

Friday, March 1, 2024

Matthiola maderensis

Scientific name: *Matthiola maderensis* Lowe

Family: *Brassicaceae*

Common name: Madeiran Sea Sock, Madeira wallflower

This matthiola is a herbaceous plant native to Madeira; it is said to be endemic because it is found exclusively on that archipelago, where it grows on rocky outcrops and cliffs near the sea. It flowers from February through to summer.

It has a very short, straight stem, with the leaves clustered at the base; they become smaller as they move away from the base. They are usually

between 5 and 25 cm long and up to 5 cm wide, lanceolate in shape and greyish-green in colour. The flowers are fragrant, purplish in colour, rarely white, and clustered in inflorescences at the ends of the branches, making the plant highly ornamental when in bloom. The fruits are cylindrical, measuring 1.5 cm.

The species has woody stems and is covered in glandular hairs, adaptations that help it survive long periods of drought. It produces toxic compounds, which keep herbivores at bay, but care must be taken if you wish to grow it at home. It is a plant that requires no special care.

It was named in honour of Pietro Andrea Mattioli, a 16th-century Italian physician and botanist, author of the first botanical works of the Modern Age. In Portuguese, it is known as goivo-da-rocha. There are a few specimens in the plot dedicated to Madeira in the Rocalla garden, which features plants from the Mediterranean climate, at La Concepción.

