Terract

The Living Connections

THE WILD ORCHIDS OF CYPRUS

An island of extraordinary diversity

PEOPLE | NATURE | PLACE



CHAPTER ONE

THE HELLEBORINES

EPIPACTIS & CEPHALANTHERA





Epipactis veratrifolia

BROAD-LEAVED HELLEBORINE

A *sprawling plant,* often in great quantity, usually on high ground.

HEIGHT
Around 70 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
Long, straggling stem with stiff, long, narrow or oval leaves.

FLOWERS
Fairly large, greenish, with brown/purple markings; sometimes few, sometimes many (up to 40 or more) along the stem.

IDENTIFYING FEATURE
The epichile is hinged where it joins the upper part, with a prominent white tip.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK
Common in Pano Amiandos.
Also found at Happy Valley, Episkopi (near water seepage), where it flowers in March.



Epipactis microphylla

SMALL-LEAVED HELLEBORINE

OVERVIEW

A small, rather weak slender plant, usually single, with small leaves and about 12 small white flowers.

HEIGHT

About 35 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

With about 5 small, narrow leaves spread along the hairy stem.

FLOWERS

Small, mostly facing the same way, greenish-white with a faint violet tinge, hairy on the outside. The hypochile is a shiny green cup; the epichile is greenish-white, heart-shaped with wavy edges.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The epichile has two very hairy mounds at its base, separated by a deep groove.

WHERE AND WHEN TO LOOK

Found in hazel woodland in the Polystippos area in June. This orchid is rare.


Epipactis microphylla
SMALL-LEAVED HELLEBORINE



Epipactis condensata

DENSE-FLOWERED HELLEBORINE

OVERVIEW
A tall plant growing in clumps, with sturdy stems and many pale green flowers that open from nodding buds. The flowers often attract aphids and ants.

HEIGHT
About 45 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
Sturdy stems, hairless at the base but hairy higher up, with oval, narrow leaves (often purplish on top), smaller near the flowers.

FLOWERS
Numerous greenish-white flowers on a fairly long, slightly hairy stalk. The hypochile has a deep glossy red/brown to purple centre; the epichile is heart-shaped and wavy-edged with two small purplish hairy swellings.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
Many flowers and clumps of tall, sturdy stems are typical.

SIMILAR SPECIES
Differs from the hairy *E. microphylla* by its larger, sturdier size and form.

WHERE AND WHEN TO LOOK
A rare orchid at the edge of pine woodland around Troodos; can be seen near the Jubilee Hotel in July.



Epipactis troodi

TROODOS HELLEBORINE

OVERVIEW

A slender orchid with neat, straight, hairless stems and a small bud at the top. Oval leaves clasp the stem; the flower-head often droops before opening. Originally thought to be endemic to Cyprus, but similar plants have since been found in Turkey.

HEIGHT

About 30 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

Stem violet at first, becoming greener as it matures. About four narrow, leathery leaves, purple underneath, clasping the stem at first but opening to near-horizontal.

FLOWERS

Sepals wide and green; petals usually violet-tinted at the edges, as is the epichile, which has two violet swellings. Hypochile slightly cupped and glossy.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

One of the last orchids to flower, with a fairly narrow range, mostly around Mount Olympus. Violet tinting and underside of leaves are characteristic.

CONFUSION SPECIES

May be mistaken for a slender *Limodorum abortivum* when first emerging, but the species are easily separated once the leaves open.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK

Seen in flower beside the Artemis and Atalante trails, in July and sometimes into August.



Epipactis troodi

TROODOS HELLEBORINE







Epipactis troodi

TROODOS HELLEBORINE



Cephalanthera rubra

RED HELLEBORINE

OVERVIEW
A tall, slender orchid with beautiful pink to mauve flowers, usually found in light woodland on higher ground, often near dog-roses.

HEIGHT
Around 40 cm, but variable.

STEM AND LEAVES
Slender, hairy stems with long, narrow and sharply creased leaves sticking stiffly out at the sides.

FLOWERS
Clear pink to mauve, sometimes few, but up to 29 on one stem. The lateral sepals are spread wide and held like cupped hands; the lip has a number of yellow ridges on a white (pink-edged) background.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The colour and shape of the flowers, particularly the ridged lip, are characteristic.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK
Flowers in June and can be seen along the Persephone Trail in the Troodos Mountains.


Cephalanthera rubra
RED HELLEBORINE



Limodorum abortivum

VIOLET LIMODORE

OVERVIEW
A sturdy plant, generally purple in colour, with no green leaves and pretty mauve/purple flowers, growing in woodland mostly on high ground.

HEIGHT
About 50 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
The stem can be slender or sturdy, usually purple and covered in small brown/purple scale-like leaves which remain closely sheathing the stem.

FLOWERS
Up to 20 large flowers with lavender sepals and petals, the dorsal sepal bending forward towards the labellum, which is hinged; the lip has crimped edges, is streaked violet and white and thrust forward.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The overall purple colour and absence of green leaves, as well as the flowering time and habitat.

CONFUSION SPECIES
None (but see this section under *Epipactis troodi*).

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK
These can be found along the Persephone trail, and at the head of the Caledonian Falls trail in June.



Limodorum abortivum

VIOLET LIMODORE


Limodorum abortivum
VIOLET LIMODORE



Spiranthes spiralis

AUTUMN LADIES' TRESSES

OVERVIEW

A small, rather weak slender plant, usually single, with small leaves and small white flowers arranged in a spiral along the flowering stem.

HEIGHT

About 15 cm.

