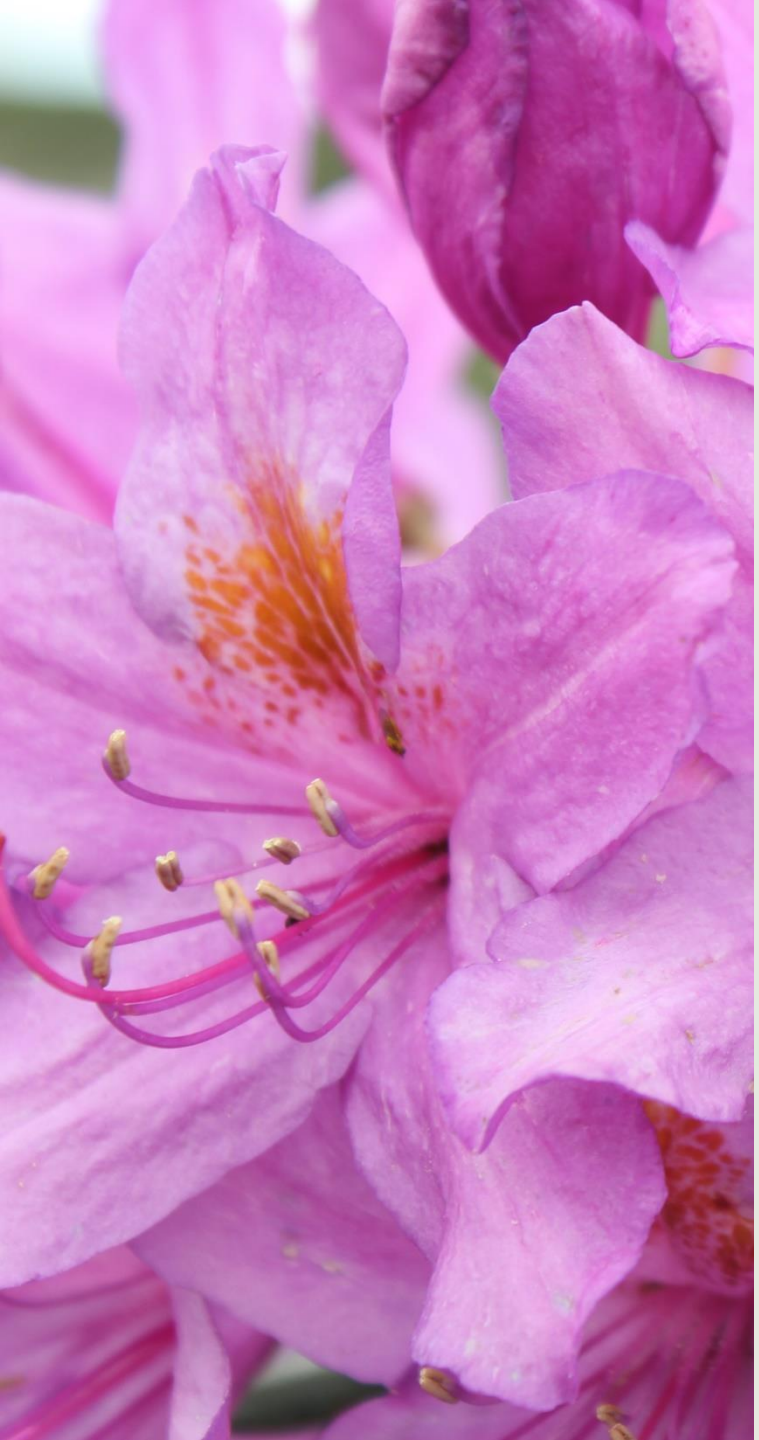
Rhododendron distribution



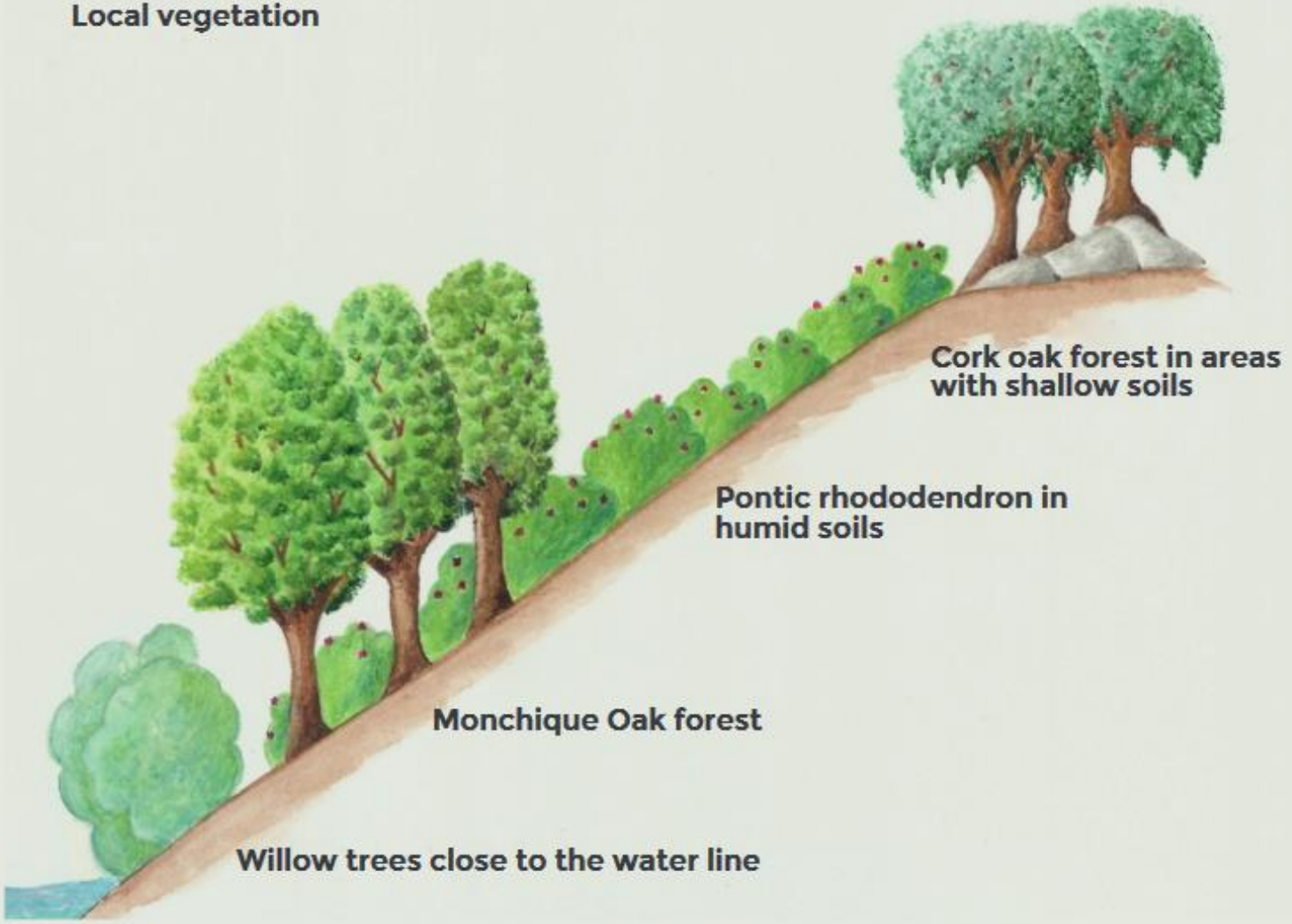
Distribution of *Rhododendron ponticum* subsp. *baeticum* Communities

It's a rare species, endemic to the SW of the Iberian Peninsula.

In Portugal, is present only in 2 areas within the Natura 2000 Network (Caramulo and Monchique Mountain).



