



Lilium candidum

SUMMER ARRIVES



Termessos theatre

One of my favourite places in the Taurus is the historical site of Termessos. For me it's the perfect combination of unsatinised ruins, wonderful scenery and some great plants. I visit frequently to walk and enjoy in every season, from snow to sunshine. Termessos is an interesting meeting point of plants too with some species found further north in Turkey mingling with Mediterranean species, as well as an endemic species found only at the site - *Verbascum dumulosum*. And, it is also here that I can find stands of that quintessential Med bulb - *Lilium candidum*. Despite its familiarity in many parts of the Mediterranean the true distribution of this species western Turkey, Greece and the Balkans. This is a flower that has been extensively moved around, because of its religious significance and its beauty. Even the population here is most likely a relict planting as there are no other populations anywhere nearby with other records scattered across the Taurus. Nonetheless they are lovely, and at Termessos, at 1000-metres, they flower late, beginning at the end of June and carrying on into July.

Big stands of *Onopordum bracteatum* are bristling for action too, their huge capitulums bursting with lilac-pink flowers and fringed

Onopordum bracteatum





Allium sandrasicum

with formidable spiny phyllaries. The progression of the season now brings a trickle of fun plants rather than the deluge of May. Rocky roadsides have the greenish drumsticks of *Allium sandrasicum*, a rather understated plant, but with flowers, light is everything and backlit with some coppery grasses behind they look just fine and those outrageous spathes with their long tips add a surreal touch. The ubiquitous woody plant in flower at this time along the roads is *Vitex agnus-casti* and these shrubs will flowers for weeks right through the summer heat. Several species of umbellifers choose this time to flower in profusion too, most commonly the wild carrots. One of the lesser known species *Daucus guttatus* has a quite bizarre flower with a pronounced black boss in the middle. Scrambling among drifts of these were the stems of *Kickxia commutata*, which bear the most delightful little flowers on pendant stems.

Though all of these thrive in the heat, more humid micro-climates are key to a different suite of species in the Mediterranean and even in midsummer shady valleys filled with oriental plane trees retain moisture and support many different species. The boulder-strewn canyons that drop down from our house are fascinating and it's here we find faint streams or springs with stands of pretty *Campanula peregrina* alongside tufts of maidenhair ferns.

And, I can already see a smattering of fascinating later species getting ready, enough to keep me occupied as the heat really kicks in. But, I can at least dive into the pool afterwards.

Kickxia commutata



Vitex agnus-casti



Campanula peregrina



Daucus guttatus

