

This nature trail was constructed in 1992 by the Department of Forests and funded by the Cyprus Tourist Organization.

It is a linear trail connecting the Stavros tou Agiasmati and Panagia tou Araka churches. Both churches are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

It is a part of the long distance European trail E4, and is connected with Lagoudera or Agros- Madari trail.

Starting points:

- Stavros tou Agiasmati church (8 Km from Platanistasa village) at an altitude of about 800 m.
- Panagia tou Araka church (Lagoudera village) at an altitude of 1000 m.

Length:

The trail is 7 Km.

Walking time:

The walking time is 3 hours.

Degree of difficulty:

3 (on scale 1-5), due to the steep ascending gradient of its first part, as well as its length.



Stavros tou Agiasmati church

Points of interest:

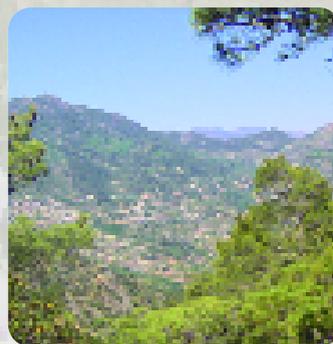
- The churches of Stavros tou Agiasmati (1494 AD) and Panagia tou Araka (1192 AD) with their excellent frescoes. For a guided tour of the church of Stavros tou Agiasmati, arrangements should be made in advance.
- Panoramic view. Kionia peak to the east of the trail, Morfou Bay, Pentadaktylos range and Xyliatos water dam to the north, Olympos mountain to the west and Madari area to the south.
- Scenery diversity.
- Rich flora and fauna.

For description purposes, the route of the trail is divided into three parts based on vegetation and landscape features.

The first part is a steep ascending gradient. It passes through abandoned almond trees plantations, before



Morfou Bay view



Troodos view



Panoramic view

entering the state forest where pine forest (*Pinus brutia*) is a dominant feature. At its highest part (1200m), the endemic **golden oak** (*Quercus alnifolia*) is co-dominant with pine.

The second part passes through impressive diabase cliffs following an even route. The eroded steep slopes, with sparse vegetation and mosses carpeting the rocks make walking more interesting and challenging.

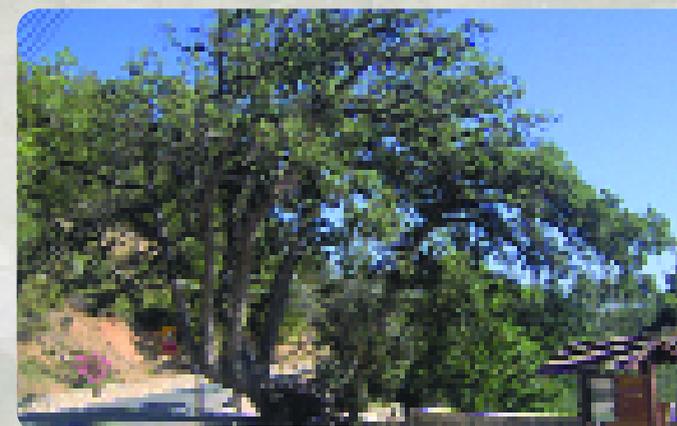


Golden oak (*Quercus alnifolia*)



Traditional stone walls

The last part has a descending gradient as it approaches to Lagoudera village through vineyards, orchards and traditional dry stone - walls. It then enters the village through the narrow streets and ends at Panagia tou Araka church. As you enter the church yard, you will see a century-old oak (*Quercus infectoria* subsp. *veneris*), aged about 800 years. This tree has been declared a nature monument, like many others in Cyprus, and it is under the management and care of the Forestry Department.



Century-old oak (*Quercus infectoria* subsp. *veneris*)

It is worth mentioning that most of the forest area around the trail, is part of the Natura 2000 site "Madari-Papoutsas", and is under a special management regime aiming at conserving its rich biodiversity .

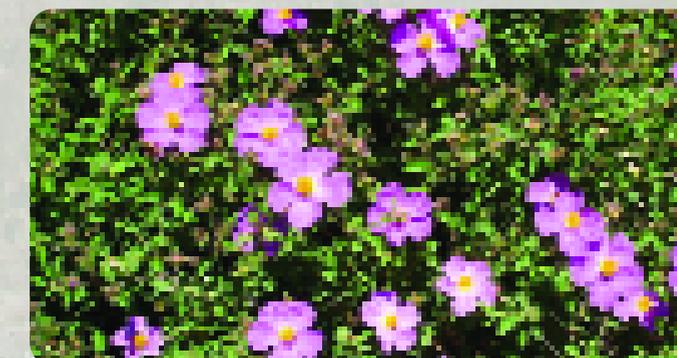
On the way to Lagoudera, hikers have the opportunity to see **Terebinth** (*Pistacia terebinthus*), **Mediterranean hawthorn** (*Crataegus azarolus*), and (*Crataegus monogyna*), **Sumach** (*Rhus coriaria*), **Rock rose** (*Cistus creticus*), the endemic **Thyme** (*Thymus integer*), **Everlasting** (*Helichrysum italicum*), the endemic **Pterocephalus** (*Pterocephalus multiflorus*), **Milk vetch** (*Astragalus lusitanicus*), **Madder** (*Rubia tenuifolia*), **Cyprus scullcup** (*Scutellaria cypria*) – also endemic, **Etruscan honeysuckle** (*Lonicera etrusca*), **Maple** (*Acer obtusifolium*), **European hazel** (*Corylus avellana*), **Common asphodel** (*Asphodelus aestivus*), **Almond tree** (*Prunus dulcis*) and many more plant species.



