

# ARCHITECTURAL ACCENTS



*Cyanus depressus*



*Bupleurum croceum*

Quite where to go was the main quandary. A week earlier I had happened on a fallow field that was quite simply brimming with interesting plants, a remarkable assortment of at least fifty species with everything from big showy stands of *Isatis glauca* to an unkempt assortment of cabbagey-things, vivid horned poppies and some crazy fruits. But I could see more interesting plants were to come and I was keen to revisit my 'field of dreams'. I wasn't disappointed and new delights included plentiful deep blue *Cyanus depressus*, the fine-leaved violet-blue or purple *Consolida hellespontica*, with its cousins *C. regalis* and *C. orientalis* creating a vivid trio. Perhaps my favourite were the delightful round disc-like bracts of *Bupleurum croceum*, a fun architectural delight with dense umbels of golden flowers. The genus contains a number of attractive, invariably much daintier species, and this is the undoubted showgirl. A pleasant hour was spent combing the field for plants, before I moved off and drove back down to Termessos.

It was here another architectural plant (a much larger relative of *Bupleurum croceum*), shone, with the golden globes of *Ferula tingitana* perfectly positioned below the temple gate.



*Consolida hellespontica*



*Ferula tingitana*



*Acanthus spinosus*

Just to the side of these was a clump of *Acanthus spinosus*, similar to the familiar garden bear's breeches, with striking white flowers peering from between tough spiny bracts. Both of these were magnets for pollinating insects with bees heading for the *Acanthus* and a great variety of beetles, hoverflies and asaphalids loving the *Ferula*. Look closely at the top of the *Ferula* and you will see the latter. Butterflies were abundant and drawn to the nectar-rich flowers of *Onopordum acanthium*, another striking feature plant, though one that needs some room. More unassuming and compact, were the subtle spikes of *Epipactis microphylla* that grew on the edge of the oak woods, each greenish flower dusted with indumentum.

The next day I was passing fierce stands of another giant thistle and one to keep very much at arm's length; *Onopordum anatolicum*. I am a big fan of these brutish architectural thistles, but boy is this one well-armed with spines jutting out at every possible angle. Utterly goat proof! I was on my way to Ak Dag to try and catch up with the endemics there and on the way up I passed impressive stands of *Euphorbia altissima*, a plant worthy of a tall border with some moisture, here growing frequently near drainage ditches. The reddish stems supported large heads of yellow-green flowers.

I passed huge two-metre-high plants of *Verbascum*

*Epipactis microphylla*



*Onopordum acanthium* with Southern White Admiral





*Papaver pilosum*



*Verbascum bellum*



*protractum*, it's thuggish cousin *V. glomeratum* was abundant, whilst on the rocky slopes above was *V. bellum*, a wonderful mullein with softly hairy ash-grey leaves and branched inflorescences of sulphur flowers. Surely a worthwhile accent for its' leaves alone. It was all fairly woolly and silken with huge stands of silver-furred *Papaver pilosa* coming into flower nicely, with crinkled pale orange flowers, but again the foliage is worth it alone.

Alas, I intended to bring you all more, but reaching the foot of the mountain my car was making increasingly loud, strange noises and had indeed, become undrivable. Everything else I saw that day was from the back of a tow truck. All very frustrating and not much chance of convincing the driver to stop for flowers.



*Onopordum anatolicum*