

The Gargano

13 - 20 April 2019 Led by Paul Harcourt Davies, Lois Ferguson & Yiannis Christofides



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The Gargano: Orchid Paradise

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Introduction

For the lover of wildflowers, wild orchids in particular, few localities can even begin to rival the Gargano peninsula in Puglia, southern Italy, both for the variety of species and their profusion. Gargano was once an island separated from the Italian mainland by the Adriatic sea. It moved on its tectonic plate and the channel with the mainland gradually silted up to form the fertile plain of Foggia and now sticks out as the spur on the heel of Italy's boot. Away from the coast the land rises to Monte Calvo at 1,065 m (3,494 ft). Most of the upland area is part of the Gargano National Park and the change in altitude between the base and heights means that



plants at high level flower some three to four weeks after the same species at the coast.

There is a wonderful central forest with huge ancient beech trees which hosts a wide variety of flowers too. The rich orchid flora numbers several endemic (or near endemics) The total number of species is open to dispute and depends whether you are a 'splitter or lumper'... what is fascinating is that hybrids, particularly of the genus *Ophrys* are more frequent than in most other places for the tiny pollinating bees are not as faithful here and are not restricted to a single *Ophrys* species.

Orchids are a special feature but there are wonderful displays to delight the eye (and the camera) and a plethora of other colourful wild species. The whereabouts of many of the best plant locations often elude the casual visitor but they can be discovered by wandering away from the beaten track through the stone-strewn areas.

We stay in two centres, one in Monte St Angelo to give easy access to the heights and allow us to wander from our hotel, the other, by the sea, in the small town of Peschici: both towns have medieval town centres with lanes, nooks and crannies.

Day 1

The group arrived in Bari airport in two waves and was met by Yiannis, Paul and Lois.

We then boarded our vehicles and set off for the countryside. The weather was cloudy with some rain. Our first stop was at fields near the salt pans near St Margherita di Savoia, where we walked along a lane and saw flamingos and a couple of Black-winged stilts. The verges were full of plants, common to most of the Mediterranean such as *Glebionis coronaria*, *Erodium malacoides*, *Calendula arvensis*, *Bellis annua*, *Sherardia arvensis*, *Cynoglossum creticum*, *Asphodelus tenuifolius* and others. We then continued on our way towards the Gargano, arriving at our hotel in the late afternoon.

Day 2



The day began sunny initially, before turning cloudy with some rain later. It cleared up but was followed with more rain in the late afternoon. We set off from our hotel into the pasture meadows nearby. Everything was heavily grazed, but there were many small things to be seen. We saw Parentucellia latifolia, Alyssum saxatile, Salvia verbenaca, Salvia argentea in leaf, Arabis hirsuta, Alkanna tinctoria, Muscari neglectum, Ornithogalum umbellatum, Asplenium ceterach, Arabis verna, Anthyllis vulneraria, Smyrnium perfoliatum, Cruciata laevipes, Aubretia columnae subsp. italica, Vicia melanops and many orchids, such as Ophrys araneola, Ophrys bertoloniiformis, Ophrys biscutella, Ophrys bombyliflora, Ophrys passionis var. garganica, Ophrys promontorii, Ophrys sicula, Ophrys sipontensis and Ophrys tenthredinifera.

We returned to our hotel for lunch and then went out again to see more of the same orchids plus amazing fields full of irises and *Tulipa sylvestris*.

Day 3

A rainy morning today, so we postponed our departure to visit the Grotto below the ancient castle, just a few minutes walk from our hotel. The weather appeared to improve so we set off in our vehicles to visit a woodland habitat, different from the garigue we had been seeing so far.

The wood was full of Anemone apennina, Cyclamen hederifolium that had finished flowering and many other plants such as Corydalis solida, Cardamine graeca, Cardamine bulbifera, Ruscus acutifolius, Aristolochia rotundifolia, Narcissus poeticus, Dactylorhiza romana and Paeonia mascula, which was still in bud.

