

1.5. = NEW RECORDS OF MALUS CRESCIMANNOI (ROSACEAE) IN SICILY

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Malus crescimannoi Raimondo (Rosaceae), a tree firstly described from Nebrodi Mts. (N Sicily, Messina Province) (1), has been recently found in the neighboring area of Madonie Mts. (N Sicily, Palermo Province).

The species is originally known from the mountain area near Floresta (Messina), where it is rather common on siliceous soils, within *Quercus cerris* L. and *Fagus sylvatica* L. deciduous communities (1). The same applies to the new sites of Madonie Mts., where the species is found at the edge of *Quercus petraea* (Matt.) Liebl. and *Fagus sylvatica* woods, growing on quartzarenitic substratum at 1200-1800 m of elevation.

These new localities are placed at the south-western limit of *Fagus sylvatica* distribution area, on both north-facing [Contrada Sempria (Castelbuono) and slopes of Madonna dell'Alto (Castellana Sicula)], and south-facing slopes [Locality Prato (Polizzi Generosa)].

In the Madonie Mts. *Malus crescimannoi* comes in contact with the allied species *Malus sylvestris* (L.) Mill., while these two species are very rarely found together on the Nebrodi Mts. In this respect, it must be emphasized that distinctive features of *M. crescimannoi* from *M. sylvestris* mainly concern the leaf outline, which is ovate-lanceolate in the former and ovate in the latter (2), the flower size, smaller in *M. crescimannoi*, and the pome shape, oblong in *M. crescimannoi*, but globose-depressed in *M. sylvestris*. Another relevant feature is the tree foliage shape, which is assurgent in the former species and expanded in the latter one.

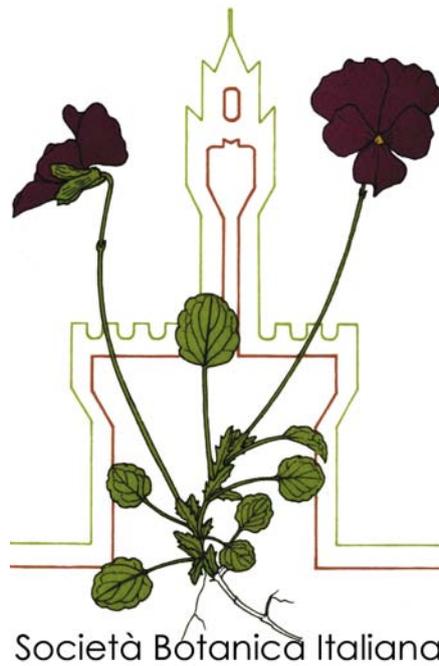
As far as taxonomy is concerned, *Malus crescimannoi* belongs to *Malus* sect. *Malus* and is differentiated from the two related species, *M. sylvestris* and *M. domestica* Borkh., by relevant morphological characters including its ascending branches, the length and thickness of fertile branchlets, leaf shape and serration, petiole length, flower size, with particular reference to petals, which are shorter and differently shaped and coloured, length of stamen filaments in relation to the styles, and both shape and size of the pome, which also shows a longer stalk.

Malus crescimannoi is strictly endemic to northern Sicily. First reports marked it as confined to the submontane belt of the basin of the river Flascio, a tributary of the Alcantara river, in the areas of Floresta and Randazzo, and to the northern slopes of Monte Soro, between 1000 and 1600 m of elevation. In that area, the species is rather well represented, with several different aged individuals and even long-standing specimens more than 300 years old, which often grow together with other Rosaceae such as *Pyrus spinosa* L., *P. pyraeaster* (L.) Du Roi, *Pyrus ciancioi* Marino & al., *Sorbus torminalis* Crantz, *Crataegus monogyna* Jacq., *C. orientalis* M.Bieb, *Prunus spinosa* L. and *Rosa canina* L.

The new records of *M. crescimannoi* from Madonie Mts., where few and much localized individuals occur, enlarge the geographic area of this species from Nebrodi Mts westwards to the whole North Sicilian mountain ranges populated by the common beech. Specimens of *M. crescimannoi* from new localities are deposited in PAL.

1) F.M. Raimondo (2008) Fl. Medit., 18, 5-10

2) F.M. Raimondo, P. Mazzola, A. Pucci (2016) Abstracts 111° Congresso SBI, Roma



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BOOK OF ABSTRACT
KEYNOTE LECTURES, COMMUNICATIONS, POSTERS

