

# Orchids in The Wild

## The OCA goes to Sicily



Mt. Etna

## April 10-21, 2022

### Tour led by Sotiris Alexiou and Spiro Kasomenakis

This Orchids in the Wild Tour begins in the city of Catania, Italy. Guests should plan on arriving on April 9 at the airport in this city, where you will then transfer to our accommodations nearby. Departures will also be from Palermo, a city on the northern side of Sicily. We will be traveling in two Mercedes mini-buses.

#### PROPOSED ITINERARY



**April 10** Guests arrive in Catania and transfer to our accommodation nearby. Welcome dinner. Overnight at the Catania International Airport Hotel.

**April 11-13** We will botanize the east slopes of Mt. Etna (Linguaglossa, Castiglione, Valdemone, Nubrodi, etc.) Overnight at Borgo degli Arani, a private villa.

**April 14** We drive south and botanize inland of Syracuse (Ferla, Monte Lauro etc.). Overnight at Villa Agorá

**April 15** A day off of orchids, visit to archaeological sites (The great Greek city of Siracusa, and tour of the Baroque Noto). Overnight at Villa Agorá

**April 16-19** Botanize the south coast of Sicily. Overnight at Villa Agorá

**April 20** Free day, visit archaeological sites, Valley of the Temples, Guided tour of Agrigento and the Archaeological museum. Sicilian cooking class at the villa. Overnight at Villa Agorá

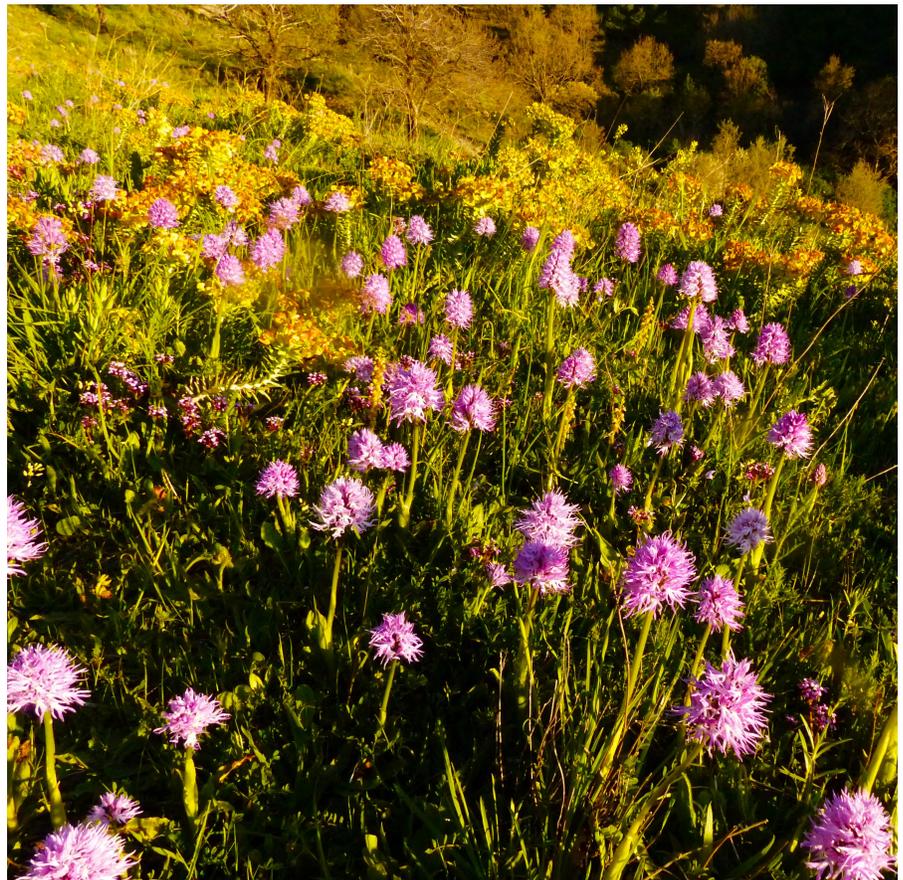
**April 21** Transfer to airport in Palermo

Note that depending on the season, rainfall, and local conditions, the precise locations we will botanize is subject to change if needed to optimize the opportunities to see orchids in the wild.



