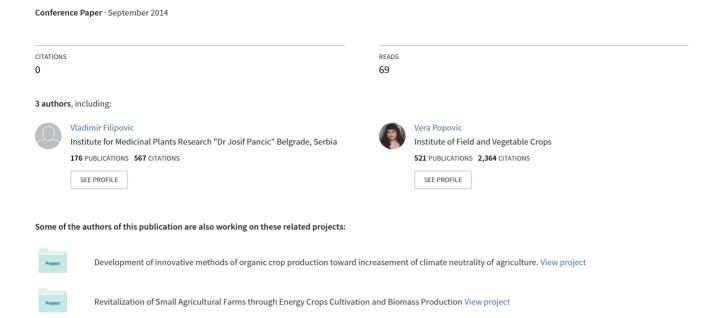
Flowering period length and seed quality of medical honey plants.



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ECO-CONFERENCE® 2014 ECOLOGICAL MOVEMENT OF NOVI SAD

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FLOWERING PERIOD LENGTH AND SEED QUALITY OF MEDICAL HONEY PLANTS

Abstract

Flowering period length of medicinal honey plants, which depends on weather conditions, later impacts the seed quality. Research of seven medicinal honey plants, conducted during 2013, showed that the beginning of the flowering time was delayed for several days which, in compare to the possible beginning and length of the flowering, shortened honey bee pasture period. There was only one exception from this case and that was the flowering of marshmallow (carlier beginning and later ending of flowering in compare to the possible beginning and length of the flowering period). For the needs of seed quality determination, authors researched the following: germination energy (GE), total germination (TG) and 1000-seed weight.

Key words: medicinal honey plants, flowering period length, seed quality

INTRODUCTION

Honey bee pasture directly depends on weather conditions and the length of plants' flowering period. After flowering period, most plants in the group of medicinal honey plants form their reproductive organ - seed. This group of plants, that is their seed, can be used for production of medicinal raw material utilized in agro-food industry, pharmacology and cosmetics, for decoration purposes, as spices in various dishes, drinks and sweets. Some of the most common medicinal honey plants belong to the family of labiate (fam. Lamiaceae), such as: sage (Salvia officinalis L.), thyme

(*Thymus vulgaris* L.), lavender (*Lavanduale vera* DC.), hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis* L.), balm (*Melissa officinalis* L.) etc. It is important to notice that all plants stated above are perennial plants and that the economics of their production and utilization is significantly larger in compare to annual and biennial medicinal honey (for example marshmallow (*Althaea officinalis* L., fam. *Malvaceae*) and borage (*Borago officinalis* L., fam. *Boraginaceae*)).

Authors main goal in this research was to determinate the flowering period length impact on the seed quality of medicinal honey plants.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research of flowering period length and seed quality indicators of seven cultivated medicinal plant species was conducted during 2013, at plants collection of the Institute of Medicinal Plant Research "Dr Josif Pancic" in Pančevo. In this research authors used seeds of varieties and domestic populations: "Vojvođanski" marshmallow (Althaea officinalis L., fam. Malvaceae), "Citron" balm (Melissa officinalis L., fam. Lamiaceae), "N-19" thyme (Thymus vulgaris L., fam. Lamiaceae), "Coastal" sage (Salvia officinalis L., fam. Lamiaceae), "N-19" thyme (Thymus vulgaris L., fam. Lamiaceae), "Coastal" lavender (Lavanduale vera DC. fam. Lamiaceae), "Domestic purple" hyssop (Hyssopus officinalis L., fam. Lamiaceae), "Boraga" borage (Borago officinalis L., fam. Boraginaceae). Cultivated perennial plants are balm, sage, thyme, lavender and hyssop while cultivated annual plants are marshmallow and borage.

Weather indicators

Important differences in the level and distribution of precipitation and average monthly temperatures are given in the table below (Table 1). During month may 2013, precipitation was larger for approximately one third in compare to multiannual average. In the next month, and especially in July and August, amount of precipitation was 7, 4 that is 4, 5 times less, in compare to multiannual average. This impacted, together with the larger average monthly temperatures during month August, the reduction of the flowering length period.