FLOWERS

Quite numerous small tubular white flowers arranged in a spiral on the upper part of the stem, greenish on the outside.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The arrangement of the flowers in a spiral gives this species its name.

WHERE AND WHEN TO LOOK

Easily found in woodland at Akrotiri, and in Peyia Forest, in November.



Spiranthes spiralis

AUTUMN LADY'S-TRESSES

Spiranthes spiralis

AUTUMN LADY'S-TRESSES





Platanthera holmboei

(LESSER) BUTTERFLY ORCHID

OVERVIEW
An insignificant green plant with green flowers and (usually two) rather large and floppy leaves.

HEIGHT
About 25 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
Usually two large glossy green oval leaves and a single stocky stem of the same colour.

FLOWERS
Greenish in colour, with a long tongue-like epichile; petals and dorsal sepal form a hood while lateral sepals are spread wide. There is a fine spur going back and down.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
Its green flowers with their long hanging labellum and two wide soft leaves.

CONFUSION SPECIES
None.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK
They can be found on the Persephone trail in flower in late May and June.



Platanthera holmboei

(LESSER) BUTTERFLY ORCHID



Platanthera holmboei

(LESSER) BUTTERFLY ORCHID



Dactylorhiza iberica

OVERVIEW

A medium-sized plant with long grasslike leaves which stand stiffly up round the stem, and delicate lilac flowers. It grows in and near water on higher ground.

HEIGHT

About 35 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

Slender stems, usually several together, have long narrow leaves which can be difficult to distinguish from the grasses among which it is often growing.

FLOWERS

Numerous flower buds are white at first, opening to lilac or cerise. The pale centre of the labellum is dashed with deeper colour. All three sepals and the petals combine to form a hood and the flowers are interspersed with obvious bracts.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The habitat, the late flowering and the flower colour all help to identify this orchid.

WHERE AND WHEN TO LOOK

Seen at the head of the Caledonian Falls trail, in June.



Dactylorhiza iberica



Dactylorhiza iberica



Dactylorhiza romana

OVERVIEW

A fairly short but sturdy plant, with numerous pale yellow flowers with prominent wide bracts; usually found in good numbers, in shady places such as open woodland.

HEIGHT

About 25 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

The sturdy ridged stem has a rosette of narrow leaves at the base and a few small leaves on the lower stem. The bracts are wide and obvious.

FLOWERS

A delicate pale yellow in colour, with the dorsal sepal and petals forming a loose hood and the laterals spread wide. The labellum is held forward with the two lateral lobes turning back, and there is a sturdy spur going up behind.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The shade of colour is unique.

CONFUSION SPECIES

None. The only other yellow orchid is *Orchis punctulata*, which is very different.



Dactylorhiza romana



Dactylorhiza romana

CHAPTER TWO

THE OPHRYSES

THE BEE ORCHIDS





Ophrys iricolor

RAINBOW OPHRYS

OVERVIEW

A sturdy plant, fairly tall for an *Ophrys*, with large very striking flowers which open early in the season. The labellum has deep blue markings and is red on the back.

HEIGHT

About 20 cm.

FLOWERS

SEPALS	Green with edges rolled back; laterals asymmetrical and spread wide, dorsal sepal bending down towards the gynostegium.
PETALS	Greenish or brownish with purple tinging; narrow oblong, sometimes slightly wavy-edged.
LABELLUM	Held well forward and three-lobed, red on the reverse side; white at the base with a v-shaped throat; the side lobes and the lower part (tip) of the middle lobe are deep blackish purple and velvety, and the speculum on the upper part (base) of the middle lobe appears as two shiny bright blue ovals side by side.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The bright blue speculum, with the v-shaped throat should identify this orchid.

CONFUSION SPECIES

When it has withered, the remnants of the speculum could be mistaken for a very large *O. funerea*, to which it is related but it retains the red underneath the labellum to the end.

WHEN TO LOOK

This species can be seen in flower in February.



Ophrys iricolor



Ophrys funerea

DARK OPHRYS

OVERVIEW
A small, early-flowering *Ophrys* found in grasland, scrub and open woodland.

HEIGHT
Around 16 cm.

FLOWERS
Small greenish flowers with a dark, three-lobed labellum, a narrow pale border and bluish markings. The dorsal sepal curves forward and the petals are greenish with slightly wavy edges.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
Look for the pale V-shaped throat and the labellum that projects forward before curving down.

CONFUSION SPECIES
May resemble *Ophrys israelitica* when older.
Also compare with the closely related *Ophrys sicula* (especially the form *melena*).

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in February.



Ophrys funerea



Ophrys sicula

'GALILEA'

OVERVIEW

A small orchid with yellow-green flowers and a dark centre. Found in grassland, scrub and open woodland.

HEIGHT

Around 16 cm (sometimes taller).

FLOWERS

Pale green sepals, yellow-green petals and a dark labellum with a yellow border.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Look for the narrow dark centre and forked tip to the labellum.

CONFUSION SPECIES

May resemble *Ophrys israelitica* when older. Also compare with the closely related *Ophrys sicula* (especially the form *melena*).

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers from February.



Ophrys sicula



Ophrys sicula

(melena form)



Ophrys omegaifera

OVERVIEW

A sturdy Ophrys with a few rather large flowers.

HEIGHT

About 16 cm.

FLOWERS

Light green sepals and petals with a brown, hairy labellum and a bluish speculum.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Look for the omega-shaped marking and the flat, horizontally held labellum.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in March.