Milk vetch (*Astragalus lusitanicus*)



Terebinth (*Pistacia terebinthus*)



Rock rose (*Cistus creticus*)



Song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

If you have an interest in wildlife, you may have the chance to observe different small animals like the **Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*), and the **Hare** (*Lepus europaeus*), as well as birds like **Partridge** (*Alectoris chukar*), **Wood-pigeon** (*Columba palumbus*), **Song thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*), **Blackbird** (*Turdus merula*) and **Cyprus wheatear** (*Oenanthe cyprica*).

The poisonous snake **Blunt-nosed viper** (*Macrovipera lebetina*), and other non-poisonous snakes like **Montpellier snake** (*Malpolon monspessulanus*), the most common **Large whip snake** (*Dolichophis jugularis*) and the **Agama lizard** (*Laudakia stellio cypriaca*), can also be observed in the area.



Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)



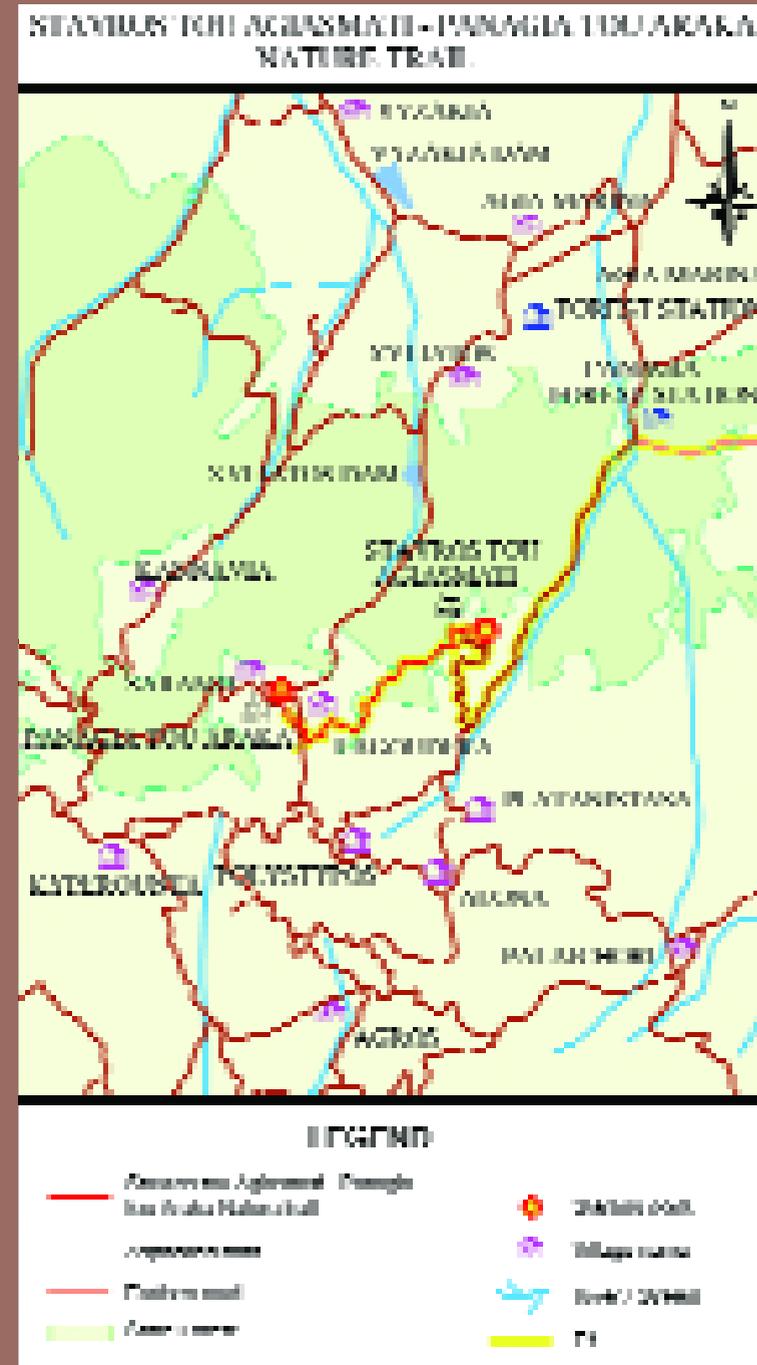
Partridge (*Alectoris chukar*)

Nature trail code:

- ⇒ Respect the natural environment
- ⇒ Keep on the trail
- ⇒ Respect animal and bird life
- ⇒ Lighting fires in, or near the forest is strictly prohibited.
- ⇒ The driving of bicycles or motorbikes on the trails is prohibited
- ⇒ Help to keep the trail clean, please pick up litter and use litter receptacles.
- ⇒ Cutting of plants or carving the bark of trees is prohibited
- ⇒ Dogs are not allowed

If you have any comments, suggestions or questions please contact the Forestry Department Headquarters, tel. 22805529 at Nicosia, or the Forest Station at Platania, tel. 22924219

**In case of a forest fire only call at once 1407 (24 hours)
Emergency calls 112 or 199**

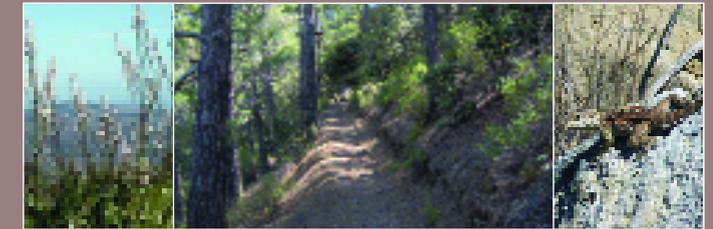


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Nature Trail «Stavros tou Agiasmati – Panagia tou Araka»



Panagia tou Araka church (Lagoudera village)

