

# Cretan flora

## Plants



Palm trees



Zelkova abeliceae



Cretan ebony



Ladania



Campanoula



Oleander



## Herbs



Thyme



Dittany



Sage



Marjoram

Crete has some of the rarest biotopes in Europe, like, for example, those of the palm trees (*Phoenix theophrasti*).

There are some biotopes, which, despite being very small – like, for example, the seasonal lake of Omalos – have amazing biodiversity. The forest species that prevail on the island are the pine tree (*Pinus* spp) and the cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), which are coniferous species with large adaptability to extreme conditions, and the evergreen maple-trees (*Acer sempervirens*). There are also other species, like the Zelkova abeliceae, which is one of the rarest trees in the world and grows almost exclusively in the White Mountains in small populations. The Cretan flora includes the Cretan ebony (*Ebenus cretica*), an impressive bush that is found only in Crete, the crocus of the Cretan mountains (*Crocus oreocreticus*), the ladanum (*Cistus creticus*), the bush from which the rockrose is collected, the Cretan bell (*Campanula cretica*), a rare and very beautiful plant that is found only in the prefecture of Chania, the oleander (*Nerium oleander*), a very beautiful and impressive bush that often grows on street sides, many species of very beautiful orchids and a lot more.

The most characteristic plants of the island are the aromatic herbs that thrive here. Because of the essential oils that they contain, they are used as ingredients in cooking, in the preparation of teas and as medicines. The thyme (*Corridothymus capitatus*), the sage (*Salvia fruticosa*), the mountain tea (*Sideritis syriaca* spp. *syriaca*), the wild marjoram (*Origanum microphyllum*), the dittany (*Origanum dictamnus*) are only some of the herbs that one can see and smell on the island.