

## THE STONE PINE



The stone pine (*pinus pinea*), also known as the Italian stone pine, umbrella pine and parasol pine, is a tree from the pine family (*Pinaceae*).

Stone pines have been used and cultivated for their edible pine nuts since prehistoric times. They are widespread in horticultural cultivation as ornamental trees, planted in gardens and parks around the world.

Obviously, stone pines have been part of the peninsular landscape from millions of years. Several studies about the fossil records of pollen show us it.

As a curiosity, many places where we can see stone pines have been repopulated, this is the case of the Natural Park of Doñana. Many people think that the pines always were there, but before the pines the typical vegetation in this place was scrub, the most pines were planted to have a control about dunes. But the weather conditions were very good for this species. That is the reason why the Doñana Park has one of the most important pine forests.

The main resourced of the stone pine are the pineapple and its fruit, which is used for a high quantity of recipes and for make typical desserts in a lot of towns. But the stone pine has other resourced less knew, this is the resin. The resin of the stone pine has qualities which are perfect for make perfumes. On the other hand, the wood of this kind of tree is not the best for the industry, and usually is used to make vegetable coal or to use as firewood for hot the home. *Pinus pinea* is also currently widely cultivated around the Mediterranean for environmental protection such as consolidation of coastal dunes, soil conservation and protection of coastal agricultural crops.

Stone Pine is one of the most representative autochthonous forest species of the Andalusian landscape.

Its scientific name derives from the Celtic "pen" (head). Later the Romans started naming "pinus" to individuals of this species. This civilization is also known as to be the responsible one of propagation and cultivation of the stone pines in the Mediterranean region.

The stone pine forest mass is concentrated in the province of Cádiz in two zones: coastal and interior. The coastal pine forests are the most important and are discontinuously distributed in large masses along the 172 km. of the entire Cadiz coast from Sanlúcar to San Roque.

The stone pine is the most peculiar tree in forest landscape of Cádiz. During the XX century it grew parasol pine forests on dunes after forestation works in coast soils with a great wind erosion. Now it presents seminatural forests with an interesting natural and a landscape value named most of them as Natural Park (Regional Park). It's representing along atlantic coast of Cádiz as public places (Sanlucar, Conil, Barbate, Tarifa, San Roque) remaining at the press of touristic uses in forest coast places.

Under pines, it grew a level of Juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea*, *Juniperus oxycedrus*) forming mixed forests. Its describes geographic distribution of the three species in the province, local environment and reproductive strategies. It analyses a Cádiz coast area, stone pine and juniper forests and describing some works for ecosystem conservation.

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