Local vegetation

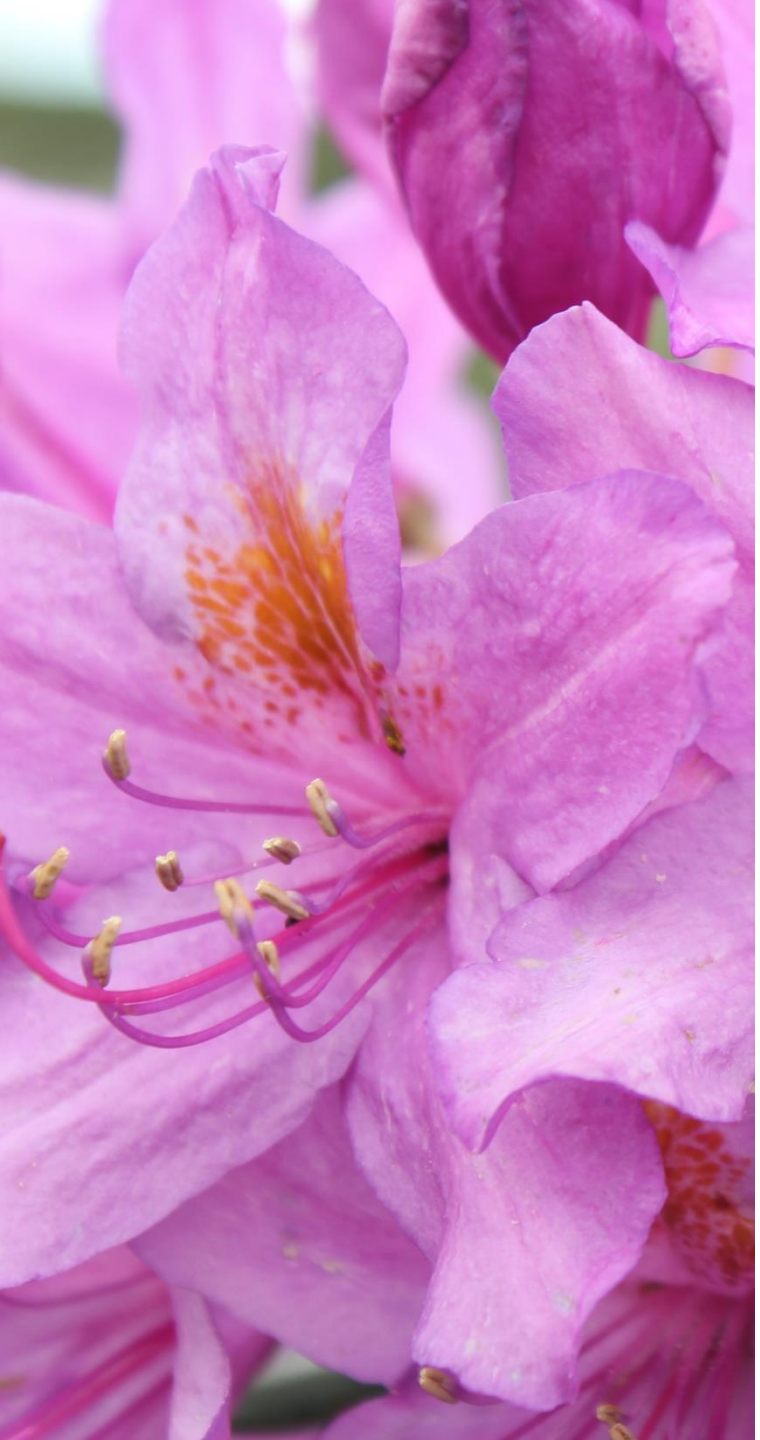


Example of a Pontic rhododendron flower

Closed Fruit of Pontic rhododendron

Semi-open matured fruit, displaying its seeds

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.



