

## **Conservation status of the endemic vascular flora of Sicily**

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Among the large islands of the Mediterranean, Sicily is the one with the richest and most diversified plant heritage. Over 3250 specific and infraspecific taxa of native, naturalized or traditionally grown exotic plants are attributed to this island. According to the last one, - conducted with the contribution of various specialists in all Italian regions and published in 2018 - the native flora of Sicily is made up of 2763 specific and subspecific taxa. The endemic contingent accounts for just over 15%. Our updated account of the vascular flora of Sicily includes 436 endemics. The number of endemics at risk of extinction has increased year by year; other taxa, attributed to lower risk categories, even if they fall within protected areas do not enjoy any particular protection, others have seen reduced or altered their elective habitat, suffering a strong demographic contraction in populations. There are several contributions, including expert-based evaluations, on the endangered flora of Sicily. Among these contributions, the assessments made within the Italian Botanical Society on behalf of the Ministry of the Environment of the national government, follow the scientific criteria proposed by the IUCN.

In this contribution we compare the quantitative data of the IUCN conservation categories reported in the different contributions for the endemic taxa of the vascular flora of Sicily. This was done integrating the data taken from the previous published sources that, in some cases, have different taxonomic delimitations.

Resulted that only a part of the endemic taxa of the Sicilian flora was evaluated according to the IUCN criteria. Therefore, there is a need to further invest in research aimed at highlighting the real status of conservation of the contingent of regional endemic species following standardized criteria.