

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

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## Island

SICILY

## Species name (Family)

*Origanum onites* L. (Lamiaceae)

## Common name

Origano siciliano (Italian name), Cretan oregano, Turkish oregano (English name)

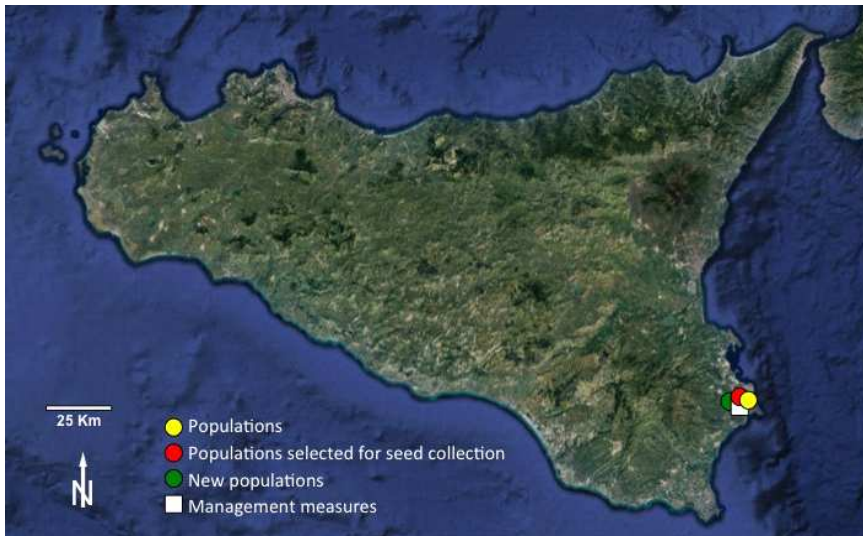
## Plant description

- ✓ *Origanum onites* is a subshrub or perennial herb, 30-50 cm tall. Stem erect or ascending, woody. Leaves aromatic, opposite, simple, sessile or subsessile, ovate to subrounded, truncate or cordate at the base. Inflorescence arranged in a dense spike, pseudo-corymbose, subglobose or ovate. Flowers bilabiate, white. Fruits are brown nutlets.
- ✓ Monoecious (rarely gynodioceous) plant with unisexual or hermaphrodite flowers, which blooms in late spring (May-June); flowers consisting of sympetalous zygomorphic corolla, with 4 protruding stamens. Pollination is entomophilous. Seeds remain within the calyces during the summer and are released after the early Autumnal rains.
- ✓ This species grows on very dry rocky stands, within the thermo-Mediterranean bioclimatic belt (0-200 m a.s.l.). In Sicily, it is exclusively found on carbonatic substrates.

## Distribution

It has a wide distribution range ranging from SW-Turkey, Crete, southern Greece up to Sicily, where it represents the westernmost population of the species. In Sicily, it is recorded for 3 localities, all within or very close to the archaeological area of Syracuse (SE Sicily).

## 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 1.1. Urban development can affect some populations;
- ✓ Threat 5.2.1. Gathering terrestrial plant as intentional uses;
- ✓ Threat 6.1. Recreational activities.

This taxon was catalogued as Vulnerable (VU) in the Red List of Sicilian flora.

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

- Seed collection.
- A new population of *Origanum onites* was established within the Nature Reserve “Grotta Palombara” (Syracuse, SE Sicily).

## Photos



Left: Natural population of *Origanum onites* (Syracuse); Right: Juvenile plant of *Origanum onites*



Localization of the new population of *Origanum onites* within the N.R. “Grotta Palombara



Translocated plant of *Origanum onites* (N.R. Grotta Palombara, Syracuse)