

**Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:****The Cretan bellflower (*Petromarula pinnata*) &  
the Bladder cherry (*Physalis alkekengi*)****Die Cretan bellflower (*Petromarula pinnata*)**

On a 2<sup>nd</sup> walk through the *Astrakiano* gorge (therefore see info leaflet 371-12/E on our Website) we could find out another location of the Cretan bellflower. Because of their edible sheets and blooms it is called by the Greeks also „rock salad “. This endemic kind (old endemic species = Palaeo-endemic species) grows only on Crete at ravine walls and calcareous slopes.

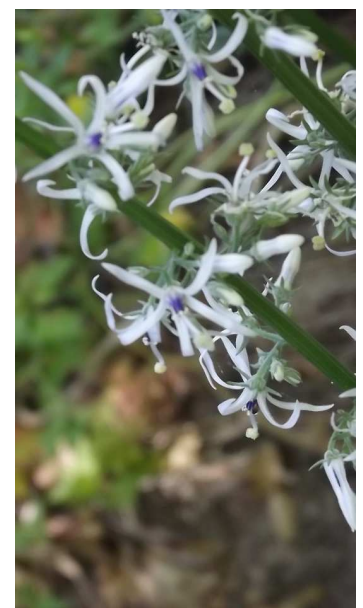
This perennial herbal plant reaches growth heights of up to one meter and possesses long stake roots. The basilar leaves are largely, oval and pinnate. The hermaphrodite blooms are five-numbered; five light blue to violet petals, which narrowly and urns-sharp grew together with one another. There is only one circle with five stamina in place. The clearly standing stamps have brick-red cicatrices. The bloom time is from April to June.

„As a member of the Aegean relict flora in the plant-geographical region of the “Kardaegaeis”, *Petromarula* is regarded as relict endemic species. Together with 140 other plant types on Crete it could outlast the climatic changes in and since the cold times of the Pleistocene in the isolated island situation and in the balanced maritime climate, while the former Aegean Flora on the mainland and within the mainland near ranges was displaced by other plant types. Also on Crete grows none further *Petromarula* relatives plant type “

([www.wikipedia.de](http://www.wikipedia.de) [translated]).

Details to *Petromarula* can be found (with drawings of particular plant elements) at:

[[http://www.flowersofchania.com/html/petromarula\\_pinnata\\_.html](http://www.flowersofchania.com/html/petromarula_pinnata_.html) ].



## The Bladder cherry (*Physalis alkekengi*) [*Chinese lantern, Japanese lantern or Winter cherry*]

The Bladder cherry occasionally is as ornamental plant cultivated representatives of the kind of the Cape gooseberry or Peruvian cherry (*Physalis*). The generic name is taken over from the Greek *physalis* (bubble) and refers to the blown up cup. PARACELTUS directed the plant as reno-protective (kidney strengthening) and diuretic medicine. Also the herb books of the Middle Ages emphasize the urine-, stone- and kidney gravel driving characteristics.

The Bladder cherry is a summer-green, perennial herbal plant with growth heights of 40 - 80 cm. The stem is blunt-sharp-edged, light branched and usually fluffy pilose.

Usually two leaves stand together. The petiole exhibits a length of 1 to 3 cm. The simple lamina is, with a length from 5 to 15 cm and a width of 2 to 8 cm slender to broadly egg-shaped with blunter scalene blade base and acuminate at the top. The leaf margin is smoothly, roughly toothed or sometimes remarkably unequally delta-shaped lapped. The leaf surfaces is bald or fluffy pilose.

The blooming period is between July and October. The 0.6 to 1.6 cm long pedicel bald, fluffy or ragged pilose and slightly curved so that the rather inconspicuous blooms hang downward. The individually standing blooms are androgynous, five-numbered, and nearly actinomorphic with double perianth. The five about 6 mm long sepals are bell-shaped grew together and densely fluffy pilose. The five petals are grown together to a bell or radial, possess a diameter from 1,5 to 2 cm and are white with greenish or yellowish eye. The five stamina are yellow. It is a upper-stiff, biloculate ovary and a filiform-cylindrical, upwards somewhat thickened pistil.

After the fertilization of the bloom the petals are thrown off first. Subsequently, the five somewhat leathery sepals enlarge with increasing ripeness, so that they nearly close and, with a length from 2.5 to 4 cm and a width of 2 to 3.5 cm form a egg-shaped, lantern-like cup around the developing berry. The coat changes color with maturity, upon variety yellowish, or intensively red. The fruit peduncle exhibits a length of 2 to 3 cm. The shining, orange to scarlet, sourly bitter berries exhibit a diameter from approximately 1 to 1.5 cm. They contain a large number orange to yellowish-white, lentils- to reniform seeds, which have a diameter of about 2mm.

Today the region of origin of the plant is not to be determined any longer. Probably it originates from the sub Mediterranean Eurasian climatic zone, thus is resident in south Europe and west Asia.



**Plant**



**blossom**



**seed head**



**fruit / seed**