

MONTE CINTO PATH n. 11

DISTANCE: 5.3 Km (including diversions)

DIFFERENCE IN ALTITUDE: 267 m

WALKING TIME: 3-4 hours

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: medium

BEST SEASON: spring

Geology. Monte Cinto (282 m) is characterized by sedimentary rocks while the top is composed of rhyolite of volcanic origin. Near Cava Bomba a remarkable range of blackish sedimentary layers have emerged which date back to 92 million years ago. Here a wealth of tropical pelagic fauna has been found which is now displayed at the Cava Bomba Museum. Worth of notice, in the cave near the top of the mount, are the “rhyolite columns”, produced by the cooling followed by the consolidation of the lava on the sea bed.

Vegetation. The dry southern slope is characterized by the broom (*Spartium junceum*), the dog-rose, the flowering hash (*Fraxinus ornus*), Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) and the black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). Walking along the western flank you can find oak-groves with Mediterranean bush, while the eastern slope is mostly covered with chestnuts. Of great interest are the meadows where different species of orchids grow.

Fauna. What mostly characterizes Monte Cinto is the great variety of birds of prey hunting in the daytime such as the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), the hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), the sparrow hawk (*Accipiter nisus*), the buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) and the short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*). At Cava Bomba the Italian Union for the protection of birds (LIPU) together with the Regional Park has created a natural reserve to guarantee the breeding of some species, above all of birds of prey.

History. During the Middle Ages Monte Cinto was a military strategic post of observation over the plain and the remains of an old fortress occupy the summit of the hill. The “Brigands’ Den” is one of the most charming place in the Euganean Hills: over the centuries it has been used as a look-out post, a fortress, a clandestine arsenal and a hiding-place for outlaws. In recent times limestone rocks have been extracted from Cava Bomba for the production of lime and cement; while in volcanic quarries the rocks have been used for paving roads and squares as well as for building or reinforcing river or canal banks.