

**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

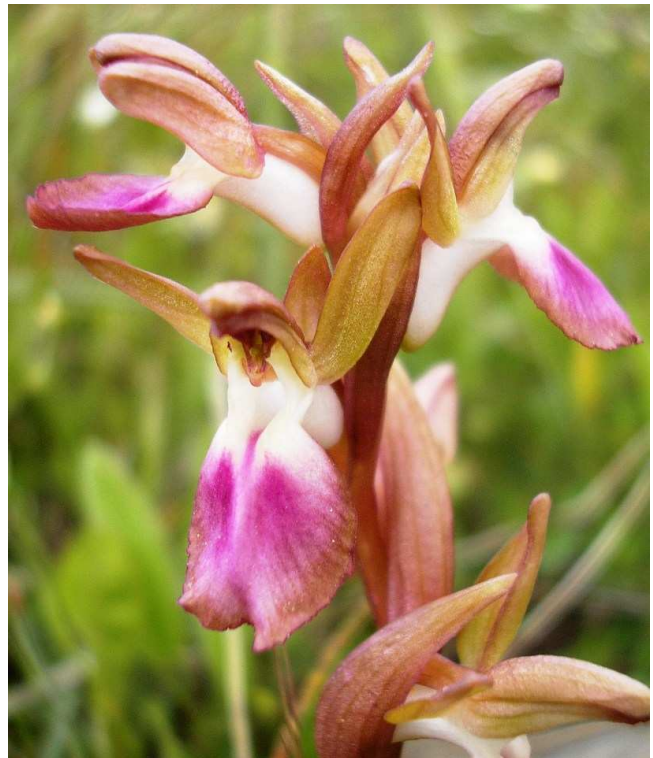
## The Orchids of Crete (Part 4): genus *Orchis*

(Barrow-, Alibertis Butterfly-, Heroic Butterfly-, Sparse blooming-, Provence-,  
Fragrant Orchis)

(An article <sup>[1]</sup> from our forums member **Ralf Schwab**, Obertshausen [Hessen]).

So far we introduced 15 Orchid types with our leaflet series “The Orchids of Crete” (see info-leaflet No. 269-08/E, Part 1, No. 270-08/E, Part 2 and No. 271-08/E, Part 3); below we consider **six** further species from the genus of Orchis.

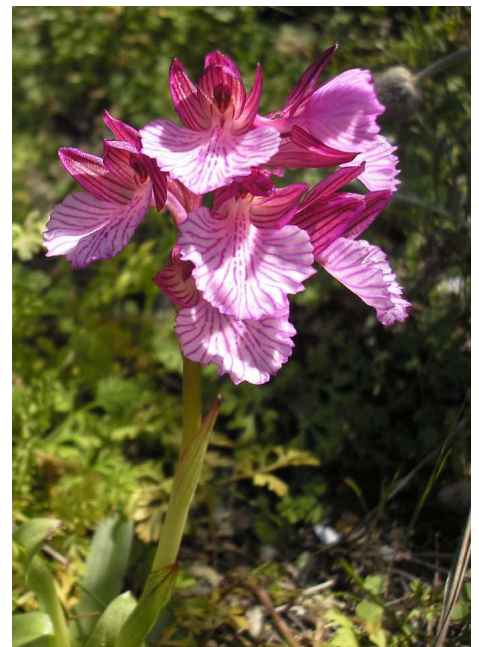
In this leaflet we will introduce the on Crete occurring subspecies of the Butterfly Orchis, the two yellow blooming species, the sparsely flowering and Provence Orchis as well as the Barrow- and Fragrant Orchis. The two latter species have a short thick spur and occur in a green and a red brownish colour variant. At the end of this leaflet (see page 4) a photo show one of the most beautiful flower areas in Crete, near the small village of **Rodovani**, where many species in large numbers are close to each other and make a real Orchid garden in the thorny Garrigue. You can easily see that here an excursion with sandals and short pants brings little joy



