

# Elder-flowered orchid

*Dactylorhiza sambucina* (L.) Soó.

## DESCRIPTION

Reaches on average 10–40 centimeters. The leaves are amplexicaul and vary from 4 to 7 per plant. The lower leaves are oblong-obovate with obtuse apex, while the upper leaves are lanceolate with acute apex. Size of leaves: width 1 to 2.5 cm, length 6 – 12 cm. The underground part of the stem has two tubers each one more or less deeply divided into several lobes. The inflorescence is 5–10 centimeters long, and it is composed of

flowers gathered in a dense spike. The flowers appear from mid-April to early July. Their colors vary from yellow with light reddish stains or purple speckled with darker spots.

## HABITAT

Elder-flowered orchid prefers fresh or dry meadows. It can be found on meadows, in grassland, as well as dry and well-exposed slopes, at an altitude of 300–2.000 meters or more above sea level.

## DISTRIBUTION

This orchid is native and widespread throughout much of Europe, from Portugal east to Ukraine and from southern Europe to Scandinavia.

## 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 listed in the red books of several countries.

TEXT: DALIBOR BALLIAN  
PHOTOS: DALIBOR BALLIAN

