

Ritamäki nature reserve restrictions

Ritamäki nature reserve is one of the most beautiful in Lahti but also one of the most sensitive. Therefore only limited everyman's rights apply in the area. Walking is allowed solely on the trails marked in the map above. The trail is marked with **brown** paint dots in the terrain.

In the area it is forbidden to

- use the land for agriculture
- pick up or move soil and rocks
- cut down trees without permission
- hunt, kill or harass animals
- harm, take or pick nests, eggs, trees, bushes and other plants and parts of vegetation (other than berries and mushrooms)
- make fire or set up a camp
- litter
- keep dogs off leash or do other activities affecting the landscape and having negative effects on the vegetation in the area
- build roads or buildings.



RITAMÄKI

NATURE RESERVE



Versatile flora

The grovelike forests form a diverse environment for numerous threatened plants and animals. The significance of the Ritamäki south slope is reflected by the fact that many species usually found mainly in Finland's south-western and southern coasts also live here. Nearly 200 different vascular plants have been found. Some of the typical grove plants include e.g. herb Christopher (*Actaea spicata*), grove buttercup (*Ranunculus cassubicus coll.*), spring pea (*Lathyrus vernus*), lung-wort (*Pulmonaria*), wonder violet (*Viola mirabilis*), flag honeysuckle (*Lonicera xylosteum*), alpine currant (*Ribes alpinum*) and hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Rare enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea alpina*) and bird's-nest orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) have also been found here.

Ritamäki offers wide variety of habitats and shelters for animals. The area is rich with butterflies, more than 800 species have been found. Endangered and rare beetles occupy the area. The avifauna of Ritamäki is one of the most versatile in Lahti. In the shades of the forest, you can hear, among others, the icterine warbler, garden warbler and nightingale.

The area is home to rare birchmouse and northern bat that are few in number in Finland. Ritamäki is indeed one of the best bat areas in Lahti.

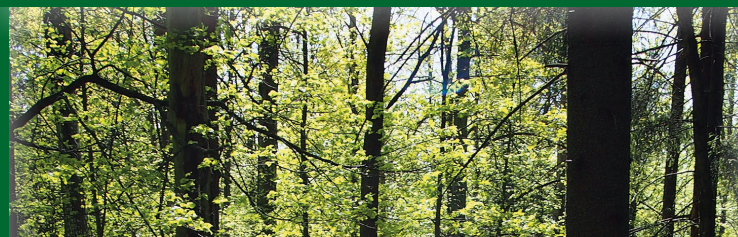


Profusion of polyporus

Ritamäki was established as a reservation area already in the 1960's. In the past decades, a lot of fallen deciduous trees have accumulated in the area. Ritaniemi indeed is an excellent growth environment to many species of polyporus.

Polyporus are indicators of the worth of the forest. Species typically found in old forests (such as *Antrodia sinuosa*, *Ceriporia purpurea*, *Sistotrema alboluteum*, *Phellinus populicola* and *Posti tephroleuca*) have been found in Ritamäki. Numerous successor species, such as *Antrodiella pallescens* growing over dead tinder polyporus (*Fomes fomentarius*) and several polyporus of the *Antrodiella* family tell about the long history of decomposition.

Most common polyporus in the area are *Phellinus punctatus*, *Tyromyces chioneus*, *Trametes ochracea*, *Fomitopsis pinicola*, tinder polyporus, *Datronia mollis*, *Bjerkandera adusta*, *Heterobasidion parviporum*, *Posti caesia* and *Piptoporus betulinus*. Some species rare in other parts of Finland still occur in Ritamäki, among them *Junghuhnia nitida*, *Phellinus a viticola* and endangered *Antrodiella Americana* and *Protomerulius caryae*. The wide mycelium of polyporus grows inside the tree, only the fruiting body appears on the surface.



Ritamäki, the oldest nature reserve in Lahti. Explore the sensitive area on its trails!

The oldest nature reserve of Lahti, Ritamäki, was reserved as early as 1962. Its enchanting 12.3 hectares are located next to the beautiful manor house park of Mukkula. Ritamäki, Kilpiäistenpohja cove, the woodpecker forests of Kilpiäinen and the manor house park of Mukkula form together one of the most interesting nature wholenesses in Lahti. Ritamäki is a nationally significant grove area. Originally, it was a part of the park domains of the Mukkula manor house, built in the 1700's.

The south slope of Ritamäki is mainly grove forest with especially hazel and other deciduous trees. On the upper hill there are fallen conifers also. On the northern slope aspens, old spruces and pine trees grow among hazel bushes. Decayed trees offer good living conditions for polyporus, hole nesters and insects. The polyporus are fungus growing on trees. They chains of several species with other fungi. In these chains, one polypore follows the other as the decay progresses. Simultaneously, the nutrients from the tree are released back to the forest soil. The polyporus also function as shelters and nutrition for numerous insects.

Several threatened insects and rare vegetation have been found in Ritamäki. Therefore it is the only nature reserve in Lahti where the preservation orders allow walking only along the paths. However, the nature trail of the area gives an excellent view of the unique environment, as it wanders through the spruce copses of the northern slope, under the green groves right to the Vesijärvi lakeside.

