

Contribuții Botanice – 2013, XLVIII: 95
Grădina Botanică “Alexandru Borza”
Cluj-Napoca



GIURGIU V. (ed.) - 2013, *Virgin and quasi-virgin forests of Romania*,
Ed. Acad. Române, București, 390 pp. (*Pădurile virgine și
cvasivirgine ale României*).

This volume (edited with the support of WWF-Romania) comprises, *in extenso* and in Romanian, with an English abstract, the papers presented at the Symposium “*On virgin and quasi virgin forests of Romania*” (February 24, 2012).

If at the Symposium on “*Naturalité et forêts de l'Europe*” (October 1997, Strasbourg, organized by the well known specialist Prof. Dr. Annik Schnitzler), the majority of the participants were surprised by the two presentations addressing the structure of quasi-virgin forests in Romania, today it is recognized that our country ranks first in the EU regarding the surface area of virgin and quasi-virgin forests.

Despite this fact and the recognition of virgin forests as “*a structural and functional archetype for cultivated forests*” (Bândiu, p. 177) or as a “*source of ecological solutions for the sustainable management of forests intended for economic-social activities*” (Giurgiu, p. 385), paradoxically, today in Romania “*no reference to forest protection has been included in the Constitution...*” (Stoiculescu, p. 185), and the anthropic impact on these real national treasures becomes increasingly obvious and difficult to control.

In the first part of this volume, the review of the virgin forests of Romania that currently represent only about 1% of those existing in the pre-Dacian period (Giurgiu) is followed by the definition of the concept of virgin and quasi-virgin forest, the presentation of the identification and ecological evaluation criteria (Doniță *et al.*), as well as by a general characterization of the biodiversity of these forests (Giurgiu).

Another group of articles address the specific biodiversity (species richness) and the genetic biodiversity of Cormophytes (Șofletea *and* Curtu), of the invertebrate and vertebrate fauna of these forests (Radu), the specific diversity of the thallophytes and herbaceous cover of such ecosystems (Radu), as well as ecosystemic (Giurgiu) and landscape diversity (Radu *and* Giurgiu) or the ecological role of dead wood in such forests (Radu *and* Coandă).

The majority of the articles concern a particular type of virgin and quasi-virgin forest (e.g. virgin beech forests in Romania – Stoiculescu, spruce fir forests with *Pinus cembra* in the Călimani Mountains – Popa *and* Sidor), aspects of the structural dynamics of forests in some protected areas (e.g. beech forests in the Izvoarele Nerei-Semenic reserve – Tomescu *et al.*, in the Humosu-Suceava reserve – Roibu, or in two reserves in the Penteleu Mountain – Dolocan), or the spatial dynamics of this type of forest in the Rusca Montană drainage basin (Frank), or the dendrochronological series of virgin forests in the Romanian Carpathians (Popa *and* Sidor).

Towards the end of the volume, Radu presents the objectives and the main results of the PIN-MATRA/2001/018 Project, the opinion of foreign specialists on the virgin and quasi-virgin forests of Romania, and Giurgiu describes the criteria and the indicators used for the characterization of these types of forests.

We believe that because of its content, this volume should be consulted not only by those with a particular interest in forests but also by biologists, ecologists and all those who feel concerned with the future of nature in Romania.

Vasile CRISTEA