

VIJESTI

The 8th Croatian Botanical Symposium with international participation held in 2025 in Osijek (Croatia)

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From 3rd to 6th September 2025, the welcoming city of Osijek became a vibrant meeting point of botanists and plant scientists from across Croatia and abroad, as it hosted the 8th *Croatian Botanical Symposium* with international participation. For the first time, this central national event of Croatian botany was held in eastern Croatia, jointly organized by the Croatian Botanical Society and the Faculty of Agrobiotechnical Sciences of the University of Osijek. The joint organization brought new energy and perspective to a long-standing tradition that began more than two decades ago.

The Symposium gathered 140 participants, representing the work of over 300 scientists from Croatia, neighbouring countries, and the wider international community. The scientific programme, designed by the International Scientific Committee, encompassed seven thematic sections, four plenary lectures, and a total of 30 oral and 58 poster presentations. This diverse programme reflected the ever-expanding scope of botanical research — from classical disciplines such as floristics, phylogeny, and vegetation science to contemporary and interdisciplinary fields including urban ecology, the application of machine learning in floristic data analysis, and holistic approaches to studying the impact of climate change on forest ecosystems.



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A particularly valued reintroduction to the programme was the *Education Section for Teachers*, aimed at bridging the gap between research and education. The section fostered direct dialogue between scientists and educators, exploring ways to integrate botanical knowledge and awareness into the broader educational system. Such initiatives highlight the Symposium's role not only as a scientific platform but also as a driver of public understanding of plants and environmental stewardship.



The official language of the meeting was English, underscoring the Symposium's growing international profile and commitment to collaboration across borders. At the same time, several sessions in Croatian reaffirmed the importance of developing and maintaining scientific communication in the national language — a balance that reflects both global openness and local identity.

Beyond its academic content, the Symposium had a celebratory note: two remarkable anniversaries marked this year's gathering — the 12th year of publication of the journal *Glasnik Hrvatskog botaničkog društva* and the 100th anniversary of *Acta Botanica Croatica*, the country's oldest botanical journal and one of the most respected scientific periodicals in the region. One evening of the Symposium was dedicated to honouring these milestones, while another featured an enthralling public lecture by Stribor Marković on the social perception of plants, illustrating the way in which botany resonates beyond the scientific sphere in culture and society.

On September 6th, the meeting culminated in a field excursion to Kopački rit Nature Park, one of Europe's largest preserved wetlands. Participants experienced firsthand the ecological richness and complexity of this Ramsar site and discussed the relevance of botanical research in conservation practice. The excursion offered a fitting conclusion: a reminder that scientific insight gains its full meaning only when connected with the living landscapes it seeks to understand and protect.

In these four inspiring days, Osijek was transformed into a hub of scientific exchange, collegial spirit, and new beginnings. Particularly noteworthy was the strong participation of students and early-career researchers, many of whom delivered their first oral presentations. The atmosphere was both professional and welcoming — a reflection of a scientific community that values openness, mentorship, and the sharing of knowledge.

The 8th *Croatian Botanical Symposium* has reaffirmed its position as the central national and regional



gathering of botanists, while simultaneously expanding its international outlook. By combining traditional expertise with new methodologies and perspectives, it demonstrated that Croatian botany continues to evolve, growing stronger, more

collaborative, and more relevant. Much like the plants it celebrates, the community itself continues to grow: rooted in tradition, branching toward the future, and blooming with ideas that transcend disciplines and borders.