



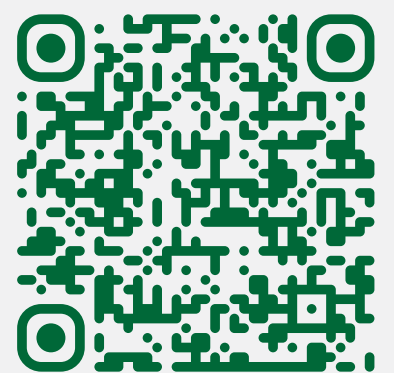
Discover Băneasa Forest!

Băneasa Forest is a place where you can leave the city behind, even if only for a little while.

Here, among tall trees and shaded paths, the air feels lighter, your steps slow down, and your thoughts begin to settle. The air is cooler, the noise fades, and the forest reminds you that beyond the rush of the city, older rhythms still endure: the rustle of leaves, birdsong, and the unseen movement of life. Beneath the trees, the soil breathes, insects go about their work, plants grow, and countless creatures find shelter in a living world held together by fragile, precious connections.

For Bucharest, Băneasa Forest is more than a green refuge: it is shade, oxygen, balance, and living memory. For you, it can be a moment to breathe, an encounter with gentle wilderness, and an invitation to care. When you truly listen, the forest reveals itself, changes you, and leaves behind a rare sense of peace.

SIGN OUR PETITION!

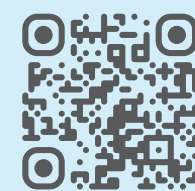


BĂNEASA FOREST
NEEDS YOU

Legend

- Biodiversity trail
- Cycling routes
- Bus stops: 301, 450, 301B, 473, 203
- Forest ranger cabin
- Parking
- Mauriciu Blank Mausoleum
- Memorial Cross of the Romanian Equestrian Society
- Monument to the Gendarme Heroes
- Băneasa Nature Hub
- Newt Pond
- Drinking-water dispenser
- Wild Boar Pond

- Welcome
- Trees
- Birds
- Butterflies
- Mammals
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Ecosystem services



LISTEN TO THE
AUDIO GUIDE!



Primăria
Sectorului 1



inițiat de:



PARCUL NATURAL
BUCUREȘTI



- Dominant and companion tree species: oak¹, linden, ash, elm, maple², poplar³, as well as walnut, wild cherry and wild pear.



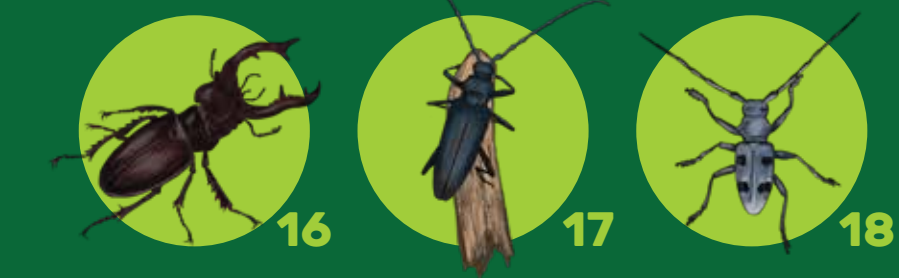
- Non-native species in the landscape: for example, tree of heaven, box elder maple, black locust⁴, green ash, Siberian elm, honey locust⁵, white mulberry⁶ and Virginia creeper.



- Birds: in the protected area, you may see species such as the Eurasian jay⁷ (*Garrulus glandarius*), great tit⁸ (*Parus major*), blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), Eurasian nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*), blackbird⁹ (*Turdus merula*), several woodpeckers¹¹ (*Dendrocopos major*, *Dryocopus martius*, *Dryobates minor*), raptors such as the common buzzard¹⁰ (*Buteo buteo*) and Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), the tawny owl¹² (*Strix aluco*), the common noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*) and the parti-coloured bat (*Vespertilio murinus*).



- Butterflies and pollinators: scarce swallowtail¹³ (*Iphiclides podalirius*), silver-washed fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*), comma butterfly (*Polygonia c-album*), speckled wood (*Pararge aegeria*), red admiral¹⁴ (*Vanessa atalanta*), peacock butterfly (*Inachis io*) and buff-tailed bumblebee¹⁵ (*Bombus terrestris*).