Ophrys israelitica

OVERVIEW

A small orchid with small flowers, largely bluish-grey in tone and finely yellow-edged.

HEIGHT

About 12–15 cm.

FLOWERS

Light green sepals and narrow greenish petals. Labellum dark and velvety, usually bluish-grey with a pale omega-shaped marking and a fine yellow edge.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Flat, hanging labellum with a pale blue-grey, marbled speculum and a clear omega at the tip.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in February.



Ophrys levantina

OVERVIEW
An early-flowering, sturdy orchid with numerous flowers, whitish sepals and petals, and a deep brown, hairy labellum.

HEIGHT
About 18–20 cm.

FLOWERS
Mostly whitish, sometimes with a green or light pink tinge. Labellum dark brown and very hairy, with a small bluish-grey speculum.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
Very hairy labellum, sepals spreading wide and slightly rolled back, and a face-like labellum shape.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in early February.



Ophrys bornmuelleri

OVERVIEW

A slender orchid with green or pinkish sepals and a hairy labellum held forward, with paler edges which curl forward.

HEIGHT

About 30 cm.

FLOWERS

Green, whitish or pinkish sepals. Labellum usually brown to dark, velvety and hairy, with yellowish edges.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Labellum square to one-lobed, held forward, with a deep notch at the tip and a hairy appendage. Base with two pointed swellings and a yellow-edged grey-blue speculum (sometimes with extra lines or spots).

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers from mid-March to April.



Ophrys tenthredinifera

OVERVIEW
A small plant with a few large flowers, with broad pink sepals and a half brown, half yellow labellum.

HEIGHT
About 16 cm.

FLOWERS
Broad, pink sepals, slightly concave.
Petals similar to the sepals, more ear-shaped and velvety. Labellum dark brown with a broad yellow edge, with a small, indistinct speculum, and very hairy.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The shape and colour of the sepals and the hairy, rectangular labellum with a yellow appendage.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in the first half of March.



Ophrys apifera

OVERVIEW

A tall, sturdy plant with large flowers, often late-flowering. Sepals and petals are pink or white; the labellum is dark and velvety with a complex pattern.

HEIGHT

About 35 cm.

FLOWERS

Usually purplish-pink, sometimes paler or white. The dorsal sepal points up and the lateral sepals angle out and down. Petals small and often triangular. Labellum dark brown, velvety, with a green edge and an appendage, resembling a bee.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Large bracts, the late flowering time, and the shape, colour and pattern of the labellum.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in April.


Ophrys apifera
variant *bicolor*


Ophrys apifera
variant chlorantha


Ophrys apifera
variant *nigra*



Ophrys rhodia

OVERVIEW

A strong-growing plant with well-spaced small flowers. Sepals and petals are vivid green and the labellum has a prominent appendage and complex pattern.

HEIGHT

About 25–35 cm.

FLOWERS

Emerald green sepals, slightly rolled back. Petals small, ear-shaped, velvety. Labellum dark brown with a green edge and distinctive pattern, with a prominent appendage.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The sepal colour and position, especially the dorsal sepal.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in March.



Ophrys umbilicata

OVERVIEW
Often a small plant with pinkish or whitish flowers. The dorsal sepal is bent down towards the labellum, which is usually bulbous with a complex pattern.

HEIGHT
About 15–20 cm.

FLOWERS
Usually pinkish or whitish. Labellum dark brown with distinctive markings, hairy at the sides and often bulbous in shape.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
Bulbous labellum, bent dorsal sepal and the colour and pattern of the sepals and labellum.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in March.



Ophrys flavomarginata

OVERVIEW

A strong-growing plant which flowers fairly early and has green sepals and petals, with a greenish edging to the labellum.

HEIGHT

About 20 cm.

FLOWERS

Green, oval sepals; laterals spread out. Petals also green, usually darker. Labellum brown, hairy and slightly pointed, with a wide greenish-yellow edge and a complex pattern.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Wide, greenish-yellow border to the labellum, together with its position and the speculum.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in March.



Ophrys lapethica

OVERVIEW

A slender plant with well spaced flowers, pink sepals and petals, and an elongated convex labellum which narrows at the tip.

HEIGHT

About 20 cm.

FLOWERS

Whitish to deep pink sepals with a green vein; laterals spreading. Petals the same colour, velvety and triangular. Labellum velvety, deep brown, with small side lobes, a narrow tip and a complex pattern.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The shape of the labellum, with its long drawn-out median lobe and the shape and position of the appendage, are key features.

WHEN TO LOOK

Usually in March.


Ophrys lapethica



Ophrys kotschyi

OVERVIEW

A sturdy orchid with large, striking flowers and a deep burgundy labellum.

HEIGHT

About 20 cm.

FLOWERS

Pinkish or light green sepals, green to pink petals, and a dark, velvety labellum with an intricate white-edged speculum.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Look for the large burgundy labellum and its elaborate patterned speculum.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in March.



Ophrys elegans

OVERVIEW

A small orchid with a distinctly triangular labellum and narrow pink sepals that soon bend strongly backwards.

HEIGHT

About 10–15 cm.

FLOWERS

Pale to deeper pink sepals and pink triangular petals. The reddish-brown, velvety labellum is deeply convex, with a tiny two-diamond speculum.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Look for the strongly bent-back sepals, triangular labellum, tiny speculum and brown stripe across the white stigmatic cavity.

WHERE AND WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in February in Peyia Forest.



Ophrys mammosa

OVERVIEW

A tall, sturdy plant with well-spaced flowers bearing a prominent H-shaped speculum and strongly two-toned sepals.

