

MALTESE TREES

LEGALLY PROTECTED



Aleppo Pine
Pinus halepensis



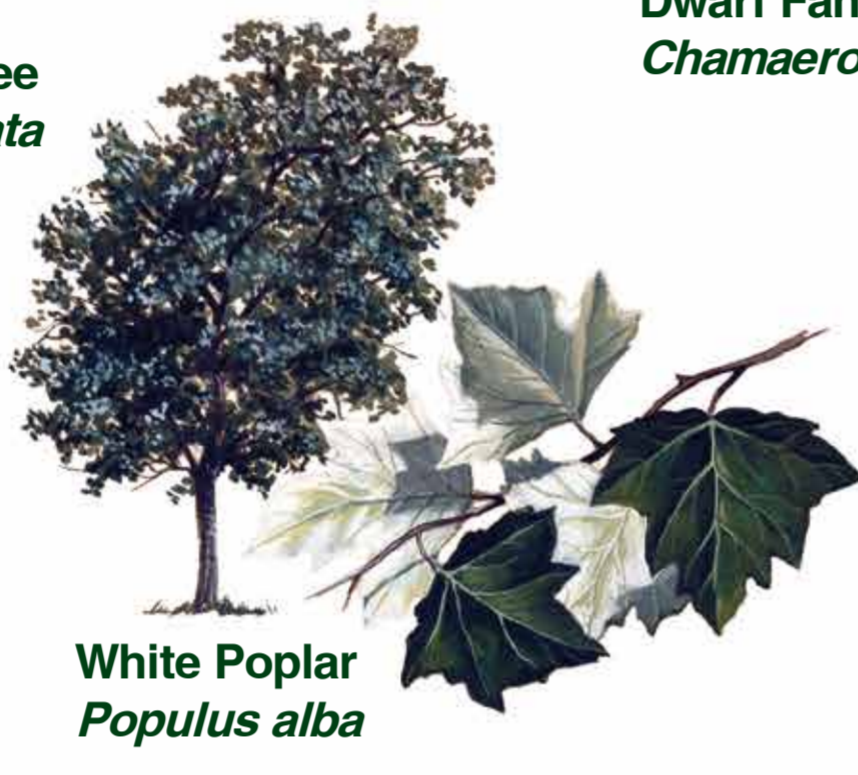
Dwarf Fan Palm
Chamaerops humilis



Bay Laurel
Laurus nobilis



Sandarac Gum Tree
Tetraclinis articulata



White Poplar
Populus alba



Carob
Ceratonia siliqua



Judas Tree
Cercis siliquastrum



African Tamarisk
Tamarix africana



Holm Oak
Quercus ilex



Myrtle
Myrtus communis

There are around 60 trees in the Maltese Islands which can be referred to as 'Maltese trees'. Of these some are indigenous, meaning that they have been growing naturally on the Maltese Islands for thousands of years and were not introduced by man. Others, such as the Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*), are archaeophytes, meaning that they were introduced in the Maltese Islands more than 500 years ago. The Maltese trees shown in the illustrations are all legally protected by the Environment Protection Act.

Adaptations to Maltese climate

- Maltese trees are well adapted to the Maltese climate.
- They have a number of adaptations which enable them to survive the hot dry summers and mild wet winters.

- These include deep root systems which draw water from cracks in underground rocks as well as thick leaves, tiny hairs and light colouration to reduce water loss and withstand high temperatures.

Conservation issues

- Trees in the Maltese Islands are generally scarce but some species are now endangered whilst a few others have almost disappeared from the natural environment.
- Fortunately some of these trees can still be found in gardens and as street trees.
- Maltese trees form part of our heritage and should be respected as such.
- Whenever possible it is wiser to use Maltese trees in gardens and landscaping, rather than foreign trees.

Alien trees

- Did you know that some trees may actually harm the Maltese environment?
- For example, the Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) grows very rapidly, invading the area and getting out of control.
- This tree competes with Maltese species for soil, space, light, water and nutrients destroying the Maltese native wildlife growing around it.
- The biggest problem is that it is so hard to get rid of - cutting it will only make it grow faster!

Illustrations by Andrew Micallef from the poster 'Xi Sığar Maltin (1998) Dipartiment għall-Harsien tal-Ambjent