The Orchids of Crete (Part 10): genus *Ophrys* (V)
(Common Cretan, Horned Cretan - and Ariadne’s Orchid)

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

So far we introduced 43 Orchid types of Crete with our leaflet series “The Orchids of Crete”. With info-leaflets No. 280-08/E to No. 283-08/E [Part 6-9, Ophrys (I-IV)] we informed about the complex of *Ophrys*, which will be continued with the below description of additional 3 subspecies.

The Cretan Orchid occurs on Crete in three subspecies, which differ in the flower shape and heyday. Together they have the black, tripartite labium featuring mostly a white bordered blue “H” as marking. The sepals are usually greenish, may be in reddish, the petals are usually darker and often have a brownish or reddish colour.

The Common Cretan Orchid (*Ophrys cretica*) is to find only locally and in lower elevations. It blooms clearly later as for example the “Ariadne’s Orchid” and its cicatrices hollow is clearly wider than high.

**Flowering season:** early to late April. **Habitat:** Garrigue, meadows, open olive groves. **Plant find spot:** South of Rethymno (19\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007) and region of Kalo Chorio - Prina (21\textsuperscript{st} of April 2007).
The “Horned Cretan Orchid” (*Ophrys cretica ssp. bicornuta*) is to find only in the East of the island. Characteristic are the lateral humps of the labium which show forward like two acuminate horns. **Flowering season:** early March to early April. **Habitat:** Garrigue, open country below 500m. **Plant find spot:** Koutsouras (27th of March 2008).

Most widely spread on Crete is “Ariadne’s Orchid“ (*Ophrys cretica ssp. ariadnae*). It blooms early than the two other subspecies and has narrower cicatrices hollow. **Flowering season:** mid February to early April. **Habitat:** Garrigue, meadows, open olive groves. **Plant find spot:** Profitis-Ilias (22nd of March 2008) and Xiron / Spili (22nd of March 2007).

[1]: with the co-operation of Ute Kluge and Heinz Eikamp
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[to be continued with Part 11]