

## Samonikle sadne vrste v Republiki Hrvaški

### Wild growing fruit species in Republic of Croatia

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Thanks to its geographical position and preservation of natural habitats, Croatia distinguishes itself from many other small countries by great biodiversity of wild growing fruit species. After study of existing literature data and terrain exploration, a large number of species are found in following genus: *Rosa* (37 taxa), *Rubus* (33 taxa), *Prunus* (21 taxa), *Sorbus* (13 taxa), *Crataegus* (10 taxa), *Ribes* (9 taxa), *Fragaria* (6 taxa), *Malus* (5 taxa), *Cornus* (4 taxa), *Pyrus* (4 taxa), *Vaccinium* (4 taxa), *Corylus* (3 taxa), *Sambucus* (3 taxa), *Juglans* (2 taxa) and *Castanea* (1 taxa). Owing to long-lasting process of natural selection, wild fruit species have adapted to ecological conditions of habitats and developed natural resistance mechanisms to biotic and abiotic environmental factors. It has been assumed that populations of wild fruit species in Croatia are unique, and that nutritional value of their fruits are exceptionally better in comparison to commercially grown fruit varieties.

Fruits of free growing wild fruit species are gathered from the nature by local inhabitants, weekenders and excursionists. There are also a great number of examples when wild growing fruit species are utilise as rootstock in production of cultivated woody fruit species.

The main research purpose in framework of project “Biodiversity of wild growing fruits populations in Croatia” is to establish a representations of individual wild fruit species from genus *Rubus*, *Vaccinium*, *Fragaria* and *Prunus* over the Croatian territory, and, based on knowledge of their characteristics, to estimate potential and theirs utilisation in the future.