

The Devin Orchid
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The Devinska Kobyla National Park has been established to protect its unique and remarkable flora and fauna. It is located in the southern most part of Malé Karpáty mountain range. It's size is 101 ha and lies between Bratislava suburbs of Devinska Nová Ves, Dúbravka and Devín. 234 types of mushrooms, 110 types of lichens, 100 types of moss and 1100 types higher forms of flora can be found there. 25 types of flora belongs to protected species. The southern and south-western slopes of Devinska Kobyla give home to a member of colonies which thrive and dry and warm microclimate and which contain unique and protected species of flora and fauna. Especially worth mentioning are the various types of violets (kind Viola) and mainly a rich representation of the Orchidaceous family. Out of 50 types growing in Devinska Kobyla 26 grow at this locality. All Orchidaceous are listed as being in jeopardy.

Natural reserve Štokeravská vápenka (the site of a former lime quarry) is at the more remote northerly end of the national park (in Devínska Nová Ves). Some beautiful plants are at home here; among them is the Adriatic lizard orchid, one of Central Europe's most precious plants. It grows in forest steppes, thin forests and forest edges and on grassy and shrubby slopes in lower heights and it prefers calcareous soil.



The plant grows up to 80 cm, the stem is reddish at the top end, the leaves are elongated and pointed, the flowers have a spherical shape, each plant has about 15 to 30 flowers which are light green and violet striped, the opening is ribbon like, white in the centre with dark violet spots, the rim of the flower is reddish brown, has three bays, the outside ones are of a less intensive colour. In full bloom it is a highly decorative and noticeable plant which is considered to be Slovakia's most exotic orchid (as described by H. Baumann).

At the opposite end of Devínska Kobyla, on the southern side above the road to Devín there is “hidden” another precious site, Fialkova Dolina Natural Reserve. It was proclaimed as such 1993 to protect critically jeopardised types of plant. It is in a form of a miniature canyon of 20 hectares.

Jarmila Richmanová writes:

Orchids are the queens of flora, gemstones amongst flowers, real pearls. It is a family of plants deserving an opinion that they are the most beautiful plants of the Earth. People always been fascinated by these plants. The orchids family counts around 30 000 types, which means that one out of every ten plants on earth is an orchid. It needs to be noted, however that it is orchids that are in the greatest danger of disappearing.

Selection of further plants found at locality Devín:

The Lady orchid (*orchis purpurea*)

The Lady orchid may be found in a small clearing in forested part of Devín Castle (this orchid gives out a pleasant odour when wilted and when dried).



Text and photo: Jarmila Richmanová

The perennial orchid has a stem 30 - 90 cm high, is sometimes purple coloured below the flower cluster, lower leaves are longitudinal and reverse egg-shaped, light green with shiny tops, clustered near the ground; the flowers are tightly clustered, 6 - 15 cm long, the flowers are of dark brownish purple colour, with darker spots and lines, light green on the inside with a few spots. The seed pouch contains a large number of seeds.

Text: <http://snaturou2000.sk/rastliny/vstavac-purpurovy>

The Military orchid (*orchis militaris*)

A perennial orchid grows in multiples in sparsely wooded parts of deciduous forests in low lying areas. Blooms in May and June. An ornamental plant with a typical smell of coumarin.



Text and photo: Jarmila Richmanová

The Pale orchid (*orchis pallens*)

The earliest flowering orchid in Slovakia. A perennial orchid, lives in sunny forests, shrubs, seldom on grazing land, outskirts of forests, mainly in calcareous soil, from low to mountain heights. Blooms from April to June.

May be found from Devinska Kobyla to the valley of Hron river (near Banska Bystrica).



Text and photo: Jarmila Richmanová

Sources : www.sazp.sk/,

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