

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

Island

SICILY

Species name (Family)

Leopoldia gussonei (Parl.) Nyman (Asparagaceae)

Common name

Giacinto dal pennacchio di Gussone (Italian name).

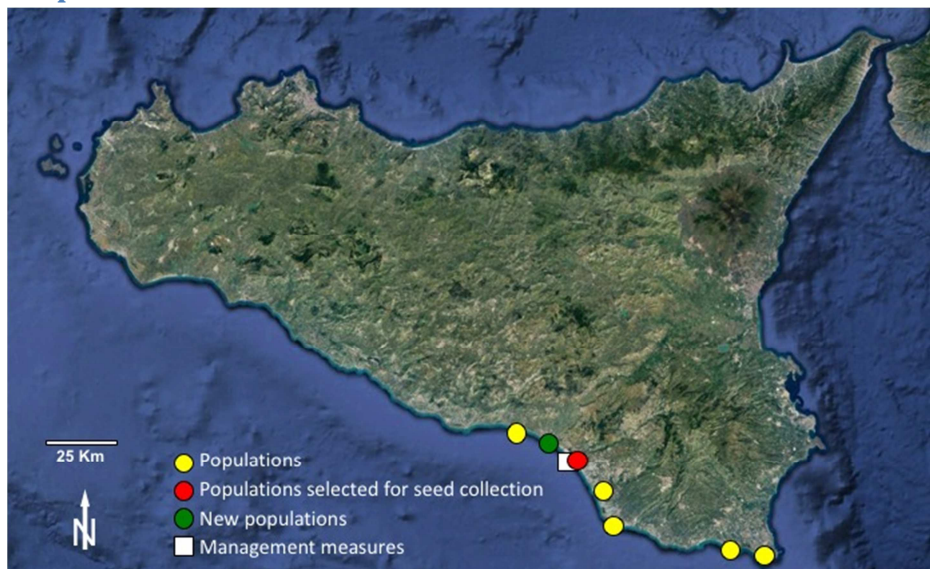
Plant description

- ✓ *Leopoldia gussonei* is a small, herbaceous geophyte, with ovoid and brown bulbs. Scape erect, 8-25 cm long, generally one. Inflorescence is a cylindrical raceme. Fertile flowers with yellow corolla, 5-5,5 mm long; perigonium globular at the base, restricted in the median part and enlarged in the upper part with small ovate and reflected lobules. Sterile flowers bluish. Capsule trigonous, with two seeds per loculus.
- ✓ Bulbous plant with hermaphrodite flowers blooming in early spring (March-April). Pollination is entomophilous. Fruits are capsules without evident morphological adaptations for dispersion, that is simply due to falling from mother plant.
- ✓ *L. gussonei* occurs on ephemeral meadows growing on sandy, flat surfaces, usually behind maritime dunes, within the thermo-Mediterranean belt (0-150 mt a.s.l.).

Distribution

L. gussonei is narrow endemic species with a distribution restricted to southern Sicily.

Map



Legal status

L. gussonei is included in the Annex II and V of the Directive 92/43/EEC.

Main threats and conservation status

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

- ✓ Threat 2.1.3, Agriculture and especially greenhouse crops represents the most important threat.
- ✓ Threat 1.3, Residential & commercial development, particularly Tourism and recreation areas.
- ✓ Threat 1.1, Urbanization.
- ✓ Threat 7.3, Ecosystem modification, in particular the shoreline erosion.
- ✓ Threat 8.1 Invasive non-native/alien species, such as *Carpobrotus edulis*, *Acacia saligna* and others.
- ✓ Threat 9.3, Pollution of agricultural effluents such as pesticides and herbicides.

Currently, the IUCN assessment for *Leopoldia gussonei* is Endangered (EN).

Conservation actions carried out in the CARE-MEDIFLORA project

- Seed collection.
- A new population of *Leopoldia gussonei* was established within the Nature Reserve “Biviere di Gela” (southern Sicily).

Photos



L. gussonei from Manfria (Gela, southern Sicily) & Fructified *L. gussonei* (Macconi di Gela, southern Sicily)



Natural stands of *L. gussonei* on sandy coast in southern Sicily & Establishment of new population of *L. gussonei* within the N.R. “Biviere di Gela”



Localization of the new population of *L. gussonei* within the N.R. “Biviere di Gela”