

EXPLORING NORTH CYPRUS

Wild Flowers and Walking

21 – 28 February 2014

PLANT LIST and BRIEF DIARY

Note: many plants were seen frequently. They are mostly listed once, (on the first occasion that we saw them,) but occasionally mentioned again for a particular reason.

(nif = not in flower) endemic = grows nowhere else in the world

DAY 1 Everybody arrived in good spirits, and the dining room staff were very obliging with a speedy late meal.

DAY 2 In warm and sunny weather we explored **Bellapais** and discussed possible two candidates for Laurence Durrell's "Tree of Idleness", both of which grow just outside the Abbey:

1. *Ficus carica* fig

Growing with *Morus alba*, white mulberry, and shading tables outside the more traditional cafenion

Or 2. *Sophora japonica* Japanese pagoda tree, growing outside the eatery opposite which calls itself "The Tree of Idleness" restaurant.

[In the village itself:

Melia azedarach Persian lilac, or worry bead tree

The dried fruits were used to make worry beads, and after the Crusaders brought the tree to the western Mediterranean, it was also used for rosary beads in the Latin/Catholic countries.

We then walked down the Crusader Way to Osankoy. This historic old road, still cobbled in parts, had many plants of interest including:

<i>Allium neapolitanum</i>	Naples garlic
<i>Calicotome villosa</i>	Mediterranean gorse
<i>Arundo donax</i>	giant reed, commonly known as giant bamboo
<i>Cyclamen persicum</i>	this plant is one of the parents of the commercially grown cyclamen sold in the UK in early winter
<i>Ferula communis</i>	giant fennel (Prometheus/fire of heaven to earth “in a ferula” Pith in dry stem burns v. slowly: 1 st Olympic torch? Sailors used it to light cigarettes until advent of c. lighters.
<i>Prasium major</i>	prassium. Scrambling white flowered shrub
<i>Ptilostemon chamaepeuce</i> var. <i>cypria</i>	a shrubby knapweed endemic n.i.f.
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judas tree
<i>Pistachia lentiscus</i>	Lentisc mastic tree evergreen
<i>Pistachia terebinthus</i>	Turpentine tree, deciduous,(has large galls used for dyeing)
<i>Smyrniium olusatrum</i>	alexanders (introduced by the Romans to Britain)
<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Field marigold
<i>Oxalis pes caprae</i>	Bermuda buttercup (but not: its from S. Africa, & is an oxalis)
<i>Tetragonalobus purpureus</i>	winged or asparagus pea with deep red flowers
<i>Prunus dulcis</i>	almond
<i>Arisarum vulgare</i>	friar’s cowl
<i>Mandragora officinalis</i>	mandrake
<i>Asphodelus aestivus</i>	asphodel
<i>Urginia maritima</i>	sea squill (n.i.f.)
<i>Anchusa azurea</i>	a bright blue flowered anchusa
<i>Ecballium elaterium</i>	squirting cucumber
<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	giant snapdragon
<i>Ranunculus ficaria ficariformis</i>	greater lesser celandine
<i>Bellis sylvestris</i>	Wood daisy (long stems, red on back of petals)

Picnic spot en route to Buffavento

Orchis anatolica Anatolian orchid (with horizontal spur)

Romulea tempskyana purple sand crocus

Gagea juliae yellow sand crocus

Muscari neglectum a dark blue muscari

Also seen: pine processionary moth caterpillars

Galls on *Pistachia terebinthus* (turpentine tree)

DAY 3 Lovely day. In perfect walking temperatures we walked through the open pine forest from Esentepe to the church of **Antiphonitis**. Amongst many other plants we saw:

Anemone coronaria anemone

Ranunculus asiaticus turban buttercup (fine displays in several colours)

Orchis lutea ssp murbeckii yellow bee orchid

Orchis morio green winged orchid

O. anatolica Anatolian orchid

Cistus salvifolius white flowered sage leaved cistus,

Arbutus andrachne a strawberry tree with beautiful reddish exceptionally smooth bark

After coffee at the church, we continued through the forest in the bus to Aleykaya Forest Station and the Herbarium. En route Gulay saw from the driving seat some very fine specimens of:

Ophrys iricolor rainbow orchid

After an excellent bbq lunch we visited the Herbarium. In the evening we returned to Bellapais village itself for a stroll around the floodlit abbey precincts and a very good meal at The Tree of Idleness restaurant.

DAY 4 Everybody went down to Kyrenia to visit the Castle and the harbour. Some of the party took an extra excursion with Gulay to the west coast and went to the spectacular flat topped mountain site of Vouni. Many orchids were seen + the charming iris:

Gynandiris sisyrinchium Barbary nut (only flowers in the afternoon)

Others stayed in Kyrenia for lunch. We all returned to the harbour for dinner.