After enjoying the wood we had our picnic and set off to visit a rocky area with many orchids.

We immediately saw a new orchid *Ophrys* bertolonii. Also seen were most of the orchids that we had seen the previous days.

We then moved to another woodland area with

more *Dactylorhiza romana*. On our return trip we made a stop to see some orchids on the bank and discovered 3 new species in *Ophrys atrata*, *Ophrys sphegodes* and *Ophrys archipelagi*. Birds for the day included Cuckoo, Green Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Wren, Stonechat, Swifts and a Buzzard.



Day 4

We drove to a deciduous woodland area with many early plants in flower. There was *Narcissus poeticus*, masses of *Viola hederifolia*, *Anemone apennina*, *Euphorbia amygdaloides*. An emerging Southern Festoon, *Zerynthia polyxena* attracted considerable attention. We returned to the starting point of the walk for our wonderful picnic, prepared by Lois. A scorpion was discovered under a stone. We then boarded our vehicles and drove back and down to the monastery of The Abbey of Santa Maria of Pulsano.

After visiting the restored church in the caves under the rock we set off down a path with flowers everywhere on the verges. We saw *Ajuga chamaepitys*, *Tordylium apulum*, *Reseda alba*, *Crepis rubra*, *Silene conica*, *Campanula garganica*, *Convolvulus althaeoides*, *Onosma lucana*, *Onobrychis aequidentata*, *Coronilla emerus* and finally *Ophrys apulica*.

Day 5



We had a late start today to allow people to visit the town and do some shopping. We then boarded our vehicles and drove below the castle walls to see the profusion of *Arabis caucasica* and *Aubrieta columnae* subsp. *italica*. We then continued our journey, stopping at a meadow with typical plants that we have been seeing so far, but also with the most amazing display of orchids. There were drifts of *Orchis italica*, *Orchis anthropophora*, *Neotinea ustulata*, *Anacamptis papilionacea*, *Anacamptis morio*, *Ophrys tenthredinifera*, *Ophrys sphegodes* and *Ophrys sipontensis*. We spend a couple of

hours exploring the habitat and photographing.

Our route to our next destination took us down a winding road, initially through a *Quercus ilex* forest and then through deciduous woodland. We stopped at a picnic place for our lunch and then explored another habitat for *Paeonia mascula*, finding only a few in flower, but also seeing wonderful *Cyclamen repandum*. We continued our drive until we reached the town of Peschici on the northern coast of the peninsula. The weather had cleared and warmed up considerably, resulting in more butterflies being seen. We had Wall, Small Heath, Large White, Cleopatra and Brimstone.

Day 6

A short drive to a site near our hotel, to visit some rock-cut tombs, but also full of flowers. We saw Fumaria capreolata, Sinapis alba, Borago officinalis, Silybum marianum and Erodium malacoides in the car park. We then walked up to the site, through Pinus brutia and Pistacia lentiscus woodland, seeing Torilis nodosa, Crepis rubra, Reichardia picroides Allium roseum, Plantago lagopus, Mercurialis annua, Lotus edulis, Carduus pycnocephalus, Serapias parviflora, Allium neapolitanum, Ophrys cornuta, Arum italicum and Matricaria recutita.



We returned to our vehicles and drove to a location on the coast, where we had our picnic and then walked along the coastline, visiting the traditional fishing structure on the shore. We also saw *Crithmum maritimum, Lotus cytisoides, Lobularia maritima, Silene colorata, Pancratium maritimum, Bellardia trixago* and *Prasium majus*. We then returned to our hotel, with some of our guests visiting the old town above our hotel.

Day 7

We set off in a westerly direction today, making our first stop to admire a grove with ancient olive trees. *Arum italicum* was growing at the base of some trees. We continued on our way and the second stop produced a magnificent display of *Orchis purpurea*, in perfect flower. We continued along the same road making stops.



