



Flora

Gibraltar Nature Reserve



Gibraltar Candytuft

(Iberis gibraltarica)

The Gibraltar Candytuft is considered to be Gibraltar's national flower. A native of north Africa, Gibraltar is the only location throughout Europe where it can be found growing in the wild.

These flower between March and June growing on stony ground and in limestone crevices. They are often spotted on the eastside cliffs of the Nature Reserve but can sometimes be found along upper parts of the Mediterranean Steps, Martin's Path and Windmill Hill Flats.

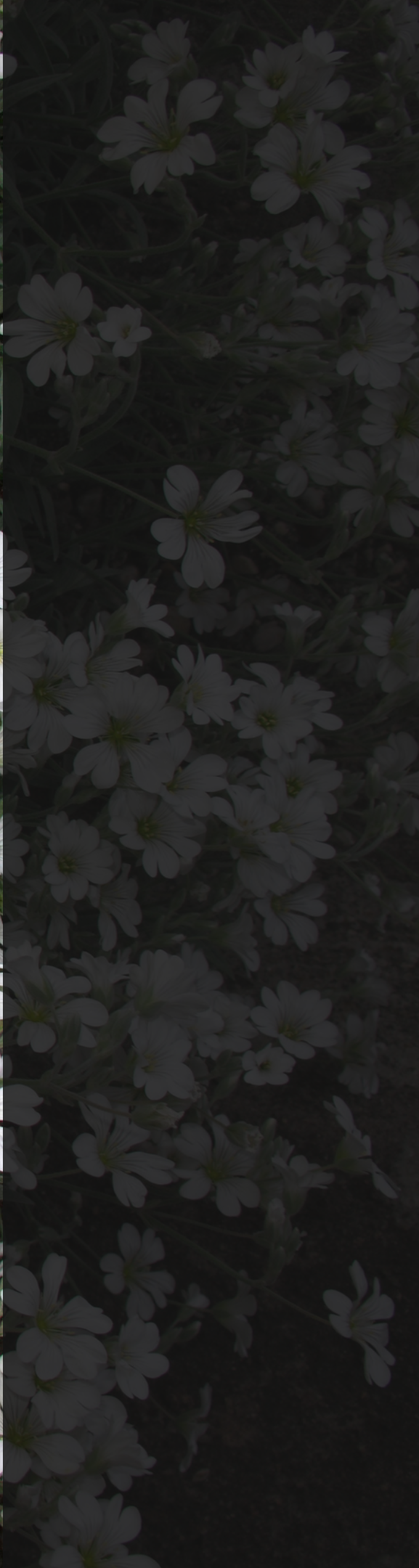
Gibraltar Chickweed

(Cerastium gibraltaricum)

The Gibraltar Chickweed is endemic to Gibraltar, only being found growing in the wild here.

Is typically found along the upper ridge of the Rock, the Rock Gun area, Breakneck Battery, Martin's Path and Mediterranean Steps. A larger population can be found on the North Face below the Upper Galleries tunnel.

Growing on stony ground and in limestone crevices it flowers between March and June. These are white in colour, and 2-2.5cm wide.





Gibraltar Saxifrage

(Saxifraga globulifera gibraltarica)

The Gibraltar Saxifrage plant is considered a herb and its flowers can be seen growing between March and June each year. These flowers are white and grow in clusters of between 3 to 10 flowers. Each flower has 5 petals and measures between 0.8 and 1cm wide. The stems of this plant grow between 5 and 15cm tall and are a reddish colour at the base. It prefers to grow in shady places from cracks in the limestone, on stony surfaces or on old walls. The Gibraltar Saxifrage is not a common plant and this type in particular can only be seen growing in the wild in Gibraltar. This plant can be seen growing in the Rock Gun area and below, including the North Face, the Upper Galleries, and near the top of Mediterranean Steps.



