

Finding Orchids on Lesvos, 2014

Brian and Eileen Anderson (*pictured, right*) will be on Lesvos in April 2014 to share their knowledge with visiting orchid enthusiasts.



This last year or two, Hotel Malemi in Skala Kallonis, Lesvos has become an April meeting ground for orchid lovers; experts and enthusiasts alike. In recognition of this and to promote it further, the hotel has set aside two weeks, 5th-19th April, to host orchid enthusiasts from Europe, Britain, Scandinavia, Cyprus or anywhere in the world.

Lesvos is home to 11,000,000 olive trees and this is no exaggeration. Ancient olive groves cloak almost every mountainside in the eastern part of the island. Many of these are difficult to reach and impossible to mechanise but ideal for orchids to develop and evolve away from watchful eyes. On an island as large as Lesvos, the third largest island in Greece, there are boundless habitats, pine forests, chestnut forests, wetlands, phrygana and small islands of fertility amongst huge areas of arid volcanics in the west. This is where endemics may develop and where *Ophrys lesbis* is found.

It should be no surprise with the size of the island and the variety of habitats that there is such a rich and diverse orchid flora. Current records show some 109 orchid species (http://www.janvanlent.com/blog/?page_id=519) of which 45 are of the genus *Ophrys*. It is the bee orchids which cause the greatest debate amongst orchid enthusiasts and April is the month when most of these flower on Lesvos. It should lead to some lively and interesting discussions!

Brian & Eileen Anderson, at one time Honeyguide leaders in Algarve and North Cyprus, and authors of *Landscapes of Lesvos* (3rd edition 2014), will be at the hotel for the whole two weeks to share their knowledge of the island and orchid locations.

Jan Van Lent, island resident, will be on hand to share his knowledge too and lead small groups on orchid tours. Sigrid at Pandora Travel will be easily persuaded to lay on jeep tours exclusively for orchid enthusiasts keen to get off-the-beaten track in their search for orchids. The fortnight has no formal structure but there is an excellent conference centre nearby and it might be possible to arrange some pre-dinner lectures.

The Hotel Malemi (www.malemi.com/en/) will open around the last week in March and is ready now to take bookings for next April, for the whole or any part of the two weeks. This invitation is extended to all genuine orchid enthusiasts who already know that orchids are a protected species and their collection is strictly forbidden.

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