

Social news

Second Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (May 14–19, 2012)

Following the successful First Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, organized at 12 locations across Croatia in late May–early June of 2011, the Croatian Botanical Society with many associates organized the Second Week in the spring of 2012 (May 14–19, 2012). Various free events open daily to the public were organized in 14 Croatian botanical gardens, arboreta and several other facilities with smaller plant collections. About ten thousand visitors participated in 187 garden-events. The dates suggested to the garden-managements as reference points were May 15 (International Day of Families), May 18 (International Plant Conservation Day and International Museum Day) and May 22 (International Day for Biological Diversity).

This year's central event (Opening ceremony) was organized in the oldest Croatian statutorily protected monument of horticultural architecture (since 1947), Opeka Arboretum in Vinica (near the city of Varaždin), founded in the 17th Century. As that Arboretum – once upon a time a fairytale place – today has no full-time employees, the organisation of the events was carried out by the Public Institution for the Management of Protected Natural Areas in the Varaždin county and the near-by high school, named after the Arboretum Opeka Marčan. At the opening ceremony, students and their teachers presented a lovely costumed role play about the noble family that established the Arboretum (»The love story of Countess Fernandine Bombelles«), and demonstrated various crafts and school-projects all across the Park (making bird-cages and »hotels« for insects, stone-carving, florist and gardening workshops, etc.). Another important Week-event was organized in the Fran Kušan Pharmaceutical Botanical Garden (Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry of Zagreb University): the re-opening of the Herbarium with ca 36 000 plant specimens collected by the famous Croatian botanist Fran Kušan, which is kept in the Garden. The second statutorily protected Zagreb University Botanical Garden, of the Faculty of Science, this year – beside everything else – organized many events for pre-school children: the »Amazing Forest« exhibition, puppet-shows and story-telling features inside the large Persian Ironwood Tree (*Parrotia persica*). In Dubrovnik, many pupils, citizens and tourists attended workshops and guided tours across the garden on the island of Lokrum (Botanical Garden of the Institute for Marine and Coastal Research, University of Dubrovnik), famous for its collection of Australian plants. Besides lectures, tours and presentations given daily in the Kotišina Visitors Centre of the Biokovo Mountain Botanical Garden (Nature Park Biokovo, city of Makarska), the Garden staff organized several events with children – for children (»Villa Kamenjarka – Legend of the Mt Biokovo Villas«, »A Looong Journey of a Short



Fig. 1. In the crown of a large Persian Ironwood Tree. »Inside the Magic Tree«, the youngest visitors of the Botanical Garden of the Faculty of Science (University of Zagreb) are listening to the well-known Croatian Tale of Long-Ago, »Stribor's Forest«, written a century ago by the famous Croatian children's writer and Nobel-prize nominee, Ivana Brlić Mažuranić (photo by Vanja Stamenković)



Fig. 2. High-and-low garden collaboration. As the Velebit Botanical Garden (NP Northern Velebit) is in May still under snow, biologist Tea Šilić brings the mountainous garden down to the coast: children in the Natural History Museum Rijeka, owner of the Liburnian Karst Botanical Collection, learning about plant adaptations to the rugged high-mountain conditions (photo by Anita Hodak)

Snail«, »The Brave Adventures of Lapitch«). Because the Mt Velebit Botanical Garden (Northern Velebit National Park) is in mid-May still under a thick snow-cap, the resources manager of the National Park Service went on a tour, this year again, »carrying« the Garden to the coastal cities of Zadar and Rijeka, where she organized workshops for children, lectures and exhibitions for adults. The coastal city of Kaštela is home to the Ostrog Elementary School Botanical Garden, long-known and statutorily protected for its rich exotic plants collection. Pupils and their teachers prepared various workshops and guided tours, gladly attended by the local citizens and many tourists.

Three new gardens joined the Week in 2012, and one of them was, also in the city of Kaštela, the Biblical Garden of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of a Hundred Rosaries. The manager of the Garden prepared the guided tours, photo-exhibition and lectures with a theme of biblical plants and herbs. The city of Karlovac (central Croatia) is famous for its gardens and parks: two of them joined the Second Week, preparing various events for their students and opening their doors to the public. These are the Arboretums of Karlovac Grammar School and the Forestry and Carpentry High School.

The only Croatian arboretum to participate in the First, but not in the Second Week was Lisičine Arboretum on the slopes of Mt Papuk (NW Croatia), and for a very good reason; that large arboretum, badly damaged during the Croatian War of Independence (1991 – 1995), had prepared an extensive project founded by European Union, and was in 2012 subjected to a broad reconstruction. At the beginning of the forthcoming Third National Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta in 2013, that beautiful arboretum has been chosen to organize the Opening ceremony, to show its new face to the public. The event in



Fig. 3. Island Garden Joy. Dubrovnik elementary school pupils taking part in an art-workshop on Lokrum Island (Botanical Garden of the Institute for Marine and Coastal Research, University of Dubrovnik): catching the essence of the Australian plant collection far-away from its home (photo by Nenad Jasprica)

Lisičine Arboretum will be organized by Croatian Forests – Forest Administration branch Našice.

The Third Week of Croatian Botanical Gardens and Arboreta across the country will be organised from Monday 13th to Saturday 18th of May, 2013, under the auspices and general sponsorship of Croatian Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection.

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