

The background of the cover is a light beige, textured paper with a mottled appearance. Numerous dried, pressed leaves of various shapes and sizes are scattered across the surface, some overlapping. A small, dark silhouette of an insect, possibly a fly or a beetle, is positioned on the letter 'O' in the word 'FORESTS'.

CROATIAN FORESTS



A HERITAGE OF DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

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Child drawing
Fabijan, 6 years old

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FOREWORD

The life of mankind is the very image of the life of leaves. This thought of Homer seems to contain all the universality of the connections between man and nature, the significance of their relationship and permanent obligation to mutual respect. The conservation and sustainability of all attributes of nature are therefore two of the most actual issues of man's future. However, for a common man not educated to see the importance of, and impossibility to replace, any of the numerous forms of life existing on the Earth, it is difficult to understand to what extent the human environment is endangered.

Being identifiable and irreplaceable and, most of all, close to people, the natural treasures of forestland with trees and forests have always been the subject of various uses and interests due to their numerous advantages and benefits. Especially in the last two centuries, forests have become a synonym of the last intact resort and relaxation.

On the other hand, the commercial forestry sector over the last century, along with modern forestry practices, has altered the forest environment drastically. Along with the ever-increasing requirements for raw timber, wood is also expected to replace some materials in certain industrial sectors.

The forests are also affected by external factors, such as airborne pollution and the resulting fertilising and acidification of the soil. All these pose a threat to biological diversity and to sustainable forest management.



CROATIA

COUNTRY OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Republic of Croatia (4.8 million inhabitants) covers an area of 56,538 square kilometres and is situated between the Drava and the Danube rivers in the north and the Adriatic Sea in the south. Croatia is a country of natural and cultural diversity: from fertile lowlands and picturesque hills with vineries and castles in the north, through the mountainous, ecologically pristine central belt, to the rocky karst regions and Mediterranean rural and urban culture. The Croatian coast is one of the most beautiful and the most diverse in the world, with a thousand islands. The total length of the coast is 5,740 km, of which 4,012 km belong to the islands. Forestland in Croatia includes several vegetation zones with great variety in natural conditions and in biodiversity. In the continental part of Croatia, over 50 forest communities have been described, and in the Mediterranean part over 20 communities, with many endemic species.

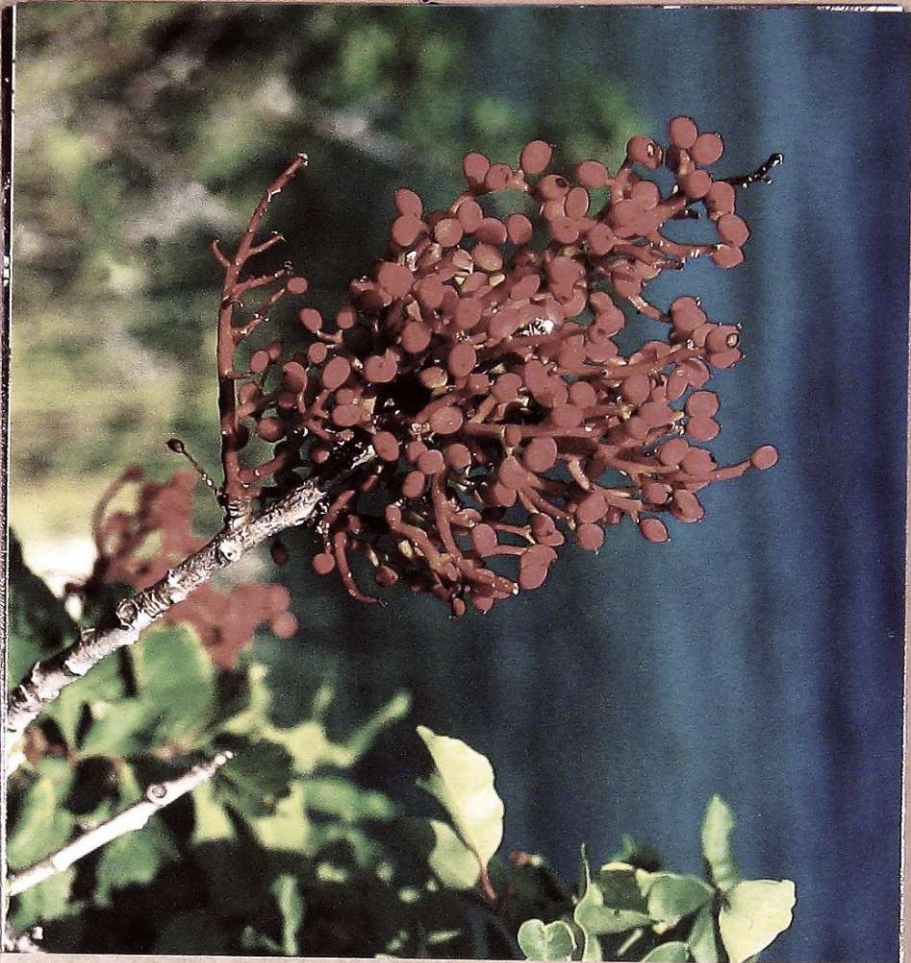
The Croatian forests are one of the basic natural resources of Croatia. These are characterised by good preservation of their natural characteristics. Apart from through legislation, the permanent protection of the biological diversity and sustainability of forests in Croatia, as well as of their gene resources, is ensured by the landscape itself. It has great variety, and provides harmonious transitions from valleys to low and high hills, to mountains, and to the sea, all in a relatively small area.

By signing the Rio Declaration, six Strasbourg and four Helsinki ministerial resolutions, the Republic of Croatia has committed itself to sustainable management with special regard to the protection and conservation of forests. Croatia's forestry sector, with a long tradition of over two hundred years sustainable forest practice, should focus on the sound environmental management of forests in general, incorporating special treatment for particularly valuable natural features and promoting biological diversity.

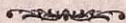
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FRIENDLY USE OF FORESTS



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