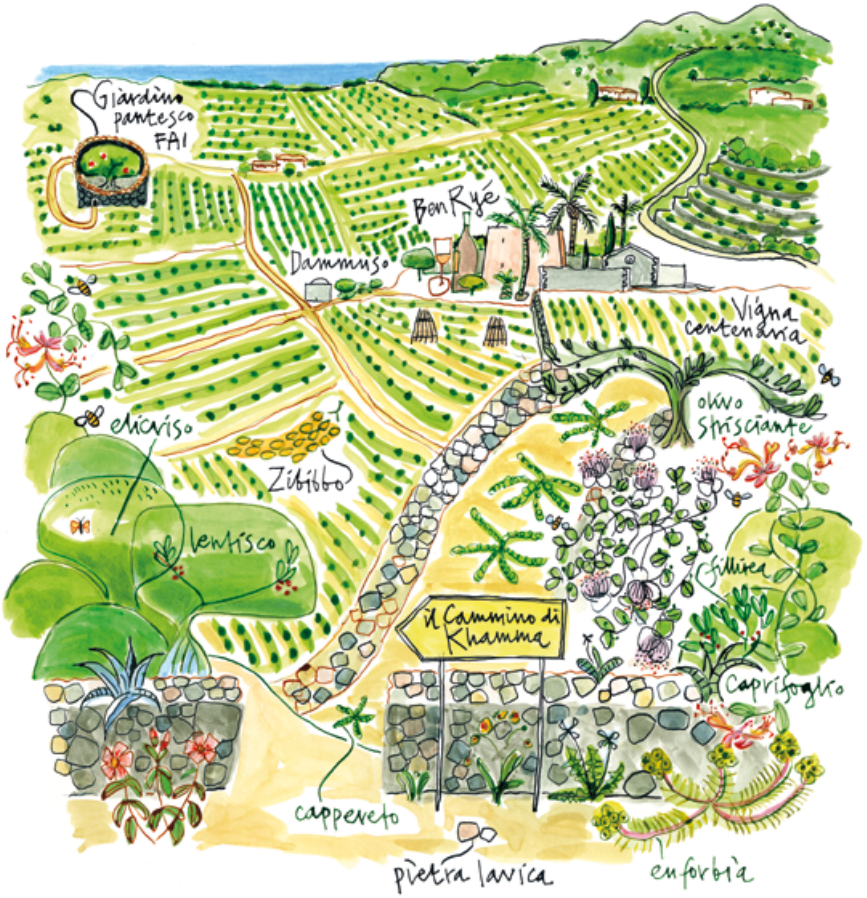
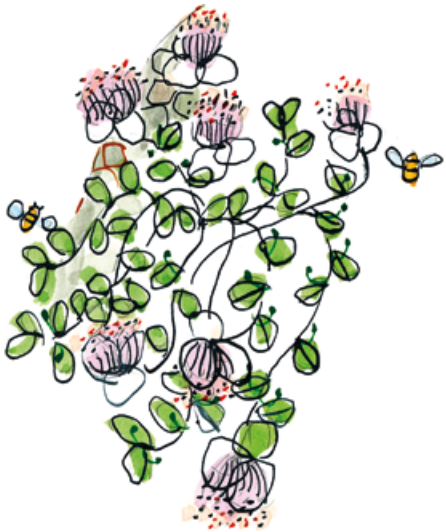
The Pantelleria Estate & il cammino di Khamma



DONNAFUGATA®

Amidst the harsh nature of Pantelleria, a volcanic island lying between Sicily and Africa, Donnafugata has developed a vine growing project of heroic nature. A magical place enclosed in the setting of a natural amphitheatre, whose horizon is traced by the sea.



Il cammino di Khamma (The Khamma trail)

The mosaic of vegetation on the island of Pantelleria today is clearly defined by cultivated land. The agricultural landscape, with its olive groves, caper groves and vineyards, is in a close symbiosis with the natural landscape, from which it draws enormous benefits. This relationship is hugely important, and in fact the complexity of the natural surroundings helps agriculture, which by its very nature is "simple". The services provided by natural ecosystems range **from soil conservation, pollination**, nutrient cycling, natural pest control and are also important for habitat conservation, as well as

weather and climate regulation. The quality of the landscape also benefits greatly in terms of **beauty** from the interaction between nature and agriculture. Agriculture needs to strive for complexity in order for its imprint to be “light”, as in natural systems, where the dense network of relationships between the innumerable components is fundamental to its balance. The mindful farmer understands the value of complexity and respects ecosystems, from which he or she appreciates the importance of the relationships between organisms, organic matter and soil.

