

#### **“G.G. LORENZONI” PATH ON MONTE VENDA n. 4**

**DISTANCE:** 6 Km

**DIFFERENCE IN ALTITUDE:** 250 m

**WALKING TIME:** 4 hours (5 hours if you include a detour to the ruins of the Olivetani Monastery)

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** some stretches are difficult

**BEST SEASON:** spring and winter

**Geology.** Monte Venda (601 m) and Monte Vendevolo (460 m) are the biggest volcanic areas of the Euganean Hills, as it is testified by their height and their size. The highest part of Monte Venda is composed of pale rhyolite; while the lowest side is characterized by outcrops of sedimentary rock (the Euganean Marl) together with basaltic tuffe and trachytic dykes, which cross the hill on the northern and on the eastern slope.

**Flora.** The eastern slope is covered with oak woods consisting of oaks, pubescent oaks, chestnuts and several mountain maples, white and black hornbeams, flowering ashes, common maples, hazels, cornelian cherries and medlars. Worth of notice are the heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), the bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), the Epimedium (*Epimedium alpinum*), the martagon lily (*Lilium martagon*), and the birch. The northern slope is mainly characterized by the chestnut, there grow also oaks, mountain maples, some beeches and white hornbeams. The undergrowth is rich in snowdrops (*Galantus nivalis*), dog's teeth (*Erythronium dens-canis*), the alpine squill (*Scilla bifolia*), the dentaria, the goat's beard (*Aruncus dioicus*); there are also ferns such as the polipody and the male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*). Some specimens, typical of the Mediterranean bush, are common on the southern slope: the rockrose (*Cistus salvifolius*), the wild asparagus, the heather, the strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), the hairy broom (*Cytisus hirsutus*), the Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), the smoketree (*Rhus cotinus*), the bush pea while among the shrubs you can easily find the juniper, the viburnum (*Viburnum lantana*), the wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) and the whitty pear (*Sorbus domestica*).

**Fauna.** The most interesting species are related to water: molluscs like the *Cepaea nemoralis*, a striped-coloured wood snail, and amphibians such as the fire salamander (*Salamandra salamandra*), the rare and protected yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) and the alpine newt (*Triturus alpestris*). Among the birds there are the small wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), the jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), the robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), the small warbler (*Phylloscopus collybita*) and the long-tailed tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*). You may observe the spectacular flight of some diurnal birds of prey such as the buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), the sparrow hawk (*Accipiter nisus*) and the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*). Among the reptiles you may find the grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), the aesculapian snake (*Elaphe longissima*), the characteristic coluber (*Coluber viridiflavus carbonarius*) known as “scarbonasso” and the slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), a harmless lizard.

**History and Art.** Worth a visit are the ruins of the Olivetani Monastery. They were erected in 1229 as a Benedictine Monastery on what once stood a hermitage. Since its foundation it became famous and rich thanks to the protection of the Maltraversi family from Castelnuovo and later of the Carraresis. They built the lodgings, the cloister and a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist. At the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Benedictine order entered a period of crisis so the monastery decayed. As a consequence, the Bishop of Padova replaced the Albinian Fathers with the aristocratic order of the Olivetani. After a period of peace, which lasted until 1771, the Republic of Venice destroyed the monastery, sold the assets and transferred the monks elsewhere, condemning these prestigious buildings to ruin.