

## The spanish *Juniperus thurifera* L. forests in the CORINE programme land cover database

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The CORINE programme starts in 1985 with the objective of gathering, coordinating and improving the consistency of information on the state of environment in the European Union. In this way, it was developed a procedures for the collection, standardization and exchange of data of different origin, very important for the knowledge on the real state of several environmental variables, as well as its use in the environmental planning for the states members.

We have with this an information grid of administrative, geographical, forestry, land surface, atmospheric, and other issues, which provide a valuable tool in the knowledge of the environmental state and its planning.

In the Iberian Peninsula, *Juniperus thurifera* L. lives in the most continental climate zones in the interior, always in high altitude and certainly not in very large slopes, as it's happened in the upper and plane "parameras", where its presence is typical. *Juniperus thurifera* L. is located around an arc from the northern mountains of León, to the heights of the Sierra del Segura in the southeast, and ranges specially in all the Cordillera ibérica. So, there are typical forests of this species in the provinces of Soria, Teruel, Cuenca, Guadalajara and Segovia, where they cover a large surface, as well as in the provinces of Burgos, Palencia, Zaragoza, Ciudad Real, Albacete and northwest of Murcia, where in many cases *Juniperus thurifera* L. is mixed with other species, as *Quercus rotundifolia* Lamk. Other little forests are located in next areas, as in the mountains of Valencia (in the rincón de Ademuz) and Castellón, Huesca, and even Navarra. It is not present in the northern and north-western oceanic climate zones, either in Portugal and Balearic islands.

After a detailed study of CORINE land cover database, which land cover is classified in 44 categories which define the different types of land use (artificial areas, agricultural areas, forestry and semi-natural areas, water surfaces...), it is checked that *Juniperus thurifera* L. forests don't appear in this database even a specific forests, not so much as a "forests" level, so they are included in this classes: "*Shrub vegetation in evolution*", "*sclerophyllic vegetation*", "*agroforestral territories*", etc.

The possible interpretation of this absence may be due to this species don't creates a dense forests (tipically eurosiberian), either cover a large areas, but it is possible too because the designers of this database have not taken suitably account of some "Mediterranean forests", typically open, but with a high level of development, and equilibrium, and they have included the *Juniperus thurifera* L. forests in lower level categories which don't look practically alike with the reality.

The CORINE land cover database, in summary, don't include this Mediterranean forests as a "forests", and in our opinion this is a mistake which may be to have negative repercussions in the forestry planning and in the conservation and survival of this singular forest species.