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An inventory of vascular plants endemic to Italy

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Abstract

For the purpose of the present study we considered as Italian endemics those specific and subspecific taxa occurring in Italy that are not found elsewhere with the exception of Corsica (France) and Malta. This study presents an updated list of the endemic taxa in the Italian flora, including their geographical distribution at regional level. Italy is characterized by 1371 endemic species and subspecies (18.9% of the total vascular flora): three taxa belong to Lycopodiidae, one to Polypodiidae, two to Pinidae and 1365 to Magnoliidae (three paleoherbs, 221 monocots and 1144 eudicots). The endemic flora belongs to 29 orders, 67 families and 304 genera. Sicily, Sardinia, Calabria and Abruzzo are the four regions richest in endemics. About 58% of endemics are confined to a single administrative region. The most represented orders, families and genera are: Asterales, Caryophyllales and Asparagales, Asteraceae, Plumbaginaceae and Caryophyllaceae, *Limonium*, *Centaurea* and *Hieracium*, respectively. The phytogeographic isolation of Sardinia and Sicily and the separation of peninsular Italy from Northern Italy is confirmed. The relative isolation of Puglia with respect the remaining southern Italian peninsular regions is also confirmed. Alpine region endemics (from northern Italy) are underrepresented.

Key words: floristics, phytogeography, systematics, taxonomy

Introduction

The term endemic is used to designate a species restricted to a definite area (Siljak-Yakovlev & Peruzzi 2012). Documenting endemic floras is important for phytogeographic and evolutionary studies and for setting conservation priorities (Hinz 1989, Garbari 1990, Ungrecht 2004, Ferreira & Boldrini 2011, Bacchetta *et al.* 2012a).

According to the most recent checklist of the Italian vascular flora (Conti *et al.* 2005, 2007), 1024 species and subspecies are endemic to Italy. However, many taxa (227) have been described as new to science in the meantime (seven of them in Phytotaxa, see Bacchetta *et al.* 2012a-b, Melai *et al.* 2012, Brullo *et al.* 2013a-b, Fenaroli *et al.* 2013, Minissale *et al.* 2013), whilst others have been recognized following taxonomic revisions and a significant amount of further floristics knowledge has accumulated since 2007. Preliminary to a new edition of the checklist of the Italian vascular flora (F. Conti and collaborators, *in prep.*) we undertook an update of the inventory of vascular plants endemic to Italy. This also served as a basis for a chromosome number survey of Italian endemic flora (Bedini *et al.* 2012) and the Italian Loci Classici Census project (Domina *et al.* 2012a). The latter aimed at improving the systematic knowledge of vascular plants described from Italy. Furthermore, updating knowledge on Italian endemics is important considering that the Italian peninsula is located at the centre of the Mediterranean Basin, one of the 25 world biodiversity hotspots with an exceptional loss of habitats Myers *et al.* (2000).

Therefore, in the present paper we aim to: (i) produce an updated list of Italian endemics, including their regional distribution; (ii) carry out a phytogeographical analysis of Italian endemics, on a regional basis.

Material and Methods

For the purpose of the present study Italian endemics are defined as the specific and subspecific taxa occurring only in Italy or only in Italy and in Corsica (France) or only in Italy and in Malta. We included the taxa from Corsica and Malta in the light of the strong biogeographical links connecting Sardinia and Tuscany to Corsica, and

Pimpinella gussonei (C.Presl) Bertol.

SIC

Ptychotis sardoa Pignatti & Metlesics

SAR

Seseli bocconi Guss.

SIC

Seseli polyphyllum Ten.

C Italian peninsula (LAZ); S Italian peninsula (CAM)

Seseli praecox (Gamisans) Gamisans

SAR (Corsica)

Seseli tortuosum L. subsp. *maritimum* (Guss.) C.Brullo, Brullo, Giusso & Sciandrello

S Italian peninsula (PUG doubtful, CAL); SIC; SAR

Siculosciadium nebrodense (Guss.) C.Brullo, Brullo, S.R.Downie & Giusso

SIC. The monotypic genus *Siculosciadium* is endemic to Sicily (see also Brullo *et al.* 2013).

Thapsia garganica L. subsp. *messanensis* (Guss.) Brullo, Guglielmo, Pasta, Pavone & Salmeri

SIC

Thapsia pelagica Brullo, Guglielmo, Pasta, Pavone & Salmeri

SIC

Torilis nemoralis (Brullo) Brullo & Giusso

SIC; SAR

Visnaga crinita (Guss.) Giardina & Raimondo

S Italian peninsula (CAL doubtful); SIC

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