To enhance the experience for each traveler, the total number of participants will be strictly limited to 14. Although there will not be extremely strenuous hikes on this trip, we will be scrambling over stone walls, hilly slopes and uneven ground. The OCA reserves the right to limit participants due to health or fitness reasons. Because of the limited number of spaces, interested participants should send their deposits to the OCA as soon as possible to reserve a spot on the tour.

Guests are welcome to arrange pre- or post-tours to other parts of Italy or Europe.





**Tour costs and deadlines:**

**\$4200 pp**

**\$1000 deposit required to reserve your place.**

Feb 1, 2022. Balance of trip costs due.

**Trip costs include:**

Accommodation, local transportation, all meals, admission fees, taxes, airport transfers.

**Trip costs do NOT include:**

Round trip airfare from guests home country **to and from Sicily**. Alcoholic beverages, tips.





Depending on whether you are a lumper or splitter, taxonomists have identified up to 90 different terrestrial orchid species on the island of Sicily. Because the bloom time stretches from late February into late May, we won't see all of them on the tour, but we will see the majority of the species. We may also see native peonies, cyclamen, iris, daffodils, anemone, various saprophytic plants, and an assortment of other spring flowering Mediterranean species.

Villa Borgo Degli Aranci Is an oasis of Peace nestled in the Pisan Hills. This country manor has a number of buildings restored in a rustic Tuscan style. Mature gardens with gress, flower beds and surrounded by ancient olive groves. <http://www.borgodegliaranci.it/en/>



Villa Agorá. This beautiful villa is just a short distance from Agrigento, surrounded by a private garden with palm trees and a beautiful pool. The villa has w structures, a main house and smaller house. There is also a jacuzzi, game room, and steam bath. <https://www.posarellivillas.com/italy/sicily/agrigento/>



Sotiris

Our Guide Sotiris is a Greek biologist with 15 years of field experience, predominantly on the Mediterranean flora, but also the study of butterflies, reptiles and other fauna. Sotiris is passionate about promoting and protecting the rich diversity of wildlife in these areas, hence he started up his own publishing company. He is the author of the book '100 endemic plants of Greece' and the editor of the open-accessed journal 'Parnassiana Archives', where various scientific papers are published.



Spiro

The OCA tour leader, Spiro Kasomenakis is an avid orchid "hunter" and has joined many of the previous OCA orchid trips. In 2015, he organized, with Sotiris, an Orchids in the Wild tour to the island of Crete as well as various sites on the Greek mainland. He was also a co-leader on the OCA post-WOC tour to Ecuador in 2017. Spiro has a BA in horticulture and has written numerous articles for Orchids Magazine (AOS) about his adventures to see orchids in their habitat. Spiro lives in Beechurst, NY and is an enthusiastic collector of antique orchid books, as well as ancient art.

To register for this trip:

Send an email to: [mary@orchidconservationalliance.org](mailto:mary@orchidconservationalliance.org)

Send a deposit of \$1000 per person payable to the Orchid Conservation Alliance

Mail to:

Mary Gerritsen, CFO

Orchid Conservation Alliance

541 Parrott Drive

San Mateo, CA 94402



The [Locality Page](#) includes a map indicating places of historical interest.

*Positions of coastal islands do not reflect proportional distances*

Above map from: <http://www.bestofsicily.com/roadmap.htm>

For more information about the orchids we can see and our destinations;

Link to the Orchids of the Maltese Islands, a descriptive guide book: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fSQYdcbQL8BlxnGG2GobQOx7WdtT-OmY/view?usp=sharing>

Siracusa: <https://paulinetravels.com/syracuse/>

Agrigento/Valley of the Temples: <https://www.sicily-visitor.com/places/agrigento.php>

Noto: <https://www.visitsicily.info/en/noto-the-sicilian-baroque/>

Mt. Aetna: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_Etna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Etna)