
AN ASSESSMENT ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF *IRIS PSEUDOPUMILA* TINEO [FAM. IRIDACEAE] IN THE MALTESE ISLANDS AND COMPARISON OF ITS FLOWER FORMS. (SUPPLEMENT)

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ABSTRACT

This supplement brings further information over the article published in the Central Mediterranean Naturalist Volume 4 (Issue 4), 2008, by the same author. A small correction must be made to the toponym in Marfa l/o Mellieha given as “Ghajn luta” in the 2008 paper. It should be corrected to “Ghajn Tuta”.

SUPPLEMENT

A small population of *Iris pseudopumila* was reported to be found in limits of Wied Musa (also in Marfa) on the 4th April 2008. At that time the colour of the flower could not be determined since this species flowers between January and March in Malta. During a site visit at the end of January 2009, the flower colour was noted to be violet and hence the taxon of this form corresponds to *I. pseudopumila* f. *violacea* Parl. (Figure 2, left)

Moreover, 4 other populations (total 5) were found in this area. The one reported in 2008 was the smallest population, while the largest population measured 20m x 6m (Figure 1). The two most distant populations were spaced 120m away and the 5 populations formed more or less a rectangular area of 120m by 75m. This must not be interpreted that the species was present throughout all this area. Nevertheless, this scattered population qualifies as the largest population of the violet form in mainland Malta. Additionally, a small population constituting around 50 specimens of the yellow-violet form (*I. pseudopumila* f. *discolor* Fiori) was further found in flower in December 2009 near to the Red Tower of Mellieha, situated about 400m South of the violet population mentioned further above. Marfa is the only location in mainland Malta where the violet form and the yellow-violet form exist so close together.



Figure 1: Population of *Iris pseudopumila* from a garigue close to Wied Musa in Marfa.

Another note-worthy observation is that about the population or *Iris pseudopumila* at ta' Cenc in Gozo which was first found in its vegetative, non-flowering form by Shirley Micallef in the early 1990s (Darrin T. Stevens,

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pers. comm., Oct 2008). Its colour form was since then never been observed and reported. The author found the population in flower in February 2009 and its colour form was new for the Maltese islands. It was the pure yellow form that morphologically corresponds to *I. pseudopumila* forma *lutea* Fiori. (Figure 2, right). The small population occupied less than 1m in diameter. Other populations close to this site were not found during that site visit. This form is common in Sicily and Apulia. The author suggests that now the term ‘yellow form’ should be applied to the pure yellow form (forma *lutea*) while ‘yellow-violet’ should be used to refer the yellow/violet form (forma *discolor*) - Figure 2.



Figure 2: Left: *Iris pseudopumila* forma *violacea* from l/o Wied Musa (Marfa); Centre: forma *discolor* from Ghajn Tuta (Marfa); Right: forma *lutea* from ta' Cenc (Gozo).