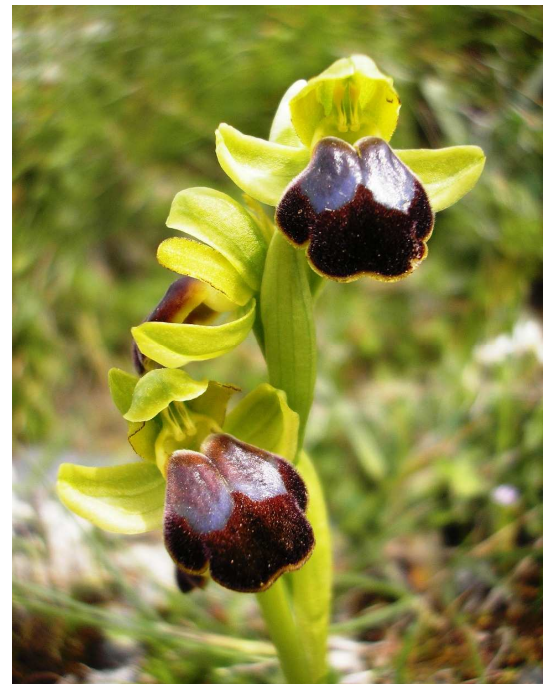


**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**The Orchids of Crete (Part 7): genus *Ophrys* (II)**  
**(*O. fusca* ssp. *creberrima*, - *thriptiensis*, - *cressa* and - *criticola*)**

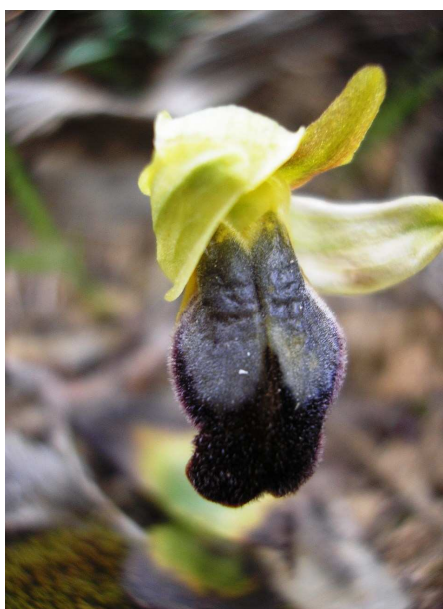
(An article <sup>[1]</sup> from our forums member **Ralf Schwab**, Obertshausen [Hessen]).

So far we introduced **28 Orchid types** of Crete with our leaflet series “**The Orchids of Crete**”. With info-leaflet No. 280-08/E we informed about the genus *Ophrys*. Following we will look at the brown *Ophrys* species starting with **4 types of *Ophrys fusca*** which occur only on Crete.

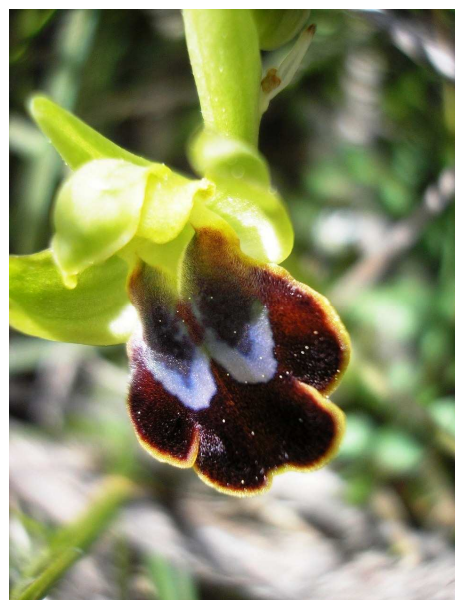
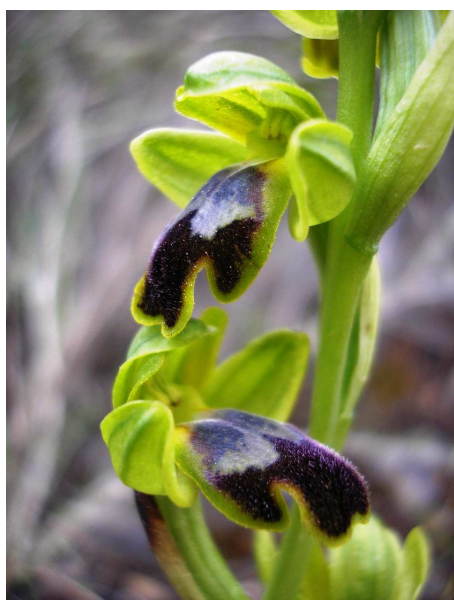
The complex of Brown *Ophrys* provides the opulent form set within the genus of *Ophrys* in Crete. Starting from the three main types, brown-, rainbow and omega Orchids, 11 species and sub-species are described for Crete, which differ mainly in flower size, shape and staining. Here the bend and the notch in the labium base have special meaning. For some species the heyday is a good method of determination, especially when several types can be found on the same site. While at some places 4 or 5 types of this group can be found side by side in its pure form, and only little bastards occur, there are also areas with rich presence where each determination attempt seems to fail because here next to some homozygous species exist all in between transitions in a fluent way.



