Alpine Garden Society Tour to Romania 2017

30th June – 9th July 2017

By Mark Matthews - Merlin 712
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Summary of Tour

This was the first tour to Romania held by the Alpine Garden Society. The tour was originally meant to be led by Răzvan Chișu, a Romanian born horticulturist who is an expert on the alpine flora of his home country. However, due to the unfortunate fact that he fell ill just before the tour, he was no longer able to lead the tour. Luckily, a more than capable replacement was found in Robert Unwin, Senior Horticulturist in the Alpine Department of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Aims and Objectives

To explore Transylvanian meadows and high-altitude habitats of the Carpathian Mountains to learn about the plants that inhabit these environments.
After meeting people participating in the AGS tour throughout the flights to Romania, we gathered in the airport in Cluj-Napoca. There were 14 of us all together, from all different areas of horticulture and of varying ages, abilities and interests. We were joined by Raz’s cousin who would be our guide for the day. After all the introductions, we loaded the luggage into a waiting bus and trailer and set out for hotel Capitolina. After checking in and a quick freshen up, we met in reception. We then headed out together for the Botanical Gardens. The 34-acre gardens here contain quite varied habitats and hold greenhouses, streams, a rose garden, wooded valleys and a Japanese garden.

After entering the garden through some impressive, large, wooden gates, we began to walk up the ascending path which guides you through the ornamental section of the garden and leads towards the different areas of the garden. On either side of the path were areas of annual plants. Some planted in labelled stand-alone blocks running alongside the path and others planted in both standard and pyramidal 3D bedding schemes further into the adjoining lawns.
At the top of the straight ascending path was a large ornamental rockery filled with various species of a number of genus such as *Sempervivum*, *Dianthus*, *Pulsatilla*, *Campanula*, *Gentiana*, etc. To the side of this rockery was a small bed filled with *Hemerocallis fulva*.

The path swept around to the left and led us across the edge of a rose garden containing approximately 300 roses belonging to different groups.
The path continued towards a small rock garden area with a small number of endemic plants, such as *Dianthus trifasciculatus* subsp. *parviflorus*. We were then lead down a slope across a small stepping stone like bridge over water and onto the island at the heart of the Japanese Garden.

This garden consisted of a small island surrounded by a circular body of water. The island was connected to the mainland at either end by bridges. Upon the bank located at one end of the lake, stood a Japanese style building. The island and surrounding banks were planted up with various plants. These included, *Forsythia suspense*, *Phyllostachys aurea*, *Paeonia officinalis*, *Chaenomeles japonica*, *Prinsepia sinensis*, *Larix leptolepis*, *Wisteria chinensis*, *Ginkgo biloba*, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, *Pinus mugo*, *Pinus pentaphylla* var. *himekomatsu*, *Weigella japonica*, *Carpinus japonica*, *Kerria mugo*, *Cryptomeria japonica*, *Syringa amurensis* var. *Japonica*, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides Albizia julibrissin*, etc.

After exploring the area, we left the island and Japanese Garden via an arching wooden bridge.
To continue our visit to the Botanical gardens we followed a walkway that led us through a wooded area before opening up with rockeries to one side of the path. We were eventually led to the glasshouses.

The large glasshouse area was divided into three sections. The first glasshouse we visited was called the Aquarium House. This very warm and very humid glasshouse provides the perfect conditions to suit the needs of the tropical plants it houses. To quote the Botanical Garden, 'The Aquarium mostly includes tropical plants of scientific, economic and educative importance.' This glasshouse is dominated by the large circular pond in the centre. The eye is immediately drawn to the *Victoria cruziana* waterlily which almost completely covers the surface of the pond with its huge leaves, which can be up to 1.5m in diameter. As you make your way around the path you keep the pond on one side and tropical plants in beds and pots on the other side. The plants around the edge of the glasshouse include species such as *Tradescantia zebrina*, *Chlorophytum comosum*, *Nepenthes northiana* and various species of *Pandanus*. Also seen was *Platycerium bifurcatum*.

The second glasshouse was called the Palm House. This tall glasshouse houses approximately 80 species of palms such as *Cyas circinalis*, *Ravenala madagascariensis*, *Chamaerops humilis*, *Phoenix sylvestris*, *Thrinax parviflora*, *Thrinax radiata*, *Trachycarpus fortunei*, *Dictyosperma album*, *Washingtonia filifera*, *Livistona australis*, *Phoenix dactylifera*, *Ceratozamia mexicana* var. *robusta*, *Encephalartos ferox* and *Elaeis guineensis*. Alongside the palms were a few other species of plant such as *Codiaeum variegatum*. 
The third and final glasshouse was the Mediterranean and Australian Plants Greenhouse. This glasshouse was much cooler and less humid. The Australian and Mediterranean plants are gathered in this greenhouse because the climate in which they occur is very similar to this region. The central path in this greenhouse divides it in half. On one side of the path are the Australian plants and on the other side, the Mediterranean. There were also a few species of plant dotted around the glasshouse from other regions like Africa and South America, such as *Coffea arabica*, *Magnolia acuminata* and *Psidium guajava*. Unfortunately, two adjoining mini glasshouses containing carnivorous plants and orchids were closed to the public.

*Anthurium andreanum*

*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis.*

*Left: The foliage of Araucaria angustifolia.*

*Right: The foliage of Mimosa pudica.*
After leaving the glasshouses we headed towards an old water tower which we climbed to gain a view of the Botanical Gardens from height. On the one side of the water tower stood a large *Liriodendron tulipifera*. Climbing the water tower bought us close to the canopy of this magnificent tree.

After descending from the tower, I went over to a nearby structure to investigate it. This turned out to be a series of small square ponds containing individual labelled species of aquatic plants. This series of mini square ponds surrounded a much larger rectangular bed with 2 larger ponds at either end. Some of the plants displayed individually in these small square ponds included plants such as *Glyceria maxima, Persicaria amphibia, Eleocharis palustris, Carex bukii*, etc.

Time was getting on at this point so it was decided that we would leave and finish up for the day.
Day 2, 1st July 2017

Temperature max: 30°C
Temperature low: 15°C
Dry, intense sun, hot.

After checking out of the hotel, we travelled on the bus south east for approximately 35km to reach Salina Turda. Salina Turda is an old salt mine located north of the town of Turda. Salt had been extracted here since antiquity and continued right up until 1932. In 1992 the mine opened as a tourist attraction and in 2008 it went through a costly process of modernisation. It is now a very popular tourist attraction and was ranked by Business Insider as the ‘coolest underground place in the world’. The 112-meter-deep mine offers a Ferris wheel, bowling alley, sports facilities, amphitheatre, underground boating lake, chapel and healthcare areas. We spent a few hours here exploring the beauty of the mine and testing out its boating lake.

After emerging from the mine and having lunch, we spent a few hours botanising around the carpark and the surrounding salt flats and scrub areas.

A number of *Echium vulgare* plants were growing in the waste land around the carpark.
Left: *Althaea officinalis* was one of the first plants we encountered.

Right: Possibly *Daucus carota*.

Botanising on the salt flats.

Left: *Salicornia europaea* found on the salt flats.

Right: *Clematis vitalba* climbing over *Crataegus monogyna*. 
Left: A bee on the flower of *Carduus acanthoides*.

Right: *Eryngium campestre*.

A *Hyles euphorbiae* caterpillar feeding upon *Euphorbia cyparissias*.

Left: *Trifolium pratense*.

Right: A damselfly sitting upon the leaf of a *Carex* sp. growing on the edge of a small pool of water.
Once we had finished botanising in these areas, we got back onto the bus and travelled approximately 40km south west to Cheile Vălişoarei. This gorge carved into the limestone cliffs has been a designated nature reserve since 1969 and covers approximately 1km².

We spent a couple of hours botanising on the south west facing slopes of the gorge. Much of it was steep slopes and rocky outcrops but we reached a grassy plateau at approximately 550m where we stopped ascending and began to head back down. We then headed to our hotel, Cabana Perla Trascăului, which was less than 15km north of the gorge. We had dinner and had a plant ID session to talk about what we had seen that day.
Left: *Agrimonia eupatoria.*

Right: A close up of the flower of *Securigera varia.*

A beautiful meadow we came across.

Left: *Gentiana cruciata.*

Right: *Sedum acre.*
Left: *Lavatera thuringiaca.*

Right: *Salvia verticillata.*

Left: A close up of *Neotinea ustulata.*

Right: *Erigeron annuus.*
Fragaria viridis.

Campanula rapunculoides.

Me on the slopes of Cheile Vălășoarei.

Stachys germanica.
Day 3, 2\textsuperscript{nd} July 2017

Temperature max: 28°C  
Temperature low: 16°C  
Dry, intense sun, hot.

We began the day by taking a 4km journey south, to a town called Rimetea, where we parked the bus and got ready. We then took a track marked with a blue cross and a south south easterly heading which lead towards, and ascended into, Piatra Secuiului. This limestone rock formation is part of the Apuseni Mountains and although it is not one of the tallest peaks of the Carpathian mountain range, it is certainly very steep and impressive and at its highest point is 1128 meters.

We began by botanising lower down in the meadows around the foot hills of the cliffs, between approximately 550 to 700 meters.
Left: *Geranium pratense*.

Right: *Veronica spicata* subsp. *orchidea*.

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Left: *Agrimonia eupatoria*.

Right: *Achillea millefolium*.

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Left: *Cichorium intybus*.

Right: *Clematis recta*.

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Left: *Agrimonia eupatoria*.

Right: *Achillea millefolium*. 
Left: *Origanum vulgare*.

Right: *Saponaria officinalis*.

Left: A close up of a butterfly sitting on the flower of *Carduus acanthoides*.

Right: *Carduus acanthoides*.

Left: *Anthericum ramosum*.

Right: *Centaurea montana* and *Genista tinctoria*. (Front to back)
As we climbed above approximately 700 meters, the meadows gave way to rocky outcrops and the beginnings of the limestone cliffs. The plants we were encountering therefore started to change. We spent some time botanising around this area before deciding to ascend further up the cliffs, botanising as we climbed.

_left_ Berberis vulgaris.

_right_ Sedum hispanicum.

_left_ The view looking down towards Rimetea.

_right_ Rhamnus saxatilis subsp. tinctorius.
Left: *Inula ensifolia.*

Right: *Sempervivum tectorum.*

Left: *Rosa sp.* Perhaps *Rosa canina.*

Right: Me standing on the cliffs we were botanising on.

Left: *Sedum acre.*

Right: *Sempervivum tectorum.*

Left: *Rosa sp.* Perhaps *Rosa canina.*

Right: Me standing on the cliffs we were botanising on.
The track became more difficult and less of a track the higher we got. It got to a point where we had got divided and had ended up in little groups. Robert, Tom and I made it to a plateau at the summit of the track, where we reached an altitude of 1065 meters. We were rewarded with our efforts to reach the top with the finding of a beautiful white *Dianthus petraeus*.

The view from the top of Piatra Secuiului.
After a short rest, we began to descend whilst continually botanising. As we descended we regrouped with more and more people until the group was complete again.

We took a break for lunch in Rimetea, which was hosting some sort of music festival whilst we were there so was buzzing with atmosphere, people and food. We then returned to the hotel where we freshened up before re-grouping outside.

We crossed the road into the grounds of a Monastery and through a fence the other side into woodland. We botanised here briefly whilst we walked through the woodland and out into a meadow on a west south west slope between approximately 450 and 500 meters. We spent an hour or so botanising on these slopes before returning to the hotel for dinner and the end of the day.
Salvia pratense.
Day 4, 3rd July 2017

Temperature max: 23°C
Temperature low: 12°C
Heavy rain and thick cloud for most of the day.

Today was a day of mainly travelling. We checked out of our hotel in the morning and loaded the bus. We then took 135km drive south east to a 13th century village called Biertan. Here we stopped for lunch at a restaurant and spent a short time exploring the fortified church which stands in the centre of village. We then got back on the bus and drove 90km south to our hotel, Cabana Bâlea Cascada, which stands at approximately 1240 meters. On the drive up to our hotel, I noticed that the woodland around the road was dominated by *Fagus sylvatica*. Above a certain altitude however, *Picea abies* became the dominant species. After checking in at the hotel, we had a discussion about what plants we had seen over the past couple of days and tried to identify plants we had not been able to decide upon yet.

The view from one of the towers of the fortified church.

Antirrhinum majus.

Aesculus hippocastanum.
**Day 5, 4th July 2017**

**Temperature max:** 22°C  
**Temperature low:** 13°C  
Thick fog to start the day, lifting late morning. Sunny spells with light cloud for the rest of the day. Feeling cooler.

We began the day by taking a track leading south east away from the hotel towards and into the forested areas on the slopes of the Făgăraș Mountains, botanising as we walked. The track took us into the forest, across a stream and started to climb the mountain. We ascended to about 1350 meters. At this point the cloud had begun to lift so it was agreed that we would return to the bus and continue our botanising much higher up in the mountains.

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*Galeopsis speciosa.*  
*Carduus crispus.*
Left: *Campanula patula*

Right: Walking across a rickety bridge over the rapids.

Left: *Lilium martagon.*

Right: *Caltha palustris.*

Left: Waterfalls and rapids flowing down from the Făgăraș mountains.

Right: *Saxifraga cuneifolia.*
**Left:** The group botanising in the forest.

**Right:** The flower of *Campanula patula*.

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**Left:** Following marked tracks.

**Right:** *Gentiana asclepiadea*.

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**Left:** *Ranunculus platanifolius.*

**Right:** *Persicaria bistorta.*
We took the Transfăgărășan Road south up to Lake Bălea, which lies on the northern side of the Făgăraș mountains at approximately 2034 meters. It was decided that we would spend most of the day botanising on this side of the mountains. However, we decided whilst on the bus to head an extra 3 km down the road, through the tunnel in the mountains to view the southern side. We got off the bus at approximately 1930 meters and botanised for about half an hour on the rocky south facing slopes. We then returned to Lake Bălea where we sourced some lunch from the market like stalls at the side of the road.
Left: Aconitum moldavica.
Right: Soldanella hungarica.

Left: Thymus comosus.
Right: A beetle eating a worm on a rock next to the Thymus comosus.

Left: Veratrum album.
Right: Allium sp.
We regrouped after lunch and set about botanising on the northern slopes of the Făgăraș mountains around the lake. We worked our way up to an altitude of approximately 2110 meters.

Lake Bâlea.

Campanula alpina.

Anthemis carpatica.
Left: A close up of the flower of *Phyteuma confusum*.

Right: *Ranunculus alpestris*.

Left: *Soldanella pusilla*.

Right: *Saxifraga pedemontana*.
Left: *Doronicum columnae*.

Right: *Viola alpina*.

*Saxifraga bryoides*.

Left: *Homogyne alpina*.

Right: A close up of the flower of *Homogyne alpina*. 
Left: Primula minima.

Right: Rhododendron myrtifolium.

Left: Saxifraga oppositifolia.

Right: Aquilegia transsilvanica.

Left: Silene acaulis.

Right: Veratrum album.
After about 3 hours we headed back to the hotel where we discussed what we had seen throughout the day and tried to identify some plants. After dinner, a handful of the group, including myself, went for a short walk along the road to look at plants growing at the roadside. However, it got dark quickly and we had to return to the hotel after about half an hour.

Looking out across the Transylvanian plain before nightfall.

**Digitalis grandiflora.**

**Hypericum maculatum.**
Day 6, 5th July 2017

Temperature max: 24°C
Temperature low: 15°C
Sunny and dry throughout the day.

We began the day by taking the bus south along the Transfăgărășan Road, where we began to ascend the northern slopes of the Făgăraș Mountains. We got the bus to pull over at the side of the road at approximately 1850 meters.

Looking north across the Transfăgărășan Road.

We then set off by foot walking north down the slopes, botanising as we went. Although we had botanised on these slopes the previous day, we had decided to work at a lower altitude to try and encounter different plants growing in different situations. We descended to approximately 1650 meters where we were picked up by the bus, which took us up to Lake Bâlea for us to get lunch.

Botanising on the northern slopes of the Făgăraș mountains.
Left: *Potentilla aurea.*

Right: *Saxifraga cuneifolia.*

*Sedum acre.*

Left: *Anthemis carpatica.*

Right: *Coeloglossum viride.*
Left: *Pinguicula vulgaris.*

Right: *Pulsatilla* sp.

*Silene dinarica.*

Left: *Aquilegia transsilvanica.*

Right: *Doronicum columnae.*
Left: *Juniperus communis*

Right: *Pinus mugo.*

Looking down at the Transfăgărășan road.

Left: *Campanula alpina.*

Right: *Geranium palustre.*
Left: Waterfall in the Făgăraș mountains.

Right: *Spiraea chamaedryfolia*.

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Dianthus barbatus.

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Left: *Thalictrum minus*.

Right: *Saxifraga rotundifolia* subsp. *heucherifolia*.
Whilst waiting for a few of the group to finish lunch I spent about 10 minutes botanising immediately around the shores of the lake at around 2034 meters.

*Cardamine rivularis.*

*Left: Gagea serotina.*

*Right: Veronica serpyllifolia.*

*Left: Persicaria vivipara.*

*Right: Saxifraga sp.*
Once we had regrouped, we then took the bus south, back along the Transfăgărășan Road, through the tunnel, and out onto the southern slopes of the Făgăraş mountains. We stopped the bus at the side of the road at approximately 1925 meters. Again, we sat off on foot this time walking south to descend. Botanising as we walked we eventually reached an approximate altitude of 1650 meters. The bus picked us up from the side of the road and we headed back to the hotel for a plant Ident session.
Left: *Geum montanum.*

Right: *Pinguicula vulgaris.*

Left: *Phyteuma confusum.*

Right: *Potentilla recta.*

Left: *Saxifraga cuneifolia.*

Right: *Pseudorchis albida.*

Left: *Phyteuma confusum.*

Right: *Potentilla recta.*
Left: *Pulsatilla* sp.

Right: *Sedum fabaria*.

Left: *Carex caryophylea*.

Right: *Rhododendron myrtifolium*.

Left: *Viola declinata*.

Right: *Pseudorchis albida* and *Campanula abietina*. 
Left: Phyteuma confusum.

Right: Scorzonera purpurea subsp. rosea.

The hairy closed flower buds of Pilosella aurantiaca.

Left: Gymnadenia conopsea.

Right: Dactylorhiza incarnata.
Every photo on this page is *Persicaria bistorta*. This vigorous perennial became my favourite plant on this trip because of its dense spikes of small pink flowers which seemed to be flowering everywhere you looked throughout the mountains.
Left: Coeloglossum viride.

Right: Veratum album.

Left: The open flower of Pilosella aurantiaca.

Right: Possibly Melampyrum sylvaticum.
Day 7, 6th July 2017

Temperature max: 29°C
Temperature low: 16°C
Warm with sunny spells to begin the day. Heavy rain and thunderstorms late afternoon before clearing early evening.

The morning began with us checking out of our hotel and loading up the bus. We then spent an hour or so as a group botanising along the roadside of the Transfăgărășan Road near to the hotel.
Left: *Cortusa matthioli.*

Right: *Campanula* sp.

Left: *Ranunculus platanifolius.*

Right: *Anthyllis vulneraria.*

Left: The flowers of *Cicerbita alpina.*

Right: The foliage of *Cicerbita alpina.*
We then returned to the bus and took a 120km journey east to a large town called Brașov. Here, we stopped for some lunch and to stretch our legs.

After doing this and exploring the town a little we got back onto the bus and drove 30km drive south west to Piatra Craiului National Park, which is located in Zărnești. We got ready to botanise in this 91,000-acre national park located in the Southern Carpathians. However, the weather was not on our side at all and after just five minutes of botanising we were forced to return to the bus as an intense thunder and lightning storm rolled in with torrential rain.

It was decided that we should just leave and head for the hotel as there was no sign of the storm passing. We therefore took a 55km trip south east to our hotel, Hotel Carpathia, located in Sinaia, where we checked in, had a plant Identification session and went for dinner.
Day 8, 7th July 2017

Temperature max: 25°C
Temperature low: 17°C
Sunny spells and warm throughout the day.

After gathering in the morning, we took a 5-minute walk through Sinaia to the cable car station. We took the cable car and ascended west through and above cloud and into Bucegi Natural Park, located in the eastern part of the Southern Carpathians. The park covers approximately 80,300 acres and resides in the 3 counties of Dâmbovița, Prahova and Brașov. After catching a second cable car we eventually reached our destination, a plateau in the Bucegi mountains, at approximately 2050 meters.

We began by botanising on the meadows and slopes around the cable car station.
Left: *Botrychium lunaria.*

Right: *Pulsatilla* sp.

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Left: *Gymnadenia conopsea.*

Right: *Coeloglossum viride.*

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Left: *Saxifraga paniculata.*

Right: *Biscutella laevigata.*
Left: Gentiana sp. Possibly Gentiana verna or Gentiana acaulis.

Right: Veratrum album.

Left: Nigritella rubra.

Right: The clouds pushing against the side of the mountains.

Phyteuma confusum.
Left: *Dryas octopetala.*

Right: *Persicaria vivipara.*

Left: A grass hopper sitting on the flower of *Anthemis carpatica.*

Right: A close up of the grass hopper sitting on the flower of *Anthemis carpatica.*

Left: *Campanula alpina var. bucegiensis.*

Right: *Persicaria bistorta.*
After some time, we decided to walk to a nearby peak to the south west in order to gain more altitude, in the hope of encountering different plants. Botanising as we walked we eventually reached the peak at an altitude of 2120 meters. At this point we were above some of the cloud. After having a bit of a rest, we began the decent back to the cable car station, botanising as we went. We then headed back down to Sinaia for the evening.

