

# International Rock Gardener

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The Scottish Rock Garden Club

July 2017

# ---International Rock Gardener---

July 2017



We begin this month with some “commercial messages” – as they say on television. As readers will surely be aware, it is the habit of the SRGC to share information freely and as widely as possible - as the many resources provided on the SRGC website and forum attest. Nevertheless, the provision of such information to the public does have a financial cost – so if you might care to join the SRGC as a member or simply make a donation to sustain our work, your support will be much appreciated. If you are content to access all your SRGC membership benefits online (for example, the twice yearly journal, The Rock Garden and the Seed Exchange) then e-subscriptions are available for only £10 per annum. Information about all categories of membership may be found

[on the website](#). The Club sends thanks to all Members and those who contribute so generously to our efforts in so many ways.

Erratum: In IRG 90 page 27, the island source for the photographs was Samos, not Chios as stated.

News about some SRGC events in the coming months.....

## **SRGC Summer Event: FLOWERS OF THE HILLS & MOUNTAINS 19 August 10am – 4pm Dunblane**

**Venues:** The Christian Fellowship Hall and Victoria Halls, Dunblane

**Two talks by Kenton J Seth, Paintbrush Gardens, Grand Junction, Colorado, USA**

11am The American crevice garden

2.30pm Plant hunting in the Wild West – things you may grow and adventures in chasing seed

Display of rock garden plants, flowers, foliage and fruits

Seedling and plant exchange

Plant Sales

## **LATE BULB DAY IN ABERDEEN 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017 8am – 4pm**

**A Celebration of Autumn Plants and Bulbs**

Ruthrieston West Church Hall, 199 Broomhill Road, Aberdeen AB10 7LU

10-11 am: Matthew Topsfield. In the footsteps of John Blanchard

12-1 pm: Ian Young. Growing Narcissus and other bulbs

2-3 pm: Dave Millward. Autumn bulbs of southern Turkey and Jordan

### **Plant display**

Members are asked to bring as many autumn flowering bulbs and plants, including shrubs and trees to make the display. Please bring as many plants as possible, either in pots or as cut stems in vases. Plants will be grouped into classes on the day but there are no restrictions as to how many plants an individual can display.

There are no trophies, prizes or points awarded.

Plant sale: Contributions of seed, plants, corms and bulbs to the 50:50 sales will be most welcome.

Photographic and other exhibits:

Display space will be available for photographs. Please contact Mike Hopkins on 01467 642 429 before the event to discuss your requirements.

[Rumbling Bridge Nursery](#) will have plants for sale.



## **SRGC DISCUSSION WEEKEND, Peebles 2017**

A warm welcome from SRGC awaits at the [Macdonald Cardrona Hotel](#), Golf and Spa in Peebles for the annual Discussion Weekend, Friday 13th until Sunday 15th October, 2017. Bookings are now open and close on 7<sup>th</sup> August.

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## Programme for the weekend:

Friday 13 October

The Jim Archibald Lecture: Rod Leeds 'The winter wonderland of bulbs'

Small bulb exchange

Saturday 14 October

Morning: optional activities; Show; Plant sales

Afternoon:

The John Duff Lecture: Sid Clark 'European Primulas'

Henrick Zetterlund 'My time at Gothenburg'

Harry Jans 'Around the world with alpine plants'

Gala Dinner, presentation of show trophies, and plant auction

Sunday 15 October

Morning:

Martin Gardner 'The unique flora of Chile'

Jean Gabriel 'The Lautaret Alpine Botanical Garden'

Afternoon:

The William Buchanan Lecture: Tony Hall 'The central and southern Asian juno irises'

The Harold Esslemont Lecture: Harry Jans 'Flowers of the Incas'

The booking form for the SRGC Discussion Weekend 2017 may be [found HERE](#) for download.

"We look forward to receiving your booking and to welcoming you at the weekend -

John Mitchell, Mike Hicks, Elspeth MacKintosh, Struan Harley & Dave Millward"

I have the bit between my teeth now so I'll continue with the "commercials" .....



Earlier this year the SRGC presented the free e-book by J. Ian Young, author of the weekly Bulb Log Diary on SRGC.net since 2003. It appears from messages received that this is still not widely known, in spite of the large number of readers so far! This work is in pdf form and its 178 pages can be downloaded to read on a computer or tablet - or to be successfully printed off for those desperate for a paper copy!

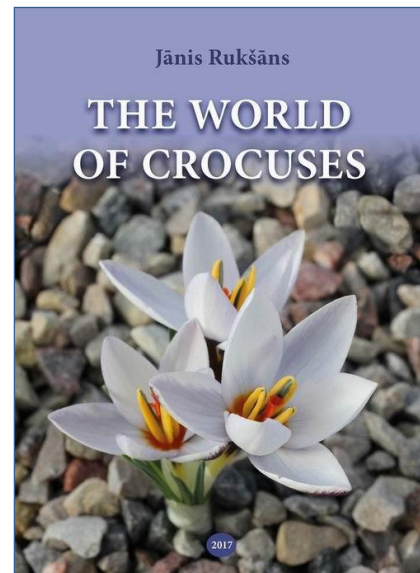
Download "[Erythroniums in Cultivation](#)" [from this link](#)".