DAY 5 In lovely sunshine we drove to **Kantara Castle** and admired the spectacular views down the Karpas peninsula.

As we climbed up through the castle we found a beautiful specimen of:

Clematis cirrhosa a winter flowering clematis, creamy yellow pendulous flowers

Also *Scilla cilicia* a scilla growing in the shade of the rocks

We continued on to the **Karpas** to have lunch with Gulay's family. Whilst walking the last few hundred yards to her mother's house we found:

Narcissus tazetta a sweet smelling narcissus

Ceratonia siliqua carob (St John's bread, or the locust bean tree.) "carat" gold

The ceremony of the bread coming out of the oven and being sampled by everybody was memorable and it was lovely to meet Gulay's mother. We ate lunch under cover which was fortunate as it started to rain.

Fortunately it had stopped for the visit to the remains of **Agias Trias**, the 6th century church with its marble baptismal font for total immersion still extant. The mosaics were particularly good as they were wet from the recent rain.

As the rain started again we set off deeper into the Karpas. Unfortunately our planned walk became impossible in such conditions and we only saw 2 wild donkeys because they take shelter from the rain. This was extremely disappointing as they are usually very visible and there are more than 1000 living wild.

DAY 6 Today in weak sunshine/part cloud, we visited **Salamis** and then continued to **Famagusta** where we drove round the immense walls and moat before turning in through the land gate. We were all amazed that absolutely nothing of the old city with its innumerable churches had been visible from outside. We all visited the extraordinary cake shop Peteks during the afternoon and enjoyed strolling round the town. On our way back to Kyrenia we drove along the edge of the ghost town of Varosha, adjacent to Famagusta, which has been forbidden territory to everyone since the 1974 troubles. This is a very strange and sad sight.

At Salamis we saw:

Acacia retinoides Wattle or mimosa

Limonium sinuatum a sea lavender grown in UK and sold as "everlasting"

Tragapogon porrifolius Jack go to bed at noon (goatsbeard)

DAY 7 ST HILARION and walk down to Lapta (gr: Lapithos)

On a fine sunny day we first visited **Hilarion Castle** where the knights' jousting ground is still clearly visible below. We saw:

Brassica hilarionis the St Hilarion cabbage (endemic to the area around the castle)

Arabis cypria a very pretty purple/pink arabis endemic

Mandragora officinalis mandrake

Hyoscyamus aureus golden henbane (highly poisonous)

Scilla cilicia fine displays on a wide ledge

Sedum lampusae Lapta stonecrop very localised endemic

Lithodora hispidula an attractive shrubby borage with flowers of pink/white/blue

Gladiolus byzantinus wild gladiolus, (the lily of the field from the bible)

We continued through open pine forest along the crest of the Kyrenia range and then walked down towards the village of Lapta, (referred to by Laurence Durrell in "Bitter Lemons" by the greek name of Lapithos)

From the time we left the castle until we got back on to the bus above Lapta, we continued to see many species of orchids and in abundance. Of particular note due to where we found it was:

Ophrys lapethica a woodcock orchid; so nice to see it above Lapithos endemic

For a complete list of orchids seen, see next page

Anne Cryer 22 March 2014

THE ORCHIDS

During the week the orchid displays were outstanding and the complete list of **18** species and subspecies seen is as follows:

Ophrys = bee orchid (often with insect like lip):

<i>Ophrys argolica ssp. elegans</i>	eyed or spectacled bee orchid
“ <i>attica</i>	Mt Carmel bee orchid
“ <i>iricolor</i>	rainbow
“ <i>lapethica</i>	a woodcock orchid
“ <i>lutea ssp murkbeckii</i>	yellow bee orchid
“ <i>sintenisii</i>	a spider orchid
“ <i>umbilicata</i>	a woodcock orchid
“ <i>fusca</i>	dull orchid
“ <i>omegaiifera</i>	omega orchid
“ <i>flavomarginata</i>	with yellow margin to lower lip
“ <i>levantina</i>	a spider orchid
<i>Orchis italica</i>	naked man orchid
“ <i>anatolica</i>	Anatolian orchid
“ <i>quadripunctata</i>	four spotted orchid
“ <i>morio ssp syriaca</i>	green winged orchid
“ <i>collina</i>	fan lipped orchid
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	pyramidal orchid
<i>Barlia robertiana</i>	giant orchid

THOSE OF US FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO EXTEND THEIR HOLIDAY IN THE SOUTH ALSO SAW:

<i>Orchis punctulata</i>	punctate orchid
<i>Neotinia maculata</i>	dense flowered orchid
<i>Ophrys transhyrcana</i>	another spider orchid
<i>Ophrys bornmuelleri</i>	Bornmeuller's
<i>Dactorylorhiza romana</i>	Roman orchid
<i>Serapias ssp</i>	atongue orchid

ends

