

Friday, May 12, 2023

The araucaria or Norfolk Island pine

Large numbers of this species are to be found in the Historical Garden. The araucarias at La Concepcion are almost 200 years old, and the 46-metre-tall specimen that stands alongside the waterfall is the largest to be found anywhere in Malaga province.

Its scientific name, *Araucaria heterophylla*, is derived from the Chilean region of Arauco, home to the *Araucaria araucana*, which was the first species in this genus to be identified. The epithet *hetero* means 'different', while *phylla* means 'leaf', a reference to the fact that the leaves found on the younger branches of the tree are different to those on the adult ones.

The species found at La Concepcion grows wild on Norfolk Island in Australia, from where it was brought to Europe. Its trunk was once used in the main masts of ships; nowadays, it is a popular decorative tree due to the pyramidal shape formed by its regular layers of branches, which give it an extremely elegant appearance. Many conifers of this type are to be found in the gardens of Malaga, where they became fashionable in the mid 19th century.



Araucaria heterophylla

Interesting fact: the araucaria has been growing on our planet since the Triassic period over 200 million years ago, i.e. before dinosaurs appeared.