

## Tree of the week: 'This pine tree must take a battering but it hangs on'

15 June 2020



The pine tree on Iztuzu beach, near Dalyan, Mugla Province, Turkey. Photograph: Brian Harrison

Brian Harrison and his wife, Sue, love visiting Turkey every year. During their trips, they always find time to visit Iztuzu beach, near the south-western [coastal town of Dalyan](#). It's not just the breathtaking mountains, the clear blue sea and the great food that keep them coming back. Each time, they return to see a contorted Mediterranean pine tree on the beach.

"It's reassuring it's always there," says Brian, 71. "It must take a battering every winter, but it always seems to survive and hang on in there. It hasn't been blown away, it's stuck into the sand and it has become something we come to every year."

Iztuzu beach is five kilometres long and the tree is at the southern end. "The weather is warm, mild and incredibly welcoming, but the tree reminds me that in winter the conditions are very different," says Brian. There are not many other trees on the beach. Sadly, it's not a great spot to rest under as the pine is surrounded by "gravelly" sand and "an undergrowth of wiry, stiff and prickly grass". The sparse leaves do not provide any shade from the sun.

The retired teacher and university administrator from Bushey, Hertfordshire, chose this particular picture because it highlights the tree's distinctive shape. He remains fascinated by its untold story. "What makes this tree stand out for me is how it's been battered and permanently distorted by the wind," he says. "It's clearly got a history, but we don't know what actually happened to make the tree the shape it is."

The entire beach is an environmentally protected breeding area for loggerhead sea turtles. Close to the tree is a therapy and rehabilitation centre to care for turtles injured by fishing lines or collisions with boats. "The turtles tend to come out at night when the beach is closed," Brian says. "That leaves the whole area free for the turtles to use as they like." They mainly come ashore to lay their eggs, and when the centre is aware there are eggs buried in the sand, it protects them from being moved or disturbed by human visitors.

Brian has arranged to visit [Turkey](#) in September with Sue and some friends, but they are unsure whether the trip will go ahead because of the coronavirus pandemic. "We hope to get back there some time soon to see if the tree is still there."

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/jun/15/tree-of-the-week-this-pine-tree-must-take-a-battering-but-it-hangs-on>