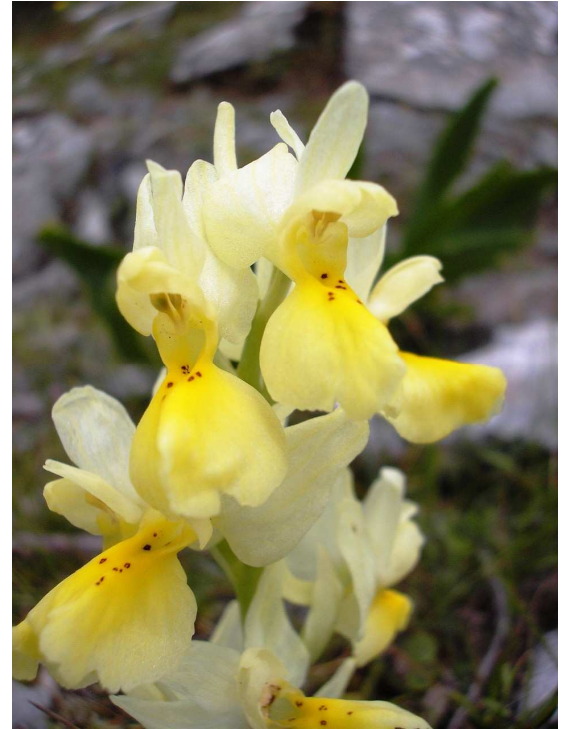
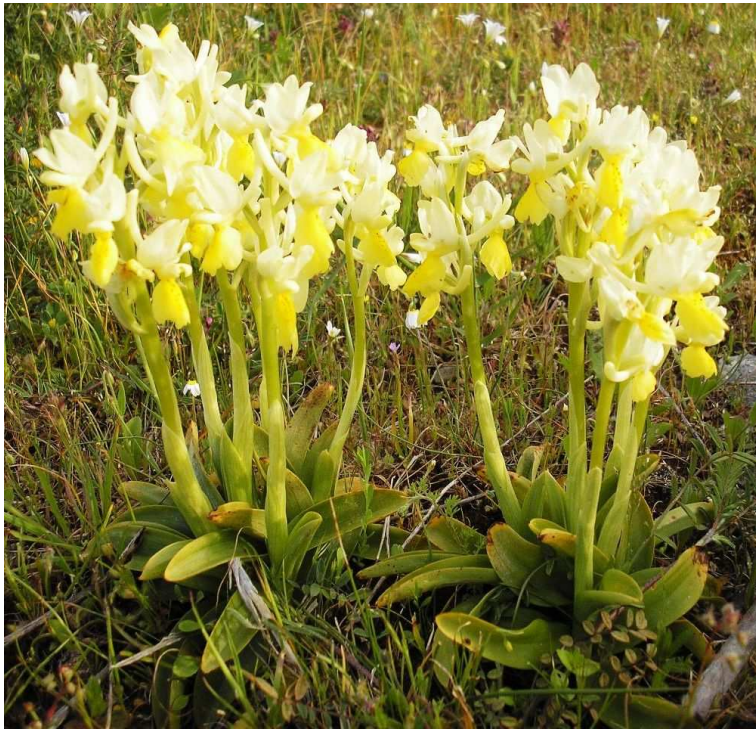
The „Barrow“-Orchis (*Orchis collina* / *Anacamptis collina*) is widely spread on Crete. The colour varies from greenish white to dark red. Characteristic is the short saccate white spur of the bloom. *Orchis collina* is the earliest blooming Orchid on Crete. **Flowering season:** blossoms in two waves: first in January and February (focus on the coast), second between mid March to early April. **Habitat:** Garrigue and dry grasslands in open country. **Plant find spot:** fig. left: Miamou, north of Lentas / Prefecture Iraklion on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2008, fig. right: west of Gerakari / Prefecture Rethymno on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



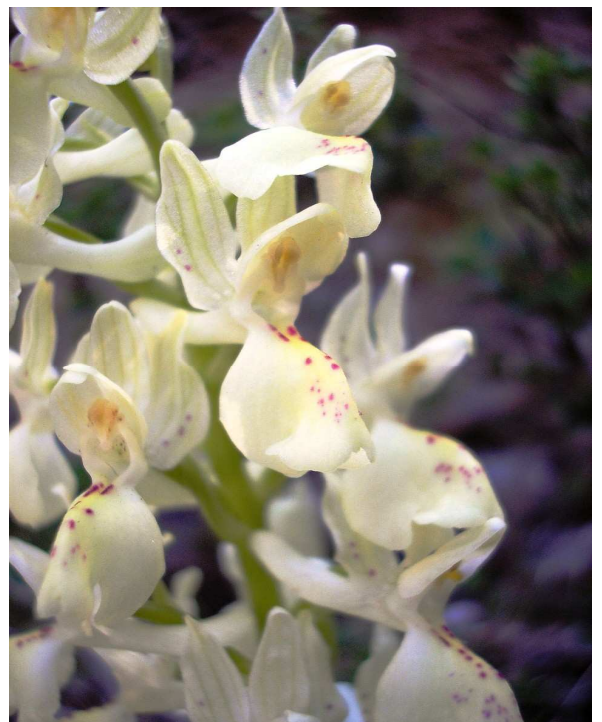
The **Alibertis Butterfly Orchis** (*Orchis papilionacea* ssp. *alibertis*) is to distinguish from the subspecies *heroica* by the much later flowering, the slender growth form and the fewer number and smaller size of flowers. **Flowering season:** mid April to early May. **Habitat:** Garrigue and dry grasslands; open Olive groves, on basic soil. **Plant find spot:** Koxare at Spili / Prefecture Rethymno on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



