



# Botanical Trekking in the Ligurian Alps

From mountains to the sea

# **Walking from the Cuneo Province to the Ligurian sea**

**Trekking in the area of Ligurian Alps in the south western Alps district, a wonderful combination of rare plants and beautiful landscape**

**During 6 hiking days you will explore Pesio Park forests, the high Tanaro valley, the Path of the Alpine, the highlights of Pietravecchia and Toraggio mountains, Couta Pass and Hanbury Botanical Gardens**



# Itinerary

## Day I - Surroundings of Pesio valley

28/06/2013

Private transfer to the Park headquarters in Chiusa di Pesio for the presentation of the trek h. 17.

Visit to the Centre for Plant Biodiversity.

Private transfer to hotel, accomodation and dinner  
(Albergo Cannon d'Oro - Chiusa di Pesio)



in search of rare flowers

# Day 2 - Full Day Trekking to Garelli mountain refuge and visit to the Alpine Botanical Station of the Park

29/06/2013

Private transfer to Pian delle Corre with the mountain guide to start trekking.

The views of the Pesio Forest are amazing from the summit. The walk is relatively steep, goes across different kinds of vegetation (beech and white silver fir forests); as we walk up, the vegetation changes due to the height.

You can see one of the most beautiful woods of *Abies alba* and *Fagus sylvatica* that with increasing altitude gives way to shrubs typical of the subalpine belt mainly composed of *Alnus viridis*, *Laburnum alpinum*, *Sorbus aucuparia* and *Salix appendiculata*. Continuing the ascent you can meet *Astrantia minor*, *Hypericum richerii*, *Phyteuma ovatum* and *Orchid sambucina* in its red and yellow forms.

Once we are over the forest line, the trail starts to get a little steep, but will eventually take us to the Refuge. This adventure takes between 2 and 3 hours to get to the top.

The view from the refuge which is surrounded by mountains is just marvelous: you can see the summits of the highest mountains of the western Alps in a unique landscape.  
Lunch (Garelli mountain refuge)

Visit to the Alpine Botanical stations of the park which recreate the microhabitats of the Alpine belt of the Ligurian and Maritimes Alps. Each microclimate bed has examples of the rare and endemic plant species specific to those conditions. Both stations are designed with the most modern and rigorous models for the conservation of alpine botanical gardens. Reproduction of microhabitat conditions avoids any form of genetic modification and erosion. Look out for mountain birds and animals too. If you are lucky you may see chamois, marmot or even eagles.

Accommodation and Dinner (Garelli mountain refuge)

Difficulty: medium with 1000 m vertical drop

Travel time: 3h 20m

Overnight at Garelli mountain refuge (beds in dormitory rooms)



# Day 3 - Full Day Trekking to Marguareis mountain and Don Barbera mountain refuge

30/06/2013

The views of Marguareis mountain, Scarason ridge and other peaks are amazing from the summit.

This is the highest mountain of the Ligurian Alps and is one of the highlights of Alta Valle Pesio e Tanaro Natural Park.

We start early in the morning with the mountain guide climbing by the path along the moraine to Sestrera Pass.

The route passes near Ratauloira lake, surrounded by *Eriophorum scheuchzeri* and colonized by *Sparganium angustifolium*. The stage also includes the ascent to the summit of the Marguareis (2651 m), the highest mountain of Ligurian Alps, where there are views across the entire Alpine region and the Langhe. Among the species found in this area are: *Saxifraga callosa*, *Ranunculus alpestris*, *Artemisia umbelliformis* subsp. *eriantha*, *Valeriana salicina*, *Potentilla valderia*, *Achillea erba-rotta*, *Galium tenda*, *Campanula alpestris* and meadows of *Leontopodium alpinum*.

Lunch (Pack lunch from Carelli mountain refuge)

After the climbing we will descend to the Don Barbera mountain refuge surrounded by Karst morphology.