HEIGHT

May be 50 cm or more.

FLOWERS

Sepals green, the two lateral sepals usually very strongly purplish in the lower half, and all with rolled edges.

Petals varying in colour, long and narrow and often wavy-edged.

Labellum convex, one-lobed and velvety, dark red-brown with two large swellings. The speculum is H-shaped, shiny and greyish. The basal area is blackish and there are two black ‘eyes’ above, at the top of the stigmatic cavity.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The H-shaped speculum and the reddish labellum with its large “mammary” swellings are characteristic of this species.

WHEN TO LOOK

It can be seen near Larnaca Salt Lake in March and into April on higher ground.



Ophrys mammosa planimaculata

A RARE VARIANT OF O. MAMMOSA

OVERVIEW

A tall, sturdy plant with well-spaced flowers, simillar to *O. mammosa* but lacking the usual H-shaped speculum.

HEIGHT

May be 50 cm or more.

FLOWERS

Sepals green, the two lateral sepals usually very strongly purplish in the lower half, and all with rolled edges. Petals varying in colour, long and narrow and often wavy-edged.

LABELLUM

Convex, one-lobed and velvety, dark red-brown with two large swellings. Instead of an H, it has a large area of shiny, bright pale blue. The basal area is blackish with two black ‘eyes’ above, at the top of the stigmatic cavity.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

A rare variant of *O. mammosa*, found at one site only and growing with *O. mammosa*. It has no H-shaped speculum, but instead a large area of bright pale blue.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in March and April.



Ophrys herae

OVERVIEW

Similar to *O. mammosa* but usually a little smaller and more slender, with a less reddish labellum and the sepals less often two-toned.

HEIGHT

Often around 35 cm.

FLOWERS

Sepals greenish to pinkish, sometimes with the lower half of the laterals purplish.

Petals usually deeper in colour than the sepals and often with wavy edges.

LABELLUM

One-lobed and usually very convex, rather blackish-brown, often with a yellow edging. There are two small swellings. The speculum is an H-shape or two parallel lines without the cross-piece. The basal area is greenish toned light brown and there are two green ‘eyes’ above a whitish patch in the stigmatic cavity.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Small details, such as the colour of the labellum, the basal area and the ‘eyes’, help to identify the species within the group.

CONFUSION SPECIES

The members of group I can be difficult to separate, because of their tendency to form intermediate populations.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in early to mid March.



Ophrys sintenisii

OVERVIEW
Similar to *O. herae* in plant stature but a little later flowering.

HEIGHT
Around 35 cm is typical.

FLOWERS
Sepals rather pale green or pinkish, with the laterals quite often deeper, purplish, in the lower half; rolled edges make them look narrower.

Petals sometimes deeper than sepals, often wavy-edged.

LABELLUM
Usually one-lobed, but sometimes three-lobed, with two small swellings; convex, but the lower edges are often spread or turned forward and often yellow or purplish in quite a wide band. The labellum is often quite a light brown and the H-shaped speculum is a clearer blue-grey than in *O. mammosa* or *O. herae*.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The labellum shape and colour (particularly the edge colour) distinguishes this species from the closely related ones in group I.

CONFUSION SPECIES
See this section for *O. mammosa*.

WHEN TO LOOK
This orchid is easily seen in mid to late March, at the Pentalia site.



Ophrys transhyrcana

OVERVIEW
A fairly tall and sturdy orchid, similar to *O. mammosa*, but the sepals, particularly the dorsal one, have very noticeably rolled edges which makes them look narrow and stiff.

HEIGHT
About 40–50 cm.

FLOWERS
Sepals with very rolled edges, the dorsal sepal often particularly square-tipped. They can be two-coloured and sometimes entirely purplish.

Petals often similar in colour to the sepals; long and narrow, sometimes with rolled edges.

LABELLUM
Often looks very triangular because it is so convex and the edges bend under; may be one- or three-lobed, with two swellings. The speculum is fairly bright and blue-toned, similar to *O. sintenisii*.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The shape of the labellum, and the very stiff, narrow-looking sepals, are the most reliable identifiers of this species.

CONFUSION SPECIES
The closely related species in group I all have features in common. See this section for *O. mammosa*.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in March, at Larnaca Salt Lake, and sometimes before *O. mammosa*, making these two the last in their group to flower.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HOODED ORCHIDS

SERAPIAS





Serapias parviflora

OVERVIEW
A single slender stem of fairly well spread-out flowers which have an exceptionally small labellum bent well under. The leaves and early flowers often wither before the last flowers open.

HEIGHT
About 20–25 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
Long narrow green leaves clasp the base of the stem (which is also green with red dashes) and then stand out from it. The bracts are also long and the same colour as the hood.

FLOWERS
The hood formed by the sepals is greyish, showing reddish veins and hides the petals which are droplet-shaped. The labellum is very small; the lateral lobes are hidden inside the hood and are darker than the centre (between them) which has a few short white hairs. The epichile is short, narrow, often pale and bends back towards the stem.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
Alone among the *Serapias*, the petals are shaped like a drawn-out drop of liquid; also the small labellum, and its position (bent towards the stem), are significant features.

CONFUSION SPECIES
All the *Serapias* species are confusing at first but patient attention to detail will separate them in time.

WHEN TO LOOK
More frequent in the west of the island, such as in Peyia Forest, and in bloom in April.



Serapias parviflora

SMALL-FLOWERED SERAPIAS


Serapias parviflora
SMALL-FLOWERED SERAPIAS



Serapias politisii

formerly ***Serapias aphroditae***

OVERVIEW
A slender stem of few small dark flowers.

