

MONTE GRANDE PATH

LENGTH: 4 km

DIFFERENCE IN ALTITUDE: about 100m.

WALKING TIME: 2 hours.

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: none

BEST SEASON: spring, summer, autumn

Geology. Monte Grande (467 m.) is made up of sedimentary rock at the bottom and of trachyte on the top, i.e. a volcanic rock which was formed about 33 million years ago during the events which led to the birth of the Euganean Hills. Of geological interest is Sella Fiorine, the highest outcrop of red rock (Scaglia rossa).

Flora. The path on the northern slope runs through a chestnut wood with mountain maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), oak, white hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), mountain ash (*Sorbus torminalis*) and flowering ash (*Fraxinus ornus*). With the change of the sunlight exposure the chestnuts become shorter and slimmer, while among the plants you can find the pubescent oak (*Quercus pubescens*), the flowering ash (*Fraxinus ornus*), the strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*) and the tree heath.

Fauna. The Monte Grande is rich in chestnut woods which give shelter to the dormouse (*Glis glis*) and the hedge-hog (*Moscardinus avellanarius*) hunted by the weasel, the pole-cat and the fox. The reptiles are represented by the grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), the slowworm (*Anguis fragilis*), the colubrid (*Coluber viridiflavus carbonarius*) known as the “scarbonasso” and the aesculapian snake (*Elaphe longissima*) called “ansa”. Among the insects there are the byctiscus populi of the hazel (*Byctiscus betulae*), whose larva develops within nests on the lower part of the leaf.

History and art. An interesting detour from the itinerary, descending towards Rovolon, involves a visit to the ruins of a medieval castle dating back to the 11th century. The castle belonged to the Maltravesi family and was destroyed in 1295. It played an important strategic role in the northern territory of the Euganean Hills, which was contended for by Padova and Vicenza. The top of Monte Grande is crowned by a huge metallic ball containing a radar of the Experimental Centre for Hydrology Meteorology of Teolo.