

## **Integrated conservation of a rare threatened plant and the community of its wild pollinators: Life+ PP-ICON project (LIFE09/NAT/IT/000212)**

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PP-ICON (Plant Pollinator Integrated CONservation approach: a demonstrative proposal) is a 4-year LIFE+ Biodiversity project focusing on the integrated conservation of the locally rare plant *Dictamnus albus* L. and the community of its pollinators.

Actions focus on habitat management, pollinators safeguard, stakeholders awareness and dissemination. Habitat has been restored in order to establish the best environmental conditions for the persistence of the plant. Effective pollinators of dittany have been identified in order to provide them with suitable nesting sites; some bumble bee species have been artificially reared and re-introduced in the area. The maintenance of pollinators is also favoured by the transplanting of autochthonous nectariferous plant species. Through periodic monitoring of plant fitness and pollinator diversity we assess the success of conservation actions.

After three years of project implementation wood management provided positive response, with an increase of incident light and a recovery of flowering. The introduction of artificial nests was successful for a number of solitary bee species (e.g. Megachilidae, *Xylocopa*), while one bumble bee specie (*Bombus terrestris*) was successfully reared in the laboratory and re-introduced in the area. The planted nectariferous plants were effectively visited by wild pollinators. Monitoring data still indicate a general scarcity of pollinating fauna, with a positive relation between pollinator abundance and flowered species diversity.

The dissemination events, focusing on the relationship between plants and pollinators and on the strategies to conserve them, attracted more and more people, contributing to the public awareness on the important theme of biodiversity conservation.