

A Floral Tapestry...

Spring comes early to Cyprus brushing away the winter cobwebs with a vibrant kaleidoscope of colour, as a myriad of flowers burst into bloom, nurtured by the winter rains. No corner of the island is left untouched in the spring as fields and hedgerows are transformed overnight with sunshine coloured crown daisies and scarlet red poppies. Giant fennel flourishes everywhere, with its golden heads swaying in the breeze that seem to grow even as you watch. Carpets of breathtakingly beautiful candy-coloured anemones are all around, whilst the palest pink cyclamen thrive in rocky crevices especially on the coastal cliffs between Latchi and Fontana Amorosa, the rocks that surround the Baths of Aphrodite, and in the craggy cliffs of the Avakas.



With over 1,000 species of plants on the island, more than 100 of them endemic, it is truly a nature lovers' paradise. Tiny blue irises, barely six inches high can be found nestling in the fresh new grass, whilst more than 30 species of orchids - many of them extremely rare - can be found growing in beautiful 'carpets' in the most unusual places! The Bee-Orchid is the first to appear, followed by the deep pink flowers of the Wavy-Leaved Monkey Orchid and the distinctive wine-coloured Long-Lipped Serapias (accurately nicknamed Glossari in Greek as it looks like a tongue!) The dark purple flowers and crinkled leaves of mandrake nestle in the meadows, whilst the tall willowy stems of asphodel display their delicate star shaped flowers edged in pink.

In the Troodos the clear mountain air is filled with the fragrance of fresh pine and herbs. In the woody glades near Prodromos, peonies in deep shades of cerise can be seen, whilst even on the most isolated slopes young crocuses and violets grow in profusion.



The trees are all in blossom to herald the arrival of Spring. The small villages on the road that winds through the Chrysochou valley to Polis Chrysochou on the island's north coast are veiled in pretty cherry blossom - the soft pink and creamy hues contrasting sharply with the azure skies. The sweet aroma of citrus blossom can also be enjoyed in the valley, in the Phassouri area, west of Limassol, and in countless gardens, whilst the fresh green shoots on the gnarled stumps of the vines reach up to the warm springtime sun. The stunning beauty of the Cyprus springtime has attracted countless visitors since the earliest times, when pilgrims from all over the Mediterranean came to worship Aphrodite at her temple at Palaepaphos (now Kouklia). The path to her temple passed through Yeroskipou (meaning 'sacred garden') where Aphrodite's favourite flowers - roses and myrtle - grew in abundance with pomegranate trees, the fruit of which has long been associated with the beautiful goddess.