Main Threats

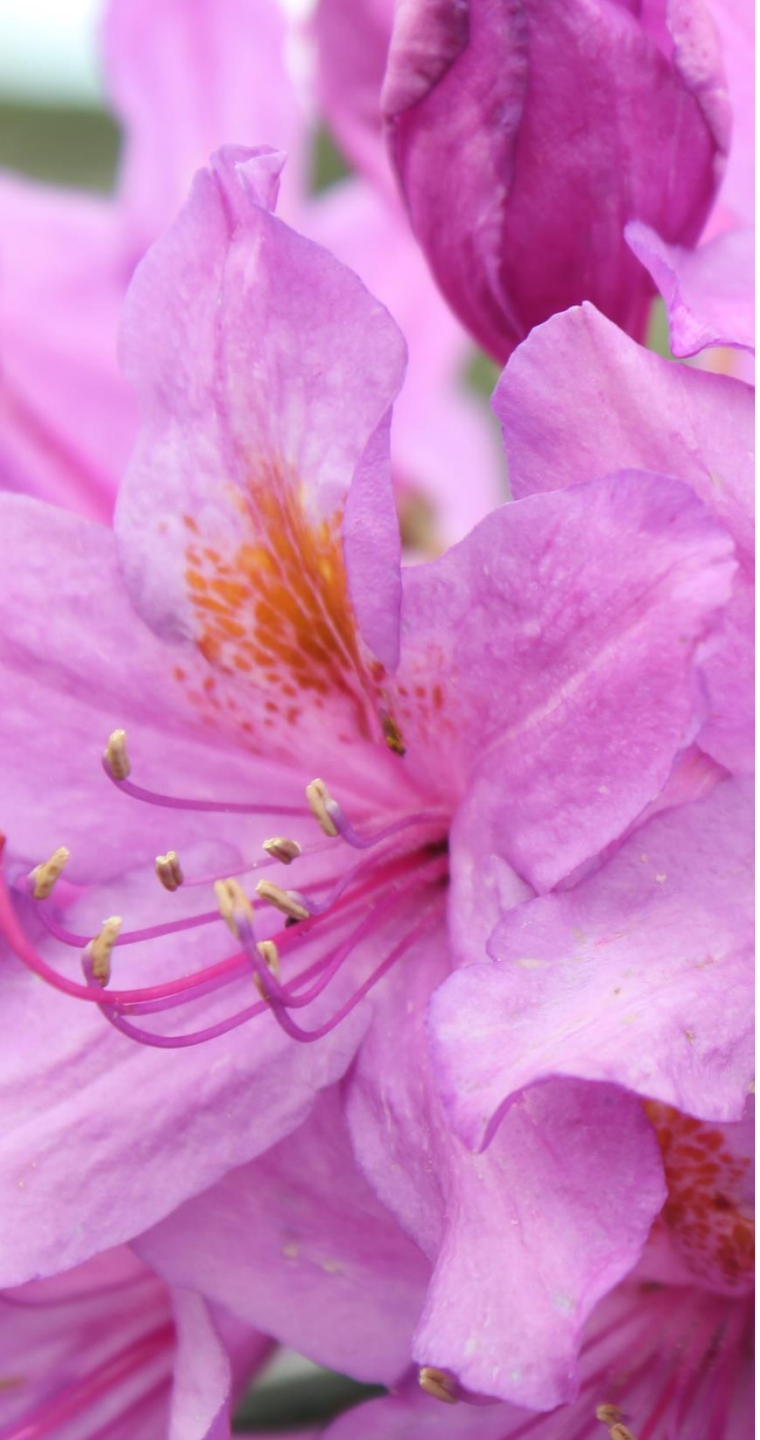
Fire

Forestry

Alien Species

Climate change

Inability to install new plants



CONSERVATION STRATEGY (through ecology)

Benefit the upper stages of ecological succession by promoting all the potential forests