Gibraltar Thyme

(*Thymus wildenowii*)

The Gibraltar Thyme is a small, woody shrub that can grow up to 30cm long and has a very strong and distinct smell. Its leaves grow to approximately 1cm long and flowers appear between April and July. These flowers are small and white to pale violet in colour. Gibraltar Thyme is common and can be found growing throughout the Upper Rock, but especially in the top areas. It prefers to grow from cracks in the limestone in open spaces and alongside paths. Throughout Europe, Gibraltar Thyme can only be seen growing in the wild in Gibraltar.

Gibraltar Campion

(Silene tomentosa)

The Gibraltar Campion is a very rare and endemic species to Gibraltar. A woody perennial, this plant has a history of being sighted along coastal cliffs on the East Side, and in the Rock Gun area.

Known to flower between April and June, the last sighting of this species growing in the wild was in 2008.





Wild Olive

(Olea europaea)

The Wild Olive Tree is an evergreen which means that its leaves remain green all year round. Its leaves grow to between 3 to 6cm long, are leathery to the touch and are dark green in colour on the top side whilst silvery grey underneath. The Wild Olive tree can grow to between 2 and 10m tall and has a rather twisted and greyish-looking bark. Its flowers are small, white in colour and can be seen during April and June every year. This tree also produces a small purplish black fruit which provides food for wintering birds on the Rock as well as being a favourite treat for our Barbary Macaques. The Wild Olive can be seen growing across most of Gibraltar as well as throughout the Mediterranean Region, Portugal and North Africa. A variation of this tree is grown for the purpose of growing olives to eat and olive oil.





Osyris

(*Osyris lanceolata*)

The flowers of the Osyris shrub grow mainly between March and July each year, although flowers can be seen growing all year round. The shrub, or small tree, can grow to 3m tall with many branches. The flowers are yellow-green in colour and only 2 to 3mm wide. Fruit also grows from this shrub and these are orange-red in colour and between 7 and 10mm wide. Osyris is a very common plant and grows throughout the Upper Rock and East Side of Gibraltar. It prefers to grow alongside other plants and can also be seen growing throughout the south-west Mediterranean area and the Balearic and Canary Islands.

Dwarf Fan Palm

(Chamaerops humilis)

Dwarf Fan Palm is a small palm that can grow to a height of 2m or more in Gibraltar. In other countries this plant will only grow to approximately 1m. This plant flowers pale yellow flowers between March to May each year, but the flowers are actually quite small at 4mm wide only. The Dwarf Fan Palm also bears fruit which are between 1 and 4cm long, appearing first yellow in colour, but then turning reddish-brown. It grows in rocky areas, both in open spaces and where small bushes can be found. It is the only native palm in Europe and can also be found in the western Mediterranean, including north Africa. The underground leaf buds are edible ("palmitos"), and the leaves produce a tough fibre used for rope making.





Spiny Broom

(Calicotome villosa)

Spiny broom is a spiny shrub with many branches which can grow to 2.5m tall. Its flowers appear between January and May each year and are yellow in colour. The spines on the Spiny broom can grow to between 1 and 2cm long. Flowers are about 1.5cm long and give off a scent. A very common plant found throughout the Rock, living mainly in shrubby areas or beside paths. It can also be seen growing in the Mediterranean region and in south Portugal.



Mastic Tree

(Pistacia lentiscus)

The Mastic Tree is an evergreen shrub or small tree which can grow up to 5m tall. Its leaves give off a strong smell when crushed. Flowers appear between March and April each year and are red to yellow in colour. The fruit grows to 4mm wide and is fleshy with a thin skin and a central stone containing the seed. The fruit is reddish-brown in colour. The Mastic Tree is a very common plant and can be seen growing throughout most of Gibraltar. It prefers to grow in areas of dense plant growth especially where other evergreen shrubs and small trees also grow. We can also find this tree growing throughout the Mediterranean and in the Canary Islands. The sap from this tree produces a gum known as mastic and can be used to produce a varnish, a liqueur, and a sweetmeat known as masticha. Its fruits produce an oil which can be used for lighting.



