

The Illasi Valley



We would like to describe our environment a little bit closer.

As we already told you last time, we live in

Selva di Progno, one of the last inhabited villages in the Illasi Valley.

In the piedmont part of this valley you can find vineyards, cherry trees and olive groves.



Cherry trees and fruit



Vineyards and olive groves by the Castle of Illasi



Downy oak leaves and fruits



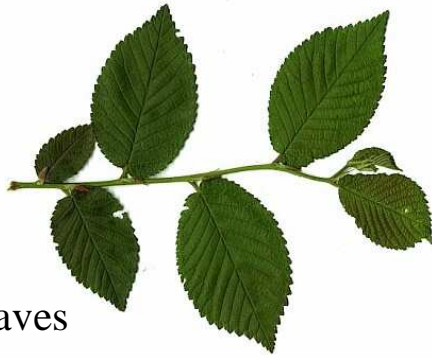
Manna ash leaves



Hop hornbeam leaves

Other trees which grow here are for example:

- **downy oak**/*Quercus pubescens*/roverella
- **manna ash**/*Fraxinus ornus*/frassino orniello
- **hop hornbeam**/*Ostrya carpinifolia*/carpino nero
- **laurel**/*Laurus nobilis*/alloro
- **holm oak**/*Quercus ilex*/leccio.



Elm leaves



Chestnut leaves and fruit



Limetree leaves

Over 400 m you can find:

- **chestnut**/Castanea sativa/castagno
- **walnut**/Juglans regia/noce
- **elm**/Ulmus glabra/olmo.

Almost all trees have

Cimbrian names, of course!

We can give you some examples:

- **oak**/Quercus/quercia/
de oache/ **Eiche**
- **limetree**/Tilia cordata/ tiglio
de linte/ **Linde**
- As you can see, it's similar to **current German**.

Upper Lessinia



In Upper Lessinia there are pastures, rocky crests and “malghe” (which are stone huts used by herdsmen and livestock in the summer), conifer woods and broadleaf forests.

The broadleaf forests...

The most typical trees in the broadleaf forests
(600-700 m and more) are:

- **beech**/Fagus sylvatica/faggio/
de puache/Buche
- **maple**/Acer pseudoplatanus/acero/
in anhorn/Ahorn
- **birch**/Betula/betulla/
de pilache/Birke
- **elder**/Sambucus racemosa/sambuco montano/
in hoular/Holler
- **rowan**/Sorbus aucuparia/sorbo dell'uccellatore/
in vaul-pome/Vogelbeerbaum.



Beech leaves and fruit



Beech leaves in autumn



Rowan leaves and berries

... and the conifer woods.

In the conifer woods you can find:

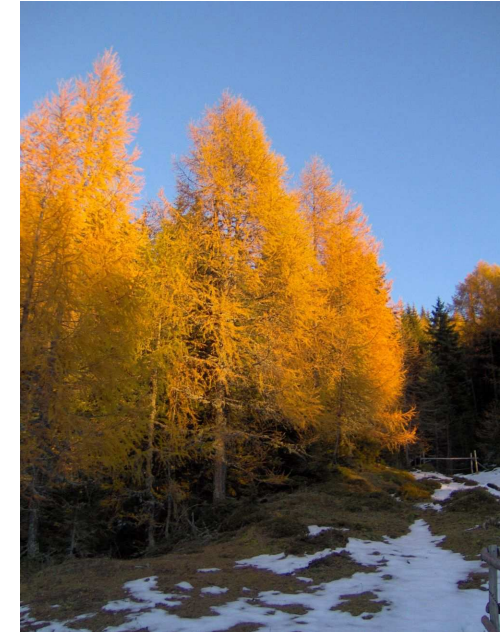
- **Norway spruce**/*Picea abies* o *excelsa*/abete rosso/
de roata tanne or *de faicht*/**Fichte**
- **silver fir**/*Abies alba*/abete bianco/
de bilja tanne/**Tanne**
- **larch**/*Larix decidua*/larice/
in lerck/**Lärche**.



Norway spruce cones



Silver fir cones



Larches in winter

At an height over 1600 meters there are for example:

- **mugo pine or mountain pine**/Pinus mugo /pino mugo/
de mughe/Latsche
- **juniper**/Juniperus communis /ginepro/
de zaneibe/Wacholder.



Mugo pine



Juniper

The Forest of Giazza

Most of these trees (especially silver firs, spruces, larches and beeches) are part of a clever reforestation project which began by the end of the 19th century.

Since 1287 the people who lived here had some rights granted by the Bishop of Verona Bartolomeo della Scala to use the land; but during the centuries, this usage had led to habitual unregulated cuttings and intensive grazing, so that no forest remained on the steep mountain slopes.

Streams rushed unchecked through the valley, causing severe erosion and big environmental problems. So, in the first decade of the 20th century, a new forest was literally "created" by far-sighted Italian foresters who, under difficult environmental conditions, did important engineering works for soil protection, water system and site preparation for reforestation. The Giazza forest, inaugurated on the 10th of August 1911, today part of the Lessinia Natural and Regional Park, is now a jewel worth visiting!



