Comenius Project

"Diversity of Cultures in Common European Home"

Portuguese Herbarium

Agrupamento Vertical de Escolas de Pico de Regalados
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Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme
**Description:**

The “medronho” tree or Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*) is an evergreen shrub or small tree. It can grow 5 - 10 meters tall, exceptionally up to 15 meters. Its trunk has a diameter of up to 80 centimeters.

The leaves are dark green and glossy, 5–10 centimeters long and 2–3 centimeters broad, with a serrated margin.

The hermaphrodite flowers are white (rarely pale pink), bell-shaped, 4–6 millimeters in diameter, produced panicles of 10-30 together in autumn. They are pollinated by bees.

The fruit is a red aggregate drupe 1–2 centimeters diameter, sometimes called *arbutus-berry*, with a rough surface, maturing 12 months at the same time as the next flowering. The fruit is edible, though it is commonly used in Portugal to make a kind of strong brandy. The ripe fruits when eaten in excess can cause dizziness, due to their high percentage of alcohol.
MEDRONHEIRO
Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*)

**Scientific classification:**

- Kingdom: Plantae
- Division: Magnoliophyta
- Class: Magnoliopsida
- Order: Ericales
- Family: Ericaceae
- Genus: *Arbutus*
- Species: *A. unedo*

**Binomial name:** *Arbutus unedo*

**Habitat:** all over the country from sea level to 800 m above sea level, associated with mixed forest of oak and holm oak woods.
Description:

It is an evergreen tree growing to 10-25 m tall and 40-80 cm (rarely 1 m or more) trunk diameter, with smooth grey bark.

The leaves are 5-12 cm long and 2-6 cm broad, variable in shape; on young plants and low branches, with three to five sharp spines on each side, pointing alternately upward and downward; on higher branches of older trees with few or no spines except for the leaf tip, often entire.

The flowers are dioecious, white, four-lobed, and pollinated by bees.

The fruit is a red drupe 6-10 mm diameter, containing four pits; although mature in late autumn, they are very bitter so are rarely touched by birds until late winter after frost has made them softer and more palatable. They are poisonous for people.

The European Holly is a very popular ornamental tree and used in Christmas decorations.
AZEVINHO
European Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

**Scientific classification:**
- Kingdom: Plantae
- Division: Magnoliophyta
- Class: Magnoliopsida
- Order: Aquifoliales
- Family: Aquifoliaceae
- Genus: *Ilex*
- Species: *I. aquifolium*

**Binomial name:** *Ilex aquifolium* L

**Habitat:** woods, hedges and scrub
Description:

The Pyrenean oak is a beautiful deciduous tree, which reaches a mature height of 20-25 m. It is a graceful tree with medium green leaves and open foliage.

The bark is light grey with deep fissures breaking into small square scales.

Leaves are oval, broader towards the tip and lobed, 10-20 x 4-11 cm.

The Pyrenean Oak tree is one of the Oak trees that produce "apple" Galls. Galls are round balls (with little horn like bumps) that "grow" on the new branch growth. There are not, however, a natural part of the tree but rather are the result of the trees defence mechanism against foreign objects.

The Pyrenean oak tree can live between 120 and 300 years.
Habitat: In the woods of Northern and central Portugal.

Scientific classification:

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Fagales
Family: Fagaceae
Genus: *Quercus*
Species: *Q. suber*

Binomial name: *Quercus suber L.*
Sobreiro
Cork oak

Description:

The Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*) is a medium-sized, evergreen oak tree. Its main use is the production of cork, the only product for which Portugal is the world's largest producer.

It grows to up to 20 m, although it is typically more stunted in its native environment.

The leaves are four to seven cm long, weakly lobed or coarsely toothed, dark green above, paler beneath, with the leaf margins often downcurved.

The fruit of the oak is the acorn. The acorns are two to three cm long, in a deep cup fringed with elongated scales. The fruits (acorns) also serve as food for pigs.
Habitat: In Portugal, it is distributed throughout the country. It is mainly operated in montados, where the oaks are almost always intercropped with one crop or a pasture. Mostly common in southern Portugal.
Description:
The Portuguese Oak (*Quercus faginea*) is a medium-sized deciduous or semi-evergreen tree growing to 20 m tall, with a trunk up to 80 cm diameter, with grey-brown bark. The tree can live as long as 600 years.

The leaves are 4-10 cm long and 1.2-4 cm broad (rarely to 15 cm long and 5 cm broad), glossy dark green to grey-green above, and variably felted grey-white below; the margins have 5-12 pairs of irregular teeth. Leaf fall is typically in mid to late winter. The flowers are catkins, produced between March and April, almost always before Holm Oak, which grows in similar areas. The acorns are oblong-ovoid, 2-2.5 cm long, maturing in 6 months to disperse in September or October.
CARVALHO – PORTUGUÊS
Portuguese oak (*Quercus faginea*)

**Habitat:** Southern Portugal, mainly in the interior of Alentejo.

**Scientific classification:**

- Kingdom: Plantae
- Division: Magnoliophyta
- Class: Magnoliopsida
- Order: Fagales
- Family: Fagaceae
- Genus: *Quercus*
- Section: *Quercus*
- Species: *Q. faginea*

**Binomial name:** *Quercus faginea*
**Castanheiro**
*Chestnut tree*

**Description:**
It is a medium-sized to large deciduous tree that can reach 20 to 35 meters high with a trunk often 2 m in diameter.

The oblong-lanceolate, boldly toothed leaves are 16-28 cm long and 5-9 cm broad.

The fruit takes place inside a wrapper thorny – capsule. The flowers of both sexes are borne in 10-20 cm long, upright catkins, the male flowers in the upper part and female flowers in the lower part. They appear in late June to July, and by autumn, the female flowers develop into spiny cupules containing 3-7 brownish nuts that are shed during October. The thorny capsule opens and releases the nuts that fall to the ground.
**Castanheiro**
**Chestnut (Castanea sativa)**

**Habitat:** the north-western region of Portugal, where there are about 12,500 ha and the mountains of S. Mamede, considered "a true sanctuary of chestnut."

**Scientific classification:**
- Kingdom: Plantae
- Division: Magnoliophyta
- Class: Magnoliopsida
- Order: Fagales
- Family: Fagaceae
- Genus: Castanea
- Species: *C. sativa*

**Binomial name:** *Castanea sativa*