

Top 50 Mediterranean Island Plants



Key Facts

- ❑ The Mediterranean basin is one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots - the richest places on earth in terms of the number of different species found there. The Mediterranean hotspot is particularly noted for its vast diversity of plants.
- ❑ The number of flowering plants and ferns native to the countries surrounding the Mediterranean basin is about 15,000 -25,000, 60% of them being unique to the region.
- ❑ The great number of islands in the Mediterranean basin (more than 5,000) has favoured the evolution of new species adapted to the diverse ecological niches created by unique combinations of topography, climate, geology and history.
- ❑ On the larger islands, around 10% of the species are endemic to the island and often restricted to a single location.
- ❑ The main factor of extinction for the island flora in the region is the small size of their populations, their restricted distribution, urbanization, tourism, agriculture and invasive alien species.
- ❑ Special targeted conservation actions include enforcement and improvement of legal protection, creation and management of protected areas and species management plans.

Many Islands, Many Species in peril

- ❑ **Aeolian Islands.** *Silene hicesiae* (CR)*. Main threats facing this species are wildfires, grazing by herbivores - rabbits - and incorrect management of the protected areas (Image 1).
- ❑ **Alboran.** *Diploaxis siettiana* (CR)*. Irrigation with seawater in order to reduce dust from helicopter landings on this military base was a direct cause of extinction of this now re-introduced plant (Image 2).
- ❑ **Balearic Islands.** *Naufraga balearica* (CR)*. A major threat to the species is the increasing frequency of droughts, probably related to climate change.

Interesting fact: The flowers are pollinated by ants, which is very rare for plants.
- ❑ **Columbretes.** *Medicago citrina* (CR)*. Population has decreased due to an attack of scale insects, an alien species from Australia (Image 3).
- ❑ Interesting fact: It grows on several small islands and its seeds are dispersed by seabirds.
- ❑ **Corsica.** *Biscutella rotgesii* (CR)*. This species can tolerate high concentrations of heavy metals in the soil as well as a limited water supply but it is threatened by fires and road construction.
- ❑ **Crete.** *Horstrissea dolinicola* (CR)*. Threatened by overgrazing, nutrient addition by sheep and road construction, only 50 mature individuals are still left in the wild.

- ❑ **Cyprus.** *Scilla morrisii* (CR)*. This species, which grows under a closed canopy of old oak trees, depends on the conservation of this habitat to survive that has been reduced by logging, road construction and expansion of farmland (Large picture on the front).
- ❑ **Greek Islands.** *Allium calamarophilon* (DD)*. There is a lack of scientific information to make assessment of the conservation status of this species, which could well be Critically Endangered.
- ❑ **Malta.** *Cheirolophus crassifolius* (CR)*. Habitat quality for the Maltese centaury is declining and it faces many threats, such as pests, quarrying and human disturbance.

Interesting fact: This species with purple flowers is the National Plant of Malta.
- ❑ **Sardinia.** *Lamyropsis microcephala* (CR)*. A ski run built within its distribution area is a major threat for this species, which had been considered possibly extinct, but was rediscovered before publication of the Italian Red List (Image 4).
- ❑ **Sicily.** *Abies nebrodensis* (CR)*. The current population of the Sicilian fir is around 30 adult trees covering an area of less than 1.5 Km².
- ❑ **Tuscan Archipelago (Capraia).** *Centaurea gymnocarpa* (EN)*. This species is severely threatened by competition from two invasive plants (Image 5).

* IUCN Red List Categories:
Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Data Deficient (DD)



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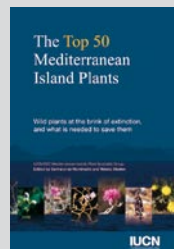
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For More Information

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Core support to the activities of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation is provided by:

