

# AGS- Autumn bulbs of the Peloponnese

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Merlin 744



Figure 1: *Sternbergia lutea* in the Mani Peninsula.

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## Itinerary

**Day 1 - 24<sup>th</sup> October** flight from London Heathrow to Athens, visit to Corinth Canal staying at Nafplio overnight.

**Day 2- 25<sup>th</sup> October** visit to the archaeological site at Mycenae and number of roadside stops near the town of Agios Andreas. Overnight stay in Nafplio.

**Day 3 - 26<sup>th</sup> October** Drive from Nafplio to Sparta, visit to Mystras and Lagada gorge. Overnight stay in Sparta.

**Day 4 - 27<sup>th</sup> October** Another visit to the Taygetos mountains visiting a number of springs within the area. A drive south to Gythio to Cranae Island. Stay overnight in Gythio.

**Day 5 -28<sup>th</sup> October** visit to the Mani Peninsula, and Cape Tenaro bay.

**Day 6-29<sup>th</sup> October** A visit to several roadside stops on the way to Dimitrios beach known for its shipwreck. Overnight stay in Gythio

**Day 7 30<sup>th</sup> October** leave Gythio and headed eastwards towards Monemvasia where we will be staying for the next two nights. With a number of roadside stops looking for *Colchicum* before reaching our hotel on the evening.

**Day 8 31<sup>st</sup> October** visit to the town of Monemvasia and a walk to the top of Monemvasia for sighting of *Sternbergia sicula* and *Colchicum cupani*.

**Day 9 1<sup>st</sup> November** A walk around the north side of Monemvasia. Before heading off to Tripoli where we will spend our last night.

**Day 10 2<sup>nd</sup> November** Drive from Tripoli to Athens airport, with the group members having sad faces that the tour had come to an end!

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to the Merlin trust, for funding my placement to be part of the Alpine garden society tour to the Peloponnese. Also, a huge credit goes to the tour leader Razvan Chisu for organising the ten-day tour and sharing his extensive knowledge with us, a great tour indeed. I would like to also thank the group members of the tour for Sharing each other's passion for plants and enthusiasm and each other's knowledge (**fig.2**). The tour has enriched me, made me want to travel much more in the future and to see the wonderful natural habitats of plants and scenery which us horticulturists love.

Many thanks to Nigel Hopes head gardener of John Massey's private garden at Ashwood nurseries, For providing me with a reference. Also thank you goes to Carol Collins my former tutor at Birmingham Metropolitan college at Birmingham Botanical gardens, who also provided me with a reference.



Figure 2: Group photo



# Map

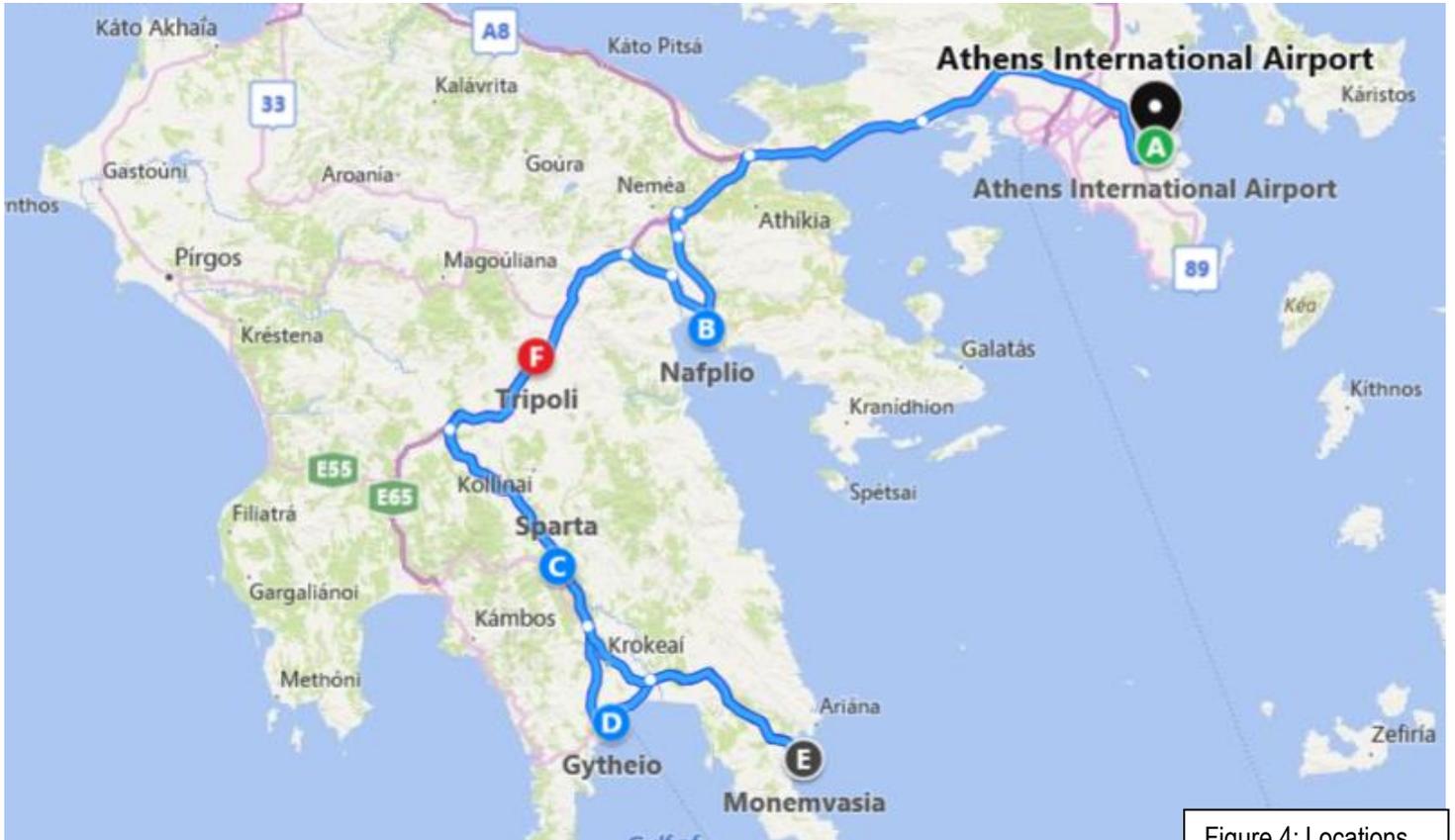


Figure 4: Locations

## Day one (24<sup>th</sup> October)

After a short drive from Athens airport (**fig .4 map position A**) we arrived at our first destination of the tour (**fig.5**). The bus crawled to the top of a mountain and came to a halt. We were greeted by a tortoise making its way across to the other side of the road (**fig.6**).

We soon started botanising among the landscape. We firstly had sighting of *Crocus cancellatus* subsp. *mazziaricus* dotted around (**fig.7**). Razvan “shouted look over here” we all quickly made our way over and there was one lonely delightful *Crocus cartwrightianus* (**fig.8**). A great find for our first stop of the tour.



Figure 5: First stop of the tour



Figure 6: Tortoise strolling



Figure 7: *Crocus cancellatus* subsp. *mazziaricus*



Figure 8: *Crocus cartwrightianus*

Our next stop was Corinth Canal (**fig.2 map position B**), built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (**fig.9**). The view from the bridge overlooking the canal was tremendous and very far down, not good for the faint hearted. At the side of the canal some patches of pink caught our eyes. We went over to explore and found *Cyclamen graecum* in full flower scattered around the gravel (**fig.10**).

We were all starting to get hungry after a long day traveling, we headed to the hotel for dinner and an early night's sleep, which was much needed.



Figure 9: Corinth Canal



Figure 10: *Cyclamen graecum*

## Day two (25<sup>th</sup> October)

After breakfast we were ready and itching to set off and explore. We started the day with a short drive to Mycenae, a place which is one of the most important archaeological sites of Greece. The area is 30,000 square meters (**fig.11**). As we were exploring the site, we had a glimpse of *Sternbergia* higher up the hillside. This was *Sternbergia lutea* a terrific sighting with them emerging from the rocks at an altitude of 321 meters (**fig.12**).

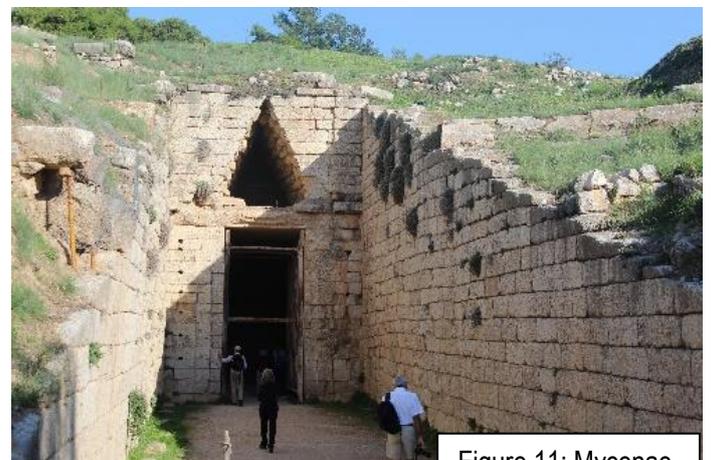


Figure 11: Mycenae

Further around between the rocks we spotted *Arisarum vulgare*, with longitudinal streaks and an attractive stem (**fig.13**). The Walls within the site were filled

with gems such as *Campanula andrewsii* and *Ephedra fragilis* a bonus was the *Ephedra fragilis* was in fruit (**fig.14**).



Figure 12: *Sternbergia lutea*

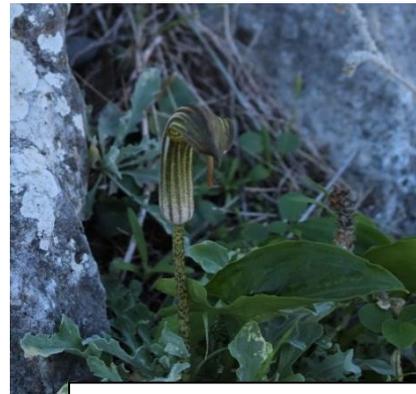


Figure 13 *Arisarum vulgare*



Figure 14: *Ephedra fragilis*

The second stop was near Agios Andreas for a sighting of *Crocus boryi*, easily recognised by its white anthers and yellowish orange stigmas. The area in parts was dense with shrubs but where open ground occurred *Crocus boryi* was naturalising perfectly and the sunshine beaming through the pure white petals made for a great sighting(**fig.15**).

Within the site was the odd *Spiranthes spiralis* growing singly, not exceeding 20cm in height (**fig.16**). I then came across a fascinating *Cyclamen graecum* trying to escape and lift the rock (**fig.17**). Heading back towards the bus overlooking the sea was *Cercis siliquastrum*, covered with clusters of pea like flowers (**fig.18**)



Figure15: *Crocus boryi*



Figure 16: *Spiranthes spiralis*

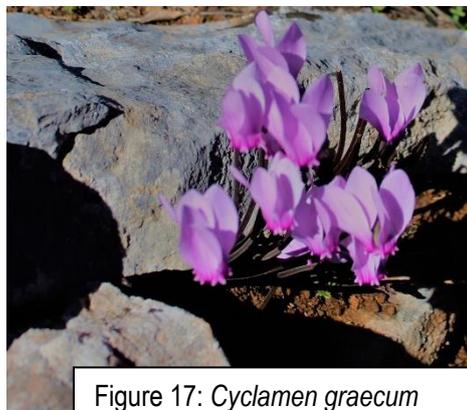


Figure 17: *Cyclamen graecum*

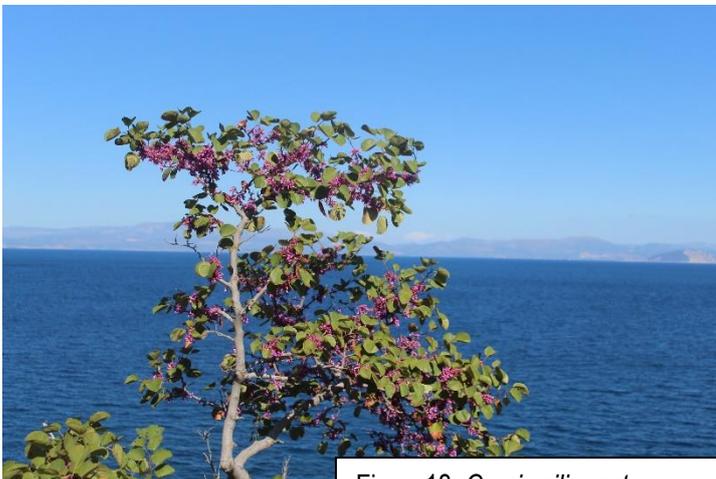


Figure18: *Cercis siliquastrum*

Lunch time had arrived, we stopped on the roadside on our way back from Mycenae. I can see why Razvan said let's stop here for lunch. The views overlooking the sea were magnificent, a perfect place to have our lunch (**fig.19**). While having lunch I noticed *Allium callimischon* a distance away, then I realised they were right by where I was sitting!

Late afternoon heading back towards the hotel we drove around the edge of a mountain. A group member shouted "stop!" growing on the verge was *Sternbergia sicula*. We pulled over and started walking up a dirt track and headed up to see what else we could find. *Urginea maritima* was towering among the grass (**fig.20**) and *Allium callimischon* was trying to make an appearance.

We walked further along whilst being eaten alive by masses of mosquitoes, with members of the group slapping themselves trying to get rid of them. We soon decided to head back down the track towards the bus for cover!



Figure 19: Lunch time



Figure 20: *Urginea maritima*

## Day three (26<sup>th</sup> October)

After staying in Nafplio for the night we drove to Sparta (**fig 2: map position C**) and visited Mystras, a town which was built on a hillside in 1249. After 1834 the people of Mystras gradually started to move to the modern town of Sparta, leaving the medieval ruins, which stand in an appealing landscape at 633 metres high.

Growing from the foundations below the steps was *Campanula versicolor* (**fig.21**). Here we saw the best *Allium callimischon* in large clumps, some of the best flowers I have ever seen. Alongside the steps on the steep slopes was the structure of *Ferula communis*, towering high overlooking the landscape (**fig.22**). Growing from rock faces was *Polypodium cambricum* (**fig.23**) and *Saxifraga rotundifolia* growing among the rocks. (**fig.24**)



Figure 21: *Campanula versicolor*



Figure 22: *Ferula communis*

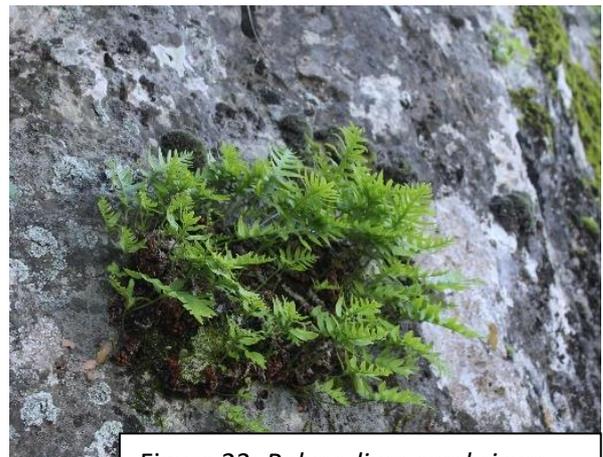


Figure 23: *Polypodium cambricum*



Figure 24: *Saxifraga rotundifolia*

Afternoon fast approached and it was time for our next destination, Lagada Gorge, 800 metres in altitude, 14 km away from the bustling town of Sparta. We soon started heading up steep winding roads, the views were astonishing and at one point the rock came right over the road with us thinking we would lose the top of the bus (**fig.25**).



Figure 25: Road view

As we arrived, we had our lunch before setting off to see *Galanthus reginae-olgae*. Itching to go and explore, I ate my lunch as fast as I could and headed down the bank in search of the snowdrops. A magical scenery with an array of wonderful plants. The rest of the group soon started trekking down the banks towards the stream behind me.

We started our stroll along the stream where many plants were growing. *Galanthus reginae-olgae* alongside Ferns and *Cyclamen hederifolium* with plane trees acting as a canopy (**fig.26**). *Galanthus reginae-olgae* was a great sighting, naturalised among these magical surroundings, a genus I was particularly looking forward to seeing (**fig.27**).



Figure 26: Location in Lagada Gorge.

Also fascinating was the vast amount of *Cyclamen hederifolium*, so many variations and sizes of foliage growing among the deep leaf litter. I came across a leaf of *C. hederifolium* which was around 10cm long and around 7cm wide. My ring for scale (**fig.28**).



Figure 27: *Galanthus reginae-olgae*



Figure 28: *Cyclamen hederifolium*

We carried on walking alongside the stream, where a large tree and shrubs blocked our pathway. Some members of the group decided to turn back, but a handful of us we were determined to carry on. So we started scrambling up the steep bank with me in front, telling the group members “if I fall the rest of you will like dominos!!”

### Day four (27<sup>th</sup> October)

The next morning, we drove back to the Taygetos mountains. The scenery on the journey was fantastic just like a movie set. We were heading towards a second site where *Galanthus reginae-olgae* grows. Yet again the destination was remarkable, beautiful scenery and within the leaf litter *Galanthus reginae-olgae* was naturalising.

As I headed down the bank from the carpark, I came across foliage of *Arum italicum* growing among the vegetation. A steep bank covered with moss and *Asplenium trichomanes*, with the odd flowers of *Galanthus reginae-olgae* (**fig.29**).

The site had many nooks and crannies among rocks where *Galanthus reginae-olgae* was making an appearance and *Cyclamen hederifolium* in leaf. Looking up I noticed flowers of *C.hederifolium* further up the bank, growing at the bottom of a tree trunk among the roots. I was amazed to see where some of these *Cyclamen* were growing and flourishing (**fig.30**).



Figure 29: *Asplenium trichomanes* with *Galanthus reginae-olgae*



Figure 30 *Cyclamen hederifolium*

Razvan our tour leader called us back to the carpark where we decided to have a walk up the mountain and head towards the refugee camp. We headed up not releasing how long it would take with so many specimens of plants drawing our attention and delaying us. On the trek up, we could not see much of the view as in places it was dense woodland. We got to a point where a gap appeared amongst the trees offering views of the mountain peaks (**fig.31**).

Carrying on upwards to the refugee camp we still came across pockets of *Galanthus reginge-olgae* and *Cyclamen hederifolium* growing among pine needles, at an altitude of 1022 meters.

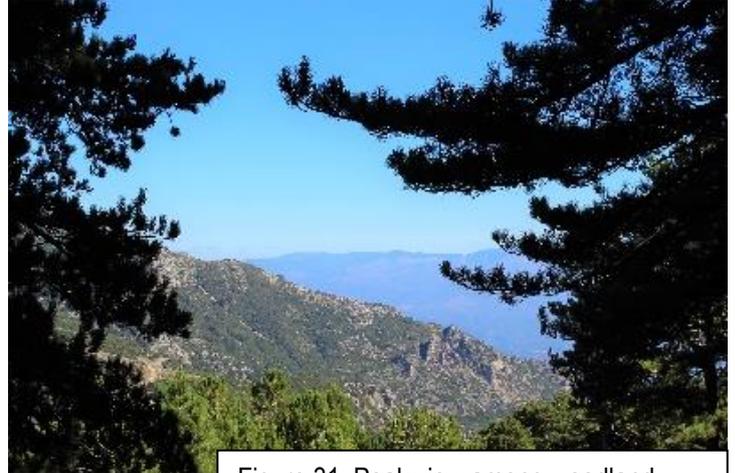


Figure 31: Peak view among woodland

Late afternoon we drove towards Gythio (**fig.2 map position D**) where we would be staying for the next three nights (**fig 32**). We visited a small island called Cranae, connected to the land by a causeway built in 1898 (**fig.33**). A ten-minute walk from our hotel was a site where astonishing *Cyclamen graecum* grow. The island left me speechless due to the variation in *C. graecum* foliage, with all kinds of patterns, from leaves no bigger than my thumbnail to leaves as big as my hand.



Figure 32: Gythio

The island had a large amount of Pine trees which in areas were very dense and casting shade, not an ideal situation for *C. graecum*. Many of the best were around the outskirts of the island on the edge of the sea, ideal where it is open aspect and their tubers can bake during the hot weather.



Figure 33: Cranae Island

*Cyclamen graecum* was not just only growing beside rocks (**fig.34**) but also growing in the nooks and crannies of the rocks themselves. One rock caught my eye where over twelve different leaf variations of *Cyclamen graecum* where growing (**fig.35**).

After spending an hour on the island, it was time to head back. Some of the group members stayed a little longer but soon caught up with the rest of the group who were walking back to the hotel.



Figure 34: *Cyclamen graecum*



Figure 35: *Cyclamen graecum* variations

## Day five (28<sup>th</sup> October)

After breakfast, we all got on the bus and headed for an old disused road. A location which a group who were staying at the same hotel had recommended to us.

Once off the bus we started walking to find the site. It crossed our minds, could the group have been having us on? We carried on walking and suddenly some group members shouted “WOW”. Around the corner in an area which looked like it had been cleared, masses of *Cyclamen* *hederifolium* were growing (**fig.36**). We were among carpets of *C. hederifolium* as far as the eye could see reaching up the bank. We didn't know what to photograph first, a real spectacle (**fig 37 & 38**)



Figure 36: *Cyclamen hederifolium*



Figure 37: *Cyclamen hederifolium*



Figure 38: *Cyclamen hederifolium* among leaf litter.

For our second stop of the day we headed south of Gythio to the Mani Peninsula. Known here for its biodiversity with hundreds of plant species. The Mani Peninsula is also known for its tower houses which perch on the hillsides with spectacular views (**fig.39**).

We stopped at a bay called Cape Tenaro. Getting off the bus we were greeted by *Cyclamen graecum*



Figure 39: Tower houses in Mani Peninsula

popping up all over the carpark, with one even growing beneath a parked campervan.

We headed down towards the edge of the sea. Amongst the grasses were *Urginea maritima* flower spikes, gorgeous with the sea view behind (fig.40). Growing among rocks were *Prospero autumnale* subsp. *latifolia* not exceeding 25cms in height (fig.41).

As we walked further on, growing from cracks within a wall were *Cyclamen graecum* in full flower with a vast of foliage and flowers, many darker than usual.

While photographing the graecum, we were called over by Razvan, he had spotted *Narcissus obsoletus*, simple but elegant flower (fig.42). I also noticed *Carlina gummifera* growing on its own with a dark pink flower inflorescence (fig.43). Alongside a rock was *Colchicum parlatoris*, a delightful small species, pale pink with no chequing on the petals.



Figure 40: *Urginea maritima*



Figure 41: *Prospero autumnalis* subsp. *latifolia*



Figure 42: *Narcissus obsoletus*



Figure 43: *Carlina gummifera*



Figure 44: Goats posing for a photo

The next stop of the day was a few miles down the road, to the sighting of *Sternbergia lutea*, which were growing among olive groves in Nikandreio. Walking to the site along the road were a group of goats all posing for photographs (**fig.44**).

As we walked on, among the olive groves we kept stopping to take photos of small clumps of *Sternbergia lutea* With Razvan saying “walk straight past them keep heading this direction, they’re even better”.

Further along masses of *Sternbergia lutea* were growing in their thousands, a tremendous view, a sight you would never successfully capture on a camera (**fig.45**).

We were blown away by the vast quantity surrounding us. On the other hand, neighbouring olive groves had no wild flowers in sight, Razvan said this is due to chemical spraying. We also found a number of crocuses at the destination, such as *Crocus goulimyi*, growing alongside a dry-stone wall. As we headed back to the bus one clump of *C. goulimyi* caught our eyes, looking like it could be on the show bench perfectly displayed with seven flowers all fully open(**fig.46**). Some areas had large clumps of *Crocus niveus* growing among walls beside the foliage of *Cyclamen graecum* (**fig.47**).



Figure 45: *Sternbergia lutea* as far as the eye can see.



Figure 46: *Crocus goulimyi*



Figure 47: *Crocus niveus* alongside *Cyclamen graecum*.

The last stop of the day was at Kelefa near Areopoli (**fig.48**). We pulled over and all headed off in small groups in search of plants. Within moments we had found the charming autumnal orchid *Spiranthes spiralis*, getting its name from the inflorescence, which spirals itself around. Growing beside the road on the edge of an olive grove was *Quercus coccifera*, an evergreen oak. Once again we came across *Narcissus obsoletus*, which we had seen earlier in the day but here were several more in flower with a delightful fragrance.



Figure 48: Kelefa roadside view.

## Day six (29<sup>th</sup> October)

The first destination was a walk from Georgios church, where the bus driver had dropped us off and would pick us up later in the morning. We headed down a dirt track and started our botanising search to see what we could find.

Soon I spotted the foliage of *Cyclamen graecum* growing beside the path among the leaf litter, a wonderful light-coloured leaf with dark mottled edging, a true gem (**fig.49**). During our walk we saw several *Cyclamen graecum* growing, with incredible leaf variations.



Figure 49: *Cyclamen graecum*

As we progressed, growing through a tree we found *Smilax aspera*, as a bonus it was in flower as well as fruiting. The word *smilax* comes from the Greek name for 'poison' and the word *aspera* refers to rough as it can be prickly and vicious with backwardly directed spines (**fig.50**).

Walking past an olive grove we spotted large *Colchicum* in a clump from the other side of the wall. This was *Colchicum bivonae*, a wonderful goblet shaped flower with strong tessellation, many of the flowers had gone over but one was holding on steadfastly (fig.51).



Figure 50: Flower & fruit of *Smilax aspera*.

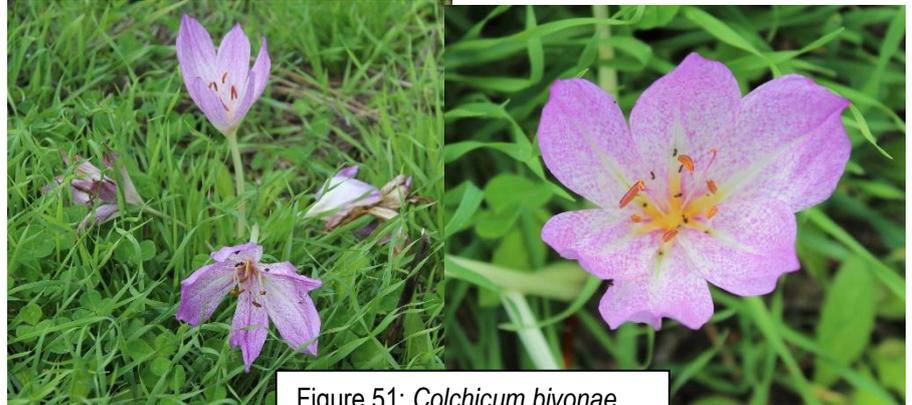


Figure 51: *Colchicum bivonae*

On our journey back to the hotel, we spotted *Arbutus unedo* growing at the roadside covered in fruit, it was well worth a stop. We all headed to this one specimen which was in flower and fruit (fig.52). We soon noticed more across the road and looking up, there was a whole area filled with hundreds (fig.53). Some of the group members tried the fruit of *Arbutus unedo*, many of them described it like having a mouth full of grit, I truly agreed!

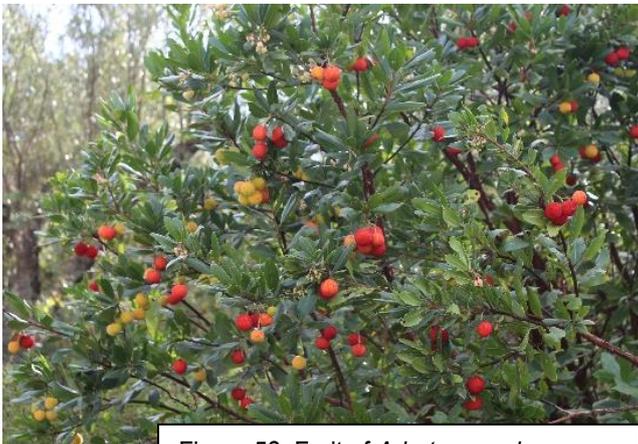


Figure 52: Fruit of *Arbutus unedo*



Figure 53: *Arbutus unedo* in their hundreds.

The next destination was a visit to Valtaki beach. A place which is known for its shipwreck called Dimitrios, a 67-metre long cargo ship which was stranded on the beach of Valtaki in 1981(**fig.54**).

Across the road from the beach was a steep bank which we explored, soon coming across *Narcissus tazetta* which is perhaps one of the most fragrant *Narcissus* (**fig.55**). Growing among grass we spotted flowers of *Anemone coronaria*, a wonderful, large, light purple flower. We were not expecting this at the time of the year (**fig.56**).



Figure 54: Dimitrios shipwreck



Figure 55: *Narcissus tazetta*



Figure 56: *Anemone coronaria*

In the afternoon we headed back to our hotel in Gythio where we were given a free afternoon to explore the local surroundings of Gythio town. I headed towards Cranae Island where we had visited earlier in week. Along with other group members I spent many hours finding more and more *Cyclamen graecum*. I put together a collage to show just a few of the *Cyclamen graecum* which I seen (**fig.57**).



Figure 57: Collage of *Cyclamen graecum*

### Day seven (30<sup>th</sup> October)

We left Gythio and headed eastwards towards Monemvasia (**fig.2 map position E**) which was founded in the 16th century A.D. Monemvasia is marked as a place of great natural beauty and known for its boutique hotels and craft shops.

The first stop of the day was at a layby. We went off exploring a large area which had dense shrubs and was very uneven due to the amount of stone around (**fig.58**). We saw several interesting plants, such as *Biarum tenuifolium*, a very small specimen with a great glossy dark red spathe and a foul smell! (**fig.59**).



Figure 58: Location in Monemvasia



Figure 59: *Biarum tenuifolium*

A group member spotted *Colchicum psaridis*, a miniature species with broad petals which overlap each other (**fig.60**).

The area had large amounts of *Thymus capitatus* which is quite common. Also growing here, dotted around in their hundreds, were large shrubs of *Erica manipuliflora*, in full flower (**fig.61**). We found *Pistacia lentiscus* an evergreen shrub. Many of the fruits had gone from red to black indicating they were ripe. It was time to head back to the bus and go to our next stop.



Figure 60: *Colchicum psaridis*



Figure 61: *Erica manipuliflora*

We had lunch while admiring stunning views overlooking the sea and the winding roads which went around the mountains with clouds covering the peaks. A perfect place to eat my Spinach pie! (fig.62).

