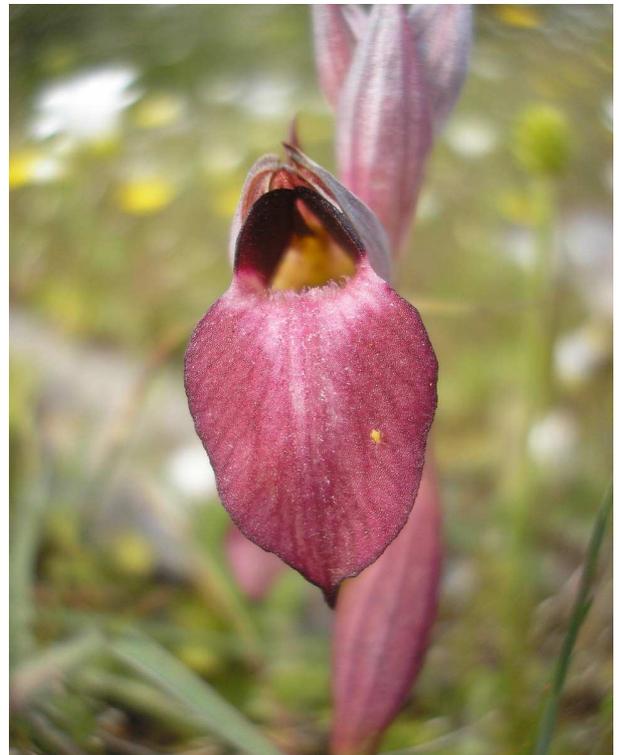


**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**The Orchids of Crete (Part 5): genus *Serapias****(S. lingua, S. orientalis, S. bergonii, S. parviflora)*(An article <sup>[1]</sup> from our forums member *Ralf Schwab*, Obertshausen [Hessen]).

So far we introduced 21 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, **No. 271-08/E**, Part 3 and **No. 272-08/E**, Part 4); below we consider four further species from the genus of *Serapias*.

**Primary note:** I've searched the Internet for vernacular names <sup>[\*]</sup> but could only find: **German:** Zungenstendel; **Spanish:** Gallos; **French:** Sérapias; **Italian:** Serapide; **Dutch:** tongorchis. There seems to be no English vernacular name for “*Serapias*”

The genus *Serapias* is represented by 5 species on Crete, which with their characteristic blossoms form look alike but can be very variable within the species. While many other orchids of Crete are bound to alkaline soils in this genus only *Serapias orientalis* is mandatory reliant on it. *Serapias* belong to the rather late blooming orchids. First perfected plants can be found in the lowlands already at the end of March, in sheltered spots last plants blossom until end of May. Dense mass stocks are found in some locations.



*Serapias lingua* has a light ping to intense red, sometimes also yellow labium which significantly broadened in the Middle, where the darker coloured side lobate of the rear labium is apparent. The labium in the bending area is less hairy than other species. Characteristic is the simple, dark red callus, lying on the bottom of the blossom labium.

**Flowering season:** early to late April. **Habitat:** meadows and moist places in Garrigue; succession follower. **Plant find spot:** west of Spili / Prefecture Rethymno on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



*Serapias orientalis* is a highly variable species that is often low stature and stocky in dry locations. The plant has only a few large flowers, which can have up to 5 cm long labiums. The colour palette ranges from deep dark-brown violet to green-white. Lateral lobes are darker coloured than the rest labium. **Flowering season:** late March to late April. **Habitat:** Grasslands on change moist bottom; It is more common in the East than in the West of Crete, located up to 800 m **Plant find spot:** east of Rodovani / Prefecture Chania on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



An on Crete widespread and also very variable type is *Serapias bergonii*. The labium of this type is often strongly back bent. The stem is red-violet overspill above the leaves. Flowers are set one above the other off-centre around the stems. A brownish violet bract is located at the base of the ovary. This is generally is much long than the entire flower. **Flowering season:** early April to late May. **Habitat:** in open terrain at change moist places on basic and acidic surface **Plant find spot:** south of Rethymno on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2007.



*Serapias parviflora* is often difficult to distinguish from *Serapias bergonii*, because the last can have very small flowers in some places. *Serapias parviflora* is a self pollinating species; therefore the shortly after bloom greatly thickened ovary is a good destination feature. The outstanding from the helmet labium part is very small and varies in colour. The flowers are often quite brightly coloured. **Flowering season:** April to May. **Habitat:** Meadows on sour, salt influenced, change wet floor **Plant find spot:** west of Marathi and Chania Airport, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2007.

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[to be continued with Part 6]

[1]: with the co-operation of Ute Kluge and Heinz Eikamp

[\*] vernacular name: common name, colloquial name, trivial name, country name, or farmer's name