

Caput I. The Land

Flos est pleni veris indicium et anni renascentis, flos gaudium arborum. The flower is the evidence of spring satisfied and the year is renewing, the blossom is the tree's delight

Pliny is the author of the two short essays cited below. He leads this series of three articles, July to September, which look at Roman life. Not the grand import of emperors and gods, but the daily rhythm of life: from the want-of-friendship of a guest who does not show at a dinner-party to an examination of relationships between brother and sister, and a husband separated from his wife

For trees are...**tunc variis colorum picturis in certamen usque luxuriant**, ...at the time [of year] a variegated colour picture all the way to luxury. He recounts his delight in seeing the **ilex**, the holm oak; the **picea**, the pitch pine; the **larix**, the larch for the ...**flore exhilarantur natalisve pomorum annuos versicolor**, ...the flower gladdens one's birth with the annual particoloured fruit tree

In the second essay, Pliny writes in awe... **Vita arborum quarundem immense credi potest, si quis profunda mundi**, The life of a tree by what means rises in waves immeasurable, I am able to believe. Again, Pliny cites the diversity of life; the **oliva**, the tree and its olive fruit, and the **myrthus**, the myrtle tree. Trees so patriarchal he associates their majesty with the foundation year ...**anno qui fuit sine magistratibus CCCLXXIX urbis aede condita**

From maidenly virtues of the **Vestaliū virgīnū** to the antiquity of an uncertain period when life began

The Land Flowering Trees

Flos est pleni veris indicium et anni renascentis, flos gaudium arborum. Tunc se novas aliasque quam sunt ostendunt, tunc variis colorum picturis in certamen usque luxuriant. Sed hoc negatum plerisque. Non enim omnes florent, et sunt tistes quaedam quaeque non sentiant gaudia annorum. Nam neque ilex ¹, picea ², larix ³, pinus ⁴ ullo flore exhilarantur natalisve pomorum annuos versicolori ⁵ nuntio promittunt, nec fici atque caprifici. Protinus ⁶ enim fructim pro flore gignunt. In ficis mirabiles sunt et abortus qui nunquam maturescunt. Nec iunipiri ⁷ florent. Quidam earum duo genera tradunt: alteram florere nec ferre, quae vero non floreat ferre protinus bacis nascentibus quae biennio haereant. Sed id falsum, omnibusque his dura facies semper. Sic et hominum multis fortuna sine flore est

Pliny. *Naturalis Historia*, XVI, 40

The Land Very Old Trees

Vita arborum quarundem immense credi potest, si quis profunda mundi et saltus ¹ inaccessos cogitat. Verum ex his quas memoria hominum custodit durant in Liternino Africani prioris manu satae olivae ², item myrtus ³ eodem loco conspicuae magnitudinis. Subest specus in quo manis ⁴ eius custodire draco traditor. Romae vero lotos in Lucinae ⁵ area, anno qui fuit sine magistratibus CCCLXXIX urbis aede condita, incertum ipsa quanto vetustior. Esse quidem vetustiore non est dubium, cum ab eo luco Lucina nominetur. Haec nunc circiter annum CCCCL habet. Antiquior est, sed incerta eius aetas, quae capillata ⁶ dicitur, quoniam Vestaliū virgīnū capillus ad eam defertur

Pliny. *Naturalis Historia*. XVI, 85

Footnotes: Flowering Trees

- 1 **ilex, ilicis**. 3f. The holm oak tree
- 2 **picea, -ae**. 1f. The pitch pine tree
- 3 **larix, laricis**. 3f. The larch tree
- 4 **pinus, -us**, or **pinus, -i**. 4f or 2m. variously declined. The pine tree
- 5 **versicolor, -is**. 3 adj, 1-end. Particoloured or various colours, changes own colour
- 6 **protinus**. adv non-declinable. Forthwith
- 7 **iunipiris** or **iuniperus, -i**. 2f. The juniper tree, variously spelt, declined either 2f or 2m

Very Old Trees

- 1 **saltus, -us**. 4m. A woodland grove
- 2 **oliva, -ae**. 1f. The olive tree or the tree's fruit, the olive
- 3 **myrthus, myrti**. 2f. The myrtle tree
- 4 **manes, -ium**. 3m pl. The spirits of the dead
- 5 **Lucina, -ae** 1f. proper noun. A district south of Rome
- 6 **capillatus, -a, -um**. 1/2 adj. A single hair