



Scientific Name:

Helichrysum melitense

English:

Maltese Everlasting

Maltese:

is-sempreviva ta'
Għawdex,
is-sempreviva s-safra

Mainly confined to western Gozo, the Maltese Everlasting is a very rare perennial shrub, endemic to the Maltese Islands. It occurs along cliffs and screes within *rdum* communities. The species is also known from southern Gozo, and was also reported from east and south-west Malta, from where it has not been confirmed for decades. Even though the Maltese Everlasting usually grows less than 70cm in height, its greyish-silvery leaves make it visible from far. The foliage has an aromatic curry-like smell, and is well adapted to hot and dry conditions; it is dense and succulent, covered with whitish hairs for water retention. The flower heads, which can be found from March to June, are yellow and made up of tubular florets, clustered at the top of the flowering stalk.

Noting the good status of Maltese cliffs and screes, the population of the Maltese Everlasting appears to be relatively stable, although human influence on accessible parts, cliff collapse, erosion and introduced alien species may negatively affect this species.

The Maltese Everlasting is strictly protected as priority species through national and international legislation, and besides *ex-situ* conservation for ornamental purposes, Special Areas of Conservation have also been designated to further safeguard this species and its habitat.