Left: *Cerastium alpinum* var. *lanatum.*

Right: *Bruckenthalia spiculifolia.*

Left: Climbing to the peak.

Right: *Dryas octopetala.*
Left: Chamorchis alpina.

Right: Moneses uniflora.

Left: Traunsteinera globosa.

Right: Scorzonera purpurea subsp. rosea.

Gentiana nivalis.
Left: Me standing on rocks near the peak.

Right: Phyteuma sp.

Vaccinium vitis-idaea and Rhododendron myrtifolium.

Left: The clouds rolling in around the mountains.

Right: Campanula abietina.
Day 9, 8th July 2017

Temperature max: 29°C
Temperature low: 19°C
Sunny spells and dry. Strong winds which made it seem cooler than it was.

This would be our final day of botanising. We began the day by taking the bus to a town called Buşteni, just 10km north of our hotel in Sinaia, where we would be able to get a cable car up to the Bucegi plateau at 2200m located in the Bucegi Mountains which are part of the Southern Carpathians. When we arrived in Buşteni, we were informed that the cable car was not in operation due to the strong winds.

At this point the group split in half. Half of the group decided that they were going to do their own thing and botanise in the surrounding area and do other things. The other half of the group which included Rob (the tour leader) and myself elected to hire a driver with a 4x4 vehicle to take us up into the Bucegi mountains, as the roads were unsuitable for our bus. There was no road that could take us straight up into the mountains so we had to travel south back into Sinaia where we turned west and ascended along route 71 into Dâmboviţa County where we turned north again at altitude to drive towards Bucegi plateau. The drive took about an hour and ten minutes and the driver took us as close to the plateau as he could get us which was at an altitude of approximately 2000m. Unfortunately, the track became unsuitable for the vehicle so we got out and began the walk.
Botanising as we went we walked north for about an hour to reach the Bucegi plateau at an altitude of approximately 2200 meters. As we were walking it became clear that this area of the mountain range was much more heavily grazed than where we had been yesterday. There were herds of cows and flocks of sheep grazing as well as horses. The cows especially graze heavily, as they pull at the foliage of plants and rip them out the ground rather than nibbling at the top. We admired the rock formations in the area which had been caused by wind and rain erosion. The most famous of these is called the Sphynx.
Left: *Pseudorchis albida.*

Right: *Potentilla aurea.*

Left: Possibly *Dianthus glacialis.*

Right: *Pinus mugo.*

Left: *Persicaria vivipara.*

Right: *Anthemis carpatica.*
Left: The Sphynx rock structure.

Right: Another rock structure.

Left: *Linum austriacum.*

Right: A close up of the tiny flowers of *Minuartia sedoides.*

Left: *Dracocephalum austriacum.*

Right: *Silene acaulis.*
Realising it wouldn’t be long before we turned back, I separated from the group temporarily and walked towards a huge rock/peak in the north in an attempt to gain more altitude and find something different. I reached this rock formation and botanised around its base and at the top reaching an altitude of 2300 meters. I was rewarded for my efforts by finding a new plant for the trip, *Androsace villosa* var. *arachnoidea*. I then headed back to the group and together we descended south towards our waiting vehicle and driver.

*Androsace villosa* var. *arachnoidea.*
The driver agreed to drop us back off at our hotel. On the journey back down to Sinaia, we asked the driver to pull over at the side of the road a few times to have a look at plants and to take photographs of the amazing landscape. At approximately 1650 meters, Robert asked the driver to pull over because he had seen something at the side of the road. We all got out to botanise in the area. It turned out that what Robert had seen was *Dianthus spiculifolius*. 

*Dianthus spiculifolius.*
Left: *Carduus* sp. Possibly *Carduus kernerii*.

Right: *Bruckenthalia spiculifolia*.

The view from the road down the mountains.

Left: *Scabiosa columbaria* ssp. *pseudobanatica*.

Right: Me happy after an amazing horticultural trip.
Day 10, 9th July 2017

After checking out of the hotel, we loaded everything into the bus and headed about 100km south west to the airport in București where we got our flights back to the UK.

