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## Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:

Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

# The Orchids of Crete (Part 14): genus *Epipactis* (Cretan Helleborine and Small-leaved Helleborine)

So far we introduced **54 Orchid types** of Crete with our leaflet series “**The Orchids of Crete**”; therefore see at [http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/NLUK\\_en.htm](http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/NLUK_en.htm) [Navigator rubric **Botanical**]. Here we continue with 2 more species (from the genus *Epipactis*) with pictures and short descriptions.

The name *Epipactis* was first used by THEOPHRASTOS OF ERESOS, a philosopher and botanist of ancient Greece. He as well as other botanists of the middle ages, like GIOVANNI ANTONIO SCOPOLI, [AUGUSTIN-PYRAME DE CANDOLLE](#) and VICTOR ALBRECHT VON HALLER, used the name but not for the today's Orchid genus of *Epipactis* but for other plant genera. The until today valid name *Epipactis* as Orchid genus was established in 1757 by [JOHANN GOTTFRIED ZINN](#), a Professor of Botany in Goettingen.

The genus *Epipactis* (today worldwide represented with 56 types, mainly at home in temperate zones of the Eurasian space) was 1842 divided by [THILO IRMISCH](#) with their then known five species in two sections. A reclassification has been made in the 1990s by [KARL ROBATSCH](#). ERICH KLEIN <sup>11</sup> undertook a restructuring of the genus in 2005, therefore the Cretan Helleborine belongs within the section *Epipactis* to the under section of *Autogamepactis* and the Small-leaved Helleborine to the section *Rhytidochilum*.

<sup>11</sup> KLEIN, E. (2005): Attempt of a restructuring of the genus Epipactis ZINN (*Orchidaceae-Neottieae*). - Journal Europäischer Orchideen 37 (1): 121-130. AHO Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart.



### The Cretan Helleborine (*Epipactis cretica* KALOP. & ROBATSCH)

These autogamies, endemic on Crete orchid is delicate and most overflow delicate violet-blue. The leafs are small (less when 5 cm), the stem is weak hairy. Hypochil and Epichil sometimes have a reddish tinge, the Epichil points slightly shovel-shaped ahead; it does not carry a weal.

**Flowering season:** end May to mid June. **Habitat:** foliage and vegetation free places along creeks above 700 m, preferred in ravine-like leaf mixed forests on limy surface.

**Plant find spot:** Zaros and Ano Simi; The pictures come from the database of the NHMC (80241, M. Avramakis; 85674, V. Papiomitoglou, 82179, Z. Antonopoulos).

**Hybrids:** based on KRETSCHMAR (2004), *Epipactis microphylla*.



#### The Small-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis microphylla* (EHRH.) Sw.)

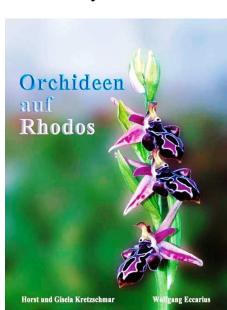
The Small-leaved Helleborine has only tiny, grey-green leaves without importance for diet. It is a small and graceful plant (even if occasionally found specimens have height around 50 cm), whose stem are white-churlish haired. It has small narrow stem-leaves. The flowers are small in the armpits and have Lance-shaped bracts. They are pale green. The Petal's are overcrowded sometimes reddish crowded. The flowers smell intensive vanilla. During flowering the rostellum is working but rare in use. Therefore the Small-leaved Helleborine pollinated mostly themselves (facultative autogamy). The Epichil is heart-shaped, at the base with strong wartier weal, has three wart-like surveys. The huge seed vessel is eye-catching.

**Flowering season:** end May to mid June. **Habitat:** widely spread in Europe, its found in Crete on shaded creeks and most gullies in chestnut forests (e.g. Chestnut village Elos, Prefecture Chania). Because of their bond to water they remain reserved to massifs; only in West Crete they battens in height below 500 m. **Plant find spot:** Vamvakados (05/16/1991); Picture: G. Blaich; fig. right: Wikipedia.

**Hybrids:** based on KRETSCHMAR (2004), *Epipactis cretica*.

Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

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