Another interesting plant was seen next, Verbascum phoenicia growing with Tordylium apulum, Pisum sativum, Paliurus spina-christi, Orobanche crenata and Theligonum cynocrambe.

A stop a little further on produced *Ophrys* sphegodes, *Orchis provincialis*, *Ophrys parvimaculata* and *Ophrys sphegodes* ssp. *incubata*.

The woodland floor was covered with pink *Cyclamen repandum.* We were also looking out for *Paeonia mascula* and we were not disappointed, finding a few still in good flower.

We had lunch and started on the return journey, finding *Anacamptis papilionacea*, *Anacamptis morio*, *Serapias lingua* and *Serapias vomeracea* on the way.

Butterflies for the day included Southern Festoon, Brimstone, Orange tip, Swallowtail, Cleopatra, Green Hairstreak, Wall, Small Copper, Painted Lady, Speckled Wood. Other notable things seen included Meadow fritillary caterpillar, Large Elephant Hawkmoth, Bee fly, Carpenter bee and a Scorpion.

Day 8
We set off in the morning after breakfast for our return journey to Bari airport and home.









Orchid List

	Orchidaceae	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
1	Anacamptis papilionacea		V	V	V	√		V	
2	Dactylorhiza romana			V	V			V	
3	Dactylorhiza sambucina				V				
4	Himantoglossum hircinum			V					
5	Himantoglossum robertianum				V	V			
6	Neotinea lactea		V						
7	Neotinea ustulata		√			V			
8	Ophrys apulica*				V				
9	Ophrys araneola		√	V					
10	Ophrys bertoloniiformis*		V	V					
11	Ophrys bertolonii			V					
12	Ophrys biscutella		√	V		V			
13	Ophrys bombyliflora		V	V	V	V	√	V	
14	Ophrys cornuta						V		
15	Ophrys exaltata (archipelagi)			V					
16	Ophrys fusca			√					
17	Ophrys incubacea (atrata)		√	√				V	
18	Ophrys lutea					V		V	
19	Ophrys parvimaculata							V	
20	Ophrys passionis var. garganica*		V	V	V			V	
21	Ophrys promontorii*		V	V					
22	Ophrys sicula		V	V	V	V		V	
23	Ophrys sipontensis*		√	√	V	√			
24	Ophrys sphegodes		V	V	V	V		V	
25	Ophrys tenthredinifera		√	√					
25a	Ophrys tenthredinifera ssp. neglecta			√	√	V			
26	Ophrys virescens (passionis)					√		V	
27	Orchis anthropophora		√	V	V	V		V	
28	Orchis italica		V	V	V	√	V	V	
29	Orchis lactea		√						

30	Orchis morio/Anacamptis morio	·	,	√	V	V		V	
31	Orchis provincialis							V	
32	Orchis purpurea							V	
33	Orchis quadripunctata	V	′	√					
34	Serapias lingua			√				V	
35	Serapias parviflora						√		
36	Serapias vomeracea	V	•			√		√	
	Hybrids								
37	Orchis morio x Orchis papilionacea	V	,	√					

	Other notable plant species				
	Aceraceae				
1	Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	3		
2	Acer opalus ssp. obtusatum	A Maple	5		
	Anacardiaceae				
3	Pistacia lentiscus	Lentisk	4		
4	Pistacia terebinthus	Terebinth	4		
	Apiaceae				
5	Ferula communis	Giant Fennel	1		
6	Laserpitium latifolium	Laserwort	2		
7	Smyrnium perfoliatum	Perfoliate Alexanders	2		
8	Tordylium apulum	Mediterranean Hartwort	7		
	Aquifoliaceae				
9	Ilex aquifolium	Common Holly	3		
	Aristolochiaceae				
10	Aristolochia rotunda	Round-leaved Birthwort	3		
	Asteraceae				
11	Calendula arvensis	Field Marigold	1		
12	Carduus pycnocephalus	Italian Thistle	6		
13	Crepis rubra	Pink Hawksbeard	4		
14	Doronicum columnae	Leopard's Bane	3		
15	Glebionis coronarium	Yellow Crown Daisy	1		
16	Glebionis segetum	Corn Daisy	1		

