

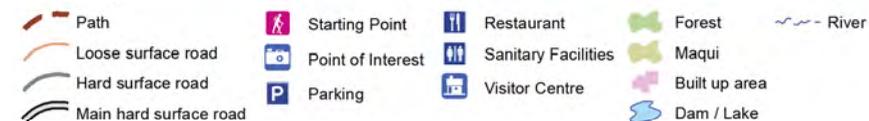
Route	5 km – circular
Walking time	2.5 hours
Difficulty grade	easy moderate difficult
Maximum - Minimum altitude	1720 m – 1660 m
General description	nearly smooth path, gentle gradients
Starting point	near Troodos Central Square GPS Coordinates (UTM- WGS84) 489150N/3864232E
Most suitable period	March - November
Cautionary notes	none
Drinking water on route	no

Troodos National Forest Park (NFP)

The Persephone Trail is located on the top of the Troodos NFP, the most important natural area of Cyprus. Covering an area of 9.3 km², it is included in the major regions of the world for biodiversity conservation (IUCN Biodiversity hotspots). Troodos is the island's highest mountain range, reaching 1952 m at the highest peak, namely Chionistra or Olympus, while the lowest is at the altitudinal zone of 700 m. Most of the Troodos NFP area is covered with dense natural forests, with the calabrian pine (*Pinus brutia*) and golden oak (*Quercus alnifolia*) dominating up to an altitude of 1400 m, while the black pine (*Pinus nigra*) and Troodos juniper (*Juniperus foeditissima*) prevail at higher altitudes. The Troodos NFP hosts more than 750 plant species (46% of the native flora), of which 72 are endemic to Cyprus (51% of endemics), including 12 species considered as local endemics. The Troodos NFP hosts 11 habitats listed in Annex I of the European Habitats Directive, and 10 Annex II-listed species. In addition, more than 100 wild bird species have been recorded, of which 11 are included in Annex I of the European Birds Directive 2009/147/EC. The geology of the area is also unique. The 90-million-year-old ophiolitic complex of the Troodos mountain range is part of the seabed of the ancient Tethys Sea, which uplifted 15 million years ago, as a result of the collision of the African and Eurasian tectonic plates that triggered the creation of the island. All the above, in combination with its special climate and the landscape, make the Troodos NFP an attraction pole for thousands of nature lovers, hikers, skiers, birdwatchers, botanists and geologists. The Troodos NFP is a State Forest managed by the Department of Forests and the main management objectives are its protection, biodiversity conservation and forest recreation.



Reference



Scutellaria cupria ssp. cypria

How to reach the trail

The starting and ending point of **Persephone Trail** is 150 m south of Troodos Square (opposite the Police Station), at an altitude of 1720 m. You may reach the spot by your private vehicle and park at the square's parking area or you may use rural buses to and from the cities of Lemesos (route 64) and Lefkosia (route BD39). Relevant bus route details are available for Lemesos and Lefkosia buses at the EMEL and OSEL web links <http://www.limassolbuses.com/rural-routes> and <http://www.osel.com.cy>, respectively.

Trail Description

The route of the trail is circular, with the first half following the forest trail and the rest (returning) being a forest road. Midway at the "Makria Kontarka" locality, at an altitude of 1660 m, a path leads to an impressive view point, from where you may enjoy the view towards the villages and vineyards of Lemesos district, the Cape Gata and the Akrotiri Salt Lake. Around the view point you will be able to see cedar and juniper reforestations. During the following route towards the end of the trail, enjoy the view of the Amiantos Asbestos Mine.

The route passes through rich vegetation and a dense black pine forest. Along the trail, you will find signs with information about the plants, shrubs and trees that can be found in Troodos Forest, many of which are endemic, such as Troodos germander (*Teucrium cyprium*), Cyprus skullcap (*Scutellaria cypria* subsp. *cypria*), pteroccephalus (*Pteroccephalus multiflorus* subsp. *multiflorus*), Troodos sage (*Salvia willeana*), golden oak (*Quercus alnifolia*), as well as points of geological interest (dunite, harzburgite). The trail offers the opportunity to observe endemic species of wild birds such as the Cyprus wheater (*Oenanthe cypriaca*), the coal tit (*Parus ater cypriotes*), the crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra guillemardi*), the jay (*Garullus glandarius glanzarii*), the tree creeper (*Certhia brachydactyla dorotheae*) and several other more common species.