The Cammino di Khamma (Khamma Trail), which winds its way through Mediterranean maquis, centuries-old olive trees and capers, exemplifies the

successful interaction between the agricultural and natural landscape and demonstrates that respecting the environment is beneficial not only for the farm but for the entire island.

Caper
[*Capparis spinosa subspecie rupestris*]

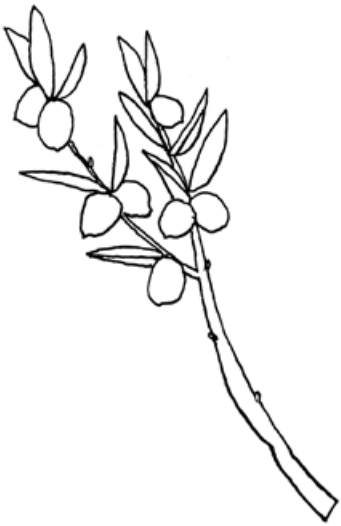
In addition to vineyards, the **cultivation of capers**, a species that resists water stress, is also important on Pantelleria. They are actually shaped like a small sapling, with the trunk sunk into special holes dug in the ground, able to capture and make use

of the very scarce rainfall. Caper flowers are very beautiful: white with numerous purple stamens, but few are seen in cultivation because it is the unopened **flower bud** that is used in cooking after being cured in salt.

Harvesting is done by hand and in stages throughout the summer, leaving the flower buds that have not reached a sufficient degree of maturity on the plant. The farmers return to the same plant every 8-10 days, depending on the weather conditions.

The caper fruits, the *cucunci*, or caper berries are oblong berries with numerous seeds that are used as pickles. But this is recent history as the farmer who produced *cucunci* did so because he had failed to produce capers.

Biancolilla olive tree [*Olea Europea*]

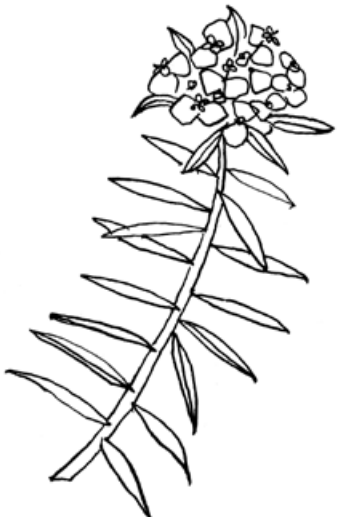


The olive tree is also of interest, with its distinctive growth pattern: from the trunk, three to four very long, radial branches radiate out, creeping along the ground. In this way, the trees become able to withstand the strong winds, which

are very frequent on the island. The olive trees are often no more than a metre high and occupy an area of a few dozen square metres. **The “creeping” olive grove** is the result of traditional pruning, which involves cutting the stem a few centimetres above the ground to encourage the growth of the best side branches outwards; in addition, to give the tree its prostrate shape, **stones are tied** to the ends of the young branches to force them to grow parallel and close to the ground. Only the **Biancolilla**, an indigenous Sicilian oil cultivar whose name derives from the colour the fruits take on when ripe (white and lilac), is grown in Pantelleria olive groves. It is a cultivar that is **resistant**

to the scarce availability of water, which makes it suitable for Pantelleria, mainly due to a particularly expansive and deep root system capable of exploring a large volume of soil to find water.

Euphorbia *[Euphorbia dendroides]*



The genus name derives from Euphorbus, physician to King Juba II of Mauritania (1st century BC - 1st century AD), who, according to Pliny, discovered euphorbia and its medicinal properties. The specific name (dendroides), from the Greek

dendron (“tree”), refers to the plant’s tree-like appearance. The branches, if broken, secrete a white latex that is irritating on contact with the skin (in some parts of the Mediterranean it was used by fishermen to stun fish). In winter and spring it forms green spherical cushions. In the summer the plants take the form of leafless, skeletal-looking shrubs. The tree-like euphorbia is the only Italian representative of an ancient group of tall-shrub euphorbias. It usually grows in the warmer areas of Mediterranean maquis, such as Pantelleria. It acts as a pioneer species in low-competition or frequently burnt environments, often forming stands in which it becomes the dominant species.