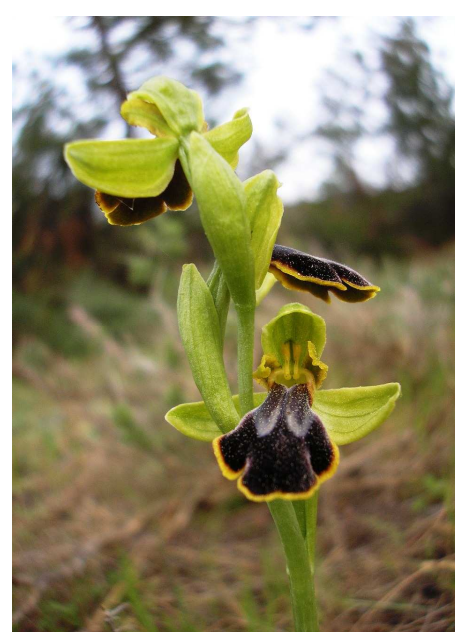
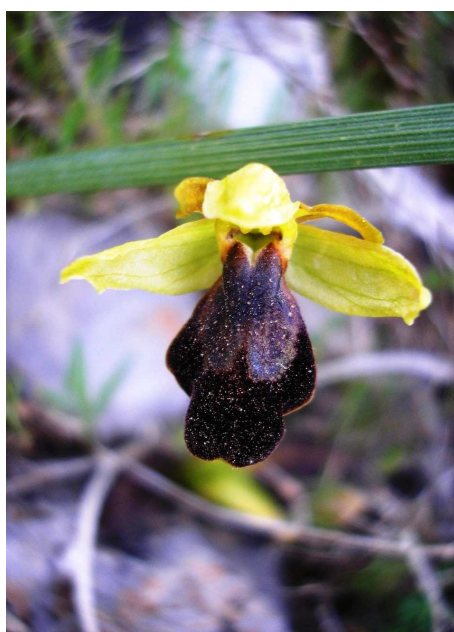
By *Ophrys fusca* ssp. *creberrima* are the edges of the blossom labium turned down. The labium has a bend and a notch on its basis, which is pointing on the edge. This type blooms a little bit later than the other species of this genus and is endemic on Crete. **Flowering season:** end March to April. **Habitat:** grassy Garrigue, grasslands, open Olive groves, up to 900m. **Plant find spot:** west of Gerakari (16<sup>th</sup> of April 2007).



*Ophrys fusca ssp. thriptiensis* is a very small squat plant with a maximum of 3 flowers, which occurs worldwide only in the Thriptis Massif in Eastern Crete (endemic). The labium shows a notch bounded with calluses at the base, but no bend. The heyday is extremely early. This type is very variable of the appearance especially on the margins of the occurrence, what may have caused by hybridization with other species. **Flowering season:** mid February to end March. **Habitat:** Thriptis Massif, at altitudes above 700 to 1400 m. **Plant find spot:** Thriptis (19<sup>th</sup> of March 2008).



*Ophrys fusca ssp. cressa* is the latest blooming of this group. It occurs only locally in Crete and is totally absent at low altitudes. The delicate plant has medium-sized flowers, which labium edges are spread out flat and yellow bounded. The labium base has a deep notch but no bend. This type is also endemic on Crete. **Flowering season:** mid April to mid May. **Habitat:** grassy-open Garrigue, only at altitudes above 500 m-1300 m, only on basic underground. **Plant find spot:** Region of Kalo Chorio – Prina - Kalamáfká (26<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 and 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2008).



*Ophrys fusca ssp. cretica* is a powerful, very early flowering plant with a few large flowers. The labium base has a deep notch but no bend, the edges are flat spread. This type is also endemic on Crete. **Flowering season:** mid February to mid March. **Habitat:** meadows and open Garrigue, up to 900 m, only on basic underground. **Plant find spot:** Region of Prina - Kalamáfká (21<sup>st</sup> of March 2008 and 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2008).

<sup>[1]</sup>: with the co-operation of [Ute Kluge](#) and [Heinz Eikamp](#)  
© all Pictures: [Ralf Schwab](#)

[to be continued with Part 8]