

# DOORSTEP DELIVERY



*Moenchia mantica* & *Silene aegyptiaca*



*Muscari bourgaei*



*Onosma nydeggeri*

We all love a surprise, so long as it's a good one and this week we've had two delightful ones. Firstly, it was my birthday, which though no surprise, it did mean having few hours to go out sans our adorable (and at times demanding) young treasures to go and find some plants. The macchie was beginning to hit full throttle with bushes of *Cistus salvifolius* smothered in white flowers and great stands of *Euphorbia hieroscolymitanus*, whilst the bristly stems of endemic *Onosma nydeggeri* were dripping with amber flowers. All very wonderful, but it is sometimes the subtler jewel that makes the day and our favourite plant we found was *Tordylium lanatum*, a simply charming woolly carrot! There was a big chocolate cake to celebrate all of this, though my little Aren insisted on blowing out the candles each time and it took three goes before I managed a puff.

We sneaked out again two days later, taking the chance for some breathing space before our two-day-strict-stay-indoors lockdown! This time it was sheets of dainty *Moenchia mantica*, blending with carpets of *Silene aegyptiaca* that stole our breath, followed by the excitement of finding the rather pretty *Muscari bourgaei* for the first time, nestled among yellow *Draba brunifolia* high in the mountains and away from it all.



*Tordylium lanatum*



*Onosma frutescens*



*Calamintha pamphylica*

Another four day lockdown was looming for the next week so beating a retreat to the mountains I settled down for a weekend of gardening, but not before I had a look around for flowers to photograph. It is amazing what we have on our doorstep if we only look. On a short foray up a rocky gully I found lots of pretty *Calamintha pamphylica* and then a veritable garden of *Onosma frutescens*, another of these wonderful bristly borages whose flowers change colour as they age, producing firecracker flowers of different 'temperatures'.

Then there were some vibrant poppies, the run-of-the-mill *Papaver rhoeas* maybe, but an under appreciated gem, which is tremendously variable in size and flower pattern. Within a few metres of each other were pure red, red with black and pink centres, red with big black crosses inside. The all important thing with poppies is the capsule and although all these forms seemed quite different, their seed capsules were all the same shape.

However, despite having lived in the area for ten years, unbelievably I had never fully explored the slopes next to my house. They had always seemed a bit uninspiring. How wrong I was! Luckily, a neighbour was more thorough and took me to see a stunning colony of *Ophrys reinholdii* that had been growing right under my nose all these years. They showed quite a bit of variation and I've included a gallery of these lovely orchids to show just how varied (like the poppies) they can be. It was quite a find and it taught me your never really know what is around the corner unless you bother to look.

In the days of doorstep delivery for many of our essentials I'm glad mine can still be of the floral kind.



*Ophrys reinholdii*



*Papaver rhoeas*



*Ophrys reinholdii*