There is a rich and varied underwood with musk,
delicate cyclamens (*iz leischarla*),
ferns (*in singlarua*) and various **mushrooms**.

The most famous ones are:

- **edible bolete mushrooms/** porcini/
de sbailja-sbam/ Steinpilz
- **honey mushrooms/** chiodini/
in neiglja-sbam/ Hallimasch
- **clavarias/** manine/
de cetla/ Keulenpilz
- **parasol mushrooms/** mazza di tamburo/
in groas-huat/ Schirmpilz
- **chanterelles/** finferle/
in finfarle/ Trompetenfifferling
- **puffballs/** vesce/
de slofe/ Stäublinge.



Asplenium trichomanes
(fern)



Edible Bolete Mushrooms



Clavarias (*Ramaria flava*)



Chanterelles



Honey mushrooms



Parasol mushrooms



Puffballs



The Christmas Coronets

You can also find a lot of shrubs:

one of these is the **Cornus sanguinea**/sanguinella.



Last December a friend of us taught us to recognize it on the slope behind our school; we cut its long and thin branches, intertwined them and we covered them with silver fir's fronds to create pretty Christmas coronets, which we sold during the Christmas markets in Badia Calavena and Selva di Progno.

Mammals...

The Lessinia Natural and Regional Park is very important for its animals, too.

There are some interesting mammals such as:

• **alpine Chamoises**/ camoscio alpino/

de bilja goaz/ Gämse

• **roe deers**/ capriolo/

de bilja goaz/ Reh

• **deers**/ cervo/

de bilja goaz/ Hirsch

• **foxes**/ volpe/

in vucs/ Fuchs

• **hares**/ lepre/

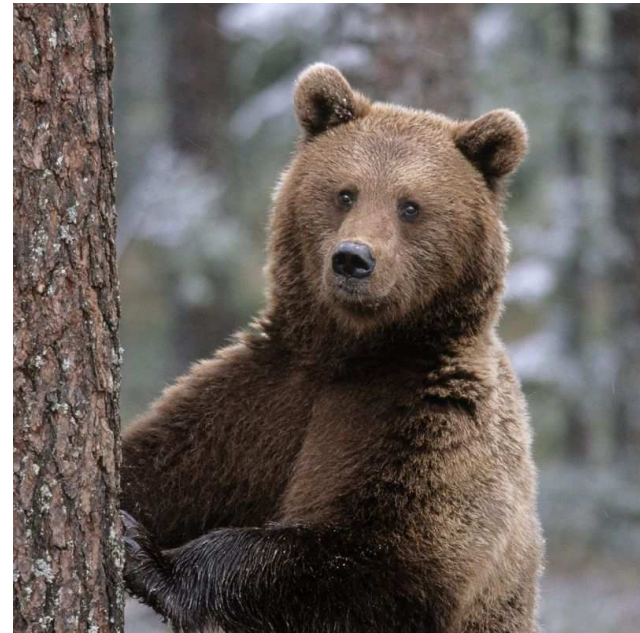
de hase/ Hase

and, as for the snakes, the very dangerous

vipers (vipera/ *de lipar*/ Viper)!



Since a couple of years **wolves** (lupo/ *in bolf*/ **Wolf**) have reappeared, too, causing many problems to the livestock. Centuries ago **bears** (orso/ *in per*/ **Bär**) lived here.



... and birds.

There are a lot of birds too, nesting in spring or resting here during their migration. You can see:

golden eagle/ aquila reale/ *in adalar*/ Adler



honey buzzard/ falco/ *in bimpeghe*/ Falke

buzzard/ poiana/ *de groaz bimpeghe*/ Mäusebussard

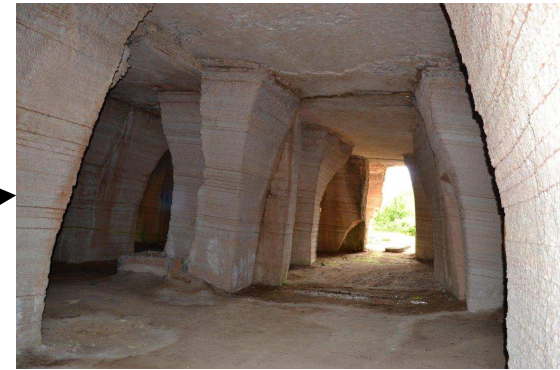
owl/ civetta/ *iz aul*/ Kauz.



From a geological point of view,

in the hills you can see *Eocene limestone*, which formed in “lagoon” seafloors about 30-40 million years ago, or the regular layers of *red scaglia* in lower-middle Lessinia sedimented during the Upper Cretaceous period, about 60 million years ago.

In Upper Lessinia, *red ammonite* rocks deposited about 100 million years ago on the bottom of open seas and its slabs became roofs, walls or the typical votive columns.



Eocene Fish fossil from
the fossil site of Bolca (Verona)

Cimbrian traces...



In fact, there are many signs of the presence of the ancient Cimbrians: numerous place names still in use, personal names, the typical architecture of the mountain huts, the structure of the stone-built hamlets and the small votive capitals and columns in the hamlets and along the roads and paths.

Very famous is the “Madonna delle Lobbie”, a *Pietà* in Campofontana.