

Residential Botanical Workshop

23 April – 2 May 2013

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 10 day course: 730 euros

Includes: guided botanical walks, art workshops and art materials, transport costs and full board.

Excludes flights to Crete and transport to Azogires.

Cost per person attending daily: 50 Euros

Includes guided botanical walk, art workshop and art materials, lunch and transport cost if applicable.



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

For your introduction to the Cretan flora, or if you simply want to enjoy the beauty of flowers or hunt for particular species, there will be many interesting plants in flower on display in and around Azogires during the April and early 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 surrounded by the rugged landscape of Azogires featuring 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 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 has 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

(<http://www.flowersofcrete.info/>)



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 (<http://jennyneal.com/>)

Julia and Jenny both became Fellows of the Linnaean Society in 2009 in recognition of their work of the Cretan flora (<http://www.linnean.org/>)

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.

Small groups of people can be picked up from the airport at an extra cost or car hire can be arranged in advance with a car available at the airport. If you wish to extend your visit to the island of Crete Jenny can provide a list of useful botanical sites, accommodation etc. Spring will have started in Crete and the weather will be warm and not too hot. The tourist season will not have started and at this time of year Crete is visited by people enjoying the flowers, bird watching and walks in the mountains.



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

Brief 10 day course outline:

Tuesday 23 April: Arrivals

Evening meal at the Alpha Kafenion. Talks and presentations from Julia and Jenny about Crete and the flowers of Crete.

24 April to 1 May

Mornings: botanical walk and collect plant specimens.

Lunch

Afternoons: art workshop and plant identification.

Thursday 2 May: Departures

Breakfast (lunch if applicable)

All course materials 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 have our evening meals at the Alpha Kafenion.

The walks will start from the village of Azogires and will be on stony rugged ground. However, they will be slow due to the fact we will be stopping to look at the plants! Azogires provides ample variation in flora and we will also be visiting 4 different places away from the village in order for people to experience areas such as the Omalos plateau and a visit the top of the Samaria Gorge.

Azogires has only a kafenion, although Paleochora has ATMs, supermarkets, chemists, doctors, dentists etc. The workshop is being held out of the tourist season when Paleochora is quiet and local people go about their day to day business.

For further information, travel enquiries and booking form please email: jenniferaneal@yahoo.com or if phoning from Greece contact Jenny on 69452 83716 from the 15th March 2013.

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