

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Ophrys sphegodes

[Synonyms : *Arachnites aranifera*, *Arachnites fuciflora*, *Ophrys aranifera*, *Ophrys crucigera*, *Ophrys fucifera*, *Ophrys galeopsidea*, *Ophrys sphecodes*]

EARLY SPIDER ORCHID is an orchid. Native to Europe (including Britain) it has yellowish-green to brownish-red flowers each with often yellow-edged, dark red or deep blue-patched, reddish-brown lip.

It is also known as *Calabrone* (Italian), *Ofrio aranea* (Esperanto), *Ophrys araignée* (French), Spider orchid, Spider orchis, *Spinnenorchis* (Dutch), *Spinnen Ragwurz* (German), *Tegeirian Copyn* (Welsh), and *Tořič pavoukonosný* (Czech).

The flowers are pollinated (it would seem sparingly) by a particular species of bee which is under the illusion that it is copulating with the bee-like flower.

It is a protected plant in Britain under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Sphegodes is a corruption of Latin *sphecodes* derived from Greek *spheco-* (wasp) component meaning ‘wasp-like’.

The dried ground roots of early spider orchid were once used for making bread or the traditional salep once drunk as a food in Europe (given especially to children and convalescents).

The plant is rare in Britain today but if it can be found anywhere there it will be in the County of Dorset on the eastern edges of the West Country – and the Dorset Wildlife Trust has adopted the flower as their emblem.