



Wild Orchids to be Found on the Campsite

This area of France is well known for its large variety of wild orchids. It is thought that up to 60 different species grow in and around the Lot and Célé valleys, and eleven or more occur in good numbers within the campsite itself during the peak orchid-flowering times of late April through to mid-May. This little guide will help you to identify most of the orchids that you may find during your walks around our tranquil and pretty campsite. Please don't hesitate to tell us if you find any more! Digital pictures will also be most gratefully received.

Visitors from the UK may like to know that several of the orchid species found on the campsite (and in the surrounding areas) occur in the British Isles, but you are far more likely to see them here: in the UK they are mainly rare or endangered due to habitat degradation and intensive agricultural practices which favour the rank weeds and grasses that quickly eradicate our native flora and other wildlife.

Lizard Orchid – *Himantoglossum hircinum* (Orchis bouc)



Very rare in the UK and confined to just one location in Kent, the Lizard Orchid occurs in vast numbers in France and can be found around the campsite in mid to late May.

Burnt Orchid – *Orchis ustulata* (Orchis brûlée)



Also extremely rare in the UK this orchid is present on the site and easy to find in the surrounding areas in early to mid-May.

Fly Orchid – *Ophrys insectifera* (Ophrys mouche)



The Fly Orchid can still be found in the UK and Ireland but is far more common here. Look in the partial shade and scrubby edges of woodland.

Bee Orchid – *Ophrys apifera* (Ophrys abeille)



This lovely orchid occurs in large numbers here. Left is the form with white sepals which (as well as the more common pink ones) occurs on the campsite.

Lady Orchid – *Orchis purpurea* (Orchis pourpre)



Another very rare (in the UK) orchid which can easily be found in this part of France from late April to mid-May.

Monkey Orchid – *Orchis simia* (Orchis singe)



Like the Lady Orchid, above, and the Man Orchid, the Monkey Orchid is a member of the Military Orchid group. It is rare in the UK but very common here in late April and early May.

Man Orchid – *Aceras anthropophorum*
(Orchis homme-pendu)



Almost impossible to find in the UK but common here and in other parts of Europe, the Man Orchid occurs on the site and in large numbers on the High Causse which is a short drive away.

Pyramidal Orchid – *Anacamptis pyramidalis*
(Orchis pyramidal)



Much more commonly pink (and many pink specimens are to be found on the site) the rare white form of the Pyramidal Orchid occurs here at Camping du Ruisseau du Treil.

Broad-leaved Helleborine – *Epipactis helleborine*
(Epipactis a large feuilles)



The Broad-leaved Helleborine is common in this part of France and can grow up to a metre in height. It likes woodland edges but, because it is green, can be difficult to spot.

Early Purple-orchid – *Orchis mascula*
(Orchis male)



Still relatively common in many parts of the UK, this woodland species of orchid occurs in vast numbers in the Lot Valley and its surrounding areas.

Common Twayblade – *Listera ovata*
(Listere a feuilles ovales)



The Common Twayblade is...common. Even in the UK. It is insignificant and difficult to spot but, when it is found, prepare yourself to find other orchids which keep it company.

And there are plenty more...

Other notable orchids that can be seen close to the campsite include the Military Orchid (*Orchis militaris*), Tongue Orchids (*Serapias lingua* and *Serapias vomeracea*) as well as both the Lesser and Greater Butterfly-orchids (*Platanthera bifolia* and *Platanthera chlorantha* respectively).

Whilst many of the orchids to be found here seem plentiful nearly all orchids are protected species in France, other parts of Europe and the UK where there may be only a few specimens left. Please treat them with the respect they deserve and take pictures rather than specimens to prove that you have seen them.

This little guide to the Wild Orchids of Camping du Ruisseau du Treil has been produced by *First Nature*. For more information on wildflowers and a wealth of other wildlife please visit: www.first-nature.com