

ALPTREES 2nd Gorenjska Regional Workshop on Non-native Tree Species

Date: 13th May 2021

Location: Zoom platform

Organisers: Development Agency Sora in cooperation with ALPTREES project partner: Slovenian Forestry Institute

Workshop design and implementation: Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation

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CONCLUSIONS

- Adaptation in a light of climate change is becoming a crucial factor in urban tree planting planning. Maintaining diversity should play a key role and the use of NNT should only be considered as a last resort, acceptable in extreme habitats, where the demanding growth conditions allow but a select number of species to thrive; in meadows, optimal growth conditions enable the use of a large range of species, including a variety of native tree species.
- *Fraxinus ornus* has proved to be the most adaptable native tree and seems to thrive in urban areas. On the other hand, NNT such as the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and the Pawlonia tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) currently remain the number one cause of issues. In Maribor, Staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) tends to be the source of similar problems. These particular species abilities to colonize new areas is extremely high, consequently a systematically replacement is currently underway.
- There is a shortage of native tree species planting material in Slovenia, especially those suitable for urban planting. Flora is a landscaping company based in the City Council of Kranj; they currently import the necessary seedlings from Belgium.
- Damage events caused reforestation should be based on the use of native tree species; the development of so called "container" seedlings is a viable possibility due to the availability of various sources of state funding.
- Currently, not many NNT species are found in our forests and forest reserves. In Triglav National Park it is explicitly prohibited the introduction of non-native species, however due to a constant pressure from its surrounding areas, the establishment of new individuals and populations in the park are not an uncommon sight. Usually, such events can be found in forest gaps, created after logging and disturbances.
- We should aim to strive for stable and highly diverse plant populations in forests; native tree species must always be preferred.

- Many native species contain great use potential, but are often overlooked. We should shift some of the focus on researching the number of ways the native species can be utilized. Forest owners should also have a possibility to choose.
- The importance of public awareness and education on NNT in urban areas should not be overlooked; on the other hand educating private forest owners is also needed.