HEIGHT
About 15cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
A few short narrow green leaves stand up round the base of the stem. Bracts are deep coloured, reaching almost to the tip of the hood.

FLOWERS
The hood is greyish violet with purple veins and hides the purple lateral lobes of the labellum as well as the petals. The central section of the hypochile (between the two lobes) is lighter and hairy; the epichile is small and deep red/purple.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES:
The petals are almost circular at the base with a fine drawn-out upper part; the deep colour and small size of the flower are significant features.

CONFUSION SPECIES:
The petal-shape and deep colour separate it from *S. parviflora*, while its small size helps to distinguish it from the closely related *S. bergonii*.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK:
This orchid is not found in the east of the island; it can be seen in Akrotiri and in Polis in early April.



Serapias politisii

POLITIS'S SERAPIAS

Serapias politisii

POLITIS'S SERAPIAS





Distinctive hooded lip with fine hairs



Capsule

A subtle beauty of Mediterranean grasslands





In flower among stones and thyme





Serapias bergonii

OVERVIEW
A fairly slender Serapias with medium-sized flowers that may be pale or quite dark.

HEIGHT
About 30 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
Fairly long narrow leaves stand up round the stem which can be marked with red at the base. The purple bracts are longer than the hood.

FLOWERS
The greyish hood hides the blackish lateral lobes and the purple-based petals. The centre is usually greenish with a few white hairs and the epichile is quite long and sometimes narrow.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The petal shape, the greenish centre and the long bract are all significant in identification.

CONFUSION SPECIES
This orchid is difficult to separate from the closely related *S. vomeracea* with which it overlaps; however, *S. vomeracea* is generally bigger, particularly its bracts and long epichile. It is also slightly later to flower.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK
This is the commonly seen *Ser*apias, very easily seen on low ground everywhere. It flowers in Akrotiri in late March.



Serapias bergonii

BERGONI'S SERAPIAS





Distinctive hooded lip with fine hairs



Serapias bergonii

BERGONI'S SERAPIAS

A Mediterranean orchid of grasslands and rocky slopes





Serapias vomeracea

OVERVIEW
A tall sturdy plant with fairly numerous large flowers and noticeably large bracts.

HEIGHT
Often 40-50 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
Several strong unmarked stems are seen together, with long narrow green leaves standing up and out around them. The bracts are very large, pointed and the same colour as the hood.

FLOWERS
The hood is grey-tinged, purple-veined and very pointed, hiding the petals and the dark purple lateral lobes of the labellum. The hypochile centre is lighter, sometimes greenish, and quite hairy. The epichile is long and rather narrow.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The overall size, particularly of the bracts, and their shape, are all significant features, as well as the late flowering.

CONFUSION SPECIES
See this section for *S. bergonii*.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK
These orchids are widespread. They can be seen in Akrotiri in April.

Serapias vomeracea

WEDGE-LIPPED SERAPIAS





Serapias levantina

formerly ***Serapias orientalis***

OVERVIEW
Stocky plants with deep red flowers, and bracts about as long as the hood.

HEIGHT
Usually about 25-30 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
The sturdy stems are often red-tinged and the leaves are proportionately longer and wider than those of *S. bergonii* or *S. vomeracea*.

FLOWERS
The labellum is quite deep red with a rather wide epichile and long violet hairs at the centre.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The stocky habit, the deep colour and the violet hairs should identify this orchid.

CONFUSION SPECIES
None, if examined closely; a dark *S. orientalis* may be superficially similar.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK
This orchid can be seen near Larnaca Salt Lake in March.

Serapias levantina – S. orientalis

LEVANTINE AND ORIENTAL SERAPIAS





Serapias orientalis

OVERVIEW
A sturdy stem carrying an oval flower-head of large flowers with a very hairy labellum, which may be deep-coloured or pale.

HEIGHT
Usually 20-25 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
Both sturdy and often blotched purple; the leaves are fairly short and stand up close to the stem. Bracts are light grey-green, the same colour and length as the flower-hood.

FLOWERS
The labellum is deep red or pale (sometimes peach-coloured) with long white hairs; the epichile is wide with the edges curling forwards slightly.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The large (sometimes pale) hairy flowers should identify this orchid.

CONFUSION SPECIES
None on close examination, but see under *S. levantina*.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in March.

Serapias levantina – S. orientalis

LEVANTINE AND ORIENTAL SERAPIAS



CHAPTER FOUR

THE TRUE ORCHIDS

ORCHIS





Anacamptis coriophora

*formerly **Orchis fragrans***

OVERVIEW
A fairly small plant with numerous closely packed spotted flowers, often deep red and with a pleasant vanilla scent.

HEIGHT
About 25 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
A slender stem with narrow, folded leaves that are often withered by the time the flowers open.

FLOWERS
Numerous and small, with a hood formed by the sepals and narrow petals. The labellum is spotted and clearly three-lobed.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The many spotted flowers, the vanilla scent and the late flowering are distinctive.

CONFUSION SPECIES
Some resemblance to *Orchis sancta*, but easily distinguished by its smaller, deeper-coloured and spotted flowers, and the scent.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers towards the end of April.

Anacamptis coriophora

FORMERLY ORCHIS FRAGRANS



Anacamptis coriophora

FORMERLY ORCHIS FRAGRANS

A distinctive Mediterranean orchid of grasslands and open habitats







Fragrant flowers with a characteristic hooded lip and purplish spots





Anacamptis sancta

formerly Orchis sancta

OVERVIEW
A medium-sized plant with straggly leaves, bearing fairly large, usually clear pink flowers with only a faint scent.

