

The Flora



Of The Central Balkan National Park, Bulgaria



Central Balkan has an exceptional wealth and diversity of plants: it is a habitat of more than 2350 diverse species and sub-species of plants. There are many rare and endangered species occurring in the park.



The impressive plant species diversity and the high level of endemism are among the unique characteristics of the Central Balkan National Park. There are:

- **1900 higher plants,**
 - **188 algae,**
 - **229 mosses**
- **15 species of ferns.**



This is more than 50% of the Bulgarian flora diversity.

The park's territory is an extraordinary representative example of the process of evolution of the recent flora. The Central Balkan includes a speciation center where new plant species are formed. The park has the biggest concentration of Bulgarian endemic plant species in the country. There are:

- **11 species and subspecies of local endemics,**
- **23 Bulgarian endemics,**
- **57 Balkan endemic plant species.**



The Central Balkan National Park contains 61% forests with total area of 440 km², and 39% mountain pastures and meadows with total area of 277 km².





Beech forests are the dominant vegetation in the park and occupy **44 %** of the park's territory. Together with the beech-tree woods in immediate proximity to the park they form the widest and most homogenous beech-tree massif in whole Europe - approximately **600 km²**.



European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

Бук

It is a large deciduous tree, capable of reaching heights of up to 49 m and 3 m trunk diameter. The crown is domed on radiating branches. The bark is smooth, silvery gray, and slightly roughed in old trees. Leaves are oval. In autumn they are colored in orange-gray and in spring their color is exceptional – pale green and sparkling.



Blueberry

(*Vaccinium myrtillus*)

Боровинка

The Blueberry is a low deciduous bush – up to 40 cm. The stems are branched and with ribbed, green branches. The leaves are toothed along the edge. The fruit is rounded, dark-blue to black, fleshy with numerous seeds. The Blueberry is abundant in the subalpine zone of the Central Balkan National Park, where it forms communities with the Siberian juniper.



Balkan daphne

(*Daphne blagayana*)

Благаево бясно дръвче

It is a small evergreen bush distributed in Central and Southeastern Europe. In Bulgaria it inhabits only the region of the Central Balkan, occurs in individual plants, predominantly on limestone rocks at an elevation of 1500 to 1900 m, in steep and stony habitats often as an element of the juniper communities. It blossoms from April through June, and the fruits ripen from July through August.





Marsh Marigold

(*Caltha palustris*)

Обикновен блатняк

This plant is known by a variety of names as Marsh Marigold, Kindcup, Mayflower, Mollyblobs, Water Bubbles and etc. Marsh Marigold is a herbaceous plant with hollow stems- up to 80 cm height. The leaves are rounded to kidney-shaped and the flowers are bright yellow. All parts of the plant are poisonous in fresh state.

Marsh Marigold is a plant commonly mentioned in literature, for example from William Shakespeare.

It occurs in wet lands, marshes and fens.





Edelweiss

(*Leontopodium alpinum*)

Еделвайс

This species is credited as a symbol of mountain tourism. It is perennial grass plant, high up to 12 cm, covered thickly by whitish hairs. It blossoms from June to August. The small inflorescences at the top of the stems are surrounded by narrow leaves, which determine the specific shape of the plant. Edelweiss occurs on limestone rocks in the Park`s subalpine zone.

The Edelweiss is protected and listed in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria.





Globe flower

(Trollius europaeus)

Планински божур

The Globe flower is a tall perennial plant up to 1m in height with a bright yellow, globe-shaped flower up to 3 cm across. It is slightly poisonous and is purgative and rubefacient when used fresh.

This species occurs on wet places within the subalpine belt of the Central Balkan.

The Globe flower is protected and listed in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria.



Belladonna

(*Atropa belladonna*)

Лудо биле

This is a perennial tall plant (up to 3 m), with very typical large leaves, dark red to brown flowers and glimmer dark fleshy fruits. The plant is very poisonous but is also a very useful medicinal plant in Europe. It was named after the Greek mythical character Atropa. The Belladonna occurs near the beech forest in the Central Balkan.

The Belladonna is protected species, listed in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria.



Janka`s Lily

(*Lilium jankae*)

Самодивско лале

It is also called Yellow mountain lily or Wood- nymph tulip. This species is one of the most beautiful plants of Central Balkan National Park. It is a perennial plant with yellow flowers.

Janka`s Lily occurs in the pastures and meadows in the Park`s subalpine zone.

The Janka`s Lily is a Balkan endemic species, protected and listed in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria and the Red List of IUCN.



Red Houseleek

(*Sempervivum erythreum*)

Червеникав дебелец

This species is a succulent plant with typical rosette at the base and with beautiful pink to red flowers. It reaches height up to 20 cm.

It occurs on stony and rocky habitats mostly within the subalpine zone of the Central Balkan National Park.

The Red Houseleek is a Balkan endemic species.



Bulgarian Betony

(*Betonica bulgarica*)

Българска бетония



This species is a perennial plant with opposite leaves and densely situated purple flowers. It occurs on open places within the forest meadows and in the subalpine zone of the Central Balkan.

The Bulgarian Betony is a narrow endemic species which occurs only in the Central Balkan National Park.