**A JOURNEY AMONG THE MOST ROMANTIC ALPINE FLOWERS**

***Between the end of April and the start of June, nature reawakens in the mountains of Trentino.***

**Europe's most famous Italian Garden**

Since the Middle Ages, the **Monte Baldo Natural Park, which is located between Vallagrina and Lake Garda,** has been known to European botanists for its extraordinary biodiversity and wealth of preglacial species. It truly is an open-air botanical paradise that has been visited by major European naturalists over the centuries. As far back as 1500, Giovan Battista Olivi, a pharmacist and scholar from Cremona, who served the Gonzaga family for years, referred to the Monte Baldo massif as 'the garden of Italy', or *Hortus Italiae*. The most common species found in the park are arnica, lilies, gentians, orchids, golden buttons and silver geraniums, which create colourful carpets between May and June, which can be observed as you walk along the Park's paths.

*The excursion:*

Particularly spectacular here is the flowering of the Botton d'oro, unmistakable for its intense yellow flowers. To observe the phenomenon that characterises the alpine meadows, you can walk along one of the routes that form the ‘***Trekking delle malghe e dei fiori del Baldo’*** (Trekking of the pastures and flowers of Baldo). The path was created to display the heritage of biodiversity and nature of the area.

The most spectacular blooms can be admired by walking from the Graziani refuge towards Malga Campo, Bocca Paltrane to reach the Malga Campei refuge in Val Paròl, where expanses of Botton d'oro can be seen. As soon as the last of the snow has melted, blankets of snowdrops surround the path from Polsa di Brentonico up towards Malga Susine to Bocca d'Ardole and the Great War posts of the nearby Corno della Paura.

**The wild peonies of the Val di Ledro**

Between spring and early summer, more than a thousand species of wild flowers colour the meadows of the Ledro Valley. This wealth of biodiversity has allowed the area to be included in the Alpi Lendresi e Judicaria UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, which attracts enthusiasts and botanists from all over Europe every year. In the areas closest to Lake Garda, typical species of Mediterranean flora can be observed, while edelweiss bloom on the ridges around Val di Concei, around 2000m above.

Particularly easy to reach are **the Dromaè alpine pastures** above the village of Mezzolago, which become a unique white and fuchsia display from May to June, thanks to **daffodils and wild peonies** offering an exciting play of colours. However, by looking closer, one can also discover wild orchids, anemones and lilies. Wildflowers, traces of history, and a spectacular view of Lake Ledro make the path to Dromaè truly spectacular. Peonies grow along the trail, while narcissuses are concentrated in the meadows above the *'casinei'*, the huts used by the inhabitants of Mezzolago during the summer. The Dromaè belvedere is an exceptional vantage point over the valley, and you can visit trenches and walkways dating back to the First World War.

*The hike:*

Following the Botanical Path that passes through pine forests, beech forests and broadleaf forests, climbing up to Dromaè from Mezzolago only takes a couple of hours, there are endless trees, flowers and plants to be observed. At the end of the path, you will return to the forest road and climb up to the belvedere. Continuing on, you will finally reach the *'casinei'*. You can then return to Mezzolago by following along the forest road.

**Blossoming apple orchards in Val di Non**

In spring, the transformation is sudden: the Valle di Non, the **valley of apples**, goes from being a vast green expanse to an overwhelming view of **pale pink and white in just a few days**. The blossoming of the apple trees at the end of April is an unforgettable time to explore this valley, rich in small villages steeped in history, and in rare natural environments such as the canyons around Lake Santa Giustina.

*The hike:*

There is a trail among the blossoms and through the main town of Cles which is suitable for all abilities. From Piazza Fiera, one descends first among the houses and then through orchards and woods until reaching the majestic Cles Castle, situated on an isolated hill, above Santa Giustina Lake.

To pay homage to the spectacle of its spring, the Val di Non and Val di Sole have created a programme full of events as part of the ‘[Aprile dolce Fiorire’](https://www.apriledolcefiorire.com/en). Taking place from 14 April to 2 May, the festival involves gastronomic walks, themed picnics with recipes based on seasonal flowers and herbs, flowering paths to admire the apple blossoms at close quarters, guided excursions to unique destinations such as the Sanctuary of San Romedio (one of the most beautiful sacred monuments in Europe), visits to wine cellars and distilleries, wine trekking, walks with donkeys, and informative events to learn more about the dandelion, discovering how and where to pick it, how to cook it and its benefits.

**Orchids with a view of the Dolomites**

At Passo Lavazè in Val di Fiemme, you can admire **spontaneous, fragrant orchids such as the Nigritella Rubra and Nigritella Nigra** that smell of vanilla and chocolate, as well as the edelweiss that populate the rocks streaked with seaweed fossils that remain from the tropical sea millions of years ago. Up here, different species share a single flowering terrace between twin peaks, Corno Bianco (dolomite) and Corno Nero (porphyry).

*The excursion:*

These environments, as well as the Enrosadira that lights up the peaks of the Latemar and the nearby Catinaccio, can be discovered during a hike from Passo di Lavazè to the panoramic peak of Pala Santa. Hikers can begin their journey in the Lavazè plateau and continue up to the Tombole. In the vast panorama, the peaks of Corno Bianco and Corno Nero are visible on one side, and on the other side is Latemar Mountain. On the descent, hikers can follow the route of the ski slope as far as Passo di Pampeago and from here, return to Passo Lavazè following trail no. 9 along a forest road path.

For more information about Trentino flowers, please visit:<https://www.visittrentino.info/en/articles/into-the-wild/wild-flowers>

**FLOWER RECIPE: *Apple strudel with mountain flowers***

**Ingredients:**

* 1 roll of puff pastry
* 5 Golden or Renetta apples from Trentino
* 2 tablespoons of apple jam
* 1 egg
* breadcrumbs
* icing sugar
* dried mountain flowers (marigold, camomile)

**Method**:

1. Mix diced apples with jam and mountain flowers.
2. Roll out the pastry and sprinkle it with breadcrumbs. Lay the apple mixture on top.
3. Close the pastry forming a roll and brush the surface with egg.
4. Bake for forty minutes at 200°C in a ventilated oven.
5. Serve warm and sprinkle with icing sugar.