

# Project partner: National Botanical Conservatory of Corsica of the Office of the Environment of Corsica

## Island

CORSICA

## Species name (Family)

*Silene velutina* Loisel (Caryophyllaceae)

*Synonyms* : *S. mollissima sensu* Briq., non (L.) Pers.

## Common name

French: Silène velouté, English: Silenus velvety

## Plant description

- ✓ Perennial plant from 20 to 50 cm, robust, whitish tomentose, with branched woody base. Leaves entirely tomentose, lower oblong spatulate, upper lanceolate-acute, smaller. Inflorescence in dense panicle. Pink flowers, rarely white. Bifid petals. Chalice pubescent-glandular, elongated in a club, constricted at the top. Ovoid-oblong capsule, no more longer than the pubescent mucron.
- ✓ The species flowers from May to July, while fruiting occurs from July to October. Seeds are dispersed by barochory on short distance, and ornithochory, zoochorie on longer distance.
- ✓ Near the sea shore, *S. velutina* is associated with littoral distribution species (association *Loto cytisoidis* - *Silenetum velutinae*: 1240.1 "Vegetations of fissures of limestone cliffs" and 1240.2 "Vegetations of fissures of crystalline cliffs").
- ✓ Farer from the sea, this taxa is found with other phytosociological association (*Pancratio illyrici* - *Silenetum velutinae*: 8220.20: Thermophilic siliceous cliffs of Corsica).

## Distribution

- *S. velutina* is an endemic from Corsica and Sardinia.
- In Corsica, this species grows on the main Island as well as on some islets.

## Map



In Corsica, *S. velutina* is growing in the main Island as well as some islets.

**Islets:** Fazzio, Cala di Sciumara, îlot du silène des Lavezzi, île Lavezzi, Cavallo, Folachedda, Folaca, Capu d'Acciaju, Toro, Ziglione, Stagnolu, Roscana. On the islet of Cornuta, the species disappear since 2000.

**Corsica:** Capo di Feno, Corba, Bonifacio Cala di Sciumara, Acciaju, Tamaricciu, Chiappa, Porto-Vecchio, Punta d' Arasu.

## Legal status

The species is protected at national level and listed in the Appendix I of the Bern Convention and in the Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

## Main threats and conservation status

According to the IUCN Threats Classification Scheme (Version 3.2) the main threats in Corsica are:

- 8.2.2 Named species. In the cracks, the chasmophytic vegetation seems to be stable. But, on the islets, bird's populations and edaphics conditions are parameters impacting directly locations.
- 1.1 Housing & urban areas. In some case, anthropic activities and urbanization are threatening directly location, either, littoral erosion is involved.

## Conservation actions carried out in the CARE-MEDIFLORA project

*S. velutina* was on the islet of Cornuta until the beginning of the 2000s. The disappearance of the species is linked to the number of seabirds increasing and to vegetation's modification (invasive species, for example *Lavatera arborea*). Otherwise, this taxa is in sharp decline in the sector of Casetta Bianca. For Cornuta, the action aims to reintroduce it on the islet, trying to control the population of *L. arborea* and to minimize the impact of birds. For Casetta Bianca, the action aims to strengthen the population, but also the information and awareness of landowners where stations are located.

November 20th, 2017, 316 plants from 6 months to 1 year old and 300 seeds were introduced on the islet of Cornuta and February 13th, 2019, 90 one-year and eight-month old plants were introduced on Casetta Bianca.

Periodic monitoring is done. Preliminary results are showing a survival rate of 49% of the transplanted individuals on the islet of Cornuta, and 95 % on Casetta Bianca.

After the end of the project, the monitoring activities will be continued, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the *in situ* actions.

## Photos



General aspects of *Silene velutina* & Transport of plants on Cornuta Island



*S. velutina* was present on the islet of Cornuta until 2001. It was reintroduced in December 2017 (left) & Planting *S. velutina* on Cornuta Islet (right)