Leaving Romania.
Plant List

Here is an alphabetical list of wild plants that I personally believe I saw, took notice of and recorded whilst botanising in various locations around Romania:

- Acer campestre
- Achillea millefolium
- Aconitum moldavica
- Aconitum napellus
- Aesculus hippocastanum
- Agrimonia eupatoria
- Alchemilla fallax
- Alchemilla sp.
- Allium oleraceum
- Allium sp.
- Althaea officinalis
- Androsace villosa var. arachnoidea
- Antennaria dioica
- Anthemis carpatica
- Anthericum ramosum
- Anthyllis vulneraria
- Antirrhinum majus
- Aquilegia transsilvanica
- Arabis alpina
- Artemisia santonicum
- Asplenium ceterach
- Athamanta sp.
- Ballota nigra
- Berberis vulgaris
- Biscutella laevigata
- Botrychium lunaria
- Bruckenthalia spiculifolia
- Bupleurum sp.
- Caltha palustris
- Campanula abietina
- Campanula alpina
- Campanula alpina var. bucegiensis
- Campanula glomerata
- Campanula patula
- Campanula persicifolia
- Campanula rapunculoides
- Cardamine rivularis
- Cardaminopsis halleri
- Carduus acanthoides
- Carduus crispus
- Carex sylvatica
- Carpinus betulus
- Centaurea atropurpurea
- Centaurea montana
- Cerastium alpinum var. lanatum
- Cerastium arvense
- Cerastium glomeratum
- Chamaenerion angustifolium
- Chamorchis alpina
- Chrysosplenium alternifolium
- Cicerbita alpina
- Cichorium intybus
- Cirsium erisithales
- Cirsium rivulare
- Cirsium waldsteinii
- Clematis recta
- Clematis vitalba
- Coeloglossum viride
- Consolida orientalis
- Cornus mass
- Cortusa matthioli
- Corylus avellana
- Cotoneaster integerrimus
- Crataegus monogyna
- Cytisus hirsutus
- Dactylorhiza maculata
- Dactylorhiza sp.
- Daucus carota
- Dianthus armeria
- Dianthus barbatus
- Dianthus carthusianorum
- Dianthus gelidus
- Dianthus glacialis
- Dianthus petraeus
- Dianthus pontederia
- Dianthus sp.
- Dianthus spiculifolius
- Digitalis grandiflora
- Doronicum columnae
- Dracocephalum austriacum
- Dryas octopetala
- Echium vulgare
- Erigeron annuus
- Eryngium campestre
- Euonymus europaeus
- Euphorbia cyparissias
- Euphorbia epithymoides
- Euphorbia helioscopia
- Euphorbia platyphyllos
- Euphorbia robbiae
- Fagus sylvatica
- Filipendula ulmaria
- Fragaria vesca
- Fragaria viridis
- Fraxinus excelsior
- Gagea serotina
- Galeopsis speciosa
- Galium flavescens
- Galium mollugo
- Galium vernum
- Genista pilosa
- Genista tinctoria
- Gentiana asclepiadea
- Gentiana cruciata
- Gentiana nivalis
- Gentiana sp.
- Geranium palustre
- Geranium phaeum
- Geranium pratense
- Geranium robertianum
- Geranium sanguineum
- Geum montanum
- Geum reptans
- Gymnadenia conopsea
- Helleborus purpurascens
- Homogyne alpina
- Hypericum maculatum
- Hypericum perforatum
- Hypericum pulchrum
- Inula ensifolia
- Inula germanica
- Inula hirta
- Juncus trifidus
- Juniperus communis
- Knautia arvensis
- Knautia dipsacifolia
- Larix decidua
- Lavatera thuringiaca
- Leonurus cardica
- Leucanthemum vulgare
- *Ligularia sibirica*
- *Ligustrum sp.*
- *Lilium martagon*
- *Linum austriacum*
- *Lotus tenuis*
- *Luzula sp.*
- *Melampyrum sylvaticum*
- *Minuartia sedoides*
- *Minuartia sp.*
- *Moneses uniflora*
- *Myosotis scorpioides*
- *Neotinea ustulata*
- *Nepeta nuda*
- *Nigella arvensis*
- *Nigella arvensis*
- *Nigritella rubra*
- *Origanum vulgare*
- *Paris quadrifolia*
- *Pedicularis oederi*
- *Pedicularis verticillata*
- *Persicaria bistorta*
- *Persicaria vivipara*
- *Petasites sp.*
- *Phleum pratense*
- *Phyteuma confusum*
- *Phyteuma obiculare*
- *Phyteuma vagneri*
- *Picea abies*
- *Pinguicula vulgaris*
- *Pinus mugo*
- *Platanthera bifolia*
- *Polygonatum biflorum*
- *Polygonatum odoratum*
- *Polypodium virginianum*
- *Polytrichum commune*
- *Potentilla argentea*
- *Potentilla aurea*
- *Potentilla recta*
- *Primula minima*
- *Primula veris*
- *Prunella laciniata*
- *Prunella vulgaris*
- *Prunus avium*
- *Prunus padus*
- *Prunus sp.*
- Prunus spinosa
- Pseudorchis albida
- Pulsatilla montana
- Pulsatilla sp.
- Pyrola minor
- Pyrus pyraster
- Ranunculus alpestris
- Ranunculus platanifolius
- Ranunculus sardous
- Rhamnus frangula
- Rhamnus saxatilis subsp. tinctorius
- Rhinanthus minor
- Rhodiola rosea
- Rhododendron ferrugineum
- Rhododendron myrtifolium
- Rosa canina
- Rubus fruticosus
- Rumex sp.
- Salicornia europaea
- Salix reticulata
- Salvia pratensis
- Salvia verticillata
- Sambucus racemosa
- Sambucus sp.
- Saponaria officinalis
- Saxifraga aizoides
- Saxifraga androsacea
- Saxifraga bryoides
- Saxifraga cuneifolia
- Saxifraga marginata
- Saxifraga oppositifolia
- Saxifraga paniculata
- Saxifraga pedemontana
- Saxifraga rotundifolia
- Scabiosa columbaria subsp. pseudobanatica
- Scabiosa ochroleuca
- Scorzonera purpurea var. rosea
- Scutellaria sp.
- Securigera varia
- Sedum acre
- Sedum hispanicum
- Sempervivum tectorum
- Silene acaulis
- Silene acaulis
- Silene dinarica
- Silene latifolia
- Silene latifolia var. alba
- Silene pusilla
- Soldanella hungarica
- Soldanella hungarica subsp. major
- Soldanella pusilla
- Sorbus aria
- Sorbus aucuparia
- Spirea chamaedryfolia
- Spirea sp.
- Stachys germanica
- Stachys sp.
- Stellaria holostea
- Succisa pratensis
- Taraxacum sp.
- Thalictrum flavum
- Thalictrum minus
- Thymus comosus
- Thymus praecox
- Thymus praecox subsp. polytrichus
- Tilia cordata
- Traunsteinera globosa
- Trifolium pratense
- Trifolium repens
- Urtica dioica
- Vaccinium myrtillus
- Vaccinium vitis-idaea
- Valeriana officinalis
- Veratrum album
- Veronica serpyllifolia
- Veronica sp.
- Veronica spicata
- Veronica spicata subsp. orchidea
- Viburnum lantana
- Viola biflora
- Viola declinata
- Viola tricolor