Table 1. Precipitation sums (mm) and average monthly temperatures (°C)

Indicator Month	May	June	July	Avg	Sep	Oct	Σ / \bar{A}
Precipitation (mm) in 2013	99.7	36,4	7,9	11,1	57.7	47,5	260,3
Precipitation (mm) 2003-2012 Average monthly	64,4	87.9	58,7	50,4	43,7	51,7	356,8
temperatures (°C) in 2013 Average monthly	20,9	21,2	23,4	24,6	16,7	14,0	20,1
temperatures (°C) 2003-2012	18,6	22,0	24.3	23,6	18,6	12,6	20,0

Source: weather station PSS Institute "Tamiš" Pančevo

Monitoring of the flowering period length

Flowering period length is a time period from the opening of the first flower to the moment of the opening of the last flower. This period was compared to the flowering period length and expected amount of honey per hectare, which was given in domestic and foreign literature. In compare to the expected amount of honey per hectare and in regard to the flowering days, authors calculated theoretical possible amount of honey produced in 2013 (kg).

Laboratory research

Laboratory research of plant seed was conducted in the laboratory for seed in the Institute of Medicinal Plant Research "Dr Josif Pancic" in Pančevo, in accordance with the Regulation on agricultural plants seed quality ("Official Journal of SFRJ", no. 47/87, 60/87, 55/88 and 81/89, "Official Journal of SRJ", no. 16/92, 8/93, 21/93, 30/94, 43/96, 10/98, 15/2001 and 58/2002 and "Official Gazette of RS", no. 23/2009, 64/2010, 72/2010 and 34/2013). Research included determination of morphological/physiological characteristics (germination energy and total germination) and physical/mechanical characteristics of seed (1000-seed weight). At precise scale researchers measured seed weight and then they put seeds to germinate - 100 seeds in four repetitions, placed in Petri dishes at filter paper with added distilled water at temperature of constant 20°C. Counting of germinated seeds was conducted using binocular magnifier on fifth and fourteenth day, from the day of the experiment setup (ISTA, 2010).

Statistical analysis

Statistical significance of calculated average values was obtained using analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the help of statistical package Statistica 10 for Windows. All results were derived based on F – test and LSD – test with significance level of 5%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Flowering length

The flowering period length depends on weather conditions (Table 1), altitude, plant variety (work material), terrain configuration, insolation rate, soil type etc. Beginning of the flowering period of researched plants can vary up to 15 days in the same area, from year to year, which was the case with flowering of some plant species during 2013 (Table 2). Due to mentioned facts, in one season, honey bee societies can use two or even three bee pastures of the same plant species.

Table 2. Flowering period length and approximate quantities of some medicinal plant species in 2013

Common name	Plant species	Flowering time in 2013*	Possible flowering period length	Expected quantity of honey per hectare (kg)	Calculated possible quantity of honey per hectare in 2013 (kg)
Marshmallow	Althaea officinalis L.	20 June-18 October	June - September	50-100 (Sava and Panaitescu, 2007)	46-92
Balm	Melissa officinalis L.	23 May- 15 September	May- September	100-150 (Muntean and Marian, 2005)	80-120
Sage	Salvia officinalis L.	9 May-13 June	May- October	250-500 (BaV, 2014)	27-54
Thyme	Thymus vulgaris L.	4 May-16 June	May-July	45 (Keeping bee, 2014)	21
Lavender	Lavandula vera DC	13 May- 10 August	June- August	250-500 (Umeljić, 2006)	33-66
Hyssop	Hyssopus officinalis L.	5 June- 18 July	June- September	250-500 (BaV, 2014)	21-42
Borage	Borago officinalis L.	15 June-18 July	June- September	200 (Keeping bee, 2014)	21

Source*: Authors' data

The best results according to calculated possible quantity of honey per hecture in 2013, were achieved with marshmallow and balm. Decrease of the possible quantity of marshmallow and balm honey in 2013, in compare with expected quantity of honey per hectare, was 8% and 20%. In compare with the length of the flowering period of other plant species, these two plant species varied the least. Although marshmallow in cultivated for the medicinal purposes as annual (seldom biennial) plant, in compare with the possible flowering period length (max. 122 days), it had extension of flowering period for 8 days, which could have a positive influence on the possible amount of honey. Due to its positive characteristics, mainly due to the long pasture, marshmallow and balm are increasingly used as bee pasture (Burgett, 1980, Filipović, 2003, Chwil 2009). In 2013, the following plants had the largest decrease of honey quantity per hectare: borage (decreased for about 9,5 times), hyssop (for 11,9 times) and sage (9,1 times). Sage had the largest reduction of the flowering period and in compare to the possible flowering period length (max. 184 days), in 2013 flowering period length was only 35 days. The diversity of plant species, shrubs and trees whose blossom periods start in march and end in September, covers the entire harvesting season for been (Covaliov et al., 2012).