We then went exploring to see what we could find. Across the road we found *Crocus niveus* dotted around the bank among the rocks (fig.63).

On the opposite side of the road was *Crocus laevigatus*, a wonderful *Crocus* with white anthers and yellow stigmas (fig.64). They stood out growing on mass beside the road, popping up everywhere like weeds (fig.65).

Beneath the canopy of a tree we found many *Cyclamen* with thicker fleshier leaves, indicating this was *Cyclamen hederifolium* subsp. *Crassifolium*. These *Crassifolium* were in full flower and many were poking out from rocks(fig.66). Further on I was fascinated by a bulb of *Urginea maritima* growing vertically on a hillside (fig.67).



Figure 62: The second location of the day.



Figure 63: *Crocus niveus*



Figure 64: *Crocus laevigatus*



Figure 65: *Crocus laevigatus* on mass.



Figure 66: *Cyclamen hederifolium*  
subsp. *crassifolium*



Figure 67: *Urginea maritima*

Later we drove towards Monemvasia where we would stay overnight for the next two nights. We stopped off at another destination beside the road where it looked like fires had occurred. I trekked towards the peak, the views were tremendous.

Tumbling and spiralling over a rock was *Euphorbia rigida*, with a slight tinge of red to the edges of the leaves (**fig.68**). Poking up among the rocks were yet again more *Crocus niveus* and *Colchicum psardis*.



Figure 68: *Euphorbia rigida*

The last destination of the day before we headed back to our hotel was sighting of *Crocus goulimyi* subsp. *leucanthus*. The destination was mainly terraced grassland (**fig.69**).

We were spoilt for choice, it was difficult choosing which to photograph first, as there were hundreds, maybe thousands, all in full flower scattering themselves around, poking their white flower heads up above the grass (**fig.70**). A perfect ending to another tremendous day before heading back to our hotel (**fig.71**).



Figure 69: *Crocus goulimyi* subsp. *leucanthus*



Figure 70: *Crocus goulimyi* subsp. *leucanthus* close up.



Figure 71: Group photo at our hotel in *Monemvasia*.

## Day eight (31<sup>st</sup> October)

The day started with a short walk from our hotel to the medieval fortress in which sits around 100 metres above sea level in Monemvasia (**fig.72**). The buildings and scenery were like a fairy tale, with short cobbled pathways drenched in history (**fig.73**). An

elderly woman came out from a doorway rattling a tub of cat food, cats swarmed from every direction.

We continued our joyful walk and headed up to above the town. The first plants we came across were the wonderful *Crocus goulimyi*. Many were growing from cracks in rocks and popping up among the *Cyclamen graecum* foliage (**fig.74**).



Figure 72: View from above of the medieval fortress.

We came across one lone *Crocus goulimyi* with a dark purple flower, it was a striking change from the usual common light purple colour which mainly occurs (**fig.75**). Beside a pathway we found a large specimen of *Euphorbia dendroides*, the biggest I had seen so far on the tour (**fig.76**).



Figure73: Pathway view in Monemvasia.



Figure74: *Crocus goulimyi* with *Cyclamen graecum*.



Figure 75: Dark form of *Crocus goulimyi*



Figure 76: Large specimen of *Euphorbia dendroides*.

As we pressed on walking up a group member shouted, “look over here”. On a pathway in the opposite direction was *Sternbergia sicula*, dotted around in clusters and many in the middle of the pathway (**fig.77**).

Finally reaching the top and gasping for a drink, we were yet again greeted by *Sternbergia sicula*, with the remains of a ruin in the background overlooking the mountains and the town below. After spending some time admiring the views we headed back down, stopping for refreshments before heading to our next destination.



Figure 77: *Sternbergia sicula*

Next up was an area near Lambokambos, a small traditional village, where we squeezed the bus through, inches away from buildings with all of us grinding our teeth. We got off and walked the last short distance. We went off track and headed up a bank. At the top of the bank was a mass of *Crocus goulimyi*, scattered among the grasses (**fig.78**), with the sun shining down on them (**fig.79**). They were even growing along a dirt track popping up everywhere.

Growing here too were *Cyclamen* two species, one *Cyclamen graecum* and the second *Cyclamen hederifolium* subsp. *crassifolium*. Yet again I was blown away by the vast variation of foliage. I was attracted specially to one *crassifolium* which had foliage looking like it had been polished, with incredible markings (**fig.80**).



Figure 78: *Crocus goulimyi*



Figure 79: Close view of *Crocus goulimyi*.



Figure 80: *Cyclamen hederifolium* subsp. *crassifolium*

The light had started to dim but we had one more place to visit before we headed back to our hotel, a race against time. It was for a sighting of *Crocus biflorus* subsp. *melantherus*, easily recognised by its black anthers. We reached the site and after searching we came across a few (**fig.81**). Sadly, the majority of flowers had closed because of dusk. We managed to find a few still open (**fig.82**). A great ending to another wonderful day and with a beautiful sunset. We got back on the bus and headed to our hotel (**fig.83**).



