

MOUNT ARNO SPECIAL CONSERVATION AREA

The Cantabrian holm oak forest is a very rare type of forest in Gipuzkoa, where it is relegated to sunny areas with limestone soil and steep slopes where the bedrock outcrops. Its orientation and the high permeability of the soil make the holm oak an arid environment that requires adaptation.

The current appearance of the holm oak forest is a consequence of the exploitation of its wood to produce charcoal, an activity that was maintained until just a few decades ago.

In the holm oak groves, buckthorn, the labium, the arbutus, the wild rose, the heather and the laurel are frequent and, both inside the holm oak grove and in its surroundings, the woody flora is populated with blackthorns, white hawthorns, hazelnuts or dogwoods. In addition, it is worth noting the presence of holly and butcher's broom.

The landscape changes to the north where the steep slopes of the terrain soften to form the Olatz valley. There, meadows, pastures and crops predominate, along with pine forests and small oak groves.

In these mountains live the marbled newt, the common frog, the Cantabrian viper, the badger, the weasel, the wild boar and, in the cavities of the massif, important colonies of bats. In addition, the Egyptian vulture nests on the cliffs.



Olatz countryside



Holm oak



Rock lizard