

Conclusions of II Conferences

Current situation of the yew

- An increase in the information on yew populations in Spain from global to local scales is observed and to date over 80,000 trees are known.
- It can be seen that in general grazing is affecting the species, as much by domestic as wild animals.
- Other intrinsic problems for the autoecology of the species include increasing environmental restrictions and the competition in the north of the peninsula for light in reshooting beechwoods.
- Southern populations are isolated and are become locally extinct.
- It is important to sustain and to foster the microhabitats where the best yew recruitment occurs. These habitats consist basically of prickly plants of great importance for their fleshy fruits, whose presence ensures a diversity of the birds dispersing wild seeds.
- It is important to broaden studies of mutualistic interactions, especially with species that carry out long-distance dispersion and that are critical for the establishment of new populations.
- Within in conservation measures it is important to differentiate between objectives of sexual and asexual reproduction.
- The pressure on yews in different parts of the world due to their production of therapeutic taxans has led to the yew being included in CITIS in order to regulate trade. It is essential to establish a rational use of the yew that does not negatively affect natural populations.
- Ethnobotany is very valuable for the conservation of the species. Its use to cure tumors by American tribes highlights its importance and also that of those working in ethnobotany. Conservation is closely linked to the use of this resource: to ensure preservation through sustainability the practical use of the species must be established.
- High genetic diversity of the species in C Europe and in Cantabria has been detected, whereas there is much less in southern Iberia and N Africa. However, the differences between populations in the Mediterranean area are greater than in Atlantic populations, which confers a great importance on the conservation of all populations near the edge of the species' distribution.
- There is a need to characterize the units of conservation throughout the species' range and to broaden the genetic study in all potentially different populations near the limits of its range.

- As well as in situ management, it is of vital importance to work ex situ with southern populations to assure the survival of these valuable genotypes.
- The friends of the yew association (Association Amigos del Tejo), which carries out numerous activities to promote and defend this tree species and its habitat, is presented.
- The problems of the yew forest at Sueve, the most important of the Iberian peninsula, are analysed. It is currently threatened by herbivores and fires that limit the growth of new specimens, a management technique that is completely unacceptable in such a valuable space.
- Several recent actions affecting monumental yews and natural yew forests are described by the friends association.
- A Google Earth application is presented along with the proposal to include sacred yews in the European Atlantic Arc on UNESCO's World Heritage list. This application provides virtual visits to old yews in churches, hermitages, cemeteries, etc.
- There is a need to broaden parallel activities at the next conference (ethnographic and bibliographical displays).
- The academic world should be more actively linked to the social interest in this species. It is essential to ensure that all the information about the species is available and accessible to ensure that it is understood and can be protected: it must be revalorised and its importance disseminated. One way would be through the web page of the association Amigos del Tejo.

This Conference were followed by highly successful III International Conferences of the Yew in Ponferrada on 25-26 March 2010.