

# Project partner: Department of Biological, Geological and Environmental Sciences, University of Catania

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## Island

SICILY

## Species name (Family)

*Urtica rupestris* Guss. (Urticaceae)

## Common name

Ortica rupestre (Italian name)

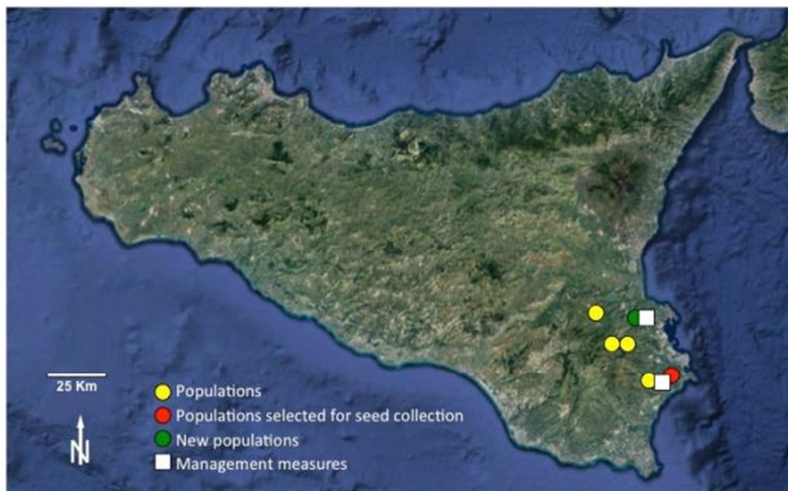
## Plant description

- *Urtica rupestris* is a perennial herb, 30-100 cm tall. Stems erect, sometimes woody at the base. Leaves ovate-acuminate, almost glabrous and without urticating hairs. Fruit is an achene, usually enclosed by persistent perianth.
- Dioecious plant with female and male racemes, flowering in spring (April-May). Pollination is anemophilous.
- This species grows within sciaphilous plant communities colonizing the rocky outcrops within mesophilous holm oak woods, in the meso- and thermo-mediterranean belt (0-600 m a.s.l.). It occurs on carbonatic substrates.

## Distribution

It is a narrow endemic species of south-eastern Sicily. In Sicily are known 8 localities and 2 historical extinct localities, all located within the Hyblaean Plateau.

## Map



## Legal status

none

## Main threats and conservation status

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

- Threat 7.1.1. Fire may affect the Holm oak woodlands where the species is found.
- Threat 2.3.1. Nomadic grazing.
- Threat 11.2. Climate changes and, particularly, severe drought may cause severe stress for the species.

The IUCN assessment for *Urtica rupestris* is VU.

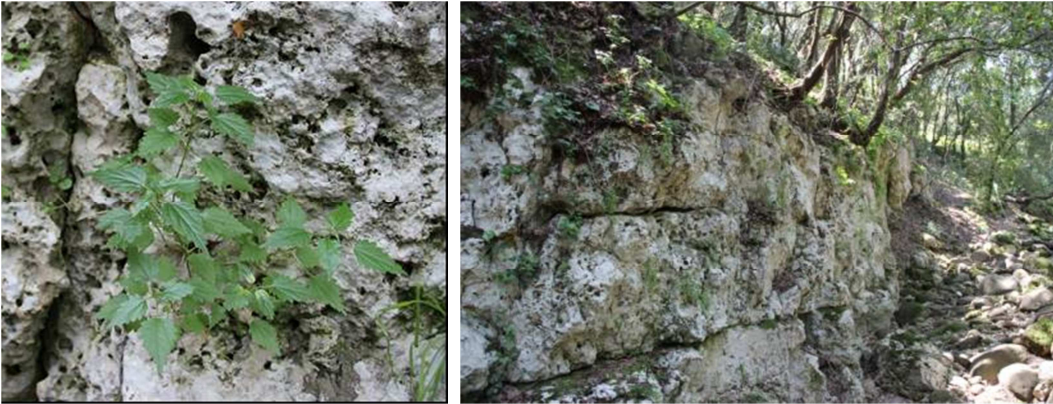
## Conservation actions carried out in the CARE-MEDIFLORA project

Seed collection.

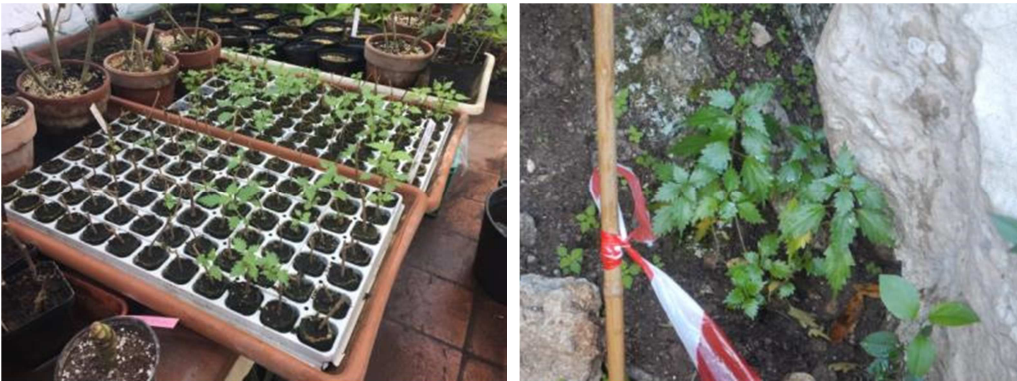
Two new populations of *Urtica rupestris* were established within the Nature Reserve “Complesso speleologico Villasmundo-Sant’Alfio” (SE Sicily).

An existing population within the Nature Reserve “*Grotta Monello*” was reinforced (SE Sicily). The single population found within the Nature Reserve “*Grotta Palombara*” was fenced. Similarly, 3 populations (2 new and 1 existing) from the Nature Reserve “*Complesso speleologico Villasmundo-Sant’Alfio*” were fenced.

**Photos**



*Urtica rupestris* from Villasmundo (SE Sicily) & Carbonatic outcrops under the canopy colonized by *Urtica rupestris* (Villasmundo-S.Alfio)



Seedlings of *Urtica rupestris* & Translocated plant of *Urtica rupestris* (N.R. Villasmundo-S.Alfio)



Translocated plants of *Urtica rupestris* (N.R. Villasmundo-S.Alfio)



Fencing the population of *Urtica rupestris* from the N.R. “*Grotta Palombara*”