

LAST MINUTE SHOPPING



Iris xanthospuria



Baldellia ranunculoides

In terms of restrictive lockdowns, we have done rather well so far in Turkey. However, the full lockdown has finally come home to roost and the government suddenly announced a three-week stay at home order. I would have accepted this happily enough in January, but early May just as the flowers are hitting peak! There was some ground to cover if I was to photograph some of the missing species for my planned Flora of the Lycian Way & SW Turkey. Despite its relatively small size, Lycia is still large enough to entail three hour drives to get from one side to the other and most of the species I needed were of course, on the other side of the province.

A coffee-fuelled early start saw me rumbling into the dunes of Patara by 9.30 and meeting Ian so he could show me something rather unusual in the marshes. Not many people would drive three and a half hours to see *Baldellia ranunculoides* - but I'm one of them and I found it a rather run little tangle of baubles and shell-pink flowers. There was more glamour not far away with a stand of egg-yolk yellow *Iris xanthospuria*, a very localised a scarce species in Lycia, but one which is widespread in Turkey.



Aristolochia baseri



Iris junonia



Iris junonia



Phlomis leucophracta

Next, I wound my way along some questionable roads to a patch of oak woods where there was a superb clump of *Aristolochia baseri*, a narrow endemic with three-dimensional flowers moulded from white and dark chocolate, which grew alongside its cousin the larger-flowered *A. adalica*. Another *Iris* species was my next target, the lovely *Iris junonia*, which can be found in scattered locations on limestone in various parts of the Taurus and north-west Turkey. It is very much a cousin of the familiar *Iris germanica*, though some populations show great variation in colour (from purple to yellow), other such as the ones I saw above Kas and only shades of violet. They were stunning in the late afternoon light, though I had little time to fully enjoy them as curfew was 19.00, it was nearly 16.00 and I had a three-hour drive home! I made it (more or less) on time.

There was still plenty to see near to home and searching for orchids the next morning we found a delightful combination of *Cistus creticus* and *Papaver rhoeas* growing in an area of recently cleared pin woodland. These are both extremely

Ptilostemon chamaepeuce





Allium siculum



Cistus creticus and *Papaver rhoeas*

widespread and common Mediterranean plants, but joyful and quintessential sights nonetheless. The rich golden and copper of *Phlomis leucophracta* was nearby, one of the six at times confusing species of yellow-flowered *Phlomis* in the area. And bushes of *Ptilostemon chamaepeuce* were beginning to flower. This is one of the few shrubby composites in the region and at its best it forms wonderful billowing shrubs with hundreds of pink flowers. The finest display I know of is at Termessos, though it had yet to reach its peak as we drove up so the boys could have a final run around the ruins before imprisonment.

Luckily, there were also the first flowers of *Aristolochia hirta*, as well as tall stems of *Allium siculum* topped with whorls of pink-tinged greenish bells, bursting from among the falling stone blocks. The former only occurs here in Lycia the latter is more commonly found in the north-west and north of Turkey. Indeed, Termessos has a number of such species that are very much plants out of their normal range, much as I will be for next three weeks.



Cistus creticus