

CALLUNA VULGARIS (L.) HULL (COMMON HEATHER)



HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Heather is a small-sized, evergreen shrub highly light-demanding plant species growing that needs strongly acidic soils for its development. It is well adapted to low nutrient contents and allows for developing an endotrophic mycorrhiza symbiosis. Heath lands in Central Europe are the result of long-term over-utilisation of poor sites and need regularly grazed (by sheep) for their conservation.

IMPORTANCE AND USAGE

Traditionally, heather was used for the production of brooms in the past and for medical reasons (heather tea). Today its nectar is an important source for highquality honey (heather honey). Cultivated heather is frequently found in gardens and cemeteries.

DISTRIBUTION

Betula sp. occurs naturally throughout Europe up to central Siberia. *Betula pubescens* has a more northerly and easterly distribution, growing further north in Europe than any other tree species, whereas *Betula pendula* can reach southern regions such as Iberian Peninsula, South Italy and Greece.

