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Evaluation of wild flora of the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge (West Serbia)  
– step forward to biodiversity conservation program

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The Ovčar-Kablar Gorge is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of Serbia. The diversity of geological formations and climatic and hydroecological conditions underlies the wealth of flora in this region (total area 22.5 km<sup>2</sup>). The presence of 559 plant species belonging to 84 families was recorded in the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge flora during 2000-2012. The highest species diversity was found in the families Asteraceae (41 species), Lamiaceae (32), Fabaceae (29), Rosaceae and Poaceae (28). Among the species recorded in the region, *Tomentypnum nitens* (Bryophyta), *Equisetum fluviatile* and *Phegopteris connectilis* (Pteridophyta) are strictly protected (Official Gazette of RS, 36/2009). *Achillea ageratifolia* var. *Aizon* (Asteraceae) is a Central Balkan endemic species restricted to only two habitats – Mt. Rtanj (East Serbia) and Ovčar-Kablar Gorge. In 2008, a new plant species - *Edraianthus canescens* (2n=32) (Campanulaceae) – was discovered in the Gorge region (43°54.362' N, 20°12.060' E).

Conservation requires marking the habitats, organising a warden service and establishing a spore and/or seed bank for these plant species, some of which are of international importance.

**Keywords:** Gorge, wild flora, protection, genetic resources