

## The Orchids of Cyprus Book Review by Les Lewis



The Orchids of Cyprus by C.A.J. Kreutz, Kreutz Publications, Landgraaf, the Netherlands, (2004). 416pp, IBN: 90-806626-3-1, price: £45 (Summerfield Books): 49 Euros (CyprusKreutz@klikSAFE.nl)

Cyprus is an interesting island for orchids with a good selection of eastern Mediterranean orchids, including rare ones and several endemics. “*The Orchids of Cyprus*” is a welcome follow-up by Karel Kreutz to his earlier books on the orchids of Turkey, Rhodes, the Netherlands and Germany. It gives an extremely comprehensive overview of the orchids on the island, including the Turkish-Cypriot north, following his visit in 2002 (reported in *HOS Newsletter* 28: 14) and results of the latest research.

Like some of the earlier books, “*The Orchids of Cyprus*” has parallel texts in German and English. The English text is very readable having been “anglicized” by Pamela Scraton, a co-author of “*The Orchids of Cyprus and where to find them*”. Six pages are devoted to each of the species presently known on the island. Each one is described in detail and superbly illustrated by 6 to 8 photographs showing the both whole plant and close-ups of the flowers. In addition, precise information is given on habitat, flowering time, altitude distribution, distribution on Cyprus and elsewhere, variations, distinction from similar species, hybrids and conservation.

For reasons explained in the text, “traditional” nomenclature, such as *Barlia* (not *Himantoglossum*) *robertiana* and *Orchis* (not *Anacamptis*) *palustris* is used, although this affects few species on Cyprus. As anyone who has found them on the island will know, identification of species in the *Ophrys sphegodes* - *mammosa* and *Serapias* groups is far from easy. The book pays particular attention to these groups and includes the recently described *Ophrys morio*, *Op. alasiatica*, *Op. hystera* and *Serapias aphroditeae*, as well as two newly-described *Orchis* species – *O. sezikiana* and *O. caspia*.

The book also contains interesting background information of a more general nature on Cyprus, including history, landscapes, climate, vegetation, conservation, botanical exploration, erroneous reports, distribution maps and statistical evaluations.

Although not quite as specific as the pocket-sized “*The Orchids of Cyprus and where to find them*”, the book gives useful guidance on where to find particular orchids on the island. However, although at 17 x 24cm, it is small enough to fit in a rucksack, it still is rather heavy to carry around for use in the field.

While the book will obviously be extremely useful to anyone planning an orchid trip to Cyprus, it will also be of interest to those who have already visited the island, especially to find out what the orchids they photographed are now considered to be.