HEIGHT
About 30 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
A rather stiff stem with numerous creased leaves.

FLOWERS
The sepals and narrow petals form a sharply pointed hood. The labellum is similar in colour, clearly three-lobed, with wide lateral lobes with toothed edges and a narrow pointed middle lobe held forward.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The labellum shape, clear unspotted colour and very late flowering are distinctive.

CONFUSION SPECIES
See under *O. fragrans*. Hybrids between the two species can occur.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in late April and into May.

Anacamptis sancta

FORMERLY ORCHIS SANCTA











Anacamptis sancta

FORMERLY ORCHIS SANCTA

A rare Mediterranean orchid of grasslands and open habitats









Elegant flowers with a characteristic helmet and fringed lip



Anacamptis palustris

formerly ***Orchis palustris***

OVERVIEW
A tall, slender plant with mauve-pink to deep purple flowers along a long flowering stem.

HEIGHT
About 40 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
A slender stem with a few long, narrow leaves spaced along it.

FLOWERS
Fairly numerous, with lateral sepals spreading wide and slightly forwards, and a dorsal sepal forming a loose hood. The labellum is three-lobed with a whitish grooved throat, marked with deeper colour and spots, and a stout spur extending backwards.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The combination of tall habit, flower shape and colour, whitish grooved labellum and late flowering are distinctive. The leaves are on the stem rather than in a basal rosette.

CONFUSION SPECIES
It is closely related to *A. laxiflora*, but in *A. palustris* the middle lobe of the labellum is longer than the side lobes.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers in May.

Anacamptis palustris

FORMERLY ORCHIS PALUSTRIS











Anacamptis palustris

FORMERLY ORCHIS PALUSTRIS





A beautiful orchid of wet meadows and marshes



Elegant flowers in shades of lilac and pink





Anacamptis laxiflora

formerly Orchis laxiflora

OVERVIEW

A tall, slender plant with reddish purple flowers and a prominent purple spur, spaced along the flowering stem.

HEIGHT

About 45-50 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

Narrow leaves are spread along the stem; bracts are tinted purple at the tip.

FLOWERS

Numerous purple to violet flowers are well spaced along the stem. The sepals are held wide and the dorsal sepal and petals form a loose hood. The labellum is three-lobed, with a shorter middle lobe, often paler and marked with dashes and spots; the lateral lobes are strongly creased and curve back.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The loose arrangement of the flowers, the prominent spur and the shape and colour of the labellum are distinctive.

CONFUSION SPECIES

It can be confused with *A. palustris*, but differs in its flower colour and labellum shape.

WHEN TO LOOK

Flowers in April, often near water.

Anacamptis laxiflora

FORMERLY ORCHIS LAXIFLORA









Anacamptis laxiflora

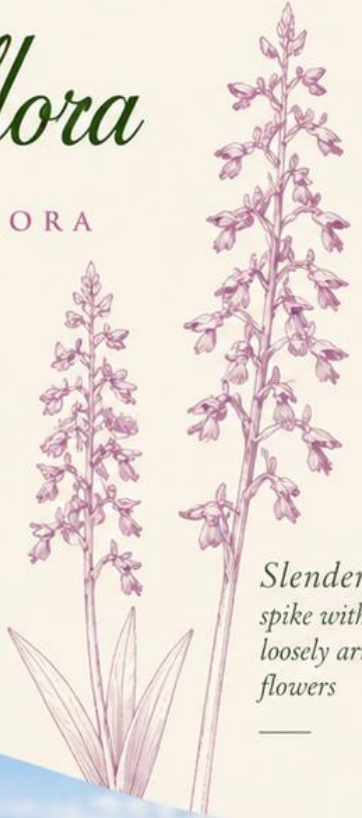
FORMERLY ORCHIS LAXIFLORA





A graceful orchid of wet meadows and marshes

← *Delicate spotted lip and elegant lateral lobes*



Slender spike with loosely arranged flowers



Thriving in seasonally wet grasslands across the Mediterranean



Anacamptis morio
subsp. syriaca
formerly Orchis syriaca

OVERVIEW
A small plant with numerous flowers, usually in two contrasting colours, often with green-veined purple sepals and a white labellum.

HEIGHT
Often about 20 cm or more, but sometimes only 10 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
A fairly sturdy stem, often purple-tinged near the top; narrow leaves at the base; purple bracts.

FLOWERS
Sepals strongly green-veined lilac to purple, forming a loose hood with the petals and lateral sepals spreading wide. The labellum is usually white, sometimes purplish at the sides, with a deep groove at the base extending back into a thin purple arched spur.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The contrasting colours of the sepals and labellum and the prominent green veining are very noticeable.

CONFUSION SPECIES
None, except for the very rare *O. papilionacea*, which is easily distinguished on close examination.

WHEN TO LOOK
A widespread and common orchid, often found with other orchids. Easily seen by the roadside in Akrotiri in February and March.


Anacamptis morio subsp. syriaca
FORMERLY ORCHIS SYRIACA



Anacamptis papilionacea

formerly Orchis papilionacea

OVERVIEW

A small plant with few to fairly numerous flowers, with green-veined red to violet sepals and a fan-shaped labellum, which may be the same colour or paler, and plain or marked with lines and dashes.

HEIGHT

At the only known site in Cyprus they were between 20 and 28 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

A fairly sturdy stem, often purple-tinged near the top; narrow leaves at the base; violet bracts.

