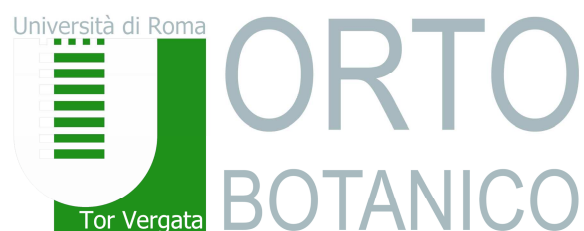


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**BOOK OF ABSTRACT**

KEYNOTE LECTURES, COMMUNICATIONS, POSTERS



## 4.1 = CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRADITIONAL USES OF NATIVE PLANTS IN SICILY

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The Sicilian territory as a whole presents orographic, geopedological, hydrographic characters and climate conditions that determine a wide diversity of environments that host a rich vascular flora consisting of over 3250 specific and intraspecific taxa (subspecies, varieties and forms), belonging to 880 genera of 134 botanical families (1). Of the above mentioned flora, about 500 entities are endemic and in several cases their populations are constituted by a small number of individuals and / or distributed on limited areas.

Within this great biodiversity, which places Sicily among the regions with greater floristic diversity of both Italy and the Mediterranean area, it is noteworthy that there is a conspicuous contingent of species used for food, aromatic, cosmetic, handicraft, agricultural, forestry and medicine interest, with the purpose of preserving health and well-being of humans and animals (2-6).

In this paper we present the preliminary results of a study aimed at identifying the traditional uses of wild (herbaceous and woody) taxa in several communities of the island. Particularly, the medicinal, veterinary and food uses are reported. The taxa hitherto surveyed were about 500, belonging to 89 families; the most represented families resulted Asteraceae (18.3% of species), Lamiaceae (9.3%), Apiaceae (6.2%), Fabaceae (5.7%), Rosaceae (3.4%) and Poaceae (3.4%).

The plants utilized for medicinal purposes constitute the largest group that we detected (270 taxa); the contingent of the plants used as vegetables is very big as well (205 taxa); 53 entities were surveyed for their veterinary use.

Among veterinary species it is significant to mention: *Helleborus bocconeii* L. subsp. *intermedius* (Guss) Greuter & Burdet, for diagnosing and treating pneumonia of horses and bovines; *Teucrium scordium* subsp. *scordioides* (Schreb.) Arcang., as a disinfectant and soothing when applied on wounds of animals; *Sideritis italica* (Mill.) Greuter & Burdet, employed as cicatrizing and hemostatic in the territory of the Madonie Mt.; *Calamintha nepeta* (L.) Savi, whose crushed leaves mixed with olive oil are applied to the areas of body affected by swelling and infection due to bites of poisonous animals and insect and against the parasites of animals.

The data obtained so far highlight the "knowledge" of the traditional uses of plants in the Sicilian rural communities that have been essentially passed down orally. Such knowledge potentially constitutes a source for effective economic enhancement of these species.

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