The Bulb Log appears each week - all issues can be found from [THIS PAGE](#) on the main SRGC Site.

Readers of IRG – and admirers of the genus Crocus – will be aware that Jānis Rukšāns often writes in the SRGC Forum and for this magazine, even describing new species here. The SRGC was proud to support the publication of Jānis' latest book – "The World of Crocuses" - a magnificent work of 570 pages, detailing all his work on the genus over the last fifty years. This encyclopaedic book is available from Jānis Rukšāns - 45 euros +postage – email [janis.bulb@hawk.lv](mailto:janis.bulb@hawk.lv) or from the AGS at Pershore.

## ---BOOK REVIEW---

The editor of the [KAVB](#) (Koninklijke Algemeene Vereeniging voor Bloembollencultuur) the leading bulb organisation of Holland's publication, [BloembollenVisie](#), Arie Dwarswaard, has written a review of this major new book, which we are grateful to be able to share here.



# ---International Rock Gardener---



Arie Dwarswaard



## Nieuwe invalshoek voor krokus

Er zullen maar weinig schrijvers zijn die drie keer een boek over krokus hebben geschreven. Op dit moment is Janis Rukšāns de enige schrijver die ik ken die dit heeft geprobeerd. En hoe! Hier is geen sprake van het recylen van eerdere boeken om zo gemakkelijk bij de lezer te kunnen scoren met een nieuw boek. Nee, Rukšāns schreef drie geheel verschillende boeken. Het eerste verscheen in 1981 en omvatte slechts 176 pagina's. Het was geschreven in zijn moedertaal, het Lets, en daarmee voor de meeste westerlingen maar moeilijk te begrijpen. In 2010 verraste Rukšāns met een Engelstalige uitgave van een flinke omvang: *Crocuses*, a complete guide to the genus, waarin hij een uitgebreid overzicht samenstelde van alle species die hij op dat moment kende. Hij deelde het zeer uitgebreide geslacht in naar de bloeitijd, dus najaarsbloeiers, winterbloeiers en voorjaarsbloeiers. Het was het eerste grote taxonomische werk over krokussen sinds Brian Mathew zijn boek in 1985 publiceerde. En nu, in 2017, heeft Rukšāns voor de derde maal de pen ter hand genomen nadat hij alle kennis die hij in de afgelopen vijftig jaar over krokussen had opgedaan bijeen had gevoegd. Dit keer kiest hij voor het alfabet als ordeningsvorm. Hij is heel systematisch te werk gegaan. Elke species beschrijft hij volgens hetzelfde stramien. Alle relevante aspecten, zoals synoniemen, keel, meeldraden, stamper en bolhuis, komen aan de orde. Met dank aan de moderne computertechniek is een kaartje van het verspreidingsgebied gemakkelijk gemaakt. De ene keer is het een deel van Europa, de andere keer is het net die ene groeiplaats ergens in Turkije. Niet alleen de tekst kent een wetenschappelijke opzet, ook bij de fotografie is daarvoor gezorgd. De knollen liggen op ruitjespapier van 0,5 x 0,5 cm, zodat de omvang goed is te bepalen. Van elk beschreven soort laat Rukšāns als het even kan meer foto's zien, eenvoudigweg omdat de kleurschakering binnen de soorten vaak meer verschil dan menigeen denkt. Gelukkig neemt niet alleen de wetenschapper Rukšāns de ruimte, maar ook de verhalenverteller. En dat eindigt menig soortbeschrijving nog met een persoonlijk verhaal. Zoals over *Crocus sativus* of de saffraankrokus. Die heeft lange, droge zomers nodig om in het najaar in bloei te komen. De knollen die hij uit Azerbeidzjan kreeg, bloeiden het eerste jaar prima, maar daarna bleek Letland toch te koud. Alleen wat groene spruiten restten nog, terwijl de bloem met zijn felbegeerde meeldraden wegbleef. Deze uitgave is het beste dat er tot nu toe is op krokusgebied en alleen al daarvoor mag de bloembollenwereld Janis Rukšāns dankbaar zijn.

Arie Dwarswaard

*The world of crocuses, Janis Rukšāns, 570 pagina's op groot formaat, uitgave in eigen beheer. Kosten 65 euro, te bestellen via [janis.ruksans@hawk.lv](mailto:janis.ruksans@hawk.lv) of bij de Alpine Garden Society, [www.alpinegardensociety.nl](http://www.alpinegardensociety.nl)*

Bloembollen Visie review



Jānis Rukšāns

## New Approach to Crocuses – a review of 'The World of Crocuses'.

There are not many people who have written three books about crocuses. Janis Rukšāns is the only writer I can think of who has done this. And what a way to do it! He has not re-written an earlier book in a new version - though that would be the easiest way to get new readers. No! Janis Rukšāns has written three totally different books.