Figure 81: Markings of *Crocus biflorus* subsp. *melantherus*



Figure 82: *Crocus biflorus* subsp. *melantherus*

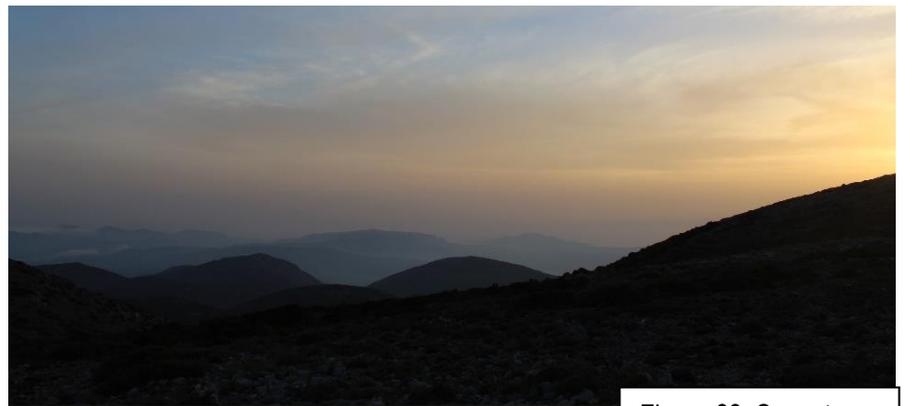


Figure 83: Sunset

## Day nine (1<sup>st</sup> November)

Shortly after breakfast right next to the hotel we were staying in (**fig.84**), we had a walk on the north side of Monemvasia to see what we could find. We soon found *Allium ampeloprasum* seed heads towering above the grass beside the path overlooking the sea (**fig.85**). A group member found a clump of *Crocus goulimy*, which looked pristine (**fig.86**).



Figure 84: Hotel in Monemvasia

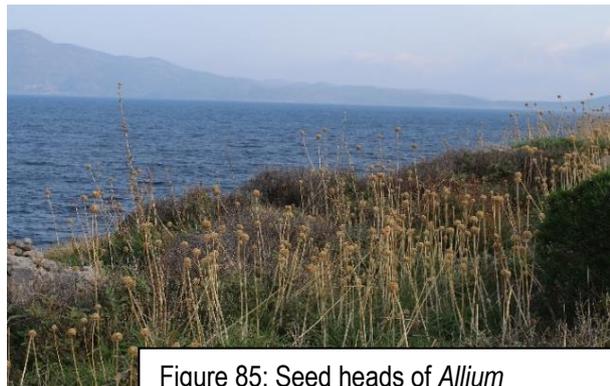


Figure 85: Seed heads of *Allium ampeloprasum*.



Figure 86: *Crocus goulimy*

With many of the group members ahead, we were called back. Razvan had found *Narcissus tazetta* up on a steep bank. We had to tread single file as space was limited a great find with fantastic scent (**fig.87**).

The location was a real success, we found lots of plants in such a short space of time. We also found foliage of *Salvia pomperifera*. We came across two specimens of *Arisarum vulgare* growing beside rocks (**fig.88**).

It was soon time to head back to the hotel and collect our luggage before driving towards Tripoli.



Figure 87: *Narcissus tazetta*



Figure 88: *Arisarum vulgare*

The second stop of the day was Sykia, a small village on the northern coast of the Peloponnese. We reached the destination at around 200 metres altitude.

Growing here were lots of *Euphorbia acanthothamnos*, not easy on the legs with their brutal spines! (**fig .89**). Growing beside a rock were a few clumps of *Colchicum cupani* (**fig.90**). Growing from a hole within a rock was *Cyclamen graecum* with a flower of *Crocus goulimyi*. The site also had a large proportion of *Crocus boryi*.



Figure 89: *Euphorbia Acanthothamnos*



Figure 90: *Colchicum cupani*



Figure 91: *Crocus goulimyi* and *Cyclamen graecum*.

The location was great for taking photos especially of *Crocus goulimyi* with the sun shining through their paper-thin delicate flowers (**fig.92**).

As we headed back towards the bus following the dirt track, beside us looked like it had been an Olive grove in the past and later left derelict. Growing here were the biggest Olive trees we had seen in our lives. It took six of us to circle this Olive tree (**fig.93**).



Figure 92: *Crocus goulimy*



Figure 93: Circling the Olive tree.

The final visit of the last day, recommended by our driver, an area he thought we would like. We were wondering what it was going to be like. The light had started to fail as we drove up the winding roads.

When we finally reached the destination he parked near a chapel, called St. Theodora's, in the central Peloponnese. Seventeen oak trees were sprouting from the roof and walls of the chapel. We were completely baffled by the sheer size of these oak trees all in perfect condition, growing on top of the chapel. (**fig.94**).



Figure 94: St. Theodora's Chapel



After admiring the chapel, we went off and explored the local area. We walked down the road which we had driven up. Growing on the verges were *Iris unguicularis* in flower, we were astonished to see them this early (**fig .95**). A group member shouted “look over here”, pointing to *Spiranthes spiralis*, the best we had seen on the tour perfectly swirling itself around (**fig .96**). A great last destination to finish the tour before heading to Tripoli (**fig 2 map position F**) for our last night.



Figure 95: *Iris unguicularis*



Figure 96: *Spiranthes spiralis*

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