**As nature awakens**

**IN SPRING TRENTINO IS A COLOURFUL CANVAS**

**From zero to 1,500 metres asl, from spring to summer, in Trentino thousands of spontaneous and cultivated species come into bloom. Brush-strokes of various colours against the green meadows: the apple orchards in Val di Non, rhododendrons and orchids in Val di Fiemme, and globeflowers on Monte Baldo.**

In the Trentino spring, nature’s awakening does not go unnoticed. An authentic explosion of colours, which in a few weeks brings life to the landscape in the valleys, and slowly moves, through the summer, higher up into the mountains to high mountain pastures. Walking or cycling through the valleys of Trentino becomes a pleasure for the eyes and for the body, gratified by the intense perfume and play of colours, alternating the most diverse hues: yellow, blue, a touch of red, a carpet of white. Starring in this colourful awakening are the thousands of floral species that grow spontaneously in the meadows and Alpine pastures at all altitudes.

The opening of this “**floral calendar**” starts in April with the fruit plants at the bottom of the valleys, and on the hillsides up to an altitude of about 500 m. Apple orchards and cherry trees create a spectacular scenery, also in terms of sheer size. In the months that follow, the higher areas slowly join in, each with their own typical species, from the Daisy to the Buttercup, to wild Orchids. The picture reaches completion between June and July, when the flowers reach the pastures above 1500 metres, which are covered in particularly flashy flowers, like the Globeflower, the Rhododendron, the scented Nigritella and the Gentian. Many of these flower species are rare - some very rare - and must not be picked. For all the others, you are allowed to pick a maximum of 5 stems per person. And nature, in all its forms, also comes to life in the three **Nature Parks**, where there are organised activities to observe animals, flowers, and wild herbs.

**A sea of flowers**

The transformation, as spring approaches, is swift: in a few days, **Val di** **Non**, the valley of apples turns from a green expanse into **pure white** **and pale pink**. As soon as the sun’s rays warm the thousands of hectares of countryside cultivated as apple orchards, **crowds of small flowers bloom** and fill the valley with their delicate colour and scent. The blossoming of the apple trees, at the end of April, is a unique opportunity to discover this valley, full of little hamlets bursting with history, and truly peculiar natural environments, most of which can be reached thanks to the numerous hikes and bike trails across the expanse of blossoming apple orchards. Thanks to the “Adotta un melo” (Adopt an apple tree) initiative, by staying at the “Ambasciatori di Melinda” farmhouse inns at the time of flowering, you can hear straight from the farmers the story of this tradition in the valley, and of the “mountain” apple farming techniques, in addition to choosing a blossoming apple tree and giving it a name. The farmer will look after your tree until autumn, when you can come back to the Val di Non to collect the apples from your tree and take them home. The price of the stay for two weekends (one in Spring and one in Autumn) is 130 Euro per person, and it can also become an original gift idea (further info: [**www.adottaunmelo.com**](http://www.adottaunmelo.com/)).

And, from Saturday 14 April, you can also travel through the blossoming apple orchards on the “**Trenino dei Castelli**” (Castle Train), for a day-long immersion in nature and the countryside, discovering four of the most significant castles in Trentino along the Val di Non and Val di Sole: Ossana, Caldes, Valèr and, finally, the monumental Castel Thun. Between one tour and the next, there is also time for a snack with the products of the “Strada della mela” (Apple Route). And on Sundays there is a “Family Special" offer, with special rates, but above all with special initiatives in the individual castles: workshops, animated tales and a treasure hunt involving the entire family. Booking required, subject to availability. For further info: info@guidavacanze.it.

**A voyage through the most spectacular Alpine flowers**

At a glance, it looks like a classic Tibetan landscape, but instead we are in the northernmost part of the **Brenta Dolomites**, at almost 2000 metres asl, between the Val di Non and Val di Sole. This large and little-known plateau is called **Pian della Nana**, and it is a **unique observation playground** for geologists, palaeontologists and botanists. At the feet of Monte Peller, it is a green amphitheatre surrounded by dolomite rocks and peculiar intrusions of reddish rock, where you can see a spectacular blooming of Alpine flowers. There are 431 species which, between May and August, take turns to bloom, providing an ever-changing scene. The climax is reached in June, the best period for a botanical excursion.

More than 1,000 species of indigenous flowers colour the meadows of Val di Ledro, and this variety has been one of the reasons why the territory was included in the **UNESCO Alpi Ledrensi & Judicaria Biosphere**. An authentic treasure trove of biodiversity, which attracts enthusiasts and botanists every year from all over Europe. Here you can find species that are typical of the **Mediterranean flora** - in the areas nearest to Lake Garda - but also Edelweiss, on the ridges above 2,000 m that surround Val di Concei. Particularly interesting is the **Alpe di Tremalzo**, as it is home to 24 very rare - and protected - species.

The pastures in **Dromaè** – an alpine pasture area above the town of Mezzolago, overlooking Lake Ledro - are particularly easy to reach, walking for around two hours along the Botanical Trail and crossing Scots pine forests, beech forests, and deciduous forests. From May to June, the pastures are transformed into a unique white and fuchsia carpet of narcissus and wild peonies, offering truly unusual colour effects. With a bit of care, you can also spot wild orchids, anemones and lilies. Along the way, you also find several walkways and structures dating back to the Great War.

In ancient times, **Monte Baldo** was referred to as *Hortus Italiae* (Italy's Garden). Its flora - full of pre-glacial indigenous species - is an open-air botanical treatise, which all the top European naturalists have explored over the centuries. It is therefore no surprise that many botanical species are accompanied by the adjective “baldensis”, emphasising their specificity and typicality.

Here, on the high mountain pastures, the blooming of the globeflower - unmistakable with its intense yellow petals - and of numerous medicinal species, is truly spectacular. To observe it, you can walk along one of the four routes that form the **“Trekking delle malghe e dei fiori del Baldo”** (Trekking among the dairies and flowers of Monte Baldo), designed to help you get to know - through forms of conscious and sustainable tourism - this heritage of biodiversity and nature that characterises this mountain’s meadows.

**From Nature Parks to the Reserve Network to catch the awakening of nature**

Between April and June, in the **Nature Parks** and in the **Reserve Network** of Trentino - covering about 30 percent of the entire territory - the doors are open to those in search of a weekend of surprising experiences, while nature in all forms is awakening. Organised activities, like watching animals in their natural habitat, or walking among the most spectacular Alpine flowers, accompanied by expert Botanists.

“**Wildlife Watching** **at sunrise"** is offered by the **Stelvio National Park** on the weekend of 28 and 29 April: you sleep over within the Park territory so you are already up at 4 in the morning; then, together with the Park operators, you can watch animals using special night vision infrared cameras, and then finish the experience with a hearty breakfast of local produce.

In the **Paneveggio Nature Park** (18/20 May), on **Monte Baldo** (29 April/1 May), in the **Val di Ledro** (14/15 April) and **Monte Bondone** (4/5 May and 16/17 June) **Reserve Network**, on the other hand, themed **hikes** guided by a **botanist** are offered. You reach the pastures and meadows high in the mountains to observe the flowers and learn to recognise wild herbs. And you can also learn how to use them in cosmetics, natural pharmaceutics and in cuisine, thanks to lessons and small workshops.

Info and bookings: [**www.ambientetrentino.it**](http://www.ambientetrentino.it/)

Further info: <https://www.visittrentino.info/en/articles/into-the-wild/spring-flowering>