The first, only 176 pages long, was written in his native language, Latvian and published in 1981 to a restricted audience, able to read that. In 2010 Janis Rukšāns surprised us by the publication of a fundamental work in English – *Crocuses* – a complete guide to the genus - where he offered a review of all species known to him at the time. He divided this large genus by flowering time – autumn, winter and spring-blooming types. This was the first large taxonomic work on this genus since 1985 when Brian Mathew published his monograph. Now, in 2017 Rukšāns has been hard at work for the third time as he collated all the information he had gathered about crocuses in the previous fifty years.

In this book the species are arranged in alphabetical order. He has worked analytically – categorising all the species in a similar fashion. Attention is given to all main aspects, such as synonymy, throat, anthers, stigma, corm tunics etc are all characterised. Distribution maps are included. Some species are present in Europe, some from only a small area in Turkey – all are listed. The scientific approach of Rukšāns can be seen in the text as well as in pictures. Using pictures of crocus corms on 0.5x0.5 cm gridline paper, the dimensions are easily seen. Where possible Rukšāns has added several pictures, variation in some species is wider than might earlier have been supposed.

Fortunately it is a book not only from Rukšāns the scientist but also from a clever story-teller who draws in the reader. To this end, many descriptions of the species end with a personal story. For example, this about *Crocus sativus*, the common saffron-crocus: "To be able to flower in autumn it needs a long and hot summer. Corms received from Azerbaijan bloomed excellently in their first autumn, but in later seasons there were no flowers. Only a few weak leaves appeared above soil, but the flowers with their much desired stigmas were not seen again2.

This is the best published work about crocuses known at present and for this flower-bulb growers all over the world can be thankful to Janis Rukšāns.

Arie Dwarswaard.

# ---International Rock Gardener---

## ---Cyprus and its early wildflowers---

### Orchids and other species of Cyprus by Gerrit & Iep Eijkelenboom

Cover picture: *Ranunculus asiaticus*



Map of Cyprus - Akrotiri peninsula, red area at lower left.

From the 10th of March until the 31st in 2017, we visited the island of Cyprus in order to look for the orchids (which are our favourites) and of course we have found other species too. Because of the occurrence of many species in small areas and their accessibility, it is a great pleasure to visit this island. Our destination was well chosen. The little village of Neo Chorio at the end of the asphalted road towards the Akamas peninsula was our home for three weeks. In the vicinity there (from Polis westwards) we have found most of the orchids at individual-rich habitats. Another rich habitat is in the south at the Akrotiri peninsula, a British military base, but freely accessible (red coloured on the map). We also searched in the foothills towards the Troodos Mountains. Determination of the species is relatively easy.

The best time to visit the island is in the second and third week of March. Start your visit at the Akrotiri peninsula, where orchids come into flower first, just like the site at the salt lake near Larnaca. At the end of March, when most orchids are out of flower, you have to go into the hills and lower mountains. There you can still find many orchids.

I have chosen to arrange the species partly in relational groups, in order to explain the differences, and partly in groups which were found together. To separate the groups I show other interesting species.

As stated, we started our examinations about 500m after leaving Neo Chorio towards the hills. The road is still paved and leads to the picnic area named Smigies. At the left side you will see vast meadows. Put your car aside and walk into them. Try not to trample the orchids, although there are so many of them, that it is hardly possible to avoid this.

On this site most of *Anacamptis collina* were already out of flower. This is one of the first flowering species usually in January. After some searching we did find a good example.



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The next four species belong to the *Ophrys scolopax* group.



***Ophrys flevomarginata*** above: Easy to recognize by its yellow bordered lip. The sides of the lip are turned down and strongly reflexed. It is a relatively large flower. The sepals and petals are green, the dorsal sepal strongly bends over the column. This species has an extremely long flowering time.



***Ophrys attica*** above and left:

A somewhat controversial species, because of the similarity with *Ophrys umbilicata*. The debate is still going on. On the picture you see a lovely plant in front of Neo Chorio. This *Ophrys* is a vigorous and compact plant as you see on the picture. The flowers are small, much smaller than *Ophrys flavomarginata*. The sides of the lip are turned under. The sepals and petals are green and the long dorsal sepal bends over the column.

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In the same meadow you may find ***Ophrys umbilicata***, easy to recognize with its purple, pink or greenish white sepals, with a green mid-vein. So, the sepals are not green. The marking covers the whole lip.



***Ophrys lapethica***, above, is endemic to Cyprus. This specimen grows in deep shade. That's why the colours are not quite true to nature. The sepals are pink, sometimes white, with a green mid-vein. The labellum (lip) is long and narrow. The sides are strongly turned down, touching below the lip. The marking on the lip is shield-shaped.

