

Pyramidal orchid

Anacamptis pyramidalis (L.) Rich.

DESCRIPTION

This hardy plant reaches on average 10–25 centimeters of height, with a maximum of 60 centimeters. The stem is erect and unbranched. The basal leaves are linear-lanceolate with parallel venation, up to 25 centimetres long, the cauline ones are shorter and barely visible on the stem. The arrangement of hermaphroditic flowers in a compact pyramidal shape is very distinctive and gives the orchid its common name. The color of the flower varies from pink to purple, or rarely white, and the scent is described as "foxy". The flowers have six tepals, being three small sepals and three petals. At the back of the flower, there is a tubular spur of about 1.5 centimeters long, while the labellum bears two lateral small flaps. The flowering from April through July.



HABITAT

Pyramidal orchid requires a sunny spot on diverse soils: loamy or clay. It can be found on meadows, in grassland, sand dunes, maquis as well as dry and well exposed slopes, at an altitude of 100–1.600 meters or more above sea level.

DISTRIBUTION

This orchid is native to southwestern Eurasia, from western Europe through the Mediterranean region eastwards to Iran.

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: DUBRAVKA ŠOLJAN