17	Helichrysum italicum	Curry Plant	6
18	Hypochaeris glabra	Smooth Cat's Ear	7
19	Hyoseris radiata		7
20	Inula crithmoides	Golden Samphire	6
21	Inula verbascifolia		3
22	Matricaria recutita	Chamomile	6
23	Reichardia picroides	Common Brighteyes	6
24	Silybum marianum	Milk Thistle	1
25	Urospermum dalechampii	Smooth Golden Fleece	6
26	Urospermum picroides	Prickly Golden Fleece	4
	Betulaceae		
27	Carpinus orientalis	Oriental Hornbeam	4 & 5
	Boraginaceae		
28	Alkanna lehmanii	Dyer's Alkanet	2
29	Anchusa cretica		3
30	Borago officinalis	Borage	4
31	Cynoglossum creticum	Blue Hound's Tongue	1
32	Echium platagineum	Purple Viper's Bugloss	1
33	Onosma lucana*	Pale Golden Drops	4
34	Pulmonaria montana	Lungwort	3
35	Alliaria petiolata	Garlic Mustard	3
36	Alyssoides sinuata		4
37	Alyssum saxatile	Yellow Alyssum	1
38	Arabis caucasica	Caucasian Rock Cress	3
39	Arabis hirsuta	Hairy Rock Cress	2
40	Arabis turrita	Tower Cress	4
41	Arabis verna	Spring Rock Cress	2
71.7	Aubrieta columnae subsp. italica		2
43	Biscutella didyma	Buckler Mustard	3
44	Bunias erucago	Corn Rocket	6
45	Cardamine bulbifera	Coralroot Bittercress	3
46	Cardamine graeca		3
47	Isatis tinctoria	Woad	6

48	Lepidium draba	Hoary Cress	1
49	Lobularia maritima	Sweet Alyssum	6
50	Rapistrum rugosum	Turnipweed	1
51	Sinapis alba	White Mustard	6
	Campanulaceae		
52	Campanula garganica*	Adraitic Bellflower	4
	Caprifoliaceae		
53	Sambucus ebulus	Danewort	7
	Caryophyllaceae		
54	Silene colorata	A Campion	6
55	Silene conica	Sand Catchfly	4
56	Silene latifolia	White Campion	7
57	Silene vulgaris	Bladder Campion	4
58	Stellaria holostea	Greater Stitchwort	3
59	Stellaria media	Chickweed	3
	Cistaceae		
60	Cistus monspeliensis	Montpelier Cistus	6
61	Cistus salviifolius	Sage-leaved Cistus	4
62	Helianthemum apenninum	White Rock Rose	1
63	Helianthemum oelandicum subsp. incanum	Hoary Rock Rose	4
	Chenopodiaceae		
64	Atriplex portulacoides	Sea Purslane	6
	Convolvulaceae		
65	Calystegia silvatica	Giant Bindweed	6
66	Calystegia soldanella	Shore Bindweed	6
67	Convolvulus althaeoides	Mallow-leaved Bindweed	4
	Crassulaceae		
68	Sedum caespitosum	Broad-leaved Stonecrop	6
69	Sedum hispanicum	Spanish Stonecrop	4
	Ericaceae		
70	Erica arborea	Tree Heath	4
	Euphorbiaceae		
71	Euphorbia amygdaloides	Wood Spurge	3