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**Bellevalia trifoliata**

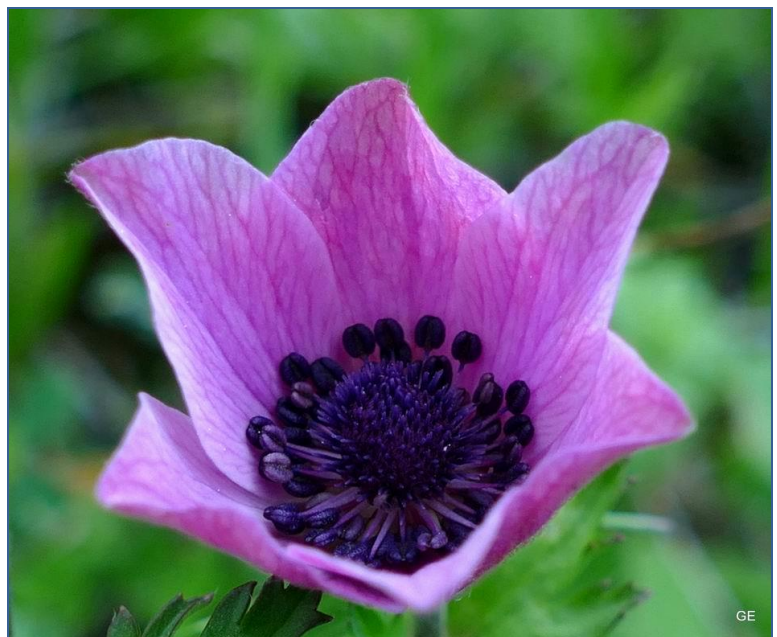


**Bellevalia nivalis**

In the same habitat these two bulbous perennials occur, abundant with thousands of them, all flowering. They occur also in Southern Turkey and Syria.



**Anemone coronaria** is a lovely species in various colours. It is always a pleasure to see large groups swaying in the wind.





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***Ornithogalum pedicellare*** : This endemic species was growing by the thousands in sandy soil, where they came into flower a week after rain showers, a splendid sight.



***Lithodora hispidula***  
***subsp. versicolor*** is a small shrub with leathery dark green leaves and white flowers, fading to pink and pale lilac.

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The next group of orchids were found perhaps 1 km further on the road towards the picnic place of Smigies, next to the Chapel Agion Minas.



On the picture above you see three ophrys from the fusca group. In the middle *Ophrys cinereophila*, flanked at the right and the left by *Ophrys israelitica*.

On Cyprus three representatives of the fusca group occur. Unfortunately we did not find the third, *Ophrys iricolor*.

*Ophrys cinereophila* is easy to distinguish by its yellow marginal band. The labellum (lip) is very small, spreading horizontally from the stem. This species is widely distributed in the Eastern Mediterranean region, for instance on Crete. On Cyprus it is abundant and well distributed.



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***Ophrys israelitica*** also occurs in the Middle East, such as Israel of course. Its synonym is *Ophrys omegaifera* subsp. *israelitica*, which shows its relation with *O. omegaifera*, the main species, which does not occur on Cyprus. The picture shows clearly its omegaifera connection. The lip is very convex longitudinally. And remarkable is the whitish omega between base and tip of the labellum. The bluish speculum is often marbled. A splendid species.

On the 24th of March we made a trip into the interior towards the Troodos mountains. Our goal was to find *Scilla morrissi* and *Cedrus brevifolia*, both endemic to Cyprus.

***Scilla morrissi*** is a critically endangered species, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. "The population is severely fragmented, covering a very small area, that is in decline. Today (2006) 600 specimens are known, in three locations. (...) Two of them are near Panagia, Vouni and Moni monastery." So far my source, The IUCN. We found the population at Moni, with 10-20 mature plants. The habitat: Altitude 800m, under a canopy of old oak trees, on a slope between grass.



***Cedrus brevifolia***: We continue our trip to the Cedar Valley. In an area of 2 square km, the Cedars stand together with no other species around them. Further on, Cedars and other trees are mixed. The road makes a big turn around the cedars and from the road you are able to look from above to the trees, which is a spectacular sight.

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The population of these Cedars is vulnerable because of the risk of fire. 16,000 mature individuals have been counted. The biggest of all stands in Windsor Great Park, 90,5m high, planted in 1937. Synonym: *Cedrus libani* subsp. *brevifolia*, which shows its relation with the famous cedars of Libanon.



**Cedrus brevifolia** – above and below.



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**Anacamptis syriaca**



**Anacamptis syriaca** hypochrome form

The Smigies picnic area is renowned because of the occurrence of so many orchid species. **Anacamptis syriaca**, one of the most common species on Cyprus grows there in masses. Synonym: *Anacamptis morio* subsp. *syriaca*. Sometimes it makes sense to know the old name. The distinguishing marks are the green veins in the sepals, like all morio's. Hypochromic specimens occur frequently. This individual, above right, stood on an embankment, in full sun, waiting for the photo.



**Neotinea maculata** occurs sometimes in white too. White forms of a species carry names like var. *alba*, *albiflora*, *nivea*, *virides* and others. This orchid, normally pink or red, is a woodland species. In the pine forests of the Akamas peninsula it is abundant.

The next orchid is a real hypochromic specimen of **Himantoglossum robertianum** (**Barlia robertiana**). In green and white, with no markings on the lips. This individual is exceptional, because of the undulated sides of the lip.



