

20th EDGG Field Workshop: Dry Grasslands of the Maritime and Ligurian Alps (Italy), 28 May – 6 June 2025 Second Call

Introduction

The 20th EDGG Field Workshop will take place in the south-westernmost part of the Alps, covering the **Italian Maritime and Cottian Alps** (Valle Maira, Valle Stura, Valle Gesso) and the **Ligurian Alps** (Valle Tanaro). This workshop continues the series of EDGG Field Workshops dedicated to the dry grasslands of the Alpine Arc, following successful expeditions in:

- 11th Field Workshop in 2018, Austria, Eastern Alps (Magnes et al. 2021)
- 12th Field Workshop in 2019, Switzerland, Central Alps (Bergauer et al. 2022)

- 17th Field Workshop in 2023, NE Italy & Switzerland, Southeastern Alps (Angelini et al. 2024)
- 18th Field Workshop in 2024, Italy & France, Southwestern Alps (Klopsch et al. 2025; Terracina et al. 2025)
- 19th Field Workshop in 2024, Switzerland, Ticino Region (Dengler et al. 2024)

This year's workshop aims to finalize this series, complementing the already comprehensive dataset with data from this unique region, where Mediterranean and Temperate influences converge, shaping a diverse mosaic of dry grassland communities and presenting several grassland types, absent in other areas of the Alps.



Figure 1. View of the Maira valley; in the foreground, rocky slopes with *Stipa pennata* aggr. and *Genista cinerea*. Photo: P. Rosso.

Study area

The 20th Field Workshop will focus on sampling the most southwestern part of the Alps, specifically in the Italian Maritime and Cottian Alps (Maira and Grana Valley, Stura Valley, Gesso Valley) and the Ligurian Alps (Tanaro Valley) (Figs. 1, 2). These valleys vary in size, ranging from 359 km² (Gesso Valley) to 739 km² (Maira Valley), with annual temperatures between -4 °C and 13 °C, and annual precipitation (both rain and snow) from 726 mm to 1790 mm (Fig. 3). The highest altitude in these areas reaches 3,314 m a.s.l. at the Chambeyron Group, in the upper part of the Maira Valley and on the border with France. Other relevant mountains belong to the Argentera massif, in the Gesso Valley, above 3,200 m a.s.l.

Situated in the most southwestern part of the Alps, the Maritime and Ligurian Alps are home to the most thermophilic refuge areas, leading to exceptional plant diversity and a high rate of endemic species. Their lower latitude and proximity to the Mediterranean Sea contribute to the presence of numerous Mediterranean species, some of which survived the glaciation periods, while others colonized the region afterward (Figs. 4, 5). The high endemism rate is also due to the high geological diversity. Gneiss and granite are dominant in the higher Maritime Alps and lower Cottian Alps, while the higher peaks of the Ligurian and Cottian Alps and the lower parts of the Maritime Alps have carbonatic rocks, mostly limestone and calc-schists. Also, ultramafic rocks can be frequently found in the Cottian Alps.