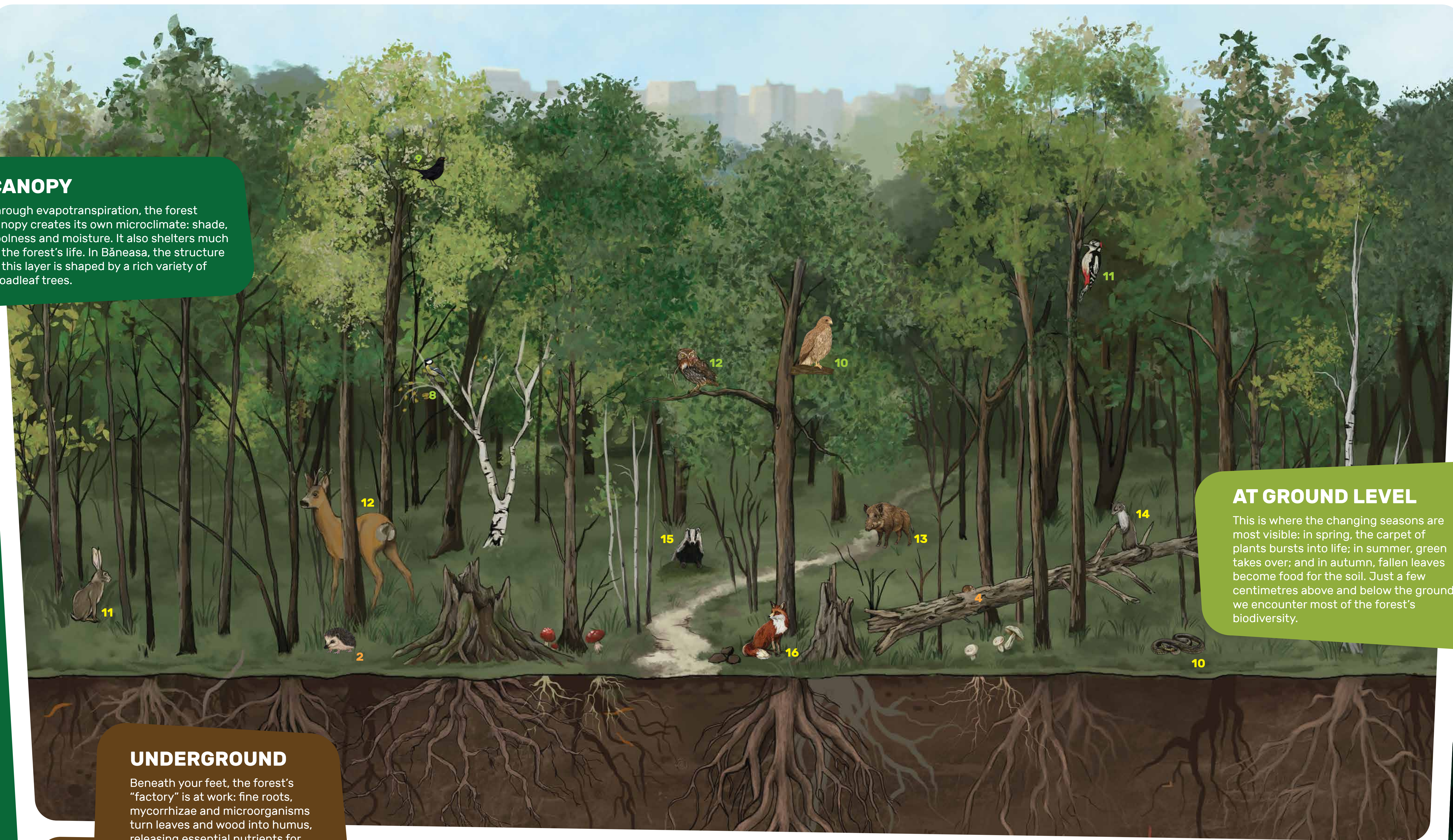
- Beetles associated with old trees and deadwood: stag beetle¹⁶ (*Lucanus cervus*), great capricorn beetle¹⁷ (*Cerambyx cerdo*) and the grey longhorn beetle¹⁸ (*Morimus funereus*).



- Evening insects: the glow-worm¹⁹ (*Lampyrus noctiluca*) and night-flying moths such as the poplar hawk-moth²⁰, hummingbird hawk-moth²¹ and red underwing.

CANOPY

Through evapotranspiration, the forest canopy creates its own microclimate: shade, coolness and moisture. It also shelters much of the forest's life. In Băneasa, the structure of this layer is shaped by a rich variety of broadleaf trees.



AT GROUND LEVEL

This is where the changing seasons are most visible: in spring, the carpet of plants bursts into life; in summer, green takes over; and in autumn, fallen leaves become food for the soil. Just a few centimetres above and below the ground, we encounter most of the forest's biodiversity.



- Shrub layer, food and shelter: hazel¹, Cornelian cherry, common dogwood, hawthorn², wild privet, dog rose³, elder, bramble; climbing plants such as ivy⁴ and old man's beard.