72	Euphorbia characias	Mediterranean Spurge	2
73	Euphorbia helioscopia	Sun Spurge	2
74	Euphorbia myrsinites	Broad-leaved Glaucous Spurge	2
75	Euphorbia spinosa	Spiny Spurge	3
76	Euphorbia rigida	Upright Myrtle Spurge	4
	Fabaceae		
77	Anthyllis vulneraria	Kidney Vetch	2
78	Cercis siliquastrum	Judas Tree	5
79	Chamaecytisus hirsutus		4
80	Hippocrepis comosa	Horseshoe Vetch	2
81	Hippocrepis emerus	Scorpion Senna	4
82	Lathyrus cicera	Red Vetchling	2
83	Lotus cytisodes	Grey Birdsfoot Trefoil	6
84	Lotus edulis	Edible Birdsfoot Trefoil	6
85	Lotus ornithopodioides	Clustered Birdsfoot Trefoil	2
86	Onobrychis aequidentata	A Sainfoin	2
87	Pisum sativum	Wild Pea	7
88	Psoralea bituminosa	Pitch Trefoil	7
89	Spartium junceum	Spanish Broom	7
90	Trifolium stellatum	Star Clover	7
91	Trifolium subterraneum	Subterranean Clover	7
92	Vicia lutea	Yellow Vetch	1
93	Vicia melanops	Black-eyed Vetch	2
94	Vicia villosa	Hairy Vetch	5
	Fagaceae		
95	Fagus sylvatica	Beech	5
96	Quercus coccifera	Kermes Oak	6
97	Quercus ilex	Holm Oak	3
	Fumariaceae		
98	Corydalis solida	Fumewort	3
99	Fumaria capreolata	White Ramping Fumitory	6
100	Fumaria officinalis	Common Fumitory	2
	Gentianaceae		
101	Blackstonia perfoliata	Yellow-wort	7

	Geraniaceae		
102	Erodium cicutarium	Common Storksbill	2
103	Erodium malacoides	Mediterranean Storksbill	1
104	Geranium lucidum	Shining Cranesbill	3
105	Geranium molle	Dove's Foot Cranesbill	2
106	Geranium purpureum	Little Robin	4
107	Geranium rotundifolium	Round-leaved Cranesbill	1
108	Geranium sanguineum	Bloody Cranesbill	4
	Globulariaceae		
109	Globularia sp.		5
	Lamiaceae		
110	Acinos alpinus	Rock Thyme	7
111	Ajuga chamaepitys	Ground Pine	2
112	Lamium bifidum	A Dead Nettle	3?
113	Lamium garganicum	A Dead Nettle	2
114	Prasium majus	White Hedge Nettle	6
115	Salvia argentea	Sllver Sage	2
116	Salvia verbenaca	Wild Clary	2
	Linaceae		
117	Linum bienne	Pale Flax	5
118	Linum catharticum	Fairy Flax	2
119	Linum perenne	Perennial Flax	2
	Malvaceae		
120	Malva sylvestris	Common Mallow	1
	Moraceae		
121	Ficus carica	Fig	4
	Oleaceae		
122	Fraxinus ornus	Manna ash	4
123	Olea europaea	Olive	4
	Orobanchaceae		
124	Orobanche alba	Thyme Broomrape	1
125	Orobanche caryophyllacea	Clove-scented Broomrape	6
126	Orobanche crenata	Bean Broomrape	7
	Oxalidaceae		