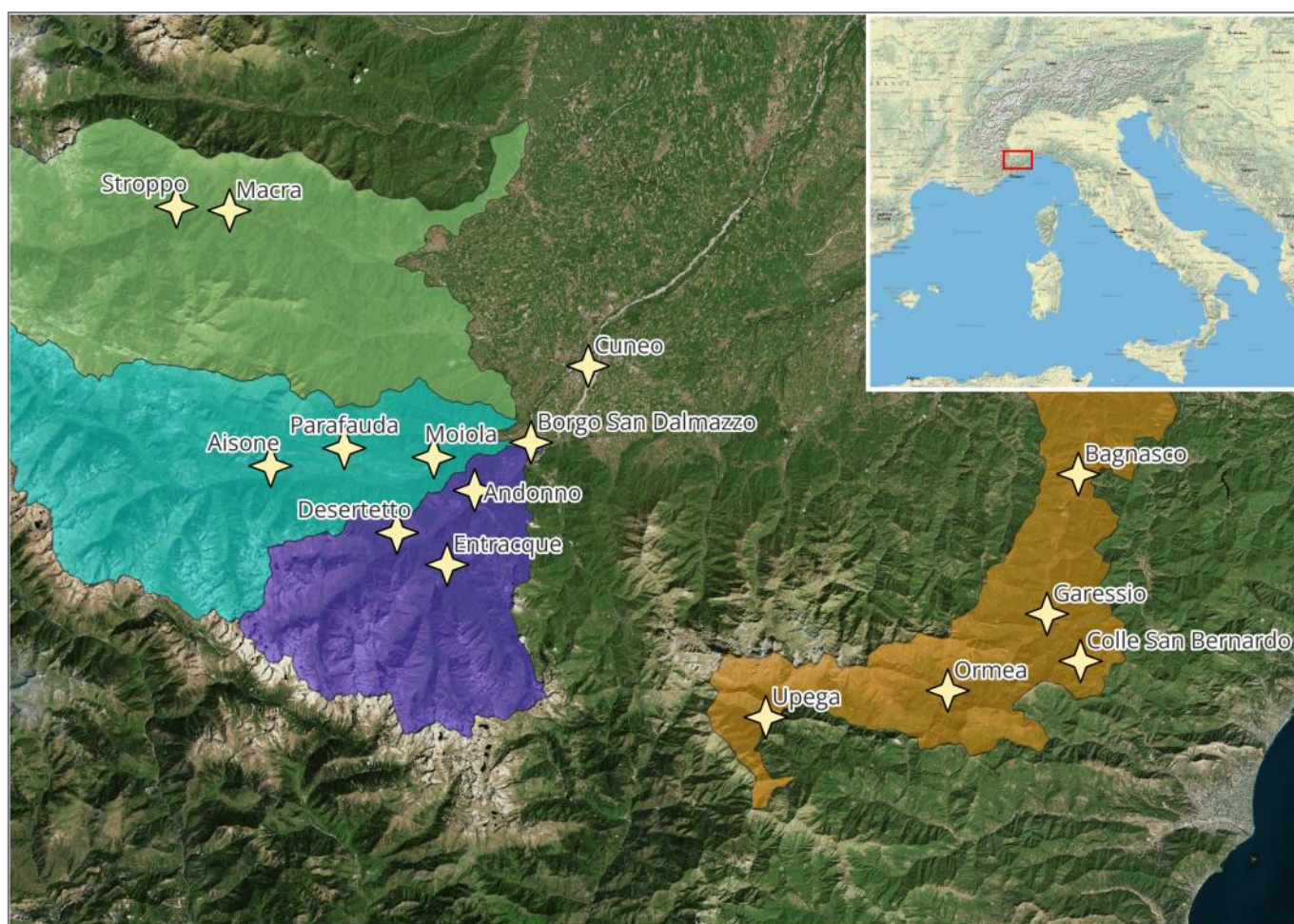


Figure 2. Map with approximate locations of the 20th EDGG Field Workshop in Italy (28 May – 6 June 2025).

Relevant endemic species that could be found in dry grasslands are: *Brassica repanda*, *Campanula bertolae*, *Erysimum burnatii*, *Euphorbia valliniana*, *Galeopsis reuteri*, *Gentiana ligustica*, *Jovibarba allionii*, *Knautia mollis* and *Potentilla valderia*.

The workshop will focus on sampling dry grasslands and sub-Mediterranean scrub communities in various habitats, predominantly on limestone but also on dry siliceous substrates. The sampling sites will include mesoxeric and xeric

grasslands dominated by *Bromopsis erecta* and *Stipa pennata* aggr. (habitat 6210*), sub-Mediterranean scrub with *Genista cinerea* (potentially habitat 5330), and screes with *Achnatherum calamagrostis* (habitat 8130).

Given that phytosociological studies in the Italian Maritime Alps are outdated, one of the workshop's objectives is to revise some complex transitional units traditionally placed in the classes *Festuco-Brometea*, *Thlaspietea rotundifolii*, *Sedo-Scleranthetea*, and *Festuco-Ononidetea*.

Short itinerary of the Field Workshop

Approximate sampling locations are shown in Fig. 2.

Day 1: 28 May

Meeting at Fermi Torino Metro station at 13:00 and transportation to our accommodation in Ormea (CN). Joint sampling with introduction of the EDGG Biodiversity Plots sampling methodology (Colle San Bernardo).

Day 2: 29 May

Sampling in Middle Tanaro Valley (Ormea, Garessio, Bagnasco).

