

Toni Nikolić – *Flora Croatica: Vaskularna flora Republike Hrvatske*, vols. 1-4 (2019-2020)

Although it is not large in area, the territory of the Republic of Croatia consists of four big European biogeographical regions: Alpine, Mediterranean, Pannonian and Continental. In addition, it is a significant refugial area, and characterized by a great diversity of relief, climate, geology and habitats. Consequently, Croatia has rich and diverse flora which is comparable to some other countries of south-

ern Europe. The rich plant life from ancient times has attracted many researchers, however, the last comprehensive review of plant taxa was published in 1869 (Schlosser and Vukotinović 1869), and last field key for vascular plant identification in 1967 (Domac 1967). For that reason, there is a need for quality, comprehensive work that will give an overview and evaluation of vascular plant taxa of this area.



Fig. 1. Cover pages of all four volumes of the book *Flora Croatica. Vaskularna flora Republike Hrvatske*, vols. 1-4, by Toni Nikolić (2019-2020).

A new book in four volumes, in Croatian, entitled “Flora Croatica. Vaskularna flora Republike Hrvatske” by the author Toni Nikolić is presented here (Fig. 1). The publisher is Alfa d.d., Zagreb (Croatia). This comprehensive work is based on a centuries-old botanical tradition in Croatia. In addition, it brings modern scientific knowledge from various botanical disciplines about vascular plants growing in Croatia. Conceptually, the book is in line with the relevant botanical literature.

For the first time, after more than 150 years of emptiness in the botanical profession, this work unites and presents and evaluates the entire vascular flora of Croatia in the Croatian language. Flora and systematic botany are the basis for all other disciplines and branches of botany, and knowledge of flora enables a better future for the entire botanical community in Croatia.

Volume one (Flora Croatica 1, 2020, 262 pp., ISBN 978-953-364-101-0) is an introductory book in which a historical background of botanical research in the area is presented. In addition, the main features and richness of the flora of Croatia (endemism, use value, endangerment and protection), family synopsis and overview of basic morphological terms (Fig. 2). At the end of the book the author gives an extensive list of references and a general index.

In the second (Flora Croatica 2, 2020, 854 pp., ISBN 978-953-364-290-1) and third (Flora Croatica 3, 2020, 704 pp., ISBN 978-953-364-291-8) volumes, the keys for determination from the level of macrogroups to the level of subspecies are presented, together with the accompanying data for each processed taxon. Here the author presents many new insights from the fields of systematic botany and taxonomy. The text is well supported by numerous photographs and

original drawings of the details necessary to distinguish and determine plant taxa.

The fourth volume (Flora Croatica 4, 2019, 664 pp., ISBN 978-953-364-140-9) is the excursion flora, a reduced key to determination that is practical and suitable for field use.

This book will be valuable source of information to any nature explorer, and a must for any botanist interested in the biodiversity and biogeography of vascular plants of the Croatia. It will also serve as a promoter and conservation source of vascular plants, as well as a sound grounding for further scientific activities in the area. Additionally, it is supposed to be a textbook for students attending any course on Croatian flora at the University of Zagreb, and other Croatian universities.

All in all, the book, which has significantly raised the standard for future similar publications even on the international market, makes an impression on the reader and one must give all due credit to the authors for a great effort – an example to be followed. The book layout is fabulous and the print is spotless. Book is highly-recommended for all of you.

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References

- Domac, R., 1967. *Ekskurzijska flora Hrvatske i susjednih područja* [Excursion flora Croatia and neighbouring areas]. Institut za botaniku Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Zagreb.
- Schlosser, J.C.K., Vukotinović, Lj., 1869. *Flora Croatica. Sump-tibus et auspiciis academiae scientiarum et artium slavorum meridionalium*, Zagreb, I-CXLI, 1–1362.