Pteroccephalus multiflorus
subsp. *multiflorus*



Loxia curvirostra guillemardi

The trail got its name from the goddess of Greek mythology Persephone, daughter of Zeus and Demeter. Hades, fascinated by her beauty, kidnapped Persephone while picking flowers, transferring her to the underworld. According to the myth, after her abduction, Persephone was rising from the underworld to Earth and returning back for four months, with her rise symbolizing the euphoria of nature and her descent the winter frost.

Services

Shops, restaurants, public toilets and hotels are among the services offered at Troodos Square, while Chionistra area becomes an organized skiing centre during winter. Troodos NFP offers a rich network of forest recreation services consisting primarily of 10 picnic areas, 3 campsites, 15 nature trails, an environmental information centre, and a botanical garden within the asbestos mine. More information may be found on the Department of Forests' website <http://www.moa.gov.cy/forest>.

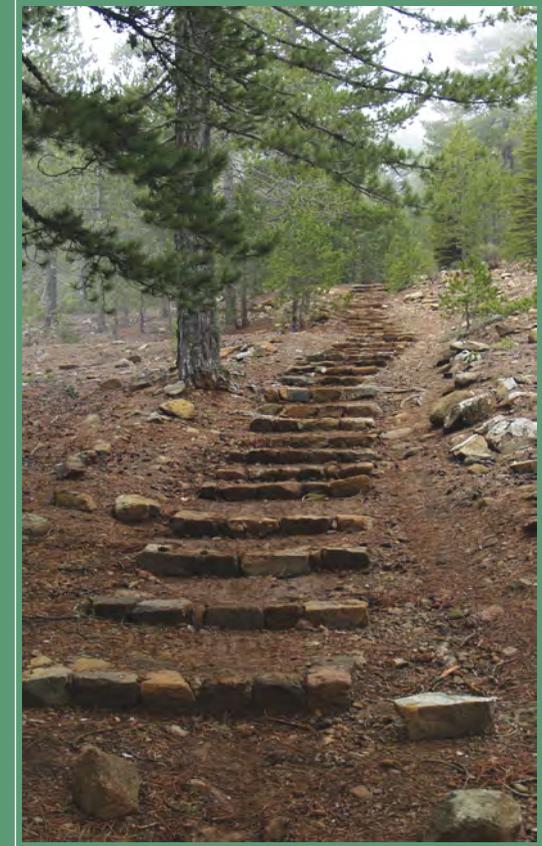
What you should be aware of!

The Troodos National Forest Park is a priceless asset of natural heritage, which we have inherited from our ancestors, to pass on to our children and future generations.

- ▶ The fire hazard in the area is extremely high. The lighting of fire is strictly prohibited. Avoid smoking while walking.
- ▶ Respect the peacefulness of the area. The forest is home to hundreds of animals and a choice for relaxation and calmness for thousands of other visitors.
- ▶ Cutting plants, trimming rocks and harassing wildlife degrade forest ecosystems and is prohibited by the Forest Law.
- ▶ Check the weather forecast for the area and prepare properly. The Troodos area is characterized by severe weather phenomena such as high winds, storms and lightning. Avoid walking under such extreme conditions.
- ▶ In case of danger, the use of wireless communication can be lifesaving. Inform someone of the time of entering the path and the expected exit time.
- ▶ Do not leave the trail. Walking out of the trail and especially on the rocks, can expose you to great danger from falling rocks, slipping or falling. Always wear appropriate footwear.
- ▶ Do not pollute the environment and properly dispose of any litter.
- ▶ In case you see smoke or fire, contact the Department of Forests immediately, by calling 1407 (24 hours, free of charge).

For any information, complaints, suggestions and further assistance contact the Saittas Forest Station, tel. 25433648, or the Troodos Forest Division tel. 22608512 and email: troodosdiv@fd.moa.gov.cy.

Persephone Trail



www.moa.gov.cy/forest



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