Day 3: 30 May

Sampling in Higher Tanaro Valley (Upega). Moving to the second accommodation in Borgo San Dalmazzo.

Day 4: 31 May

Sampling in Lower Gesso Valley (Desertetto, Saben, Andonno).

Day 5: 1 June

Higher Gesso Valley (Entracque).

Day 6: 2 June

Higher Stura Valley.

Day 7: 3 June

Lower Stura Valley and Grana Valley.

Day 8: 4 June

Higher Maira Valley.

Day 9: 5 June

Lower Maira Valley.

Day 10: 6 June

The workshop will finish at 10:00 in Cuneo or 12:00 in Torino. Optional: Half-day sampling riparian grasslands in Cuneo.

Support information

The workshop will be supported by the Department of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences (DISAFA) of the University of Turin and the Alpi Marittime Protected Areas, which manages two parks, eight reserves, and twenty Natura 2000 sites across the southwestern Italian Alps, spanning from the Maira Valley to the Tanaro Valley. The Alpi Marittime Protected Areas also manage two botanical stations hosting more than 500 spontaneous plant species, 93 of which are considered extremely rare for the Ligurian and Maritime Alps.

Technical information

Accommodation and travelling

We will stay at two different accommodations throughout the Field Workshop: Albergo Italia in Ormea (CN) and Hotel Primula, Beguda (Borgo San Dalmazzo, CN).

For transportation, we will use a 9-seat minibus and private cars.

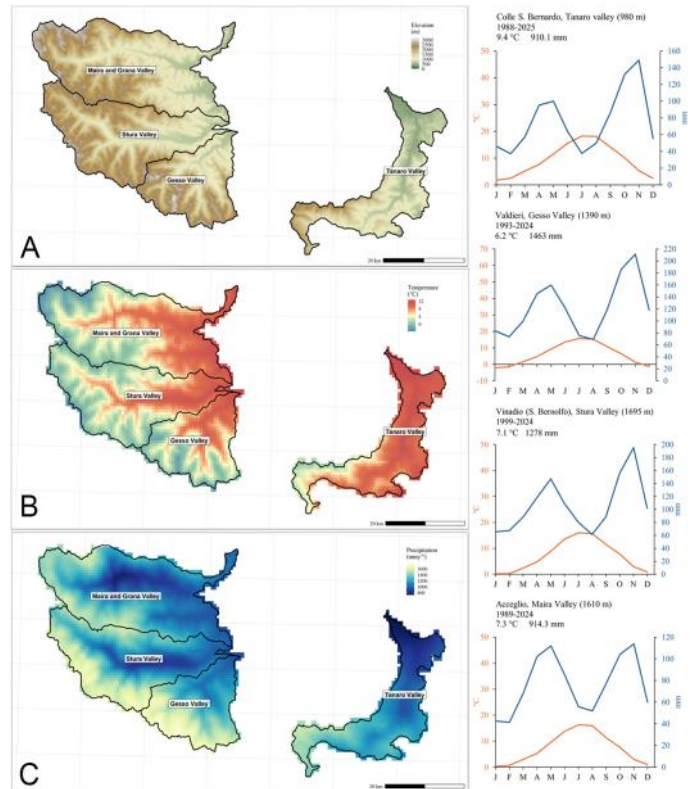


Figure 3. Left: Elevation (A), mean annual temperature (B), and annual precipitation (C) of the selected valleys. Elevation obtained from the Digital Elevation Model (DEM) provided by Tintaly (Tarquini et al. 2023) with a spatial resolution of 10 m. Annual precipitation and mean annual temperature obtained from the CHLSA dataset (<https://chelsa-climate.org>) with a temporal coverage from 1981 to 2010 and spatial resolution of 1 km. Right: Climate diagrams of the Maira Valley (Acceglio), Stura Valley (Vinadio), Gesso Valley (Valdieri) and Tanaro Valley (Colle S. Bernardo). Data are from ARPA Piemonte meteorological stations.

Travel information

The Field Workshop will begin in Torino, Italy, at 13:00 on 28 May 2025. The exact meeting location will be provided to registered participants closer to the start of the event. The workshop will end at Cuneo (at 10:00) or Torino (12:00) on 6 June 2025. On the last day, we also plan optional sampling of riparian dry grasslands near Cuneo.