Please note that this list does not include plants seen in Cluj-Napoca Botanical Garden. It also does not include plants that other members of the tour group may have seen. Although I worked as hard as possible to ensure my identifications were accurate, some of my identifications may not be correct and should therefore should be treated as a guide only. Where I could not narrow the plant down to a species level I have included it on the list as; ‘Genus’ sp.
Conclusion

I enjoyed every minute of this tour thanks to the amazing plants, people and country that I had the chance to work with. I also believe this tour has really helped me develop as a horticulturist. I am going away from this tour with an insightful first experience of field botany and with greatly improved plant identification skills. I also have a much greater appreciation for alpine plants and their ability to survive in the environments in which they grow. I therefore hope to work with the Alpine Garden Society more in the future to continue my learning.

My aim when starting out on this trip was to explore Transylvanian meadows and high-altitude habitats of the Carpathian Mountains to learn about the plants that inhabit these environments. I believe that both of these types of environment have been explored throughout the trip and many of the plants within them studied and identified. Altogether, a very successful, useful, inspiring and enjoyable tour.

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Bibliography


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Appendix

Animals of Romania.

I was lucky to see many animals on my trip to Romania, including both wildlife and livestock. There was also a large population of wild dogs roaming the wild, on their own or in packs. One evening, I was lucky enough to see a brown bear as it emerged from darkness of the forest, to scavenge food from the area around the hotel. There are approximately 6000 brown bears in the Carpathian region of Romania. Here are a few photos of animals I encountered throughout the tour.