

FLOWER FINDING TRIP AROUND MELIDONI, RETHYMNON



Julia Jones Flower Finding Trip

17th - 24th March, 2020

Tuesday

Arrival and greeting of guests. Time to settle in and get to know each other. An illustrated talk on the wild flowers of the area.

Wednesday

Visit to the historic Monastery of Arkadi, and on into the mountains around Amnatos. We can expect to find a variety of interesting and beautiful plants, including the endemic *Eryngium creticum*, the beautiful *Pinus pinea* pine trees (from which we obtain pine nuts), a variety of orchids and annuals. Coffee en route and lunch in a friendly traditional taverna, where the host grows much of the produce used in his dishes.

Thursday

After breakfast we will head west towards Hania, to visit Cape Drapano and to explore for flowers; finding a taverna for coffee en route. After lunch we will head further west to the archaeological site of Aptera to see the famous Roman cistern and enjoy the myriad of wild flowers growing around the site. Today we can expect to find masses of *Lunaria annua*,

Orchis fragrans, Ophrys heldreichii and many more interesting species. If we are lucky we may also find Orchis simia.

Friday

A slow drive to Kournos lake, stopping on the way to look for rare and endemic species and to have coffee in a roadside taverna. We will spend time walking around Kournos lake and have a leisurely lunch by the water, before making our way back to Melidoni; stopping from time to time if we spot anything of interest.

Saturday

Today we will head inland and south towards Spili, one of the main orchid sites of Crete. On the way we will stop in Armeni to visit the Minoan cemetery to view the famous tombs and to search out orchids amongst the Quercus macrolepis (Valonia oak). This oak is rare on Crete and is distinguished by its very distinctive 'cups' which hold large, elongated acorns. We will take a short stop in Spili before we head up to the orchid fields, where we will find Anacamptis pyramidalis (the Pyramid orchid), Ophrys candica, Ophrys kedra, Ophrys phaedra, Orchis boryi and much, much more.

Sunday

Today we will take the opportunity of exploring the area around Melidoni, including a visit to the Cave. We will take lunch in a comfortable and welcoming taverna, before returning to our apartments. In the evening there will be an illustrated talk on the endemic flowers and orchids of Crete.

Monday

We will take a trip into the mountains to visit the Nida Plateau, stopping to examine flowers and plants on our way. The plateau is remote and the scenery spectacular. There is an opportunity to visit the famous Ideon Cave, which, according to mythology was the home of Zeus, King of the Gods. Around the entrance to the cave we will find many rare, endemic flowers, including Scilla nana (Glory of the Snow) and Prunus prostrata (Rock Cherry). We will take lunch at the wonderful taverna, distinguished by its amazing homemade cheese and local lamb and goat; taking in the incredible views as we sample the house wine.

Tuesday

Time to say our goodbyes, exchange e-mail addresses and depart.

Cost of the Holiday, excluding flights, but including all travel on the island, accommodation in a restored traditional village, with breakfast, lunch in a traditional taverna and dinner, and full guiding £2,340 per person