Mastic tree
[*Pistacia lentiscus*]

A very frequent species along the Cammino di Khamma (Khamma Trail) but becomes less common at higher altitudes, it is an evergreen, densely branched shrub with leathery leaves. The male and female plants are distinct and grow separately; on the female plant, the flowers develop into fruits that are red at first and turn black when ripe.

The mastic tree has numerous resin ducts under the bark. The resin has the property of whitening teeth and purifying the breath, characteristics also known to ancient Arab medicine. In his work “De Materia Medica”, Dioscorides recommended chewing mastic in cases of indigestion, coughs and as an aid in oral hygiene, but also for cosmetics. Galen recommended it for inflammation of the digestive system and for its emollient properties.

Fillirea
[*Phillyrea latifolia*]

It is a shrub or small tree species in the Oleaceae family. The leaves are persistent and opposite, oval and elongated, leathery, dark green above and silvery below. The flowers are dioecious, small, white, collected in short axillary clusters. The fruit is a small, globular, blackish-blue drupe. Mock privet was used in the past

as a graft carrier for olive trees to which it gave greater hardiness and resistance. It is a very long-lived plant and has an exceptional ability to reproduce from the stump so that it recovers quickly if damaged by fire. In the past, the **bark** was used to dye textiles yellow. The leaves of Phillyrea latifolia contain a glucoside (phyllirin) with tonic-astringent and diuretic properties.

Honeysuckle
[*Lonicera implexa*]

It is a highly branched evergreen shrub. The genus name *Lonicera* was given by Linnaeus as a dedication to the German physician and botanist Adam Lonitzer (Latinised as *Lonicerus*, 1528-1586), author of a treatise on medicinal herbs. *Implexa* derives from *implecto*, meaning

entangled, a term that describes the plant's appearance well. Honeysuckle grows in open holm oak forests and Mediterranean maquis, from sea level to around 800 m. It grows in association with shrubs that act as supports, especially mastic trees (as in our case). It flowers in May-June.

White hedge-nettle [*Prasjum majus*]

A small perennial, aromatic plant (very rich in vitamin E), belonging to the Lamiaceae family (to which lavender, rosemary, etc. belong). It is a **melliferous plant** and therefore very useful in increasing bee populations. The twigs of Prasium majus were used in the past in agriculture as ties to

fasten young tree plants to stakes. Its common name in Italian is *Tè siciliano* (“Sicilian tea”), which suggests that it was used, particularly in the past, as a substitute for traditional tea, above all by those who, for economic reasons, could not afford it. The way Prasium majus is prepared is much the same as the usual teas. The leaves are also used for infusions and decoctions for their diuretic properties and to combat kidney stones.

Spiny broom [*La Calicotome villosa*]

It is a typical plant of garrigue and Mediterranean maquis environments, where it grows in association with mastic trees, wild olive trees and mock privet, especially along sunny slopes, just like those along our route. It is recognisable by its spiny branches that are striated longitudinally,

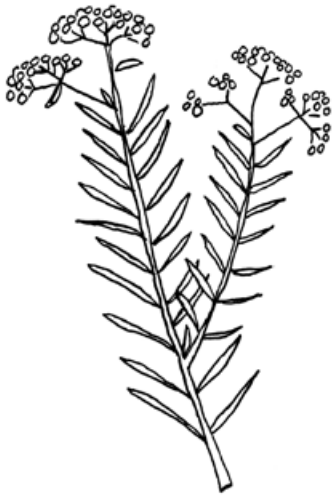
with acute diverging spines. The leaves are silvery-white on the underside and almost hairless on the upper side. It has a yellow corolla. The flowering period is between March and June. The fruits are 5-6 mm wide and 30 mm long legumes covered with long white hairs.

