

## NATURE STUDY TRAIL “THE RODIO” OF AGRIDIA

In 2015, the Community Council created a Nature Study Trail which was co-funded by the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus within the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Measure 2,6 – Sub-Measure 2,6,1: 100% Non-Productive investments, with the total cost rising to 50.000,00 Euros.



The trail was named after the pomegranate ("rodi" in Greek). The Pomegranate tree is one of the oldest known cultivated fruit-bearing trees of the community of Agridia and the wider region in general, while its cultivation has recently been intensified.

The starting point of the trail is the famous Pomegranate Park, which is centrally located along the road leading from Handria to Agridia, on the direction heading towards Agridia, while it also terminates along the same road, at the Water Dam of Agridia and at a distance of 1 km before the entrance of the village.

The trail's route allows hikers, should they choose to do so, to select which course to follow on a mean altitude of 1150 m, whether this is within the Community or around it.

The route follows a circular 5 km - long course or/and a linear 5 km long course, with the hiking time estimated between 3 and 4 hours and the degree of difficulty set at 3 on a scale 1-5.

Another important feature of the route is the drinking water which is available to hikers, as well as the smooth morphology of the ground along the biggest part of the Trail, apart from some specific routes which present medium or high degree of difficulty. These routes are characterised by a rough morphology of the ground including slopes, narrow and/or steep, uneven, slippery ground where hikers are required to be particularly careful. Along the trail, there are several endemic plants such as fruit-bearing trees, as well as a lot of fauna which consists of mammals, birds and reptiles. What is more, hikers have the opportunity to admire the cultural and natural wealth of the community of Agridia and to enjoy the benefits of the area through themed "pomegranate" routes.



The Trail starts by passing through fruit gardens and vineyards neighbouring the village (**section 1 – earthy and concrete – distance 700m**). Along the route one encounters several plant species. Next, we come across the first houses of the village before walking by the Children's Park and the old Primary School, which is today used as a Children's Campsite by the Municipality of Latsia also featuring a basketball court.



Next, the route continues through fruit-gardens, vineyards and wild vegetation, where several plant species emerge once again shortly before we enter the traditional core of the village to encounter the football pitch (**section 2 – earthy and concrete – distance 1550m**). Let it be noted that there is also an alternative route one can follow in order to enter the traditional core of the Village (**section 2a – asphalted – distance 400m**).



Upon reaching the traditional core, we come across the central square where we can have a break to rest, have breakfast or taste traditional coffee at the coffee shop of the Athletic Club of "Apollon Agridia" and the "Agridia" Hunting Association, shop at the minimarket or even have a meal at the small traditional tavern of the Village. Moreover, the centre of the Village also features the new building of the Community's Youth Centre, which is used as a venue for various games, contests and events, especially during Easter and the summer.



At the square we can even see the Heroes' Monument of Agridia, a pantheon dedicated to the heroes of the Community who fell during the liberating fight of 1955-59 and the invasion of 1974. Honorary commemorations at the monument can inform visitors about the history of the village during the various liberating fights of the island.

Further on, there is a choice of walking along the river, crossing small bridges and walking by the small stream while actually stepping on some stones inside the stream. Through this route we can admire the wild vegetation, the irrigation water channels and the small water reservoirs of the village (**section 3 – earthy – distance 150m**).

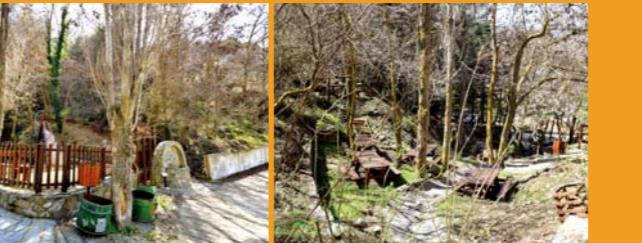


Once we cover one of the most beautiful and challenging routes, we have the opportunity to enter another route through fruit gardens to admire and walk under the impressive grape pergolas through which we will reach the gentrified traditional Olive-mill, the Church of Prophet Elias and the Ecclesiastical Museum (**section 4 – earthy and concrete – distance 300m**).



Next, appears in front of us what is probably the best, roughest and most impressive route of the trail (**section 5 – earthy and concrete – distance 450m**), which we can reach, if we choose to do so, by bypassing the previously mentioned route.

As we continue our hike, we will walk through or past the Excursion Site of the Village, which provides all that is necessary for those who wish to select this site for some rest, peace and quiet and for the preparation of food at the specially adjusted area for barbecues available on site. Moreover, a playground located on the grounds is suitable for children's activities.



The above route gives us the opportunity, by following an exclusively uphill route through thick vegetation of pines, to reach the most impressive and most beautiful part of the village, the covered in hagiographies chapel of Prophet Elias. In its stony courtyard there is an Observation Point from which visitors can enjoy the breath-taking view towards the mountain ranges of Troodos, Madari and Papoutsas, towards the foothills of the mountains of the communities of Agros, Potamitissa and Pelendri, towards the Water Dam of Kourris and the village of Alassa, the Akrotiri Salt Lake and Bay and finally towards the villages of Agridia, Dymes, Kyperounta and Handria.



As it has already been mentioned, one can select a circular route. While hiking towards the highest point of the trail, at 1200 m, we can see and admire the large white 5-metre-tall Cross which at night constitutes a point of reference for the village while being illuminated by big projectors.

Then, on the way back to the village, we encounter the Missing Persons' Park where we can learn more about the contribution of Agridia to the national liberating fights of our country.

Next, we start heading downhill and we find ourselves right above the village from where we can proceed and return to the starting point of the trail by hiking through fruit gardens and vineyards which neighbour the community (**section 6 – earthy, concrete and asphalted – distance 1200 m + section 1 – distance 700**).



However, one also has the option of choosing the route which follows a linear course by hiking again through the fruit gardens, the vineyards and the wild vegetation. While on this route, several plant species emerge before us once again until we reach a part of the river which is of great religious importance for the Community since it was there where the icon of our village's protector Saint, Prophet Elias, was found lying in a crack between massive rocks.



Ending this unique route while walking uphill through the river, the fruit gardens and the vineyards and while heading towards the terminating point of the trail having admired the cultural and natural wealth of a big part of the Pitsilia region, we encounter the Water Dam of the village which is located at the end of the route, thus having the "honour" of saying goodbye to the visitors and hikers of "The Rodio" Trail of Agridia, who in turn leave the trail having the best of memories and impressions. (**section 7 – earthy, concrete and asphalted – distance 1900 m**).

*This text has been written by the Community Council of Agridia.*