

## ... in February

By Morgan Cooper

Though I first began hiking in Palestine with Shatha Walking Group 12 or 13 years ago, I only really became seriously interested in Palestinian wildflowers when I saw the artwork of botanic illustrator Lois Nakhleh hanging on the walls of the PR office director at Birzeit University. It was love at first sight. In my effort to get copies of her prints, a mutual friend connected us. From the moment we met, I have continued to observe, photograph, study, write about, and love, above all, love Palestine's small but mighty wildflowers.

Palestine boasts five different climatic regions, giving life to well over 2,500 species of wildflowers across historic Palestine. The wildflowers featured here are those found in and around Mashjar Juthour, an arboretum and garden located at the edge of Ramallah. Many of these wildflowers will also be in bloom in the Galilee, in the hills around Rameh, for example; though you will find very few of them in Jericho, nearer to Ramallah.

This list is not exhaustive; it's based on what we at Mashjar Juthour observed blooming last February. Some flowers, such as common cyclamen, were blooming early, in December 2017 and January 2018; this January, very few are in bloom. Perhaps other wildflowers will also bloom a bit later since it's been colder and wetter this year.

Our wildflowers, and all the biodiversity in Palestine's beautiful nature, is sacred. They are part of ecosystems in which the individual flowers, insects, soil, rocks, animals, and trees interact, feeding off one another, pollinating, shading, and enabling life together. I am deeply committed to learning about and protecting these flowers through my work at Mashjar Juthour. It is my great goal that others join me in this work, which starts with our learning about the flowers, naming them, and remembering stories from grandmothers and the way our Palestinian ancestors valued the plants.

These are some of the flowers you'll find in bloom this month in Palestine.



*Mandragora autumnalis*  
Mandrake  
تفاح المجنون، جربوح



*Cyclamen persicum*  
Common Cyclamen  
ذعيطوط، صابون أو عصا الراعي



*Euphorbia hierosolymitana*  
Jerusalem Spurge  
حلبيون، حلبوب المقدس



Virgin's Bower/Clematis



*Anemone coronaria*  
Crown Anemone  
شقانق النعمان



*Ophrys fusca*  
Brown Bee Orchid  
الأوفريس



*Bellis sylvestris*  
Southern Daisy



*Arisarum vulgare*  
Friar's Cowl  
الصرين الشائع