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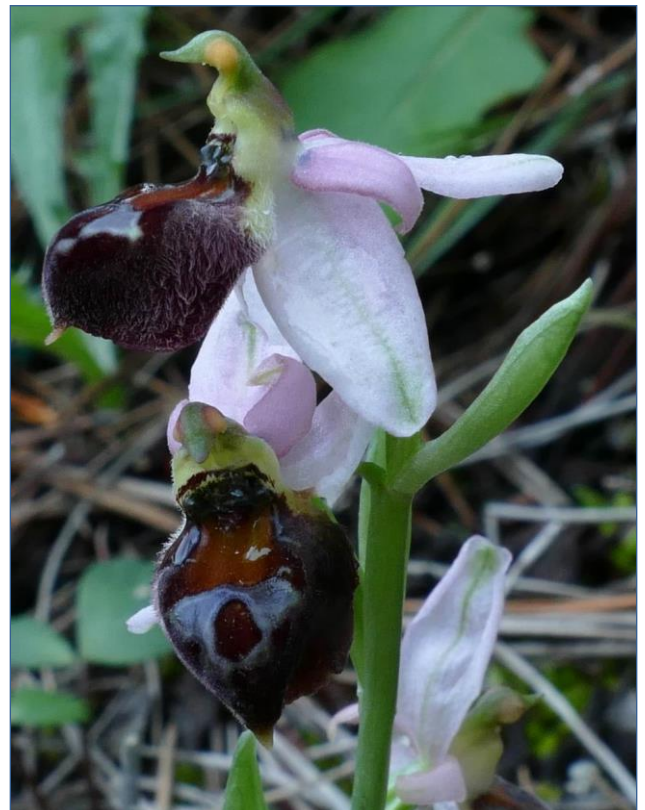


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*Himantoglossum robertianum* (*Barlia robertiana*)



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*Ophrys elegans*, above, is endemic to Cyprus. The small flowers have a triangular appearance. At least they are conical. The lateral edges are strongly bent backwards. The marking often has an arch on the distal half of the lip (towards the appendage). The sepals and petals are white to pink violet. Mostly you will find only one flower or perhaps two at the stem.

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***Ophrys levantina***: We are still in the vicinity of the Smigies picnic area. This orchid is strong and vigorous, when full-grown. The white sepals with a green vein attract attention. Large flowers are directed vertically downwards and even backwards, making it difficult to take appropriate pictures. The wide, rounded, quadratic labellum is covered with a complete band of dense submarginal hairs, greyish-brown and a very small speculum. It is a very abundant and widespread species on Cyprus.

On this picture, left, you see an aberrant specimen of *Ophrys levantina*. Most parts of the flower are double. See also *Ophrys alasiatica*.

*Ophrys levantina* is easy distinguishable from ***Ophrys bornmuelleri***. It is in flower at least two weeks after *Ophrys levantina*. It grows in the same habitat, but if you come to Cyprus too early, you may have bad luck and miss the flowers of *O.*

*bornmuelleri* and that would be a pity. This species can be distinguished from *Ophrys levantina* by the small flower size, about half as big as *O. levantina* and the flowers grow horizontally from the stem. The lip is trapezoid or square, with a complete band of dense, rather long submarginal silver-brown hairs. The appendage is prominent, pointing forwards or upwards, inserted into a deep notch.

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Above: *Ophrys bornmuelleri*



*Dactylorhiza romana*, above left, grows in the same habitat, light woodland, with many clearings. A widespread and easy to find species.

*Serapias bergonii*, above centre and right, is an abundant and widespread taxon in the eastern Mediterranean region. The species can be recognized by its very long, lax-flowered inflorescence. The lip is very long shaped and is not reflexed towards the stem. On the second picture you can see a very beautiful red form.

It is time for a visit to the archeological sites of Paphos; the Tombs of the Kings and The Archeological Park, Stunning flowers and the remains of ancient ages are a perfect combination. *Cyclamen persicum* has colonized the crevices in the walls of the ancient tombs. They have chosen the shadow sides of the walls, but the red poppies, *Papaver rhoeas*, decorate the sunny sides.



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***Cyclamen persicum*** on the rocks in crevices and in the shade and with the poppies in the sun.

***Papaver rhoeas*** in front of ancient columns.

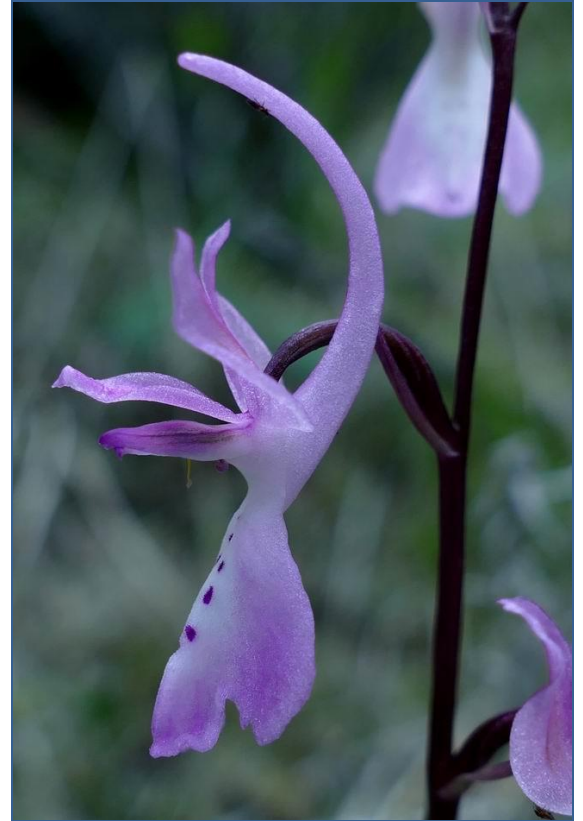
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The next pictures are from the Archeological Park, where ***Limonium sinuatum***, above, with its white and blue caught the eye. On the cliffs near the sea, I found the remarkable cushions shown below. In full sun and unbearable heat in summer they seem to survive. The name is ***Limonium cypricum*** (syn. ***Limonium albidum*** subsp. ***cypricum***) According to various websites, such as [Flora of Cyprus - a dynamic checklist](#) - it is endemic to Cyprus. However, according to [Kew, The Plant List](#), it is an unresolved name.