Turpentine Tree

(Pistacia terebinthus)


The Turpentine Tree is a deciduous shrub or small tree which can grow to around 4m tall. When the new leaves appear in Spring, they are first red, turning green later. The flowers of the Turpentine Tree are red or brownish and grow in clusters up to 15cm long. The fruit grows to 5mm long and is fleshy with a thin skin and a central stone containing the seed. The fruit is red in colour, later turning brown. This tree is common and can easily be seen growing throughout the Upper Rock. It prefers to grow in areas of dense plant growth especially where evergreen shrubs and small trees also grow. The sap from this tree produces a gum known as Chian turpentine. Its fruit produces an oil which can be used for medicinal purposes.



Wild Rosemary

(Aristolochia baetica)

Rosemary is a woody shrub which can grow to 2m tall. Its leaves grow up to 3cm long, dark green on the topside and densely white hairy underneath. Its flowers appear between October and April each year, and are pale blue to bluish-lilac in colour. They grow up to 1.5cm long. Rosemary can be seen growing along the upper parts of Signal Hill, Charles V Road, East Side sand slopes, and along Mediterranean steps. This shrub prefers to grow in open spaces where evergreen shrubs and other herbs grow. It can be seen growing throughout the Mediterranean region as well as in the Canary Islands. Rosemary is also grown on purpose for its oil which is used in perfumes, soaps, etc., and for medicinal purposes. The leaves of the Rosemary plant are also used in cooking.



Mediterranean Buckthorn

(Rhamnus alaternus)

The Mediterranean Buckthorn is an evergreen shrub, or small tree, that can grow up to 5m tall. This shrub flowers between January and April each year, each flower is about 5mm wide with no petals. The leaves of this shrub grow to between 2 and 6cm long. The upper side of the leaves being shiny and darker green than the underside. The Mediterranean Buckthorn produces fruit during the summer months which look round and red at first, but turn black in colour later. This shrub is very common and can be seen throughout the Rock. It prefers to grow in areas of dense plant growth. We can see the Mediterranean Buckthorn growing throughout the Mediterranean region as well as in the Canary Islands.



Wild Jasmine

(Jasminum fruticans)

Wild Jasmine is a shrub with many branches, which can grow to 1.5m tall. It is an evergreen plant! Its flowers are yellow and up to 1.5cm wide, growing in clusters of between one and 5 flowers. Wild Jasmine is easily found in the Upper Rock. It likes to grow in open spaces, along paths and in areas where you find other low growing bushes and plants. This plant also grows in other Mediterranean countries as well as Portugal.





Honeysuckle

(Lonicera implexa)

Honeysuckle has a distinct sweet smell, with its flowers appearing between March and August every year. These flowers grow into mini trumpet-shaped flowers in groups of 2 or more flowers. They are yellowish in colour with their tube in reddish-purple. Honeysuckle also produces very small red berries. It can be found growing throughout the Upper Rock, especially in areas where there are different plants also growing in the wild. Honeysuckle can also be found growing in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean region.



Shrubby Scorpion Vetch

(Coronilla valentina)

The Shrubby Scorpion Vetch is a small shrub plant that can grow to 1.5m tall. This plant produces flowers between January and May each year which are yellow in colour and between 1 and 1.5cm long. These flowers also give off a fragrant smell. The Shrubby Scorpion Vetch also produces a set of seed pods. When these are ripe, they give the appearance of a scorpion's body and, hence its name. It is a common plant which can be found growing throughout Gibraltar. It prefers to grow in shrubland. The Shurbby Scorpion Vetch can also be found growing in the Mediterranean area and south Portugal.



Wild Madder

(Rubia perigrina)

The Wild Madder plant has many branches and can grow up to 1m tall. Its stems are covered in small pointed thorns and its flowers appear between March and June each year. These are greenish-yellow in colour and about 6mm wide. The Wild Madder also produces fruit, these being black in colour and around 6mm across. This plant is very common and can be found throughout the Upper Rock. It prefers to grow in areas of dense plant growth especially where evergreen shrubs and small trees also grow. Wild Madder can also be seen growing throughout the Mediterranean region, south-west Europe and north-west Africa.

