

# Residential Botanical Workshop

3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Led by

**Jenny Neal and Julia Jones**

**Venue: The Alpha Hotel Retreat, Azogires**

Azogires is located 7km north east of Paleochora in the Prefecture of Chania, south west Crete

Cost per person, residential 5 day course: 525 Euros

Including guided botanical walks, art workshops, all materials and full board, excluding flights and transport to Azogires.

Cost per person attending daily: 65 Euros

Including guided botanical walk, art workshop, all materials and lunch.



The Greek island of Crete, from west to east is about 250km (155 miles long). Three distinct mountain ranges form a backbone along the island, mountain plateaux and gorges offer various habitats and niches for endemic plants.

As an introduction to the Cretan flora and if you simply want to enjoy the beauty of flowers or hunt for particular species there will be many interesting plants in flower around the area of Azogires during the month of May.



Crete is an ideal environment for painters seeking inspiration or for beginners and improvers guided by Julia Jones. Course participants can explore their creative side whilst surrounded by the rugged landscape of Azogires which also has a magical waterfall next to the old olive oil factory.



Some 1,500 species of flowers and orchids with over 150 endemic species of flowers are at their best during the season of spring enhanced by the gentle Cretan springtime sunshine.

The village of Azogires is typical of a working Cretan village with sheep and goats grazing beneath olive trees and the Cretan birds of prey circling the sky. Locals go about their day to day life and settle in the Alpha Kafenion at the end of the working day. Our host at the Alpha Kafenion, where we will have our evening meals, will tell you many interesting stories about this area which have been passed down from one generation to next.



View from the Alpha Hotel Retreat, October 2011



The art workshop is led by artist and writer, Julia Jones. Julia has a passion for the native flora of Crete and her work can be found in private collections around the world. Julia is a self-taught artist and believes that anyone with a desire to produce their own botanic work is capable of unlocking their own creativity. Julia is also President and founder of the charitable organisation 'Flowers of Crete' which seeks to promote conservation and environmental education on Crete.



Jenny Neal, a botanist with a special interest in the Cretan flora, will lead the walks. Jenny completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural History, graduating in 2005. She has many years of experience teaching as an environmental educator. Jenny's studies and activities continue in ecological and conservation work in the UK and abroad providing her with experience and knowledge of the living world and also the threats to flora and fauna.

Coincidentally, Julia and Jenny both became Fellows of the Linnean Society in 2009 in recognition of their work of the Cretan flora.

### ***Venue and accommodation***



The Alpha Hotel Retreat consists of 6 twin bed rooms and 2 double bed rooms with an additional single bed.

There is a large kitchen/diner with an outside terrace suitable for having breakfast, lunch and workshop activities.

The accommodation is clean and simple, visit this blogspot for further information: <http://alfahotelazogires.blogspot.com/>

### ***Travelling to Crete and Azogires***

Paleochora is 77kms south of Chania and the nearest airport, Chania International Airport, is situated in the north west of Crete. Regular buses run between the airport to the main bus station in Chania town where the buses to Paleochora depart. People can be picked up from Paleochora and taken to the village of Azogires.

Note: The villages on the south west coast are connected to Paleochora by a ferry service which runs regularly from May. The villages are: Sougia, Ag. Roumeli, Loutro and Sfakia.



Walk from Azogires to the old Turkish fort, a good flower hunting area.

Brief course outline:

Day 1

Thursday 3 May: Arrivals during the day and evening meal at the Alpha Kafenion. Talks and presentations from Julia and Jenny about Crete and the flowers of Crete.

Days 2, 3, 4, 5

4-7 May: Mornings – botanical walk and collect plant specimens. Afternoons: art workshop and plant identification.

Day 6

Tuesday 8 May: Departures

All course material will be provided.

We are working and living as a group and will have breakfast and lunch together in the Alpha Hotel Retreat communal area. We will eat our evening meals at the Alpha Kafenion.

The walks will start from the village of Azogires and will be on stony rugged ground but will be slow due to the fact we will be stopping to look at the plants!

Azogires has only a kafenion, although Paleochora has ATMs, doctor surgeries, dentists etc. However, course leaders will be driving into Paleochora every other day for fresh supplies of milk and bread.

For further information, travel enquiries and booking form please

email: [jenniferaneal@yahoo.com](mailto:jenniferaneal@yahoo.com) or if phoning from Greece contact Jenny on 69452 83716

Visit the Paleochora Site for links to flights, buses, ferries and other useful information: <http://www.thepaleochorasite.com/>