Common oak (*Quercus robur*) – H9230

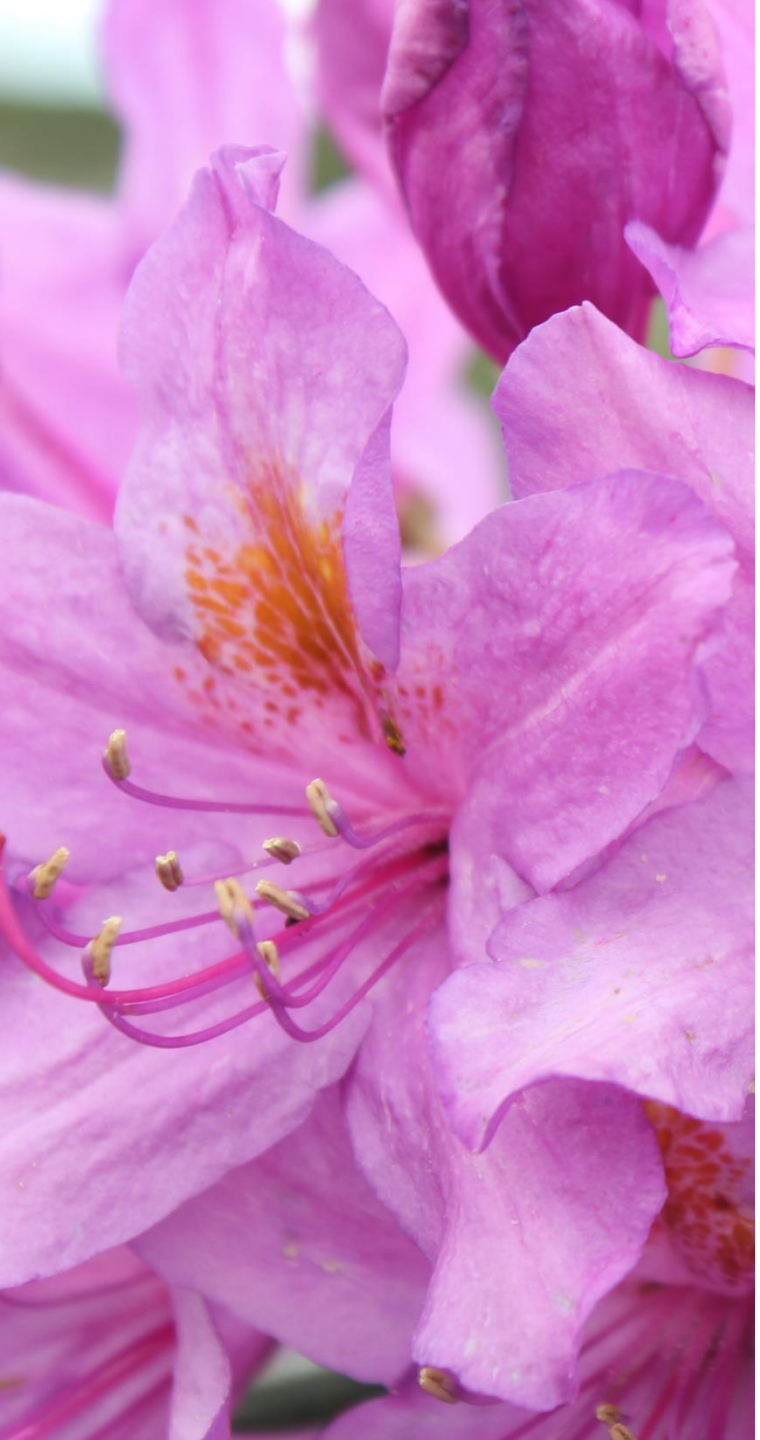
Coark oak (*Quercus suber*) – H9330

Holm oak (*Quercus rotundifolia*) – H9340

Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*) – H5330

Monchique oak (*Q. canariensis*) – H9240

Chestnut tree (*Castanea sativa*) – H9260



CONSERVATION STRATEGY (through restoration)

Benefit the upper stages of ecological succession by promoting all the potential forests

