MAD RURAL

Ephemeral landscapes, unique colours and nature at its finest



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Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia

Comunidad de Madrid

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BLOOMS IN RURAL MADRID

Every spring and summer, the rural areas of the Madrid Region undergo one of their most dazzling transformations. With the arrival of the mild days, mountains, valleys and countryside are blanketed in flowers, and the landscape becomes an ever-changing mosaic of colours, scents and textures. For a few weeks, nature puts on a spectacle as beautiful as it is fleeting, an invitation to wander the paths, pause to take in the surroundings and discover the natural riches that lie beyond the city.

Golden broom illuminating the mountain slopes, gorse staining the peaks of the range a deep yellow, fragrant rockroses perfuming the air in the Mediterranean hills, delicate wild orchids peeking out from among grasslands and forest clearings, violet fields of lavender swaying in the wind, or hillsides dotted with poppies heralding the arrival of fine weather. Each region and each moment of the season offers a different scene, an invitation to contemplate the landscape at a leisurely pace and to let yourself be carried away by the rhythms of nature.

This leaflet brings together some of the most characteristic blooms of rural Madrid — from the Sierra de Guadarrama and the Sierra Norte to the Sierra Oeste and the region of Las Vegas & Alcarria Madrileña — and invites you to discover where and when to see them at their best. Throughout these pages you will find information on the most characteristic species, recommended locations and tips for enjoying these landscapes respectfully and responsibly, thereby helping to preserve their beauty for those who visit them today and for those who will do so tomorrow.



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SIERRA OESTE DE MADRID

AROMATIC ROCKROSE THICKETS AND RED SEAS OF POPPIES

Poppy · Rockrose · Nature

In spring offers one of the region's most varied and stunning floral landscapes. In this transitional area between the mountains and the Mediterranean countryside, hills covered in rockroses stand alongside farmland where, for a few weeks, poppies paint the landscape a deep red.

Between April and June, white and pink rockroses spread across hillsides, open pine forests and areas of Mediterranean scrub, filling the air with their characteristic resinous scent. At the same time, in the cereal fields and along the edges of country lanes, wild poppies bloom in vast red patches that undulate in the wind. The result is a landscape full of colour contrasts, where the white of the rockroses, the red of the poppies and the green of the fields create scenes of particularly photogenic beauty.

During the month of May, broom and yellow broom also appear, adding new splashes of colour to paths and hillsides. This overlapping of blooms makes Sierra Oeste an ideal destination for those seeking Mediterranean landscapes during the full splendour of spring.

Notable blooms

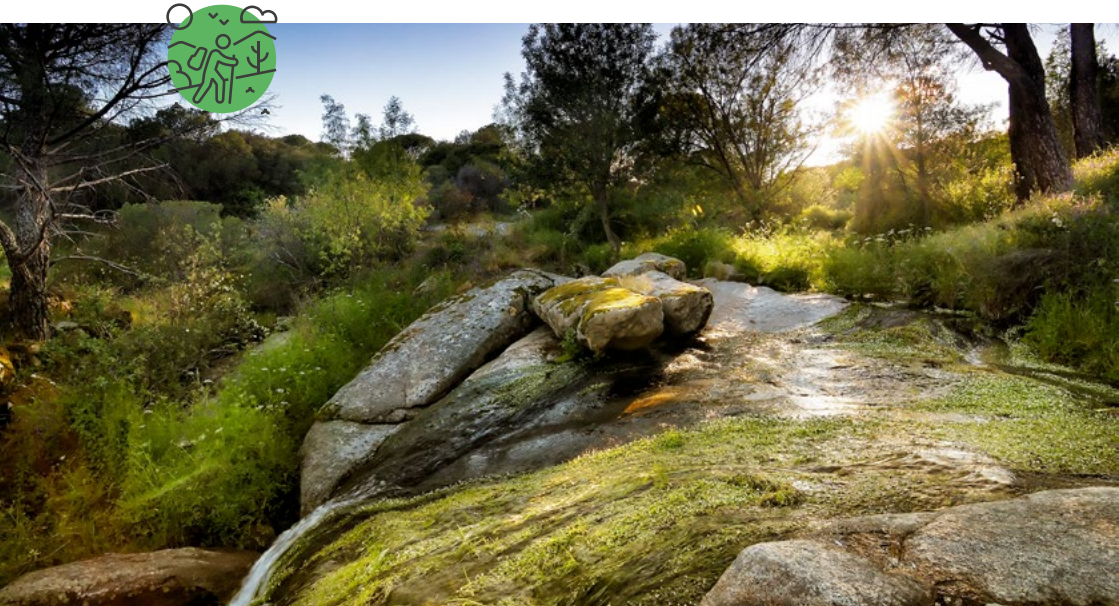
- Sticky rockrose (Cistus ladanifer): April – June
- Corn poppy (Papaver rhoeas): April – May

Key locations

- **Cadalso de los Vidrios:** extensive areas of rockrose on hillsides and in open pine forests, highly representative of the area's Mediterranean landscape.