## ---International Rock Gardener---



A mythical place, the bath of Aphrodite, is not far from Neo Chorio. There, a trail starts into the Akamas mountains and forest, named "The Adonis Trail". Along this trail we have found the endemic ***Orchis troodi***, above. An elegant plant, the red stem somewhat flexuose, with a strongly flecked rosette, the sepals washed or blotched green in the centre, the lip, white in the centre with red dashes and dots. The lateral lobes are strongly turned down. The long spur is curved upwards.



***Orchis anatolica*** is difficult to distinguish from *Orchis troodi*. The plants are much more smaller, The veins in the sepals are green and the most important, the spur is horizontal, straight and conical. I have found the two species, growing in a wood. Both on the Akamas peninsula. One in the vicinity of the Smigies picnic area, a second along the Adonis trail.

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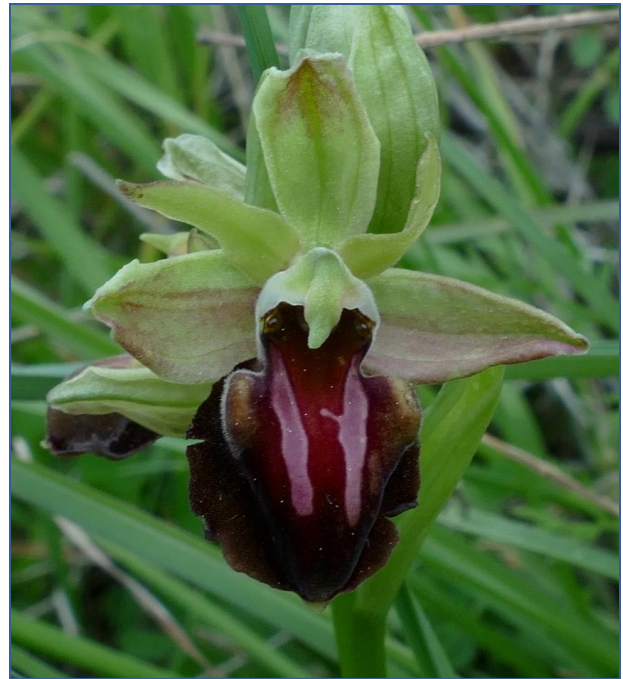


***Orchis sezikiana***, above and below left: A controversial taxon. Sometimes considered as a hybrid between *Orchis quadripunctata* on one hand and *Orchis anatolica*, *Orchis troodi* or *Orchis sitiaca* on the other hand. As *Orchis quadripunctata* does not occur on Cyprus, *Orchis sezikiana* should be considered as a fully-fledged species. We found *Orchis sezikiana* in many places and in considerable numbers on the Akamas peninsula. We agree the next quote from G&K Morschek: "Exceptionally elegant (...) plants from the Akamas peninsula (...) which rarely reach to a height of ten centimeters." They gave these plants the name *Orchis quadripunctata* var. *akamasica*. The plants are so tiny, you may easily overlook them. We found many species, together in groups of about 20 individuals, in clearings in the woods on very

stony soils. At first sight you don't think of *Orchis troodi* or *Orchis anatolica*. When sunlight hits the flowers, you are able to see the membranous skin of them. Very special.

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Now I will show you the species, belonging to the *Ophrys mammosa* complex. Four species are present on Cyprus and we have found them all, growing together in roadside-phrygana between Choulou and Panagia. Take the main road in the village of Choulou towards the Troodi Mountains. After about 5 kilometres, when the road rises to the highest point, you will find at the roadside embankments with phrygana. (Phrygana are abandoned fields, with a stony soil, and a vegetation of cushion shaped spiny shrubs. Goats and sheep graze there and keep the vegetation low and short. They trample small paths and maintain them permanently. Phrygana is the most important habitat for orchids.)



***Ophrys mammosa***: The lip is rounded, longer than wide (oblong). The colour of the lip is velvety, dark, reddish-brown to blackish-purple, bordered by a thin, paler margin. (sometimes yellow) On the centre of the lip, 2 parallel lines, or an **H** are present. The sepals are bicoloured, tinted violet or purple on the lower half. Due to its name it possesses 2 large swellings. The second picture is a red form.