Southern Butcher's Broom

(Ruscus hypophyllum)

Southern Butcher's Broom is a dark green, evergreen, shrubby plant which can grow up to 80cm tall. Its flowers appear between November and June each year. The outer part of the flower has 6 greenish coloured petals with a violet tube-like centre and grow to around 1cm wide. These flowers grow on the flattened leaf-like stems of the plant. Southern Butcher's Broom also grows berries between 1 and 1.5cm long. These are first green when they appear, turning a shiny red later. Its a very common plant found throughout the Upper Rock. It prefers to grow in areas of dense plant growth and beside paths, especially in shady spots. We can also see this plant growing in the south of Spain. The dried branches of this shrub have been used to make brooms.



Mediterranean Broom

(Genista linifolia)

The Mediterranean Broom can be seen flowering between March and June every year. It is a thick bush with no spines and can grow up to 1.5m tall. The leaves are dark green on their top side whilst the underneath of the leaves are a thick, silky and hairy texture. When moved in the wind, it looks like the leaves are actually silver in colour. The flowers of the Teline are yellow. This plant can be seen across most of Gibraltar but prefers to grow beside paths and in areas where you find thick bushes and shade. The Teline can only be seen growing in the wild in western Mediterranean areas.





Common Smilax

(Smilax aspera)

The Common Smilax can grow to 10m or more tall. The stems have a woody feel and the leaves are shiny, growing up to 10cm long each. The flowers appear between September and December each year and are about 1cm wide. They are a creamy white to pinkish in colour and are scented. This plant also bears fruit, berries, around 7mm wide first appearing red but then turning black in colour. The Common Smilax is a very common plant found throughout the Upper Rock. It can also be seen growing throughout the Mediterranean. The young shoots are edible and can be used in salads.

Dutchman's Pipe

(Aristolochia baetica)

Dutchman's Pipe is a plant which flowers between November and May each year. It is known as a climber, attaching itself to trees or walls as it grows. Its twining stems can grow to up to 4m tall. Its flowers are purplish-brown in colour and look like a curved tube, growing 3 to 6cm long. It is very common and widespread throughout the Upper Rock, but can also be found growing in southern parts of Spain and Portugal.



Sweet Bay

(Laurus nobilis)

Sweet Bay is a rare find in Gibraltar. When occurring, it is mainly found in Southern parts of the Upper Rock Nature Reserve, such as the Mount gardens. Flowering between February and April it likes to grow in woods and thickets. The leaves are used for seasoning food and yield Oil of Laurel. They are often dried. Since classical times the leaves have been used for crowning heroes and poets.





Branched Asphodel

(*Asphodelus ramosus*)

The Branched asphodel is another very common plant found growing throughout Gibraltar, although you mainly see them in the Upper Rock area. They grow in clearings and alongside paths. This plant flowers between January and April each year, each flower being between 3 and 4cm wide and white, with a little brown streak, in colour. The plant's stems can grow to around 1.5m tall.

Giant Tangier Fennel

(Ferula tingitana)

The Giant Tangier Fennel plant can grow up to 2m tall and flowers between February and May each year. The flowers are yellow in colour and grow in clusters. It is a very common plant throughout the Rock. It likes growing in open spaces and by paths. The Giant Tangier Fennel can also be found growing in south-east Spain, Portugal and north Africa.





Common Gladiolus

(Gladiolus communis)

The Common gladiolus flowers between March and June every year on stems that can grow up to 1m tall. The leaves grow to between 30cm and 70cm long, whilst the flowers grow to between 4cm and 5cm long. The flowers of this plant are red to reddish-purple in colour and can be easily found in Gibraltar. The Common gladiolus likes to grow in open spaces and beside paths. This plant can be seen growing in the wild in other Mediterranean countries as well.



