



JUNE SPECIALS

Linum hirsutum



Salvia pisidica



Convolvulus compactus

Before you realise it in the Med, spring has raced away and summer is knocking on the door with the familiar 'summer holiday' image of a burnished coastal landscape and endless blue skies beckoning. Fortunately, it doesn't mean an end to the botanising - we have the Taurus overlooking the length of the coast and these highland retreats continue to offer a lovely selection of plants.

Our next big book project is '*Flora of Anatolia*' and we're working towards getting the remaining photos we need. Luckily, our travels to date have covered much of the country and what's more some of the best plants we still need are all relatively closeby. During the last week I first ventured onto the steppic vegetation around Korkuteli. Everywhere there seemed to be delightful clumps of *Linum hirsutum* in variable shades of soft pink, joined by *Salvia pisidica*, abundant *Acanthus hirsutus*, the tall stems of *Linaria genistifolia* and hanging precariously from a roadside bank were the glorious twin domes of *Convolvulus compactus*, the larger one at least 50cm across - surely a showbench winner, if you could find a big enough bench.

Linaria genistifolia





Saponaria pumilio



Matthiola montana & *Paracaryum lithospermifolium*



Papaver apokrinomemnon

Next it was an impressive orange poppy, *Papaver apokrinomemnon*, whose tall stems bear big, soft orange crinkled flowers. They were common among the junipers and pines as I drove up to Saklikent and sprang from large boulders at the pass too. It thought it would take a bit more effort to find another June gem, but as happens sometimes, when I stepped out of the car a perfect specimen was more or less at my feet. *Saponaria pumilio* forms tight mats, studded with rubies,. Preferring stony barren tundra, it can be tricky to find. But the searching is half the fun and I managed to find a few more as well as turning up a big clump of the sultry tanned-beige *Matthiola montana* mingling with violet *Paracaryum lithospermifolium* before the mists swept in across the mountains.

Over the years I've seen pretty much all of the orchids in Turkey, but one has eluded me thus far. However, a chance meeting at a dinner party a while back (when such events were possible) provided me with a location and one that was quite close. Heaving a heavy camera bag onto my bag I climbed up to the rocky site. It took me a while to get my eye in but then there it was - *Himantoglossum montis-tauri*, the slender flowers a subtle blend of blushing brownish-green. On the nearby cliffs



Himantoglossum montis-tauri



grew an altogether showier plant, with fine tufts of *Dianthus elegans* colouring the limestone.

Given the length of the Taurus, some of its delights can be a bit spread out at times and the next day I found myself on the road in the wee hours to reach the coastal mountains east of Antalya. Almost as soon as I started climbing above the coast I saw the first *Michauxia campanuloides* - an exotic-sounding name and a extraordinary plant in real life. A relative of campanulas it has swept back petals and long protruding styles. These flowers are suspended on long stems that often arc out from rocky banks and cliffs creating a rather spectacular plant. They grew with delicate *Verbascum nudatum* and plentiful *Alcea pallida*, whilst nearby woods had white *Cicer monbretii*. I spent quite a while trying to find an ideal specimen, the best ones often out of reach or rammed among shrubs, but in the end found a couple of fresh subjects to enjoy their unusual flowers.

Now, it was back to Antalya and a trip to the dentist for a prognosis on my broken tooth - but who can give up chocolate and I celebrated my morning with a couple of big chunks!



Dianthus elegans



Michauxia campanuloides