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Preliminary checklist of the Italian gypsophilous flora

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The richness and uniqueness of the flora growing on gypsum substrates in Italy is known since the XIX century (Macchiati, 1888). Furthermore, the concept of plant gypsophily can be defined as the exclusiveness (or virtually exclusiveness) for living in gypsum outcropping rocks. Thus only those plant species, which show preference – or even exclusivity - for gypsum substrates, would be classified as gypsophilous (Mota *et al.*, 2011). The main aim of this research has been the elaboration of a checklist of the Italian gypsophilous flora. The study was made possible through international collaboration between the "Mediterranea" University of Reggio Calabria (Italy) and the University of Almería (Spain). During the first step, an extensive literature review has been carried out in order to collect all available information about gypsophilous flora and to compile a preliminary list. Afterwards 18 regional botanists experts on Italian gypsum flora have been asked to rank the preference of these species for gypsum soils. Following the methodology proposed by Mota *et al.* (2009), the gypsophilous character of more than 100 plant species has been thus ranked on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 (with 5 representing for a total dependence on gypsum substrates). According to the obtained values, all the plant species, ranking between absolute or preferent gypsophytes, will figure in the final checklist of the gypsophytes of the whole Italian territory.

Keywords: flora, gypsophily, gypsum, soil.

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