

Biokovo Botanical Garden Kotišina

It is located on the coastal slopes of the mountain slope above the village Kotišina, at an altitude of 350-500 meters and is an integral part of Biokovo Nature Park.

The garden was founded by Dr. Fra Jure Radić (1920-1990), a Franciscan priest and scholar, with the purpose of scientific research and monitoring, protection, conservation, and popularization of the flora of Biokovo. This is not a botanical garden in the classic sense, where each plant is brought by certain rules, but is designed as a "walled part of nature", which will retain the natural vegetation forms with its native flora. For a relatively small area of 16.5 hectares there are highly diverse habitats such as rock gardens, screes, precipitous rocks, arable land, and the Proslap canyon with the same name waterfall, which is most of the year is dry, and comes alive only during heavy rains.

On the surface of the garden there are approximately 300 wild plant species, typical of the Mediterranean to the mountains, and in some areas exotic, agricultural and medicinal herbs are planted. Among the perennials in the garden, in spring especially impressive is the Adriatic iris (*Iris pseudopallida* Redaction), with its large purple flowers. The Dalmatian is endemic to the family Iridaceae, it grows on the rocks and notches with paths. White or pale pink flowers in early autumn in the garden bloom called Neapolitan Cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium* Aiton.) from the family Primulaceae, which in summer is lost completely above ground parts, and it usually survives drought and heat in the form of underground stems (tubers). Its flowers appear before leafing between loose rock material on notches. In the spring and early summer the garden is luxurious and full of colorful flowers, while the rest of the year there are always a few hidden flowers.

Through the garden run several hiking trails that are located along the educational panels, and certain plant species are clearly marked with the name of the family and species.

The main entrance to the garden in the rock are the words engraved in the memory of Dr. Fra Jure Radić, and near the entrance, along the cliff, there are large castle walls - fortifications from the 17th century with a very impressive appearance.

At the site of the present church of **St. Ante** in **Kotišina**, which was built in the period from 1901 to 1903, there was an old church in which was restored in 1672, but there is nothing but a preserved inscription on the apse of the church today. It speaks of the sanctification of the church, which was conducted 27.4.1681, during the Turkish rule of Bishop Lišnjčić.

The memorial home "Mrin Kovačević" in the village of Kotišina has info and a presentation center of the Nature Park Biokovo, which is open during the summer months for visitors, while the rest of the year can be visited by appointment.

REFERENCES:

REGULA-BEVILACQUA LJ. (1998.): Kotišina Biokovo Botanical Garden: A Guide. ecological Bulletin, Donja Lomnica, 1-119.



Iris pseudopallida Trinajstić – Iris Adriatic, Dalmatian endemic



Canyon Proslap during heavy rains



Cyclamen hederifolium Aiton. – Neapolitan cyclamen



Words carved into the rock at the entrance of the Biokovo Botanical Garden Kotišina



Castle from the 17th century