***Ophrys alasiatica*** is an endemic species. The lateral sepals are bicoloured, green in the upper part, reddish in the lower part. The labellum (lip) is roundish to oval, slightly domed, with reflexed edges and a very distinct yellow margin at the edge, an **H**-shaped marking on the lip and of course 2 swellings. The third photo is of an aberrant specimen with an extra couple of sepals. Maybe due to a parasitic attack, or the individual might have been trampled down by an animal. A genetic anomaly affects all flowers, which is the case here. See also *Ophrys levantina*.

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Left: *Aberrant Ophrys alasiatica*

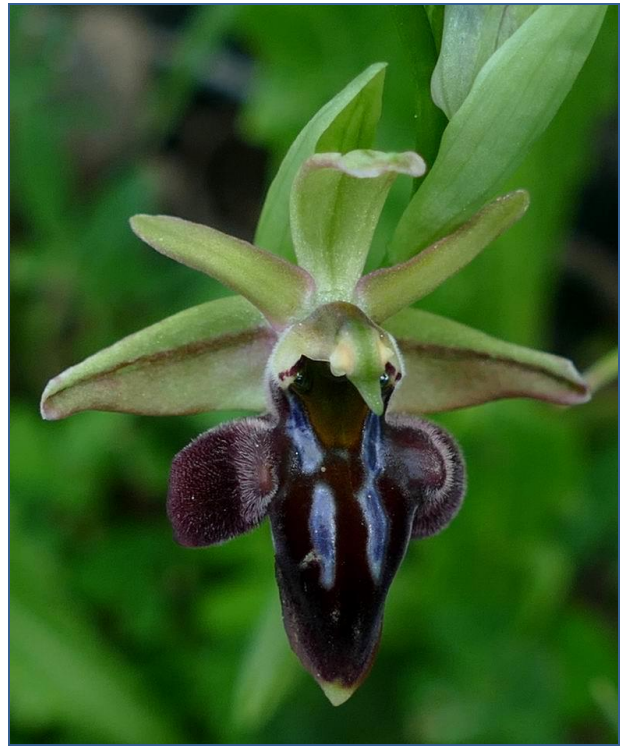


On this picture, right, you see *Ophrys alasiatica* on the left and *Ophrys herae* on the right.

*Ophrys herae*, below: The small to medium sized lip is circular or trapezoid, and the colour is not the velvety-blackish-brown of the other members of the mammosa-group, but more lighter-brown. In the field one sees the difference immediately, when comparing the various species. The swellings on the lip are rounder and smaller. the basal field above the speculum, which is olive-green to orange washed green is remarkable.



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***Ophrys morio*** above: The main characteristic of this species is the conical shaped labellum. The sides of the lip are strongly turned down and under. The edges are sometimes yellow. This species is very variable, which may lead to confusion in determination.



On a trip into the Troodos Mountains, we saw some very interesting plants. Endemic to Cyprus and common on the Akamas peninsula and the Troodos mountains is ***Thymus integer***, above, an aromatic species, less than 10 cm high, with white to dark rosy purple flowers. It forms large beautiful cushions on dry rocky soil.

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***Astragalus lusitanicus subsp. orientalis*** (syn. *Erophaca*) is a medium to tall plant up to 1 m high, with feathered greyish leaves and white ornamental flowers.



The endemic ***Euphorbia veneris***, above, the English name is Aphrodite's Spurge, makes short prostrate stems, with bluish-green leaves and a yellowish-green inflorescence, native of rocky sites in full sun in the mountains. It seems to be an excellent plant for rock gardens to me.



## ---International Rock Gardener---



*Arabis purpurea*, above, is endemic too and a mat-forming species. It was growing on the vertical rocks along the roadside on higher altitudes but not only in the alpine zone. It was a splendid view, to see them growing in the copper-coloured rocks. The last one is the colourful *Vicia lunata* below, it is 'nearly' endemic. It appears in Southern Turkey also. This plant colonized some 100m of the roadside and after that, we did not see it any more.



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***Orchis punctulata***, above with Iep Eikelenboom and also left.

This stately orchid, is one of the most beautiful orchids in Europe. The colours vary from intense lemon-yellow to orange-brownish, because of the brownish dotted flowers. This orchid is caught in a continue decline, due to the intensifying agricultural use of its biotopes. The number of flowering plants has fallen rapidly and on many locations they are already disappeared; reputedly even at the rich findspot at Tochni. So, the species can therefore be categorized as profoundly threatened. That's why I am proud to show here pictures of this amazing species. We have found about 60 individuals on the Akamas peninsula.

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***Serapias aphroditae*** grows together with the *Orchis punctulata*. It is an endemic species. The stem arises singly. The inflorescence is lax and dark. The lip is lanceolate and pointed, red to deep purple. This species is mainly distributed to the Akamas peninsula, where we have found it indeed. It is much more slender and elegant, elongated and lax than *Serapias bergonii*. In the same habitat we saw this group of ***Orchis italica***, below, a plant widely distributed on Cyprus. One of the most abundant orchid species.