FLOWERS

Sepals strongly green-veined reddish to violet, the dorsal sepal forming a loose hood with the petals, and the laterals spreading wide. The labellum is fan-shaped and may be flat, concave or slightly convex. It may be pale pink to violet, usually with fan-shaped markings and central dashes.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The fan-shape of the labellum and its markings.

CONFUSION SPECIES

At first sight similar to *A. morio* subsp. *syriaca* (formerly *O. syriaca*) but differs in size and the green-veined sepals.

WHEN TO LOOK

A very rare orchid, thought to be extinct in Cyprus until it was re-discovered in early March 2001 in the Lefkara area.

Anacamptis papilionacea

FORMERLY ORCHIS PAPILIONACEA





Anacamptis collina

formerly Orchis collina

OVERVIEW

A very sturdy, medium-sized orchid, one of the first to flower. It has a thick dark stem and large flowers in a range of colours from dingy green or whitish to deep red, with a short fat spur and prominent bracts.

HEIGHT

About 25–30 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

Stem sturdy, strongly coloured at least near the top, with slightly fleshy, large green leaves. Bracts are large and purplish.

FLOWERS

Petals and dorsal sepal form a hood which is often brownish with olive green tones; the lateral sepals are the same colour, rather narrow, and twisted or folded. The labellum is wide and fan-shaped with wavy edges and is often pink or red, sometimes green-tinged. There is a groove at the base which extends back to become a short, fleshy spur, light-coloured and down-pointing.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The very early flowering and the fan-shaped labellum are significant in identification.

CONFUSION SPECIES

None.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK

Often overlooked because it flowers in January or even December, but in a good year it can be seen in great numbers in most places where other orchids are found. It is easily seen, almost on the sea-shore, near Moni power-station.


Anacamptis papilionacea
FORMERLY ORCHIS PAPILIONACEA



Anacamptis collina
var. leucoglossa
formerly Orchis collina

OVERVIEW
A sturdy, early-flowering orchid with a thick stem and large flowers, coloured from green or whitish to deep red, with a short spur and prominent bracts.

HEIGHT
About 25–30 cm.

FLOWERING TIME
January to December, often in large numbers, especially near the coast.

KEY FEATURES
Sturdy stem with large green leaves. Flowers with a hood of greenish sepals; the labellum is wide, fan-shaped with wavy edges. Bracts are large and often purplish.

VARIANT
A. c. var. leucoglossa – white labellum with green-tinged edges and no hint of colour.

CONFUSION SPECIES
None.



Orchis anatolica

formerly Orchis troodi

Troodos Orchid

OVERVIEW

A fairly small orchid with large pink flowers, which get deeper in colour as they finish flowering. It is often found in considerable numbers in pine woodland on higher ground.

HEIGHT

About 25 cm.

FLOWERS

Pink flowers with green-marked sepals. The labellum is pale in the centre with two rows of spots. The lateral sepals point upwards, and the dorsal sepal also often points up, rather than forming a hood with the petals. The spur points backwards and usually upwards.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Look for the upright lateral sepals and the spur, which usually points backwards and upwards.

FLOWERING TIME

March–April.



Orchis anatolica

OVERVIEW

A small orchid with delicate pale-pink flowers and a deep reddish stem, usually found in small numbers in light woodland.

HEIGHT

20–25 cm.

FLOWERS

Pale pink flowers with veined lateral sepals held wide. The pale-centred labellum has two rows of spots. The dorsal sepal often forms a loose hood with the petals. The spur tapers back almost straight, or curves up a little to a fine point.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Look for the widely held sepals, delicate flowers and the position of the fine spur.

FLOWERING TIME

March–April.


Anacamptis anatolica
FORMERLY ORCHIS ANATOLICA



Orchis quadripunctata

OVERVIEW

Often a tiny plant, with white to pink flowers, looking superficially like *O. anatolica*. It can grow quite profusely and seems to favour banks, in the open, or in the shade of trees.

HEIGHT

About 10–15 cm, usually.

FLOWERS

Numerous tiny flowers in pale to strong pink and white have rather oval sepals, the laterals spread wide and the dorsal sepal curving slightly forward over the petals which form a slight hood. The almost flat labellum has two rows of spots, which continue into the “throat” where the spur begins; the fine spur curves back and down. A pure white unspotted form exists.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The fine downward-pointing spur on the delicate small flower is diagnostic of this orchid.

FLOWERING TIME

March–April.


Orchis quadripunctata
FORMERLY ORCHIS QUADRIPUNCTATA
FOUR-SPOTTED ORCHID



Orchis simia

OVERVIEW
A compact plant with a rosette of light green leaves and a rather dense flower-head of man-shaped flowers, the light-coloured “body” contrasting with the deep reddish-purple “limbs”.

HEIGHT
About 20 cm.

FLOWERS
The numerous flowers are densely packed in an oval shaped head, which looks whitish before opening from the top. The sepals and petals form a hood, pale on the outside with streaks of purplish-red. The pattern is repeated in the centre of the labellum, while the three lobes are deep reddish-purple; the middle lobe is divided into two long tips, with a short tooth between them. All the tips are bent and angled, giving a man or monkey shape. The spur is short and sturdy, pale and down-pointing.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The colour of the bud and the open flower and its habit of opening from the top of the flower head, as well as the shape of the labellum, enable easy identification of this orchid.

FLOWERING TIME
Late March.


