

Habitat restoration of Rizoelia forest- The case of removing invasive *Acacia saligna* in order to protect the native highly specialized Gypsum ecosystem



The Australian Acacia was introduced to Cyprus by the British in the early 20th century to drain swamps, prevent erosion and malaria



However, this invasive species is outcompeting native species. In the Rizoelia forest we find gypsum soil, rich in calcium sulphate and poor in organic matter. Plants that grow here are specialists and can only grow here. It is due to this high endemism that it is ecologically valuable.



Acacia trees have been cut down, and managed to prevent regrowth, as part of the 'Life-Rizoelia project' by the Forestry Department in an effort to protect the priority ecosystem *Gypsophiletalia*.