

UNIQUE GARDEN BLOOMS AGAIN

The gardens of the Ionian Village originally built in the early '60s are located on a scenic stretch of ocean front property outside of Bartholomeio in Greece. The property is about 32 acres, and lays along the western coast of the Peloponnese, directly across from the island of Zakynthos.

The campus run, by the Greek Orthodox church, organises activities throughout the year for up to 200 young people to learn more about their orthodox faith, Hellenic culture and strengthen their education in environmental protection

In September 2016 the entire garden was destroyed by a tornado and the Greek Orthodox Church of North America charged landscape consultant Nikos Thymakis with the garden's redesign, screening of plant material and the supervision of the construction.

The new gardens were completed a year later and feature 11,000 plants and

over 900 large specimen trees. Out of the 200 different plant species 180 are Hellenic native. The remainder is Mediterranean and tropical plants including both *Chamaerops humilis* and *Phoenix theophrastii*. "The Ionian Village is the only place in Greece to have both these palm species," commented Nikos Thymakis. Another distinctive feature of this garden are three vulnerable species listed in the The Red Data Book of Rare and Threatened Plants of Greece: *Phoenix theophrastii*, *Pancratium maritimum* and *Juniperus oxycedra*.

Two more imposing garden features are the 70 monumental olive trees and a Bible garden. "We used TerraCottem to guarantee the survival rate of all these unique specimens planted in sandy soil and dry lands. We achieved a 100 per cent success rate, observed very good and fast plant growth and an increased drought resistance. It is becoming increasingly important to have a water-wise approach in planting schemes to withstand erratic climate conditions," concluded Nikos.