Selective control of vegetation

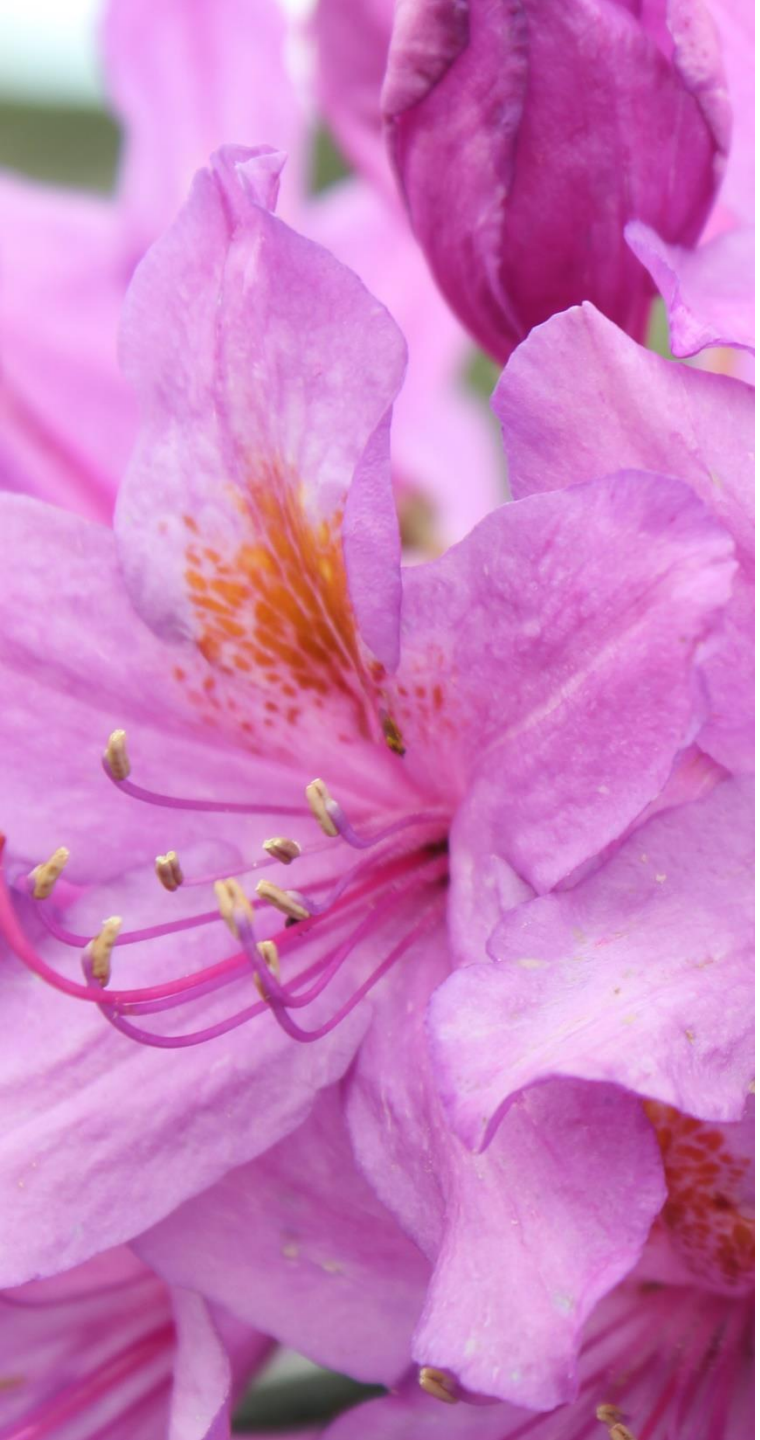
Plantations of Rhododendron

Plantation with native species

Control of exotic species & fire risk reduction

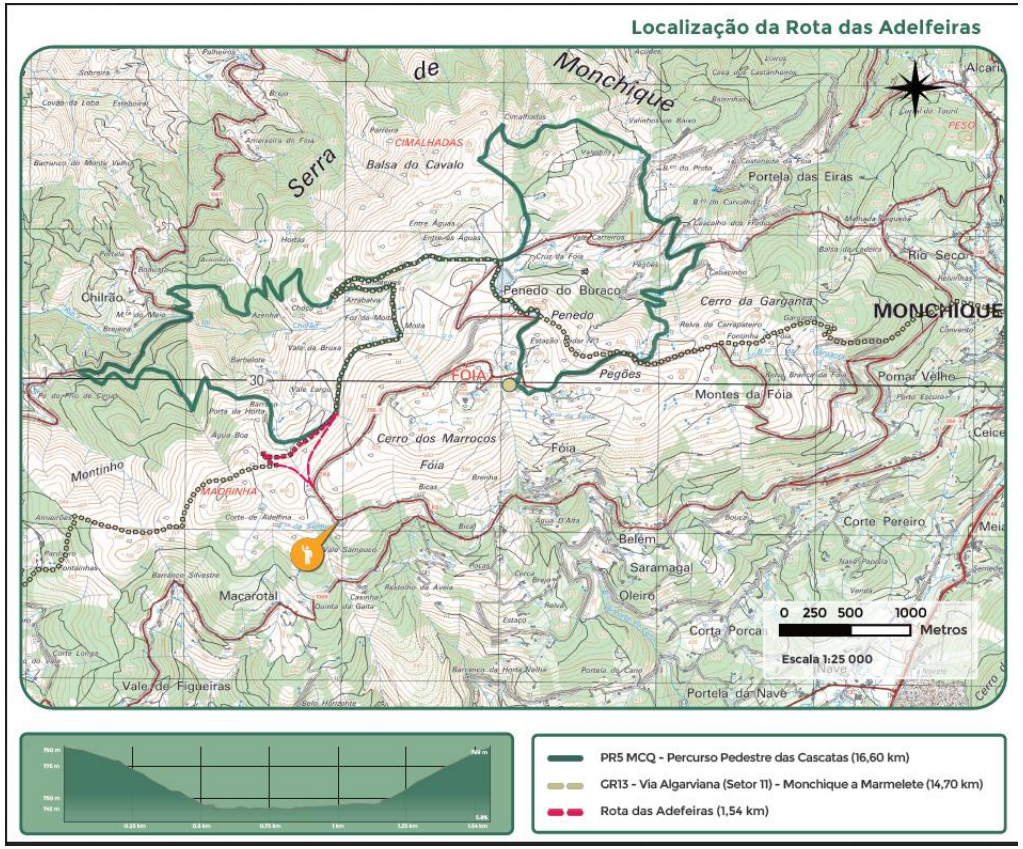
Improvement of the chestnut forest

Monitoring

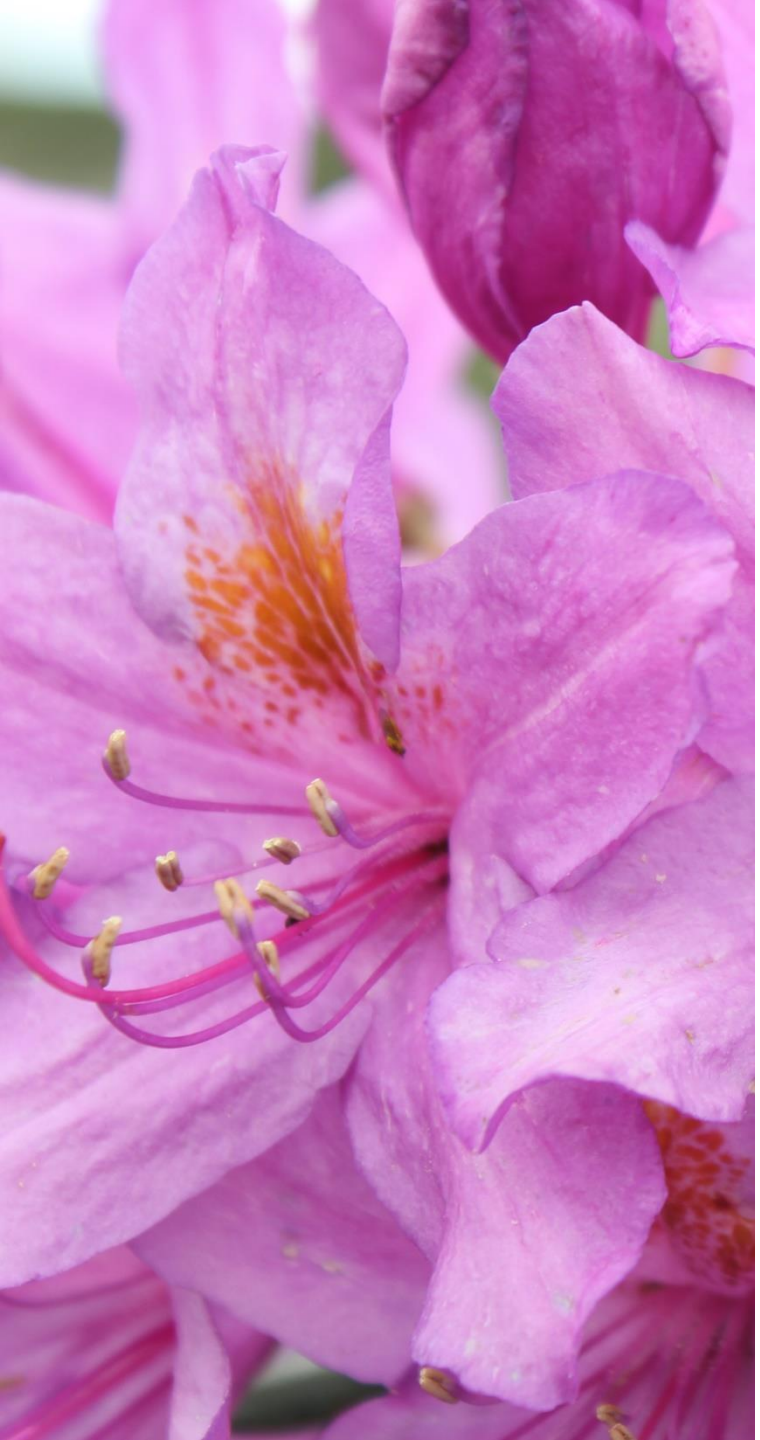


CONSERVATION STRATEGY (through tourism)

Promote nature based tourism activities



RULES OF CONDUCT



CONSERVATION STRATEGY (through tourism)

Marked trail, audio guided and flyers


Join us on the Rhododendron Route!
Get to know this rare habitat, the landscape and vegetation typical of the Monchique Mountain!