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IRIS VARIEGATA (IRIDACEAE) IN THE FLORA OF LANDSCAPE RESERVE "CĂRBUNA"

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It is recognized that biological diversity is a natural wealth that underlies the functioning of ecosystems, the provision of ecosystem services essential to human well-being and contributes to the economic development of society.

Iris is the largest genus in the Iridaceae family with up to 300 species. Eight species have been indicated for the flora of the Republic of Moldova.

In recent years, during the planned research within the landscape reservation "Cărbuna" and the adjacent territories, the protected by law in the republic species *Iris variegata* L. – Variegated Iris has been reported. It is a plant with a thick brown rhizome. The stem is usually branched at the top or in the middle, wrapped at the base with the long sheaths of the leaves. Two or three leaves dry out during flowering, and the green ones have a length of 20-30 cm, at the top being narrow and acute. Flowers more frequent in number of 6 on the flowering stem. The leaflets of the back are slightly swollen, acute green or obtuse. External perigonial lacinae rounded at the tips, barbellate, golden- yellow, with narrow, yellow-rimmed edges with dark lilac or light-lilac venation.

According to our investigation in the reserve during 2020-22, the Variegated Iris grows alone or in small groups in clearings or in White oak forest edges, in plots 12, 13, 17, 18 and 19, in assosiation with *Chrysaspis aurea* (Poll.) Greene, *Coronaria coriacea* (Moench) Schischk. et Gorschk., *Cotinus coggygria* Scop., *Crataegus monogyna* Jacq., *Cruciata laevipes* Opiz, *Dianthus armeria* L., *D. carthusianorum* L., *Erysimum cuspidatum* (Bieb.) DC., *Falcaria vulgaris* Bernh., *Ferulago galbanifera* (Mill.) Koch, *Gagea paczoskii* (Zapal.) Ghrossh., *G. villosa* (Bieb.) Duby, *Galatella linosyris* (L.) Reichenb. fil., *Galium mollugo* L., *G. octonarium* (Klok.) Soo, *Hypochaeris maculata* L., *Inula conyza* DC., *Leopoldia comosa* (L.) Parl., *Scorzonera cana* (C.A.Mey.) O.Hoffm., *Silene bupleuroides* L., *Ranunculus illyricus* L., *Salvia nemorosa* L., *S. verticillata* L., *Stachys recta* L., *Teucrium chamaedrys* L. etc.

In this context, the populations identified in the "Cărbuna" Landscape Reserve were monitored, the coordinates were taken and the limiting factors were identified. As conservation measures, we propose to protect the growing sites of this species, monitoring existing populations and recording parameters for the study of their dynamics. The inclusion of this taxon in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova (4th edition) will contribute significantly to the protection and futher distribution of the species both *ex-situ* and *in-situ*.

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