- Amphibians of wet areas: common toad⁵ (*Bufo bufo*), agile frog⁶ (*Rana dalmatina*), smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and eastern tree frog⁷ (*Hyla orientalis*).



- Reptiles — found in clearings, forest edges and sunny paths: sand lizard⁸ (*Lacerta agilis*), European green lizard⁹ (*Lacerta viridis*), eastern slow worm (*Anguis colchica*), grass snake¹⁰ (*Natrix natrix*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*).



- Mammals — especially active at dusk and at night: European hare¹¹ (*Lepus europaeus*), roe deer¹² (*Capreolus capreolus*), wild boar¹³ (*Sus scrofa*), as well as predators such as the least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*), European polecat (*Mustela putorius*), stone marten¹⁴ (*Martes foina*), European badger¹⁵ (*Meles meles*) and red fox¹⁶ (*Vulpes vulpes*).

UNDERGROUND

Beneath your feet, the forest's "factory" is at work: fine roots, mycorrhizae and microorganisms turn leaves and wood into humus, releasing essential nutrients for plants, shrubs and trees.



- Burrowing and ground-dwelling mammals: European mole¹ (*Talpa europaea*) and northern white-breasted hedgehog² (*Erinaceus roumanicus*).



- Small rodents and insectivores — the forest's "night shift": mice, including the wood mouse³ (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and striped field mouse⁴ (*A. agrarius*), the hazel dormouse⁵ (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), common vole (*Microtus arvalis*) and common shrew⁶ (*Sorex araneus*).



- From myriapods such as the "Băneasa Dragon"⁷, discovered in 2026, to decomposers and insect larvae, these organisms process organic matter and keep the soil healthy, aerated and fertile.



Episode 4: After the last glaciation: the Vlășia Forests, a climax-stage woodland

HOLOCENE | the last ~12,000 years

A more stable climate sets in. The soil becomes a living system: fallen leaves turn into humus, humus retains water and nutrients, and the forest can persist over the long term. In the Middle Holocene, roughly 8,000–6,000 years ago, this more stable climate allowed forests to reach their maximum extent. For many temperate regions, scientific reconstructions point to a landscape in which forest was dominant, covering around 80% of Europe.

A climax forest is a mature forest that has reached a stable balance with the local climate and soil. It is no longer being replaced, through succession, by another type of vegetation; instead, it regulates itself through slow cycles of growth, death and regeneration. It has a complex layered structure: a tall canopy, understory, shrubs, herbaceous plants, abundant deadwood, humus-rich soil and high biodiversity, with energy and nutrients circulating efficiently.

Herds of European bison lived here and, together with the famous aurochs, helped maintain a mosaic of microhabitats. Their populations were kept in check by wolf packs, which remained present in southern Romania until the mid-20th century.

Episode 3: Cold winds, fine dust, clay and gravel deposits

PLEISTOCENE | ~2 million – 12,000 years ago

The climate fluctuates sharply between cold and temperate phases. During cold periods, winds deposit loess, locally known as the “Bucharest Clays”, while river networks lay down sands and gravels, including aquifer layers such as the Frătești deposits and Colentina-type horizons. The plain forms through alternating layers: fine dust over coarse alluvium.

Life follows the climate: steppe and forest-steppe in cold, dry periods, followed by patches of woodland when conditions become wetter and milder. Biodiversity does not increase in a straight line, but in waves: ecosystems retreat and return with changes in temperature and water. Woolly mammoths, buffalo and woolly rhinoceroses once lived in these lands.

Episode 2: The Pliocene lake and the formation of the plain

PLIOCENE | ~5–2 million years ago | the most recent layer lies 300 m beneath your feet.

After the retreat of the Sarmatian Sea, a lake formed during the Pliocene. Over time, the lake gradually silted up: alluvium and slope-wash deposits filled the basin, and the dry land surface consolidated, forming the foundation of the plain you see today in southern Romania.

Life shifts to the water's edge: reedbeds, ponds and banks rich in vegetation. As dry land expands, mosaics of wet and dry habitats emerge, increasing biodiversity: insects, frogs, newts, water snakes, rodents, insectivores and large mammals, including different species of camels and horses.

Episode 1: The Sarmatian Sea: a landscape dominated by water

MIOCENE | ~12–7 million years ago | the seabed of that ancient sea now lies 1,000 m beneath your feet.

Where you are standing now, the landscape was once dominated by the waters of the Paratethys Sea, a “neighbour” of the Tethys Ocean, which covered vast areas of Central and Eastern Europe.

Life was primarily aquatic: algae, invertebrates and fish lived in a natural environment shaped by repeated changes in salinity, water level and connections with other basins. The sediments left behind gradually became part of the foundation of today's plain.