

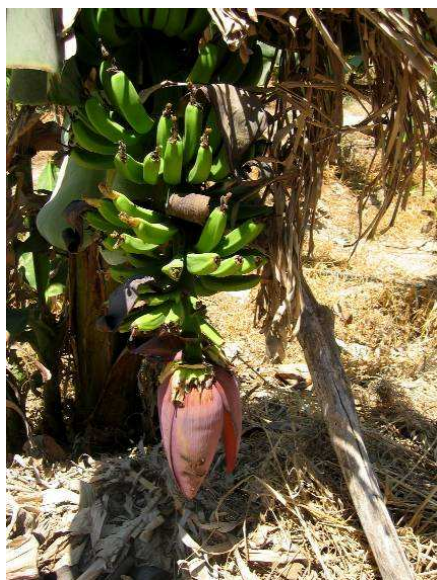


Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:



Jeep-Tour to the Arvi-Canyon and Monastery Saint Antonios / Prefecture Lassithi **Cretan Dittany, Erodas (*Oreganum dictamnus*)**

Start of the Tour is *Kastri / Keratokampos* [Κάστρι / Κερατόκαμπος] at the Libyan sea on the south coast of Crete. From here there are approx. 8 miles to the destination. From *Keratokampos* follow the coast road for approximately 1 mile east. Here take the junction towards *Arvi* [Αρβι], left into the hills, first over a part of gravel slope (500 m), which hereafter points to an asphalt road. This part is approx. 2 miles and leads than (after crossing the ridge) again into a gravel slope which needs to be followed downhill and later on through the lowland for around 4 miles. While reaching the lowland (after approx. 1.5 miles) the first plantation systems will be in the view ahead of *Arvi*, and will be crossed for the remainder way. In the greenhouses covered with plastic, are paprika, tomatoes, but primarily bananas grown; they can be found a lot in smaller plantations (also outside the greenhouses) around *Arvi*. The gravel slope leads on the coast road to *Arvi*, whose centre is reached soon after. In the Centre the main road leads to a junction where you turn left to the town centre (right is just the "newly built" port while straight ahead is the "old harbour basin"). After passing the town centre the way to the *Arvi-Canyon* and the *Monastery of Saint Antonios* is left within a right-hand bend uphill. The junction is left the main road on a very narrow gravel slope (in the widest case 2 m), to be followed for approx. 1.2 miles. Then the gravel slope gets broad and you can enjoy a free view of the *Arvi-Canyon* and the *Monastery of Saint Antonios*, located on the right at the hillside. Unfortunately there is no official opportunity to visit the Monastery and also the *Arvi-Canyon* can be seen in its wild beauty only from remote (0.6 miles). An attempt to reach the Canyon entrance "by foot" failed due to jungle-like vegetation approx. 0.3 miles ahead of the mark. Also the use of the stream bed coming out of the Canyon "as access" failed (0.2 miles to go); a fast-flowing stream, dense jungle on the steep bank vegetation and ultimately a waterfall (2.7 m high) "lock" the entrance to the Canyon.



Picture **left** is showing a banana tree, the picture **right** the greenhouse plantations in the *Arvi* lowland. Cover of greenhouses must be renewed, cause by the weather (Wind), very often. Unfortunately, the plastic is not always environmentally disposed, so they blemish the "landscape" ("blown by the wind") and, because they hardly moulder - take negative impact on the environment.

Photos: U. Kluge (19.07.2004)



The picture **above left** shows the *Arvi-Canyon* which towers above the village. In front the visible "green belt" indents the route of the stream coming from the Canyon Creek, which flows at the end of the village of *Arvi* into the Libyan sea. The picture (**bottom left**) show a waterfall in the field of the stream bed, around 0.2 miles after its outlet of the canyon. The picture **right above** show the site of the monastery "Moni Arvi" (Saint Antonios), which is located around 0.3 miles right of the canyon at the hillside; a visit of this site is worth only conditionally.

Photos: H. Eikamp (19.07.2004)

Origanum dictamnus (Dittany of Crete or Cretan Dittany),

known in Greek as "Δίκταμο" or in Cretan dialect "Ερωντας" (Love).

The Crete endemic plant is up to 40 cm high and belongs to the family of the Labiatae (mint family). The semi wooden shrub is pilous and feels like velvet. The leaves are greenish white, round or ovate with a diameter of around 0.5 inch. The flowers are pinkish and have a size of 0.4 inch. The plant is important for the economy of Crete. **Dittany** is the only spice that is cultivated, a fact that has kept it from extinction. Today two varieties are grown, the narrow-leaved and broad-leaved **Dittany**. Former has an intense flavour and latter better retains its aroma after drying.



At Crete **Dittany** has 17 different names and assist for the care of 17 different diseases: Gastric and intestinal complaints, weariness, headache and many others more. It closes wounds, if previously a Kri-Kri, already Aristotle said so, was injured by an arrow, they ate Dittany, the arrow broke from the body, and the wound closed. Also Aeneas, a son of Aphrodite, owes his life the Dittany. Hippocrates believed in its effect supporting births and Dioscorides was convinced that Dittany helped to extrude dead embryos.

(Picture right: DAPPER, 1668)

