

Bertoloni's bee orchid

Ophrys bertolonii Moretti

DESCRIPTION

The height of the flowering stem of the twin-bulbous plant is 10 - 45 cm. The number of leaves in the leaf-rosette is 4–7. It is blueish-green coloured, around 6 cm long and 2 cm wide. Number of cauline leaves is 1–2. Inflorescence is sparse with 3–8 flowers, the lowest flower emerges at 7 cm above the ground. The outer tepals are ovate-lanceolate, 10–18 mm long, 5–8 mm wide, with the colour that varies from pale pink to dark purple. The inner tepals are linear-lanceolate, 6–11mm long, 2–4 mm wide, with ciliate margin and pink purple (usually darker than the outers)

in colour. The undivided, characteristic “saddle-like” lip (the labellum) is 10–16 mm long, 10–13 mm wide, dark brownish-black in colour. The lip is very hairy with long, brownish-red hairs on the margin. The lower third of the lip bears bright, blue shoes light violet, bold speculum often with a white margin. The tip of the lip has an upward pointing and yellow greenish appendix. The flowering period is reported to last from March to Jun, depending on the altitude and subspecies.



HABITAT

This orchid prefers to grow in grassy and stony places and sometimes can be found in open woodland, up to about 600 metres above sea level in submediterranean region. This species prefers a Mediterranean and submediterranean climate.

DISTRIBUTION

Bertoloni's bee orchid, is a species of orchid native to the western and central Mediterranean (Spain, France, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, mainland Italy, Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and in south Hungary.

ENDANGERMENT

Habitat destruction by unplanned urbanization, natural successions in open habitat, underground fires. Also, a special threat is the disappearance of insects adapted for its pollination.

PROTECTION

It is on the CITES list of species and is also listed in the red books of several countries.

TEXT: DALIBOR BALLIAN
PHOTOS: DALIBOR BALLIAN

