

TRAGIC BEAUTY



Iris aucheri, near Gaziantep in April



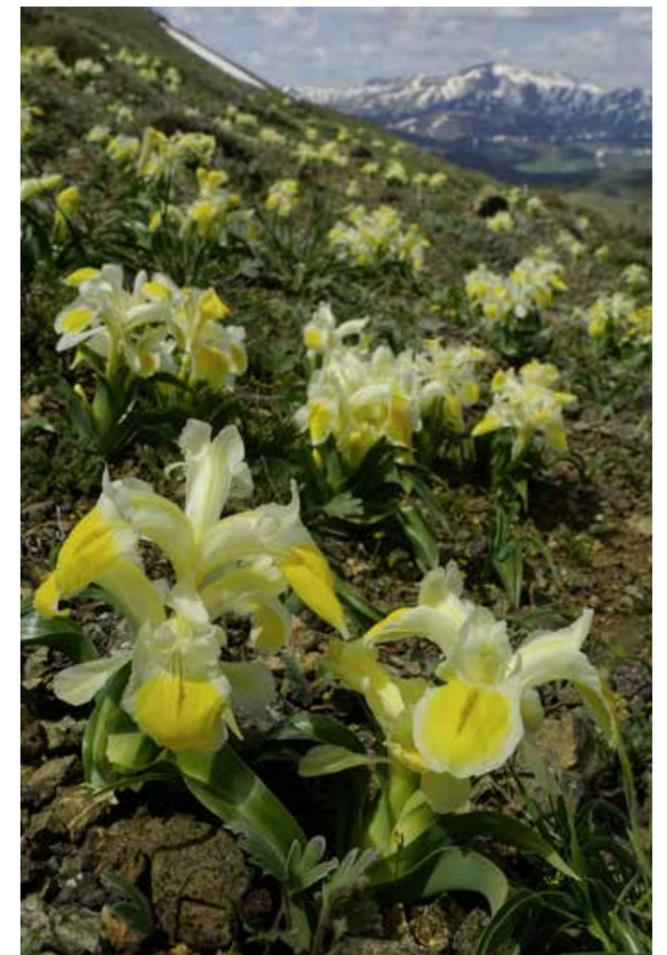
Gypsy Girl mosaic, Gaziantep museum

We were poised to send our usual flower-filled post to you all but as you are all no doubt aware, Turkey is a country in mourning following powerful twin earthquakes that struck on Monday night. They devastated a large swathe of southern Turkey from Hatay and Adana to Gaziantep, Kahramanmaras, Malatya and Adana as well as northern Syria. Thousands of buildings have collapsed and the subsequent gruelling and traumatising work the emergency teams now have to carry out will go on for weeks. For now, we sit glued to TV screens as rescue teams continue to pull out miracle survivors.

Many people have had their lives turned upside down in an instant, with both material and personal losses. We are sure many of you are just as saddened by this tragedy. Some of you have already reached out to us to find out how they can help. One way is through donations we are able to then forward to AHBAP a trustworthy social support organisation here in Turkey, which can then use these funds to provide help to the thousands of people affected. Anyone wishing to do this simply needs to label their transfer to us 'Earthquake Donation' or 'Donation'.

We have also received many messages from people we have travelled with concerned for our well-being after the earthquake, something we have been rather touched by, so a big thank you from the four of us.

As a small tribute in remembrance; the beauty of irises has for centuries been used to decorate graves across Asia. The mountains of Gaziantep and Malatya possess two of the finest species there are.



Iris peshmenii, near Malatya in May