

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

Proposal

To list *Abies numidica* in Appendix I.

Proponent

Algeria\*

Taxonomy

*Abies numidica* de Lannoy, *A. baborensis* Coss.,

Sapin de Numidie = Sapin des Babors = Taoument

Algerian Fir = Algerian Silver Fir

Morphological characteristics

Flora of Algeria (Quézel and Santa, 1962): tree growing 20 m tall, whorled branches horizontally tiered, top branches directed upward; leaves blunt packed, stiff, with a flat upper surface, those of the lower and middle branches arranged in a plane on either side of the branch, all very twisted at the base; cones cylindrical, elongated, blunt, 13-20 cm long, maturing gray-brown).



Distribution in Algeria

Very rare: Babor and Tababort mountains.

Distribution in Protected Area

Species endemic to Algeria and the protected area itself; Populations limited to the summits of mounts Djebel Babor and Djebel Tababort at between 1,600 and 2,000 m elevation.

Ecology

The Algerian fir of Djebel Babor is characteristic of the humid and perhumid bioclimatic stages with cold winter variant.

\* The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

## Protection and Conservation Status

Protected species in Algeria; conservation actions must be proposed. Historically, Barbey (1934) indicates that this conifer “was discovered in 1861 by a soldier (Captain de Guilbert). Soon thereafter, Cosson, a naturalist traveling in the same region, provided a description of this *Abies* using the name *Abies pinsapo* var. *baborensis*.” Barbey “estimated that there were approximately 2,000 to 3,000 firs of usable volume on Mount Babor and they are thriving. The fir’s lower limit does not seem to have changed. In around 1930 the first fir was spotted at about 1,650 m; in 1984 the situation remains the same.” In 1862, De Lannoy designated the fir as a separate species under the name *Abies numidica* de Lannoy. The first seeds of the conifer arrived in France in 1862. According to this author, “In the past, the Algerian silver fir undeniably occupied a significantly greater expanse. Unfortunately, no documentation exists delineating the boundaries of this fir forest in previous centuries.” According to the bibliographical data, this species, unique in the world, seems to be undergoing “a slow but sure decline of this rare conifer, which is making its last stand here.” However, other studies (Boudy, 1948) indicate that the “fir is currently the most vigorous species in the Babor forest. From the forests at the summit to the oak-fir forests lower down, the ground is covered with tens of thousands of seedlings in Spring.

“Wherever the soil is not too superficial and the humus layer is not too deep, the number of plants a few years old remains high.” However, during field explorations undertaken as part of this study (2014, 2015), few seedlings of this species were seen on the ground. Only a few cones were observed at the tops of the individual firs. These observations corroborate those of Barbey (1934), for whom “the harshness of the climate and, in particular, the deep snow layer covering the ground seven months out of the year, along with the intensity of the summer sun, are factors that combine to discourage the development of seedlings.”