Flax-leaved daphne [*Daphne gnidium*]

It is a typical perennial Mediterranean maquis species, which normally does not grow beyond a metre in height. This shrub has erect, leafy stems and dark-coloured bark. In the past it was used as a **dye plant**, with the leaves or branches being

processed to obtain yellow to brown colours. Due to its antiseptic properties, the plant was also used to disinfect and preserve wool. Daphnes have been known since antiquity for their pharmacological qualities, but their use is very risky and often mere contact with the skin causes redness and blisters. Flowering period: July-September.

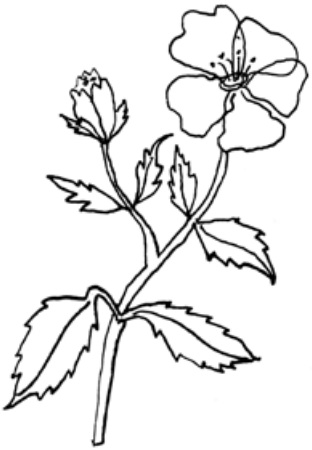
Pantelleria helichrysum [*Helichrysum errerae*]



This variant of helichrysum is a small perennial plant endemic to the island. Its young geological age and geographical isolation in the Sicilian Channel explain the small number of Pantelleria endemics. Helichrysum has ashy grey leaves and yellow

flower heads carried in corymbs (inflorescences) that can be seen from spring to summer. Its name derives from the Greek words *helios* (“sun”) and *chrysos* (“gold”).

Rock rose [*Cistus*]



At the edges of the area where tall shrub species (mastic tree, mock privet, etc.) prevail, often

where the soil is drier, you can find rock roses, small shrubs typical of the Mediterranean maquis, with showy, melliferous flowers.
It is possible to spot ***Cistus creticus*** - pink rock rose (a flower with pink petals), ***Cistus salvifolius*** - sage-leaved rock rose (a flower with white petals, yellow at the base) and ***Cistus monspeliensis*** - Montpellier cistus (a flower with white petals). These are so-called pyrophytic species: their seeds germinate much faster after the passage of fire, which is why they take advantage of the other species after fires. In spring - along the route - one can see the beautiful flowering of *Antirrhinum majus*, known as snapdragons because of the particular structure of the flower

which, when squeezed sideways with the fingers, looks like jaws opening and closing.

The Khamma Observatory

One glance and it is immediately clear that the agricultural landscape, with its olive groves, caper groves and vineyards, carries on a continuous dialogue with the natural landscape. Here, human activity has had to contend with the irregularity of the terrain and the force of the elements: in doing so, it has been able to create something extraordinary.

The Gardens of Donnafugata: a project to enhance biodiversity

Sustainability is a value that forms part of Donnafugata's DNA. For over thirty years, the company has been committed to producing wines that respect both the environment and humanity, convinced that caring for the earth is caring for the quality of production, encouraging a mutually beneficial relationship between wine and the plant world. Since 2008 Donnafugata has been a supporter of **FAI - Fondo per l'Ambiente Italiano** (National Trust for Italy), with which it shares the mission of preserving the Italian landscape. The decision to create gardens and green spaces and to contribute to the protection of

natural areas is a cultural gesture, to restore **biodiversity** and **beauty** to the landscape. A choice that takes practical form not only in the Randazzo estate and the unique landscape that surrounds it, but also in a series of projects conceived specifically for each of the estates. The restoration of a **Giardino Pantesco** (Pantellerian Garden) in the contrada Khamma winery, in Pantelleria; the **Contessa Entellina garden**, an embroidery conceptualised by Gabriella Anca Rallo's green thinking to connect the estate with the agricultural landscape in which it is immersed; the creation of **aromatic herb** tubs in the Acate winery, a perfect example of integration between the agricultural and natural landscape; and finally, the desire to house,

in fall, a **collection of ancient Kolymbethra citrus fruits** in the historic Marsala wineries. Thanks to this attention to green spaces, a visit to one of Donnafugata's five estates is an experience that involves several senses: the tasting exploration of the wines and flavours of the land is accompanied by a visual and olfactory discovery of nature that becomes memory, emotion and aesthetic gratification.

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Artwork Julia Binfield

La visita in una tenuta Donnafugata si configura come un'esperienza che coinvolge più sensi: all'esplorazione gustativa dei vini e dei sapori del territorio si affianca una scoperta visiva e olfattiva della natura che diviene ricordo, emozione e appagamento estetico.

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