- **Rozas de Puerto Real:** offers a landscape of rockrose, pine forest and mountain scrub which, in spring, bursts into colour with the flowering of aromatic Mediterranean species. The municipality is also home to the largest chestnut grove in the Community of Madrid, surrounded by riverside vegetation, oak groves and pine forests that make up one of the most distinctive landscapes in south-western Madrid.

- **Pelayos de la Presa:** areas of Mediterranean scrub with well-developed rockroses.



Technical recommendation

- **Terrain:** easily accessible forest tracks, footpaths and farm tracks.
- **Difficulty**: low.
- **Best time of year:** April–May for the poppies; April for the rockrose thickets.
- **Important**: poppies are extremely fragile flowers; observe them without touching them and avoid walking on the flowering areas.

The blooms in rural Madrid are a fleeting spectacle that changes every year depending on rainfall, temperature and light. Observing them with respect is the best way to ensure they continue to form part of the landscape and the natural heritage of our regions.

These are fragile ecosystems. You are advised not to tread on the flowers, not to cut plants, not to enter private farmland, not to use drones without permission, and to stay on the signposted paths. Conservation depends on everyone's respect.



Microexperience: Pine forests of Cadalso and Cenicientos

Between Cadalso de los Vidrios and Cenicientos lie some of the most characteristic pine forests of the Sierra Oeste. Walking through these woods in spring is a serene and sensory experience: the ground, covered in pine needles, muffles your footsteps; light filters through the canopy; and the air is filled with the resinous scent characteristic of Mediterranean pine forests.

In the forest clearings, spring brings new surprises: flowering rockroses, yellow broom and small aromatic plants that attract insects and birds. Take a stroll along one of the forest paths at sunset, when the light filters through the tree trunks and bathes the landscape in golden hues. It is one of those places where time seems to slow down and the forest invites you to walk at a leisurely pace.

SIERRA DE GUADARRAMA

THE GOLDEN BLOOM OF CAMBROÑO

Cambroño · Scenic · Mid-mountain (between 1,000 and 1,900 metres above sea level)

As spring gives way to summer, the Sierra de Guadarrama experiences one of its most dazzling moments. Between April and May, the mid- and high-altitude slopes are blanketed by the intense flowering of the cambroño (Adenocarpus hispanicus), a mountain shrub that bathes the landscape in a vibrant, luminous yellow. For a few weeks, pine forests, hilltops and clearings in the scrubland are transformed into a veritable sea of gold, contrasting with the dark green of the Scots pines and the sober grey of the granite rocks.

This natural phenomenon is one of the great symbols of spring in the mountains. The footpaths winding through the mountains are then filled with colour and fragrance, offering sweeping views of flower-covered slopes which seem to stretch all the way to the horizon. For those who enjoy walking in the mountains, taking in the scenery or capturing the light with a camera, the flowering of the cambroño is a brief, intense and unforgettable experience.

Featured location

Los Molinos, the *Capital of the Cambroño*. The surrounding pastures have very gentle slopes, making the cambroño trails in the lower reaches of La Peñota ideal for all visitors. During the flowering season, the cambroño climbs up the slope of this mountain as if an invisible hand had unfurled a vast, luminous blanket over it, offering a unique spectacle for the eyes.

FLOWERING CALENDAR

- START: APRIL
- PEAK BLOOM: FROM MID-APRIL TO MID-MAY
- END: LATE MAY

JANUARY	JULY
FEBRUARY	AUGUST
MARCH	SEPTEMBER
APRIL	OCTOBER
MAY	NOVEMBER
JUNE	DECEMBER



Technical advice

- Best time of day: early morning or late afternoon, when the light brings out the golden hues of the blossoms.
- Terrain: mountain trails with uneven surfaces, typical of the mountainous environment.
- Difficulty: low to medium, depending on the route chosen and the elevation gain.
- Important: if you're planning a long walk, bear in mind that much of these routes passes through areas with little shade, so the early morning hours are best for a comfortable walk.

Microexperience

The Cambroño is a species perfectly adapted to the harsh conditions of the high Mediterranean mountains. Its yellow flowers, which appear in large clusters, attract numerous species of bees and other pollinators, playing a vital role in the biodiversity of the mountain range.

In Los Molinos, this spectacular flowering also takes on a special significance with the Cambroño Flowering Festival, an event that highlights the unique landscape and natural beauty of this phenomenon.

Throughout history, the cambroño has also served various traditional purposes for the village, such as fuel for domestic use, firewood for bread ovens, raw material for making brooms, and even some medicinal uses that the older residents still remember fondly.

Look out for a small natural viewpoint in Los Molinos as evening falls. When the evening light gently sets the cambroño-covered slopes ablaze, the landscape takes on golden and orange-red hues that transform the mountain into an almost surreal scene – one of those moments when nature seems to ask for nothing more than silence, a pause and contemplation.