Orchis simia
MONKEY ORCHID



Orchis punctulata

OVERVIEW
A sturdy orchid, often quite tall, with upstanding leaves and a long stem of numerous yellow man-shaped flowers.

HEIGHT
About 45 cm.

FLOWERS
Very numerous, rather squat man-shaped flowers have a hood formed from all three sepals (plain outside, but yellowish inside dashed with deep brown) which hides the fine petals. The three-lobed labellum is yellow, often finely spotted with brown with fine hairs at the centre; the middle lobe is sub-divided into two with a tooth between and all the lobe tips curve forward. The spur is short and sturdy and curves down behind.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The colour, size, labellum shape and early flowering are all helpful in identification of this orchid.

FLOWERING TIME
Early March.



Orchis italica

Naked Man Orchid

OVERVIEW
A sturdy plant with numerous pink man-shaped flowers on a tall stem.

HEIGHT
About 35 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES
A stout green stem with a rosette of broad, wavy-edged leaves at the base and short whitish bracts.

FLOWERS
A dense spike of pink flowers, the labellum pale in the centre with darker spots and streaks, divided into three lobes, the middle one with two long narrow tips and a central tooth. A short pale spur points downwards.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES
The combination of wavy-edged leaves and man-shaped flowers is distinctive.

CONFUSION SPECIES
None on close examination, though *O. simia* and *Anacamptis pyramidalis* may be superficially similar.

WHEN TO LOOK
Flowers from mid- to late March.


Orchis italica
ITALIAN ORCHID

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GIANT ORCHID

HIMANTOGLOSSUM ROBERTIANUM

(formerly Barlia robertiana)





Barlia robertiana

GIANT ORCHID

OVERVIEW

This is a big coarse plant with large glossy oval upstanding leaves and a thick stem of rather numerous, somewhat man-shaped flowers, sometimes pink, usually dingy and often with a greenish tone.

HEIGHT

About 50 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

The thick green stem is sometimes purplish near the top, and has rather wide fleshy shiny leaves from the base, standing untidily up round it. The bracts are long and tinged purplish, usually.

FLOWERS

Numerous coarse large flowers are rather closely packed around the upper stem, with a hood (formed by the sepals and petals) which is greenish-tinged outside and even more so inside. The labellum is three-lobed, less greenish than the hood, and hangs down, the side lobes curving back. The middle lobe is (sometimes only slightly) divided again; it is lighter at the centre, and streaked, and has a sharp cleft at the base from which the thick short spur extends back and down.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The general size of the plant and its leaves and the early flowering are all helpful in identification of this common orchid.

FLOWERING TIME

Early March.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SMALL JEWELS

OTHER GENERA





Neotinia maculata

DENSE-FLOWERED ORCHID

OVERVIEW

A small plant, with a dense cluster of tiny almost tubular flowers, which may be reddish or (often) off-white; usually found in shady places such as under bushes and in light woodland.

HEIGHT

Usually 10–20 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

There is a rosette of leaves (which are often spotted) at the base of the stem which is also sometimes spotted.

FLOWERS

The sepals form a hood enclosing the petals; the labellum is three-lobed and sometimes hangs down but often forward, forming a half-closed tube.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The numerous tiny flowers, rarely wide-open, are diagnostic.

CONFUSION SPECIES

None. Although the labellum shares the “man-shape” of several other orchids it is very much smaller than any other.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK

They are very widespread and easily found; in woodland near Smigies picnic site they bloom in March.



Neotinea maculata

SPOTTED ORCHID



Anacamptis pyramidalis

PYRAMIDAL ORCHID

OVERVIEW

This is a smallish compact and sturdy plant, with cone-shaped flower heads (particularly at the bud-stage) in a range of pink shades from whitish through to quite strong pink.

HEIGHT

About 30 cm.

STEM AND LEAVES

The narrow leaves stand up untidily around the stem.

FLOWERS

The dorsal sepal forms a loose hood with the petals and the lateral sepals are spread wide. The labellum is divided into three rather similar lobes and has two prominent crests at the base which serve to guide pollinating insects in the right direction.

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

The shape of the flower-head and the shape of the labellum make this orchid easily identifiable.

CONFUSION SPECIES

None (although the colour range may be similar to that of *Orchis italica*, the labellum shape is completely different).

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK

This orchid is widespread and easily found, often in large numbers, in grassland in full sun. They can be seen in Akrotiri by the roadside in April.



Anacamptis pyramidalis

PYRAMIDAL ORCHID

Terract

BUILDING CULTURE,
SHAPING LANDSCAPES.

Among the Stones, Orchids Bloom

THE WILD ORCHIDS OF SALAMIOU

A BOOK ON THE WILD ORCHIDS OF SALAMIOU

Salamiou's terraced landscapes and ancient dry stone walls are more than beautiful scenery — they are living landscapes. These stones hold soil, water and life, creating rich habitats where wild orchids and many other plants thrive.

This book celebrates the close connection between people, place and nature. By valuing and protecting our traditional landscapes, we help safeguard the wild orchids of Salamiou for future generations.

A living landscape is built on relationships.

VASSILIKI PETROPOULOU PANAYIOTOU
FOUNDER, TERRACT

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PHOTOGRAPHY

- Photographs by Andri Kedariti and other contributors, taken in and around Salamiou, Cyprus.

A FINAL NOTE

Wild orchids are a precious part of Cyprus's natural heritage.
Please admire and protect them. Do not pick or disturb them.
Let's keep Salamiou beautiful for future generations.



Wild orchids near Salamiou, Cyprus
Photograph: Andri Kedariti

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