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***Anacamptis laxiflora***: This orchid species belongs to the rarest and most threatened on Cyprus. It is only known from a few sites. We spent 3 days searching on different locations between Polis, Neo Chorio and Drouseia on the Akamas peninsula. Along the streams coming from the hills at Drouseia and flowing to the sea at Polis, we searched for promising habitats, permanent wet and grassy, until we almost lost courage and finally found in a depression about 60 to 70 individuals. On another location, about 100 metres away, 10 more.



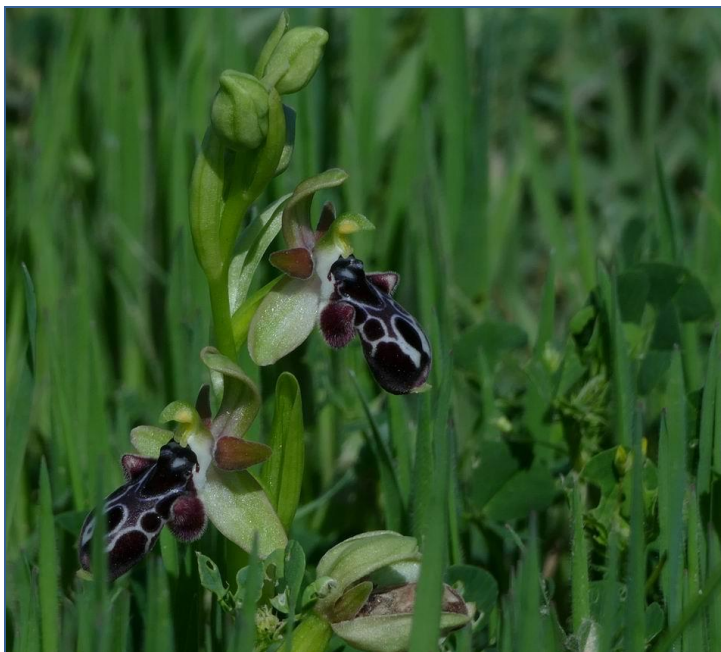
A trip to the Akrotiri peninsula is a highlight for orchid-seekers. The rich orchid-populations are to be found south of the salt lake. But first we will make a stop to look for an important orchid: ***Epipactis veratrifolia***. There are two locations for it on Cyprus. In the alpine zone of the Troodos Mountains, in bloom end of June and the second, very threatened spot at Episkopi on the British RAF-base. About 400m west of the village of Episkopi, at the roadside. Three specimens of this *Epipactis* grow there, but they are extremely endangered. They grow on an embankment in clay soil, with permanent trickling water. In 2004 CAJ Kreutz described them in his book: "Several dozen very vigorous plants grow there each year". So, now in 2017 only three.

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***Epipactis veratrifolia***

A very important 'findspot' is south of the Akrotiri salt lake. Follow the road from the village of Akrotiri to The holy monastery of the cats. About 800m before this monastery you will see on the right a board with information about orchids. Stop there and park your car. A path leads to the fields. On the first crossing go straight on and after 20 m you will find between the grass (when in flower) the stunning ***Ophrys kotschyi***, below, a Cyprus endemic orchid. There is no need to describe it, because it is unique. Maybe it is good to say, the plant, so big on the photo, in reality is as big as a blade of grass. The meadows in which they grow are a peculiar habitat. So close to the salt lake. Apparently they like the saline influence. Other orchid-species are growing there happily too.



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Large parts of the meadows are overgrown by the yellow ***Ranunculus asiaticus***, above. Strangely we have seen on Cyprus the yellow, and on Crete the white, and occasionally a red variety.



***Anacamptis fragrans***, above: This is a late flowering species. We have found the first flowers on March 31, our last day, on our way to the airport at the borders of the Akrotiri salt lake, one of the hottest places on Cyprus, where the orchids are blooming a week or two before they do in other regions. This species needs no introduction.

***Ophrys sicula***: There are no identification problems with other representatives of the *Ophrys lutea* group. There is another member of this group, *Ophrys melena* which is extremely rare and only known from one site, at the Larnaka salt lake. We have searched there, but we came too late.

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**Serapias levantina**, right: The hood is lilac-grey, veined violet outside, which is visible left on the photo. The lip is oval-lanceolate, rather broad, pendant to bent down and backwards, left on the picture. It is a somewhat controversial taxon.

We found it not far from Neo Chorio on the Akamas peninsula, together with thousands of **Gladiolus italicus**, below.



The last species is **Tulipa agenensis** below, growing in the vicinity of the village of Polemi. Every year there is the Polemi tulip festival, to promote the village. Two days before, we went to this village in order to admire the tulips. Surprisingly we did not see many. What we did see was people picking a lot of tulips. Maybe to sell at the festival, who knows?

On the photo you see the largest group and here and there we saw some individuals, that's all. Ah yes, a tulip festival, the best way to get rid of the tulips. But, on the internet, I read about initiatives to re-establish the tulips on special fields, in order to save the tulips (and to save the festival). G.E.



Books:  
Pierre Delforge: Orchids of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East  
C.A.J. Kreutz: The orchids of Cyprus  
Christopher Grey-Wilson: Wild flowers of the Mediterranean.