LAS VEGAS & ALCARRIA MADRILEÑA

THE SCENT OF ALCARRIA

Lavender · Agricultural landscape · Photography

As summer begins to settle in, the fields of Las Vegas & Alcarria Madrileña are transformed into a spectacle of colour that is hard to forget. From mid-June onwards, the expanses of lavender and lavandin bloom, forming long violet rows that trace perfect lines across the agricultural landscape. From a distance, the fields resemble veritable seas of purple, contrasting with the ochre of the earth, the green of the neighbouring crops and the clear blue of the summer sky.

This landscape, where agricultural tradition and natural beauty intertwine, has become one of the most photographed scenes of the Madrid summer. The geometry of the fields, the scent that fills the air and the warm light of the sunset combine to create a unique atmosphere that attracts visitors, walkers and photography enthusiasts.

Much of this crop consists of lavandin, a lavender hybrid particularly prized for its intense and long-lasting fragrance.

Thanks to these qualities, it is widely used in the production of perfumes, cosmetics and essential oils. Thus, as well as offering a spectacular landscape, these fields keep alive an agricultural activity closely linked to the region's aromatic tradition.

FLOWERING CALENDAR

START: MID-JUNE
PEAK BLOOM: JULY
·END: LATE JULY, WHEN THE FLOWERS BEGIN TO TAKE ON GREYISH HUES
HARVEST: AUGUST, WHEN LAVANDIN IS HARVESTED FOR PROCESSING

JANUARY	**JULY**
FEBRUARY	AUGUST
MARCH	SEPTEMBER
APRIL	OCTOBER
MAY	NOVEMBER
JUNE	DECEMBER



Microexperience

In Santorcaz, stay a few minutes longer as the sun begins to set. The evening light transforms the lavender fields into an almost cinematic landscape: the intense violet of the flowers blends with the orange and pink hues of the sky, whilst the scent of lavender intensifies as the day's heat slowly dissipates.



Top locations

- El Palomar (Pezuela de las Torres) – around 24 hectares of lavandin, creating one of the most extensive and recognisable landscapes in the area.
- Cerro San Miguel (Santorcaz) – around 10 hectares of lavender fields, offering sweeping panoramic views over the Alcarreño countryside.

Technical recommendation

- Best time of day: sunset, when the golden light brings out the violet hues of the lavender fields.
- Terrain: farm tracks and rural paths that are easy to access.
- Difficulty: low.
- Important: these are private fields used for farming; please do not walk between the rows or tread on the crops.

Almond trees in bloom

Even before spring has fully set in, in Las Vegas & Alcarria Madrileña the almond trees herald the change of season with one of the first blooms of the year. They cover the landscape in shades of white and pink that contrast with the still wintry earth, creating delicate, luminous scenes, almost suspended in time.

This early blossom, brief yet eagerly awaited, transforms the farmland for a few days into a natural spectacle that invites you to stroll along country lanes and discover the awakening of spring. It can generally be seen between February and March, although the exact timing depends on the weather each year.



SIERRA NORTE DE MADRID

AROMATIC ROCK ROSES, WILD ORCHIDS AND MOUNTAIN BROOM

Rockrose · Broom · Orchids · Nature

Sierra Norte de Madrid is one of the richest and most diverse areas in terms of wildflowers in the entire region. Its mid-mountain landscapes, where forests, meadows, rockroses and mountain scrub alternate, create a natural mosaic in which dozens of species of wildflowers bloom every spring. Among these, the rockroses that perfume the air, the broom that brightens the hillsides with its intense yellow, and a true botanical treasure stand out: the wild orchids.

This area is home to more than twenty different species of orchids, some of which are very rare in the centre of the peninsula. Many go unnoticed by the distracted walker, as they are small and unobtrusive; however, for those who pause to look, they become one of spring's most fascinating discoveries. Between April and June, the valleys and hills are filled with colour and fragrance, offering a tranquil experience of nature, ideal for exploring peaceful footpaths and taking in the landscape's subtlest details.

Notable blooms

- Sticky rockrose (Cistus ladanifer): April – June
- Wild orchids: April – May
- Mountain broom: May – June

Key locations

·Sticky rockrose (Cistus ladanifer): April – June
Lower Lozoya Valley. Cervera, Robledillo, Berzosa, El Atazar...
·Wild orchids: April – May Sierra del Rincón. Wetlands and grasslands.
·Mountain broom: May – June
High areas of the Montes Carpetanos, such as Robregordo, Somosierra and La Acebeda.



Technical recommendation

- Terrain: mid-mountain trails and country lanes.
- Difficulty: low to moderate depending on the route chosen
- Best time of year: between April and June, when several species are in bloom at the same time.
- Important: many orchids are protected species; observe them with respect, without touching them or getting too close.



Microexperience

In La Hiruela, pause for a moment in the damp meadows surrounding the village. If you look carefully amongst the grass, you'll discover tiny wild orchids with unusual shapes and delicate colours. Some look like tiny sculptures sprouting from the earth, almost invisible to most visitors. Finding them is part of the magic of exploring these landscapes with patience, wonder and a keen eye.



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