

VareseNews

The first time for Valcuvia's primrose in an atlas

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When **Alfredo Binda**, three-times world road cycling champion, was abroad and was interviewed he always said that **Valcuvia** was the most beautiful place in the world. However, the champion could not know that even a small flower contributed to that beauty. This is the **Primula della Valcuvia (primula valcuvianensis)**, the only endemic species in the province of Varese, that is present only in the valley so loved by the champion. This flower, which prefers limestone, was described for the first time in detail in the atlas “**Flora between Lake Maggiore and Lake Como**” by **Michael Kleih** from Ticino, published in 2019 by **Nomos Edizioni**.

From the **mountain arnica** to the **rosehip**, from the **allium carinatum** to the **insubric gentianella**, passing through the **geranium purpureum**. **Kleih** catalogues **1,300** wild species in an area that goes from the **Po Valley to the Pre-Alps**, including the lakes of **Lugano, Como and Maggiore** and the southern part of **Canton Ticino (Mendrisiotto and Luganese)**. A book that fills a gap, considering that, until the **eighties** of the last century, the flora of this area was the subject of specialized magazines of botany, not easy for the general public to consult.

The study area taken into consideration by the author was divided into rectangular quadrants, according to the grid of the Austrian botanist **Friedrich Ehrendorfer**, and for each of these quadrants were considered all vascular plants, with the exception of algae, mosses and hepatic. Among the shrubs and trees there are well known plants, such as **ash, chestnut, oak** (four types), and others less known, such as the **mahaleb cherry** (*Prunus mahaleb*), the **hackberry** (*Celtis Australis*) two species of **laburnum**

(Laburnum Anagyroides), the **tree of Judah** (Cercis siliquastrum) and four species of **Daphne** (Daphne).

So many rarities in the book. Among the **marshes** we find the **golden club**, the **fibrine clover**, the **iron**, the **nannufaro**, the **water chestnut** (with edible fruits), the **water lily** and the **Limnanthemio**. And again, the **peony**, the **susinary iris**, several **orchids**, the **Christmas rose**, the **lemon grass**, the **lily martagon** and **St. John's**, the **helianthem** of the **Apennines**.

The effects of **climate change** are also being felt on the **insubric flora** with some typical species from the south expanding, including the **Apulian poppy**, **bearded oats**, **vilucchio maggiore**, Italian lappola and **exotic species** such as **Japan hops** and **Sumatra saeppola**.

book sheet

author Michael Kleih

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di Translated by Viola Raineri (Reviewed by Prof. Robert Clarke)