Fees

The fees cover all costs of meals, travel, and accommodation, starting at 13:00 on 28 June and ending at 10:00 (Cuneo) or 12:00 (Torino) on 6 July. The fees for full participation are as follows:

- 650 EUR for students (including PhD students) who are IAVS members

- 750 EUR for postdocs, senior scientists, or other regularly employed persons who are IAVS members
- 750 EUR for students (including PhD students) who are not IAVS members
- 850 EUR for postdocs, senior scientists, or other regularly employed persons who are not IAVS members

Payment must be made directly into the bank account before the start of the Field Workshop. By request, it is possible to pay in cash on the first day of participation (for people who do not have access to money transfer). Bank account details will be provided to registered participants upon confirmation of participation. The fees include a small buffer, so if costs are lower than expected, some refund may be possible. In the event of cancellation, we will refund the fees to the extent that the cancellation results in a cost reduction.

How to apply

To apply to participate, please submit a motivation letter (about 200 words) to the Field Workshop coordinators, Denys Vynokurov (denys.vynokurov@gmail.com) and Jürgen Dengler (dr.juergen.dengler@gmail.com), with the subject line “EDGG Field Workshop”.

In the letter, explain why you are interested in participating and how you plan to contribute to the success of the workshop, both during and after the event. We expect all participants to contribute equally to sampling, plant determination, sample processing, data postprocessing, and related tasks. In general, only EDGG members can participate in EDGG Field Workshops. However, non-members can freely join the organization.

The application deadline is **21 March 2025 (Friday, 24:00)**. Confirmation of participation and feedback on travel grant applications will be provided no later than 15 April 2025. If the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, participants will be selected based on the motivation letters and the competences they offer.

In the case of oversubscription, we may offer participation in the second Field Workshop (Archipelago Sea, Finland, 28 June – 6 July 2025), if places are still available. Please indicate in your registration whether you would be willing to participate in the second workshop instead, in this case.

Preference will be given to those who are able to identify bryophytes and lichens or analyze the collected soils. For those who have already participated in at least three EDGG Field Workshops, the motivation letter is not required.



Figure 4. *Anthyllis montana* is typical for rocky grasslands on calcareous substrates (Tanaro valley). Photo: P. Rosso.

Along with your motivation letter, please include the following information in your application email:

- Name
- Age
- Professional status (e.g., PhD student, postdoc, professor, unemployed)
- Affiliation
- Address
- Mobile phone number (for contact purposes, e.g., if you get lost in the field)
- Dietary requirements (no/vegetarian/other: please specify)
- Willingness to join EDGG (if you are not already a member)
- Travel grant application (Yes/No)
- Willingness to transfer to the second Field Workshop (Archipelago Sea, Finland) in case of oversubscription.

Experts in other taxonomic groups, such as grasshoppers, leafhoppers, spiders, butterflies, fungi, or soil metagenomics, are also welcome to apply if they are willing and able to carry out sampling that allows for joint analysis with vegetation diversity data. Such applicants are asked to discuss the potential sampling design with the Field Workshop coordinators, Denys Vynokurov and Jürgen Dengler, prior to applying.

Travel grants

A limited number of travel grants (approximately 1750 EUR in total) will be available, provided by our parent organization, IAVS, exclusively for IAVS members in 2025. Priority for travel grants will be given to the following groups:

- a) Students and applicants from low-income countries
- b) Active participants of previous Field Workshops
- c) Individuals who have agreed to organize future Field Workshops or contribute additional expertise, such as soil analysis, or the sampling and identification of taxonomic groups other than vascular plants.



Figure 5. *Linum appressum* is typical for dry grasslands (Macra, Maira valley). Photo: P. Rosso.

The final decision on grant allocation will depend on the combination of these factors. The amount awarded to each grantee is not fixed; it will be based on the available funds, the demonstrated need of the applicant, and their relevance to the success of the Field Workshop. Due to the limited funds, travel grants will most likely cover only part of the registration fee. In exceptional cases, they may also cover travel expenses to attend the event.

IAVS grantees are required to actively contribute to the success of the Field Workshop, both during and after the event. Post-Field Workshop tasks typically include data entry, sample analysis, and the identification of plant specimens. Failure to fulfill these responsibilities may result in ineligibility for future travel grants for EDGG events.

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