The Orchids of Crete (Part 13): genus Ophrys (VII)
(Ophrys apifera, - mesaritica, - spruneri [ssp. spruner])

So far we introduced 51 Orchid types of Crete with our leaflet series “The Orchids of Crete”; including 25 species of the genus Ophrys; therefore see at www.kreta-umweltforum.de [Navigator rubric Botanical] the info-leaflets 280-08 (Part 6), Ophrys (I) – 285-08 (Part 11), Ophrys (VI). Here we continue with 3 more species of the genus Ophrys with pictures and short description.

Ophrys apifera pollinates itself [Autogamy (gr. αὐτός autó „self“, γάμος gamos „marriage“)], already during early blossom the pollen clap on the stigma. The sepals are whitish-green to pink; the petals are short and slim. The pistil column runs in an extended extension. Once orange, yellow-white bordered, lateral lobate are strongly pilose.

Flowering season: end March to mid May.
Habitat: open olive groves, coastal marshes, change wet ground.
Plant find spot: Phaistos (Festos), Prefecture Iraklion (04/20/2001)
Picture: © G. Blaich.
Hybrids: currently not known for Crete.
**Ophrys mesaritica** is a slim, tall, extremely early blooming Orchid. The labium underside is green to greenish-brown. The labium basic colour is dark blue, little shining paint drawing, black purple. The labium is deep and broad notched at the basis. [for the pictures on page 1]

**Flowering season:** early January to end February. **Habitat:** strongly bushy Garrigue, also in open, graze area. As the species name says (mesaritica = Messara), the main occurrence is around the Messara-Plateau in the South of Crete and in the Asteroussia Mountains.

**Plant find spot:** Asteroussia (01/11/1999) and Phaistos (Festos), Prefecture Iraklion (02/11/2002)

Pictures: © G. Blaich. Picture left is from the database of NHMC (52291); Photo: K. Vardioyannis.

**Hybrids:** not known.

**Ophrys spruneri** [ssp. spruneri] is a vigorous plant with stately flower. The sepals are pink, the lower half some darker. The petals are shorter and thinner, pink to red-greenish. The labium is tripartite with a larger mid labote, about the same length (or only little shorter) than the mid sepal; with a small, reddish coloured appendix at the top. The basic colour is deep black, velvet. The mark is grey-blue to intensive blue, “H”-shaped, starting form the base of the labium.

**Flowering season:** mid February to early April. **Habitat:** meadows and bushy Garrigue, in open olive groves, in altitudes up to 900 m.

**Plant find spot:** Gerakari (04/19/2001) and Rodovani (04/06/1990)

Pictures: © G. Blaich.


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