

## Spring awakening

This year spring arrived quite late in Norway. Walking through the forest, we saw a lot of changes in the landscape. The first thing that popped into our eyes were the endless amount of spring flowers. They grow all over the forests ground like a carpet.

One of the first flowers that appear, due to more light in the woods, is the "*Anemone nemorosa*" in Austria called "*Buschwindröschen*". It is clearly one of my favorite flowers!

### ANEMONE NEMOROSA

"*Anemonoides nemorosa*" is a rhizomatous herbaceous perennial plant less than 30 centimeters in height. The compound basal leaves are palmate or ternate (divided into three lobes). They grow from underground root-like stems called rhizomes and die back down by mid-summer (summer dormant).

The plants start blooming in spring, March to May, soon after the foliage emerges from the ground. The flowers are solitary, held above the foliage on short stems, with a whorl of three palmate or palmately-lobed leaflike bracts beneath. The flowers are 2 centimeters diameter, with six or seven (and on rare occasions eight to ten) tepals (petal-like segments) with many stamens. In the wild the flowers are usually white but may be pinkish, lilac, or blue, and often have a darker tint on the backs of the tepals.



The next flower we found was not as numerous as the "*Anemone nemorosa*". It was the "*Viola*" in Austria called "*Veilchen*" – a tiny beautiful blue flower. They seem to hide between other flowers rather than creating a carpet of flowers.

### VIOLA

Typically have heart-shaped or kidney-shaped, scalloped leaves, though a number have linear or palmate leaves.

The flowers of most of the species are strongly zygomorphic with bilateral symmetry and solitary, but occasionally form cymes. The flowers are formed from five petals; four are upswept or fan-shaped with two per side, and there is one, broad, lobed lower petal pointing downward. This petal may be slightly or much shorter than the others and is weakly differentiated. The shape of the petals and placement defines many species, for example, some species have a "spur" on the end of each petal while most have a spur on the lower petal. The spur may vary from scarcely exerted (projecting) to very long, such as in *Viola rostrata*.

The flowers have five free stamens with short free filaments that are oppressed against the ovary, with a dorsal connective appendage that is large, entire, and oblong to ovate. The stigmas are head-like, narrowed or often beaked. The flowers have a superior ovary with one cell, which has three placentae, containing many ovules.



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As I walked down the path to the coastline, I tried to keep my eyes open and then I found another small blue flower. It was the "*Gentiana*", in Austria called "*Enziane*".

### GENTIANA

is a genus of flowering plants belonging to the gentian family (Gentianaceae), the tribe Gentianeae, and the monophyletic subtribe Gentianinae. With about 400 species it is considered a large genus. They are notable for their mostly large, trumpet-shaped flowers, which are often of an intense blue.

The genus name is a tribute to Gentius, an Illyrian king who may have been the discoverer of tonic properties in gentians.

Many gentians are difficult to grow outside their wild habitat, but several species are available in cultivation. Gentians are fully hardy and can grow in full sun or partial shade. They grow in well-drained, neutral-to-acid soils rich in humus. They are popular in rock gardens.



The last flower we found was bright yellow. It is called "*Ficaria verna*", in Austria called "*Scharbockskraut*".

### FICARIA VERNA

is a hairless perennial, with spirally-arranged cordate dark-green leaves without stipules. It produces actinomorphic (radially symmetrical) flowers with 3 sepaloid tepals and 7 to 12 glossy yellow petaloid tepals. Double flowered varieties also occur. The stamens and carpels are numerous, and the fruit is a single-seeded achene with a very short style. In several subspecies, tubers are formed in the leaf axils after flowering. It blooms between March and May:

It prefers bare, damp ground. Many specialist plantsmen, nursery owners and discerning gardeners in the UK and Europe collect selected cultivars of the plant, including bronze-leaved and double-flowered ones.



All the flowers can finally bloom as the sun can reach down to the ground. Everytime worth taking a walk and admiring the variety of colors, shapes, and smells.



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Not only flowers dominate the springtime, also different bushes and of course the trees. Right next to the path were growing a lot of “Blackberry bushes”, in Austrian “Brombeersträucher”.

### **BLACKBERRY BUSH**

Bramble bushes have long, thorny, arching shoots and root easily. They send up long, arching canes that typically do not flower or set fruit until the second year of growth; some varieties, known as everbearing or primocane bearing produce fruit on the tips of first-year canes. Brambles usually have trifoliate or palmately-compound leaves.

Bramble fruits are aggregate fruits. Each small unit is called a drupelet. In some, such as the blackberry, the flower receptacle is elongated and part of the ripe fruit, making the blackberry an aggregate-accessory fruit.



The trees that dominated the forest were the beech, the birch, and the pine. Also, some young maple trees were scattered all over the forest.



## Spring awakening

When I looked up at the trees, I saw something weird growing out of a tree. It almost looked like a tumor and clearly was not good for the tree. This weird thing that is growing out of the tree is caused when the tree was not pruned correctly. Pruning is an important part of tree care that is performed for aesthetic and plant health reasons. For those that are unaware, pruning is the removal of living, dead and dying parts of the trees to benefit the tree's well-being. You should prune a tree to remove damaged or diseased branches which will stress the plant.

But in this area, it is not allowed to prune, damage, or cut trees. This is because the forest is protected by law. It is an offence to prune, fell or otherwise damage a tree without first giving notice to the Council.



Sadly, we saw another not so pretty phenomenon observing some trees. They were dying because they got infected by a fungus which blocks the trees water system. The branches all wilt and then die. It is also called “Elm Disease”.

And finally, we made some furry friends. Every year in spring the lambs are born and jump happy around on the fields.