Accommodation and Dinner (Don Barbera mountain refuge)

Difficulty: medium with 1000 m vertical drop

Travel time: 7h

Overnight at Don Barbera mountain refuge (beds in dormitory rooms)



in search of rare flowers

# Day 4 - Full Day Trekking from Don Barbera mountain hut to Tanarello Pass. Then by Coach to Triora

01/07/2013

We start early in the morning with the mountain guide taking the path along the border between Piedmont and France crossing many different habitat and rare, endemic or endangered plant species.

Is just marvelous: you can see the summit of the mountains as well as the wonderful carsic landscapes, forest and rare plants.

Fascinating historical stage which in some places runs the "Marenca way", an ancient road that connected Piedmont to the sea. We can easily reach the summit of the panoramic Bertrand peak and the highest summit of Liguria region, the Saccarello montain. Notable species we will see along the route include *Senecio personii* and *Iberis nana* (exclusive endemic species of Ligurian Alps), *Potentilla pumila* ssp. *delphinensis*, *Artemisia glacialis*, *Chamorchis alpina* and *Leucopoa dimorpha*.

Lunch (Pack lunch from Don Barbera mountain refuge)

After reaching Tanarello pass we transfer by coach to the beautiful villages of Triora.

Accomodation and Dinner (Colomba d'Oro hotel)

Difficulty: medium with 500 m vertical drop

Travel time: 5h 30m + 1h coach to Triora

Overnight at Colomba d'Oro hotel



# Day 5 - By coach to Melosa Pass. Full Day Trekking from Melosa Pass to Gouta mountain refuge by the "Path of the Alpine".

02/07/2013

Beautiful hike, surely the most evocative of the Alps which goes through the "Path of the Alpine", daring work carved into the slopes of the mountains Toraggio e Pietravecchia made between the two world wars, in some parts worthy to compete with the famous kaiserjäger of the eastern Alps.

The component of the flora is outstanding with more than 60 endemic species: *Aquilegia bertolonii*, *Campanula macrorrhiza*, *Euphorbia valliniana*, *Leucanthemum discoideum*, *Lilium pomponium*, *Moehringia lebrunii*, *Phyteuma cordatum*, *Rhaponticum scariosum* ssp. *bicknellii* and others wondrous rare species.

To those who suffer vertigo and for children the use of ropes or hooks to be attached to steel cables is recommended and available for some part of the journey.

Lunch (Pack lunch from Colomba d'Oro hotel)

Transfer by coach to Rocchetta Nervina (Albergo Lago Bin)

Dinner (Albergo Lago Bin)

Difficulty: medium with 700 m vertical drop

Travel time: 7h

Overnight at Albergo Lago Bin



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# Day 6 - Rocchetta Nervina (IM) – Mortola Cape Half day visit to Hanbury Botanical Gardens By coach to Chiusa di Pesio

03/07/2013

## Hanbury Botanical Gardens

In order to acclimatize plants from many different climatic zones of the world an English family created a botanical garden near Ventimiglia in 1867. They chose this site because of its particularly mild climate.

The 45 acres (18 hectares) of the Hanbury Botanical Gardens occupy the whole of Capo Mortola.

Approximately half of this area is cultivated as garden with the remainder native vegetation dominated by *Pinus halepensis*.

You can find also *Ficus rubiginosa* from Australia, *Nolina longifolia* and *Oreopanax dactylifolius* from Mexico and *Davyalis caffra* (Key apple) a tree from South Africa, whose acidulous yellow fruit is suitable for making jam.

Lunch in Villa Hanbury is not included

Transfer by coach to Chiusa di Pesio, arrival in the afternoon



## Conditions

- This program is appropriate for experienced as well as for less-skilled hikers; nevertheless you should be able to walk about 5 to 7 hours daily
- Personal equipment: Hiking boots, warm clothes (for wind and rain), spare clothes: jacket and waterproof trousers, a small hiking backpack for personal belongings during day walks, warm gloves and a hat, good sun-screen, sun-glasses, hat and light hiking clothes
- You must stay with the group, on the paths indicated by the guide at all times
- If you leave the group, even with the consent of the guide, it is under your own responsibility and at your own risk

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## Information and contact

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