

## Jozo Franjić (1966–2021)

Croatia's small botanical community mourns the premature and sudden loss of our professor, colleague and friend Jozo Franjić, who passed away on 7 November 2021. Jozo Franjić (Fig. 1) was a Croatian scientist and a full professor at the Department of Forestry Genetics, Dendrology and Botany, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology, University of Zagreb.

Professor Franjić was born on 7 January 1966 in Musić (near the town of Đakovo), Croatia. He completed his undergraduate studies in forestry at the Faculty of Forestry in 1990 and received his MSc degree in 1993 and PhD in biology under the mentorship of Professor Emeritus Ivo Trinajstić at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Zagreb, in 1996. He spent his whole working life at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology teaching botany and related courses. He was a devoted professor, especially emphasizing practical courses and fieldwork, trying not only to transfer knowledge about plants to students but also to arouse their interest in and love for the natural world. He always tried to arouse students' interest in ongoing research into the complex relationships among the different parts of ecosystems. As a passionate hunter, he went around and got to know many diverse natural areas, so that he had a good feeling for how to organize very interesting fieldwork across the whole of the country, in both the lowlands and the mountains, as well as in the coastal region. Many generations of foresters have happy memories of fieldwork in botany with Professor Franjić.

Furthermore, he took on many responsibilities in the management of the Faculty, especially during the Bologna-induced reform of study programmes. He was Head of the Department of Research in Forestry (2003–2004), Head of the Department of Forestry Genetics, Dendrology and Botany (2004–2008), Vice Dean of the Department of Forestry (2004–2006) and Dean (2006–2008). While he was Dean, the Faculty moved into new buildings, equipped with laboratories and student practical work classrooms.

Although Professor Franjić always had many duties and interests, his real passion was observing and exploring the natural world around him. He was a real old-fashioned field botanist. From an early age, he was distinguished by his curiosity, refined feeling for nature and a great desire to explore and understand it, especially plants and forests. He



Fig. 1. Jozo Franjić (1966–2021)

published over 100 scientific and professional papers. He began his scientific career studying morphological variability of common oak populations in Croatia. Plant taxonomy and the morphological and genetic variability of various plant taxa remained the focus of his interest in the following years. His persistence and enormous energy led to the establishment and equipping of the Molecular Biology Laboratory at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology.

He also researched into the distribution of alien plant species in Croatia and made a great contribution to many phytosociological research in his many papers dealing with the distribution, syntaxonomy and structure of plant communities in Croatia and Southeast Europe. While working on various scientific and professional projects, he conducted floristic and phytosociological research in almost the whole of the Republic of Croatia (especially in the areas of Baranja and Spačva, on mountains such as Dilj, Papuk, Krndija, Kalnik, Žumberak, Samoborsko Gorje, Velebit, Biokovo, and also on the island of Mljet) as well as in neighbouring countries. In addition, he authored numerous articles in which he popularized the flora of Croatia and other parts of the world, trying to bring plants closer to foresters and to the general public. He also published four university textbooks with surveys of forest flora and woody species in the Republic of Croatia.

Working through many scientific and professional associations, Professor Franjić promoted botany and nature conservation trying to connect professionals working in different disciplines (foresters, biologists, ecologists, agronomists, etc.). He always tried to apply complementary knowledge from these different scientific disciplines in nature conservation as well as in sustainable use of nature for human needs. Professor Franjić was a member of the Academy of Forestry Sciences, Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Processing Engineers, Croatian Forestry Society, Croatian Botanical Society, Croatian Biological Society, Eastern Alpine and Dinaric Society for Vegetation Ecology, and the International Association for Vegetation Science.

Unfortunately, the rich and meaningful career of Professor Franjić was abruptly interrupted by a short but serious illness. He had planned, started, conceived and imagined so much more. However, Professor Jozo Franjić's name will go down in the history of Croatian botany and of forestry science as one of those productive researchers who contributed to a better knowledge and understanding of Croatian flora and plant communities. To all of us he will remain a dear colleague and friend, an enthusiastic researcher and nature lover who lived his life to the fullest.

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