127	Oxalis pes-caprae	Bermuda buttercup	6
	Paeoniaceae		
128	Paeonia mascula	A Peony	3
	Papaveraceae		
129	Papaver hybridum	Rough Poppy	1
130	Papaver rhoeas	Common Poppy	1
	Plantaginaceae		
131	Plantago coronopus	Buck's Horn Plantain	6
132	Plantago lagopus	Mediterranean Plantain	1
133	Plantago maritima	Sea Plantain	6
134	Plantago serraria	Toothed Plantain	6
	Polygalaceae		
135	Polygala nicaeensis	A Milkwort	3
136	Polygala venulosa	A Milkwort	2
	Primulaceae		
137	Anagallis arvensis	Scarlet Pimpernel	4
138	Cyclamen hederifolium	Ivy-leaved Sowbread	3
139	Cyclamen repandum	Spring Sowbread	5
	Ranunculaceae		
140	Anemone apennina	Apennine Anemone	3
141	Anemone pavonina	Peacock Anemone	2
142	Ranunculus bulbosus	Bulbous Buttercup	7
143	Ranunculus ficaria	Lesser Celandine	3
144	Ranunculus millefoliatus	A Buttercup	2
145	Ranunculus paludosus	Fan-leaved Buttercup	2
	Resedaceae		
146	Reseda alba	White Mignonette	4
147	Reseda lutea	Yellow Mignonette	4
148	Reseda phyteuma	Corn Mignonette	2
	Rhamnaceae		
149	Palliurus spina-christi	Crown of Thorns	7
	Rosaceae		
150	Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	7
151	Fragaria vesca	Wild Strawberry	3

152	Pyrus amygdaliformis	Almond-leaved Pear	4
153	Rosa canina	Dog Rose	7
154	Rubus sanctus	Holy Bramble	
155	Sanguisorba verrucosum	A Burnet	3
156	Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan Tree	9
	Rubiaceae		
157	Cruciata laevipes	Crosswort	2
158	Galium verum	Lady's Bedstraw	2
159	Rubia peregrina	Common Madder	6
160	Sherardia arvensis	Field Madder	2
	Saxifragaceae		
161	Saxifraga granulata	Meadow Saxifrage	
162	Saxifraga tridactylites	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	3
	Scrophulariaceae		
163	Bellardia trixago	Bellardia	6
164	Cymbalaria muralis	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	4
165	Parentucellia latifolia	Red Bartsia	2
166	Verbascum phoeniceum	Purple Mullein	7
167	Verbascum undulatum	Wavy-leafed Mullein	6
168	Veronica hederifolia	Ivy-leaved Speedwell	3
	Solanaceae		
169	Solanum sodomeum	Apple of Sodom	6
	Theligonaceae		
170	Theligonum cynocrambe	A Knotweed	7
	Thymelaeaceae		
171	Daphne laureola	Spurge Laurel	3
	Urticaceae		
172	Parietaria judaica	Pellitory of the Wall	4
173	Urtica dioica	Stinging nettle	2
	Valerianaceae		
174	Centranthus ruber	Red Valerian	7
	Violaceae		
175	Viola heterophylla ssp. graeca	A Violet	2

176	Viola riviniana	Common Dog Violet	3
	Araceae		
177	Arum italicum	Italian Arum	6
178	Arum maculatum	Wild Arum	6
	Iridaceae		
179	Crocus vernus	Spring Crocus	4
180	Iris bicapata	Twin-headed Iris	2
181	Iris lutescens*	Crimean Iris	2 & 5
182	Iris tuberosa	Widow Iris	2
	Amaryllidaceae		
183	Allium ampeloprasum	Wild Leek	6
184	Allium neapolitanum	Naples Garlic	6
185	Allium roseum	Rosy Garlic	6
186	Allium triquetrum	Three-Cornered Leek	3
187	Narcissus poeticus	Pheasant's Eye	3
	Liliaceae		
188	Asparagus acutifolius	Wild Asparagus	4
189	Asphodeline lutea	Yellow Asphodel	2
190	Asphodelus aestivus	Summer Asphodel	1
191	Asphodelus fistulosus	Hollow-stemmed Asphodel	1
192	Bellevalia romana	Roman Hyacinth	7
193	Gagea sp.		3
194	Muscari comosum	Tassel Hyacinth	7
195	Muscari neglectum	Grape Hyacinth	2
196	Ornithogalum (umbellatum) angustifolium	Garden Star of Bethlehem	2
197	Polygonatum multiflorum	Solomon's Seal	3?
198	Ruscus aculeatus	Butcher's Broom	3
199	Smilax aspera	Smilax	4
200	Tulipa sylvestris	Wild Tulip	2













































