

# Discover the Flora of Our Campus


## *Matthiola incana*

*Matthiola incana* is a perennial or biennial ornamental plant belonging to the Brassicaceae family, known for its fragrant flowers. It is also known as "gillyflower" or "stock rose" among the people. This plant is mainly grown for decorative purposes and is distinguished by the variety of colors of its flowers, as well as its pleasant fragrance. Its height can range from 20 cm to 80 cm, depending on the variety. Its stem is erect, slightly hairy, and the leaves are oblong and grayish-green in color. Its flowers form racemose flower groups and are found in white, pink, purple, red and yellowish shades.



The natural distribution area of *Matthiola incana* is mainly considered to be the Mediterranean basin, especially the countries of Southern Europe. It is widely distributed in countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain. Over time, it has been introduced to many countries of the world due to its decorative value and has begun to be widely used in gardening. In modern times, it is cultivated in temperate regions of Asia, North America and even in some subtropical areas, in addition to Europe. In Azerbaijan, it is mainly grown as an ornamental plant in parks and gardens, and its varieties adapted to the climate can be found. *Matthiola incana* loves sunny and open areas, but can also grow in semi-shaded conditions. It needs fertile, well-drained, moderately moist soils for its best

development. Too much moisture and waterlogging of the soil can cause root rot. This plant grows better in cool and temperate climates, while high temperatures and prolonged drought can weaken the flowering period. In terms of temperature, spring and autumn are considered



the most favorable periods for its growth. It is propagated by seeds and is relatively sensitive during the germination stage, so proper care at the initial stage is important.

*Matthiola incana* is mainly an ornamental plant, so it has a positive aesthetic and psychological impact on human life. It plays an important role in beautifying parks and gardens, and has fragrant flowers that have a pleasant effect on people's mood. At the same time, it is ecologically important as a source of nectar for bees and other pollinating insects. This helps to strengthen the pollination process in local ecosystems. It has almost no harmful effects, but when grown as a monoculture on a very large scale, it can compete with native vegetation in some regions. Nevertheless, it is generally considered a useful and safe plant for the ecosystem.

*Matthiola incana* is mainly used in ornamental gardening. It occupies a wide place in the design of parks, gardens, alleys and landscape design. It is also very valuable as a cut flower and is used in bouquets, wedding and other ceremonial decorations. Due to its fragrance, it also has a certain history of use in the cosmetics and perfumery industry, although its use in this area is limited. The longevity of its flowers makes it particularly valuable in floristry. In addition, some of its varieties are used in scientific breeding studies to study genetic diversity.

*Matthiola incana* has the property of emitting a stronger fragrance at night. This property helps it attract pollinating insects, especially some species of moths that are active at night. The plant was named in honor of the 16th-century Italian botanist Pietro Andrea Mattioli. The color variety of its flowers has been increased through selection, and hundreds of decorative varieties have been obtained today. In the Middle Ages, this plant was known as the "noble fragrant flower" in European gardens and was grown especially in palace gardens. In modern times, it is one of the most chosen plants to create a romantic and classic look in landscape design.

Overall, *Matthiola incana* is a plant that occupies an important place in the world of gardening with both its aesthetic beauty and its ecological and practical value. It is easy to grow in suitable conditions and has a high ability to adapt to different climates. These characteristics make it attractive to both professional landscape designers and amateur gardeners.