Galactites

Galactites tomentosus

The Galactites plant flowers between March and June every year, growing to 1m in height. The leaves are dark green with a little white. The flowers are bright pink, sometimes with a little white, and grow up 4cm wide. The Galactites are very common and can be found throughout Gibraltar. This plant likes growing in open spaces, on waste grounds and beside paths. It can also be seen growing throughout the Mediterranean area and north Africa.

Mallow-leaved Bindweed

(Convolvulus althaeoides)

Mallow-leaved Bindweed is a soft-hairy climber, the twining stems growing to over 1m long. It flowers between March and August each year, the actual flowers being pink, funnel-shaped and between 5 and 6cm wide each. Very common and easily spotted throughout the Rock. It grows in open spaces and alongside paths. The Mallow-leaved Bindweed can also be seen growing in the Mediterranean region and south and central Portugal and Spain.



Cut-leaved Lavender

(Lavandula multifida)

This is one of two species of Lavender on the Rock. It can be told from the Toothed Lavender by its broader, fern-like leaves. This is not a common plant in Gibraltar and can mainly be found along Engineer Road, the Jew's gate area, and on the Lower East Side slopes. This plant is a small, aromatic, much branched, grey-green shrub which grows up to 50cm tall. Its leaves are slightly hairy growing to between 1cm and 3cm long. Its flowers grow to 1cm in length and are blue-violet in colour. This plant flowers from December through to June every year.





Toothed Lavender

(Lavandula dentata)

Toothed Lavender is a grey-green shrub that can grow to 80cm tall. It has a very particular smell used widely as perfume, in scented candles, hand soaps, etc. The flowers are small and pale purple to violet in colour, growing into a small cone-like shape, 2 to 5cm long. Flowers grow between December and June every year. Toothed Lavender is very common and can be seen growing in the southern half of the Upper Rock. It likes to grow in open spaces and beside paths, especially where there are cracks in the limestone. This shrub grows naturally in the wild in the Western Mediterranean and North-West Africa. It is also grown in other regions specifically for its scent.

Prasium

(Prasium majus)

Prasium is a small, evergreen shrub which can grow up to 1m tall. Its leaves are dark green and can grow to between 2 and 5cm long. Its flowers can be seen between March and June each year and are white with purple markings. The fruit grows to between 3 and 4mm long and is fleshy with a thin skin and a central stone containing the seed. The fruit looks shiny black when ripe. Prasium is very common and can be seen growing throughout the Upper Rock. It prefers to grow in areas of dense plant growth especially where other evergreen shrubs and small trees also grow. We can also see Prasium growing in the Mediterranean region, South Portugal and Spain.





Giant Squill

(Scilla peruviana)

The Giant Squill is a plant which grows from a bulb with stems between 10 and 40cm long. The bulbs measure around 6cm wide. All the leaves of this plant grow from the base, are shiny and grow to between 40 and 60cm long. Its flowers can be between February and May each year, are blue-violet in colour and grow in clusters of many flowers. Each flower being no bigger than 2cm wide. The Giant Squill is a very common plant and can be seen growing throughout the Rock. It prefers to grow in open spaces or alongside paths. We can also see the Giant Squill growing in the western Mediterranean region, Portugal and the Canary Islands. It is also grown as a plant for gardens.

Narrow-leaved Purple Iris

(Iris filifolia)

The Narrow-leaved Purple Iris is given its name because this plant grows very narrow leaves which can grow to 90cm long. The flowers of this plant appear between March and June each year, each flower growing either alone or in a pair from a single stem. The flowers can grow upto 8cm wide and are violet-purple in colour with a yellow patch on the outer area of the petals. The Narrow-leaved Purple Iris is not easily found in Gibraltar. It prefers to grow from cracks in limestone as well as in open spaces. If you look closely you might be able to spot them along the uppermost parts of the Upper Rock, including the area around Rock Gun, Douglas Path, Martin's Path, Mediterranean Road, Mediterranean Steps and O'Hara's Road. It can also be seen growing in the wild in the south of Spain.





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Department of the Environment,
Sustainability, Climate Change
and Heritage

HM Government of Gibraltar



Information and selected photos sourced from Leslie Linares (GOHNS)