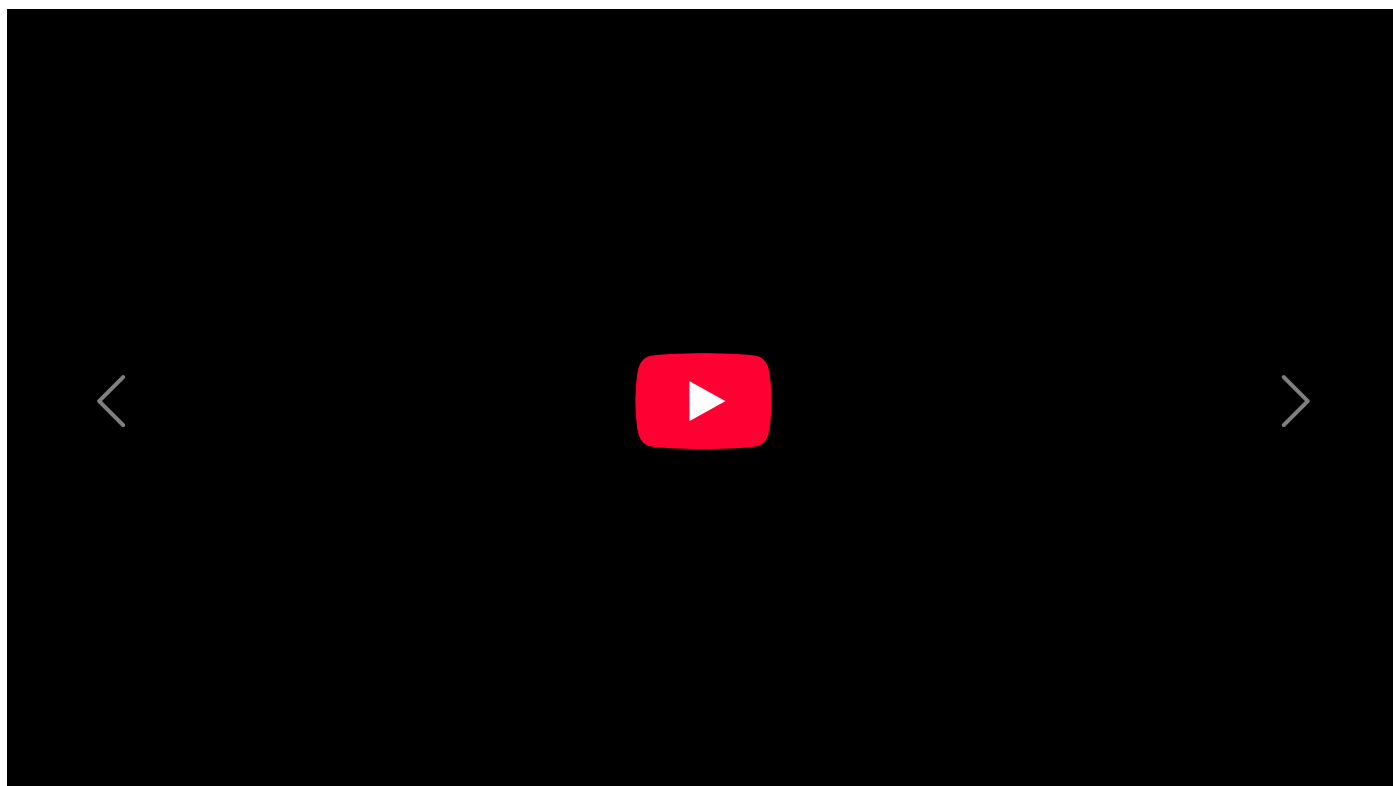


Forest of Sequoias near the village of Bogoslov – a natural phenomenon

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The only sequoia forest in Bulgaria is located in the Yuchbunar area near the village of Bogoslov, which lies on the northeastern slopes of the Osogovo Mountain, about 5 km southwest of the town of Kyustendil.

The first trees here were planted in 1890 by the forester Yordan Mitrev, and the seeds were brought by a sailor from the homeland of the sequoias – the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. Later, foresters planted another 100 sequoias, thus forming today's forest. The Bulgarian sequoias are 30 meters high, and the trunk of the largest one is 9 meters. This species is the largest living organism.

The Bulgarian sequoia forest in the Yuchbunar area took part in the "European Tree of the Year" competition in 2018 and ranked 8th with a total of 11,846 votes.



Coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) is a monotypic tree species of the genus *Sequoia*, family Cupressaceae. The tree is evergreen, coniferous, and can live for nearly 2,000 years. It is considered to be the tallest tree in the world and can reach 115 m in height and over 7 m in diameter at the base. The volume of a sequoia can exceed 1,000 m³. The bark of the tree reaches up to 30 cm in thickness, is relatively soft, and its colour is reddish-cinnamon. It is believed to bear the name of the chief of the Cherokee Native American tribe, Sequoyah. The term “sequoia” is sometimes also used for the other two representatives of the subfamily Sequoiadendron giganteum – the giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) and Metasequoia, which are the largest trees on the planet.

The natural habitat of the giant tree is along the Pacific coast in California, North America. In principle, this species is not typical for Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Sequoias in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, individual giant sequoias can be found in various places in the country. For example, at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv there are 20 sequoias about 30 years old. In the courtyard of the Boyana Church there are three majestic sequoias, planted by Queen Eleonora, and in Borisova Garden in Sofia, near

the Iztok residential district, a giant sequoia rises, dating back to the time of Boris III. Huge trees of this species can also be found in the courtyard of the fire station in the town of Smolyan (24 years old), in the courtyard of the University of Forestry, in the Sea Garden in Varna, the Sea Garden in Burgas, on the station platform in the town of Pirdop (5 giant sequoias planted in 1935 – a gift for the Tsar), in the courtyard of the school in the village of Anton, in the square of the village of Dushantsi, and in the balneological resort Villas Kostenets, located in the eastern part of the Rila Mountain, 9 km south of Kostenets railway station and 78 km southeast of Sofia (2 sequoias), in Narechen Baths, Varshets, and in the centres of Gotse Delchev and Berkovitsa.