Seed quality of some medicinal honey plants

In table 3 are shown average values of germination energy (GE), total germination (TG) and 1000-seed weight. The largest germination is recorded in the case of balm seed (GE=81,0% and TG=89,5%), it is somewhat lesser in the case of sage seed (GE=55,8% and TG=88,0%) and borage (GE=51,0% and TG=82,3%), and the least is in the case of marshmallow (GE=22,0% and TG=57,3%) and lavender (GE=38,8% and TG=54,0%).

Table 3. Seed quality of some medicinal honey plants in 2013

Common	Plant species	Germination energy (%)	Total germination (%)	1000-seed weight (g)
Marshmallow-	Althaea officinalis L.	22,0	57,3	1,93
Balm	Melissa officinalis L.	81,0	89,5	0,51
Sage	Salvia officinalis L.	55,8	88,0	7,34
Thyme	Thymus vulgaris L.	68,5	76,8	0,17
Lavender	Lavandula vera DC	38,8	54,0	1,04
Hyssop	Hyssopus officinalis L.	29,3	76,5	0,69
Borage	Borago officinalis L.	51,0	82.3	15,88

Source: Author's data

Table 4. Variant analysis of researched seed quality indicators

Sources of variations	Df	Germination energy (%)	Total germination (%)	1000-seed weight (g)
Replications.	3	11,6	4,7	0,0
Plant species	6	1.784,3*	795,4*	135,3*
Error	18	14,6	12,2	0,0

Source: Authors' calculation

Annotation: * P≤5%

Results of medicinal honey plants' seed quality are in accordance with the results of previous domestic and foreign researches (Maletić et al., 2000, Jevđović and Filipovic, 2006, Zutic and Dudai, 2008, Berti et al., 2010, Gorai et al., 2011, Florez et al., 2012). Depending on plant species, size and biochemical composition of analyzed seeds, authors also recorded the impact on germination energy level, total germination and 1000-seed weight (Table 4). The smallest values of germination energy and total germination, recorded in marshmallow, lavender and hyssop, impacted the statistical variation (Lsd 0.05), in compare to other plant species. As expected, seeds with the largest weight (sage and borage) caused statistically important variation (Lsd 0.05).

CONCLUSION

Weather indicators (rainfalls and average monthly temperatures) significantly impacted the flowering period length and seed quality of seven species in the medicinal honey plants group. The largest number of researched plants had reduction of flowering period length, in compare to the possible flowering period length, which caused lesser honey production up to 12 times. Possible amount of honey in 2013, was in negative correlation with the seed quality indicators. Advantage in cultivation of researched plant species from the family *Lamiaceae* as honey and seed source is in their perennial life, where some species can be used up to 20 years (lavender).

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DUŽINA CVETANJA I KVALITET SEMENA LEKOVITOG MEDONOSNOG BILJA

Apstrakt

U zavisnosti od vremenskih uslova, zavisi i dužina trajanja perioda cvetanja lekovitog medonosnog bilja, a kasnije i kvalitet semena. U istraživanjima sedam lekovitih medonosnih biljnih vrsta sprovedenim u toku 2013. godine, početak perioda cvetanja kasnio je za nekoliko dana što je, u odnosu na mogući početak i dužinu trajanja perioda cvetanja, skratilo period pčelinje paše. Jedina biljna vrsta koja je pokazala produžetak perioda cvetanja bila je beli slez (raniji početak i kasniji završetak cvetanja u odnosu na mogući početak i dužinu trajanja perioda cvetanja). Za potrebe utvrđivanja kvaliteta semena, istraživane su: energija klijanja (EK), ukupna klijavost (UK) i masa 1.000 semena.

Ključne reči: lekovito medonosno bilje, dužina cvetanja, kvalitet semena

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