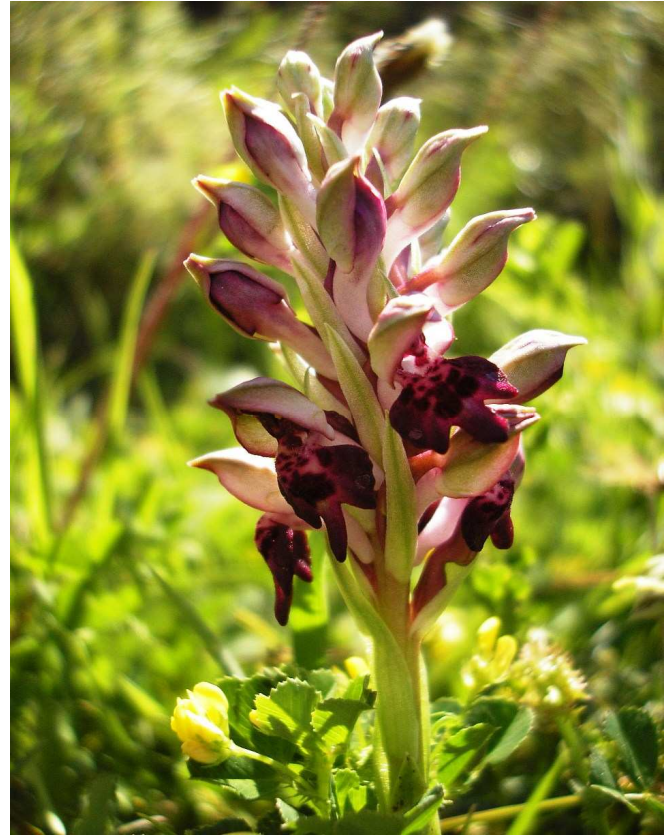
The **Heroic butterfly Orchis** (*Orchis papilionacea* ssp. *heroica*) is like the Barrow- and the Milky white Orchis a very early blooming Orchis species. It is found widely in Crete and often in dense herds. The small, sturdy plants have very large flowers with a unsplit labium, which is darker red striped in its spherical inflorescence. **Flowering season:** early February to early April. **Habitat:** Garrigue and dry grasslands; in open country, on basic soil only, also in light pine forests. **Plant find spot:** Kasanos - Ini / Prefecture Iraklion on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2008.



The “**Sparse blooming Orchis**” (*Orchis paucifolia*) prefers rocky areas where it is possible in dense colonies. Most of the time the plants are small and have only a few flowers (name). The colour is characteristic of the type: the labium is intense yellow with small dark dots in the Center, the remaining petals are pale yellow, the spur is steep upward. **Flowering season:** mid March to early May. **Habitat:** escarpment of rocky areas, most in open country. Only on basic soil, up to 1300 m. **Plant find spot:** west of Gerakari / Prefecture Rethymno on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



The **Provence Orchis** (*Orchis provincialis*) is the second yellow blooming Orchis species of Crete. It occurs on the island on just a few places. It differs from the “Sparse blooming” Orchis by the higher growth, the completely pale yellow colour and the spotted leaves. **Flowering season:** late March to late April. **Habitat:** bushy Garrigue in open country, only on floor basic surface at altitudes of 600 to 1400 m. **Plant find spot:** Bambakades, south of Kandanos / Prefecture Chania on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



The **Fragrant Orchis** (*Orchis fragrans*) is a late flowering species that can vary like the Barrow Orchis in the colour from light green to dark brown red. The flowers are small, the labium is three lobed and red dotted in the centre. The remaining petals form a closed helmet over the labium. While the Fragrant Orchis today counts to the greatest rarities in Central Europe and is here almost anywhere close to extinction or already completely disappeared, it is still widespread in Crete. **Flowering season:** early April to late Mai. **Habitat:** in heavily grazed areas, on change-moist basic floor, up to 1200 m. **Plant find spot:** fig. left: water reservoir at Ierapetra on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2007, therefore see our leaflet No. 196-07/E [[http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter\\_en/196-07E.pdf](http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/196-07E.pdf)] and fig. right: at Rodovani, north-east of Paleochora / Prefecture Chania on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



Orchid's biotope at **Rodovani**. You can find large appearance of many different species on the grassy places between the thorny bushes.

Picture from the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.

**Rodovani** (Greek: Ροδοβάκι) is a small village in the Prefecture Chania. As of the last census of population (2001) it has a population of 122 and is part of the municipality of **Selino**. The ancient city **Elyros** is located nearby **Rodovani**.

<sup>[1]</sup>: with the co-operation of *Ute Kluge* and *Heinz Eikamp*  
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[to be continued with Part 5]