



Autumn Bulb Finding Trip

2017

1 week – 17th – 24th October - £1,150

2 weeks – 17th – 31st October - £2,500



Crocus oreocreticus

Day One: Guests will be collected from the airport and taken to their accommodation to settle in. The first week's accommodation is on a self-catering basis at Corali Studios in Elounda. Evening welcome 'get together' at the traditional taverna in Mavrikiano.

Day Two: After a not too early breakfast, we get together to take a short drive high into the mountains above Aghios Nikolaos, stopping on the way to find species of interest. Look out for colchicum and crocus, especially the rare and beautiful endemic, *Crocus oreocreticus*. We take a delicious lunch at Zervas tavern where there is a chance to look through a catalogue of Flowers of the Katharo and to talk to Flowers of Crete supporter Yianni, who has lived here all his life. Expect to find *Sternbergia greuteriana*, *Colchicum cretense*, *Crocus oreocreticus* and *Scilla autumnalis*.

Day Three: An earlier start and a slightly longer drive will take us to the north coast to find the rare *Colchicum cupanii*, *Crocus tournefortii* and many, many more delightful flowering bulbs. We will then turn inland to admire *Sternbergia*, *colchicum* and *Narcissus serotinus* on the way. We will spend time on the Lassithi plateau for botanising, photography and maybe some sketching, then will take a detour to visit a little known area. Expect to find *Colchicum cupanii*, *Crocus boryi* and *Crocus laevigatus*.



Day Four: Plaka and the North coast. Another short drive will take us to the famous fishing village of Plaka, with stunning views across the water to Spinalonga island, the setting for Victoria Hislop's best selling novel, *The Island*. In the hills above Elounda there are many wonderful flowers to be found. Further around the coast we will find *Narcissus tazetta* and the rare, endemic, *Biarum davisii*.



Expect to find *N. serotinus*, *N. tazetta*, *B. davisii* ssp. *davisii*, *C. tournefortii*, *Spiranthes spiralis*.

Day Five: Today we will drive to the eastern tip of Crete to visit the remote Cavo Sidero and the palm forests of Vai. The flora of this part of the island is very different from anything

we have yet seen and we may be lucky enough to find some elusive crocus amongst the many other wonderful discoveries. For those interested in birdlife, there may be the opportunity to spot an Eleanora's falcon around the monastery at Toplou. On the way home we will stop at the small fishing village of Mochlos to take dinner overlooking the island of Psira, famous for its Minoan lighthouse and archaeological digs. Expect to find *Arisarum vulgare*, *Colchicum macrophyllum*, *Sternbergia sicula*, *Cyclamen persicum*.

Day Six: A chance to draw breath and relax, taking time to explore the villages that make up the modern day Elounda.

Day Seven: A visit to the east of the island would not be complete without a visit to the Thripti mountains. These areas are renowned for their orchids in springtime, and in autumn they are bright with countless flowers, including crocus, colchicum and sternbergia. Expect to find *Sternbergia lutea*, *Colchicum pusillum* and *Allium tardens*.



Biarum davisii

Day Eight: Guests leaving today will be taken to the airport for their flights. Guests booked for two weeks will travel west to the stunningly beautiful Rouvas Gorge, where the flora changes once more and there will be new discoveries to be made. We will

stay overnight in simple accommodation in Plakias, where we are sure to receive a warm welcome. Expect to find *Cyclamen creticum*.

Day Nine: From Plakias, we will travel the short distance to the mountain village of Spili. This picturesque village is famous throughout the world for its flowers and walks. There is plenty to do and see. After checking in to Heracles apartments, we will take a trip out to see some of the many wonderful autumn bulbs and some of the sunning scenery. Expect to find *Cyclamen graecum*, *Crocus cartwrightianus*.

Day Ten: Climbing into the mountains above Spili, we will explore the flower-rich meadows looking for new species. Lunch will be taken in a traditional tavern which specialises in Cretan produce based on the cherries for which the area is famous. The sweet cheese pies with cherry syrup will remain in the memory for years to come. The surrounding forests are rich with wildlife and flora. We will leave Spili mid-afternoon to drive to the south coast at Chora Sfakion. We will stay the night in comfortable quiet accommodation within a short walk from a delightful sandy cove, for those who would like to swim.

**Day Eleven:**

Today will take us high into the White Mountains to find rare alpine endemics.

Day Twelve:

After an early breakfast we will continue to travel west,

stopping at the leafy village of Elos, famous for its chestnut festival and broad leaved woodlands. We will spend the night at the Milia Eco village – an inspired award winning renovation of a previously deserted village, set high in the mountains in an idyllic setting. We will share a traditional meal together in its atmospheric tavern. Expect to find the endemic *Cyclamen confusum* (formerly *C. hederifolium* ssp *confusum*), plus many examples of *sternbergia*, *crocus* and *colchicum*.

Day Thirteen: Leaving the mountains, we will drive south along the west coast to the furthest tip, stopping at the fabulous Elafonissi beach, home to many endemic species. We will spend the night in a small mountain village close to Paeleochora, after visiting a remote and seldom visited forest area. Expect to find *Bellevalia bevipedicellata* and *Iris planifolia*.



Romulea bulbocodium

Day Fourteen: Drive along the west coast, stopping at Falarsama to find *Romulea bulbocodium* in abundance on the beach and maybe some late flowering

Pancratium maritimum. We will spend the night at the delightful

Amphora hotel overlooking the Venetian lighthouse and travel into the mountains to Dracona to dine at the amazing Slow Food Taverna for a memorable farewell meal.

Day Fifteen: After a hearty breakfast guests will be transported to either Hania or Heraklion airport for their flights home. Hania airport is approximately 30 mins from the hotel, Heraklion airport is around 2 ½ hours from Hania.

Information: The cost of the holiday includes all guide accompanied trips and transfers, and accommodation including breakfast and lunch. It does not include flights, evening meals or independently ordered drinks, telephone calls charged to the room or travel insurance.

Iris unguicularis

