



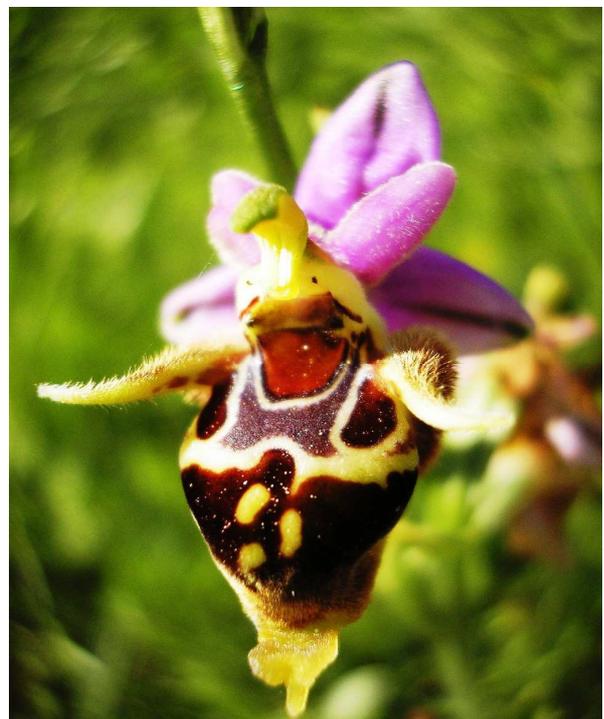
Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
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The Orchids of Crete (Part 6): genus *Ophrys* (*O. heldreichii*, *O. episcoplais* and *O. candica*)

(An article ^[1] from our forums member **Ralf Schwab**, Obertshausen [Hessen]).

So far we introduced 25 Orchid types with our leaflet series “**The Orchids of Crete**” [Info-leaflet No. 269-08/E, (Part 1) to No. 273-08/E (Part 5)]; which will be continued here with three more species from the genus of *Ophrys*.

The genus *Ophrys* forms the largest orchid genus of Crete which with their clear colours, beautifully drawn, furry flower labium surly belong to the most beautiful orchids. In addition, you can find hardly two plants for which the drawing of the labium would be identical, often are even differences visible from flower to flower at the same plant. The labiums resemble female of different insect species, pollination is done by males of the corresponding type of insect that fall for the deceptive effect. If pollination not came by insects, some species have the option of self-pollination. Despite this special reproductive strategy you will find bastards between similar types. Plants of this genus have only a few flowers that have no spur.



Ophrys heldreichii is widely spread and common on Crete. The blossoms have a bulgy labium, whose lateral humps are peaked. A yellow appendage, directed forward, is located at the top. The remaining petals are pink coloured. **Flowering season:** end March to end April. **Habitat:** bushy Garrigue, grasslands in open country. **Plant find spot:** west of Gerakari (16th of April 2007) and Agias Silas (24th of April 2007).



Ophrys episcopalis with its large flowers certainly belongs to the most beautiful species. The undivided labium presents two lateral humps, the large labium appendage points upwards. The other petals are light pink to pink, where the tiny petals often are slightly darker coloured than the sepals. **Flowering season:** early March to end April. **Habitat:** in terraced old olive groves and grassy-Garrigue; need more soil moisture than other types, therefore gladly in parched gutter. **Plant find spot:** Rodovani (18th of April 2007) and west of Gerakari (16th of April 2007).



Ophrys candica has their dissemination focuses particularly on the West and the Centre of Crete. This delicate species blooms much later than the two above types and has a non-split labium, which is very variable both in form and colour. The appendage is directed forward or upwards. The other petals are red-dish coloured. **Flowering season:** mid April to end May. **Habitat:** on basic surface, scrub zones and grassy-Garrigue, but also surrounded forest to over 1300 m. **Plant find spot:** Spili (25th of April 2007).

^[1]: with the co-operation of [Ute Kluge](#) and [Heinz Eikamp](#)