



## HEALING HERBS

Herbs are the oldest medicines. They have been used for thousands of years. Our grandmothers embraced them as well. With the development of the chemical and pharmaceutical industries the importance of herbs has drastically declined. Nowadays many people are reconsidering herbal medicines from their yearning to be more closely connected with nature.

Of all the crops the people of Bela krajina have established their most genuine relationship with the grapevine.

The year-round work in the vineyard is rewarded annually with sweet grapes in the autumn. The Derganc orchard has a small vineyard with samples of older grape varieties. The small vine grove complements the grape growers' collection of artifacts located in the Semič museum. These vines and the vintner museum display provide a thematic unit. This beautiful collection of vines reminds us of our duty to preserve the forgotten native grape varieties and the wine growing tradition of Bela krajina.



The demonstration orchard is dedicated to Dr. Viktor Derganc (1917 – 1983), a well-known Semič physician and roentgenologist. In 1983 his family donated their homestead to the Slovenian Paraplegic Association with a wish that their home continue to offer well-being to all of its guests. Dr. Viktor Derganc, the youngest son of Dr. Franc Derganc, dearly loved Semič and enjoyed spending his free time in this particular area. He was a nature lover, a passionate fisherman and a proponent of embracing fruit agriculture in local communities.



Dr. Derganc Demonstration Orchard offers educational and expert information to different groups of visitors.

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# Dr. Derganc Demonstration Orchard in Semič



Mankind should live and work in the spirit of nature; it generously offers us its fruits which maintain and strengthen our health. From nature people can acquire much knowledge during all seasons of the year and in all stages of our lives. Let us respectfully listen to nature in this fruit orchard.



## MEADOW ORCHARD

The central part of the garden is a meadow orchard which in the old days was part of almost every homestead. The presence of high-stemmed fruit trees is very important because they contribute to:

- beautifying the cultural environment and the countryside,
- nurturing the biodiversity and balance of living organisms,
- preserving native and old fruit varieties which offer a broad set of of flavour choices,
- offering a wide selection of fruits which are most appropriate for being processed into numerous products,
- protecting homesteads from the sun's heat in summer and from cold winds in winter,
- making use of poor soil and steep locations as well as protecting the soil from erosion,
- enabling man to maintain contact with nature.

The largest part of the meadow orchard contains old apple varieties such as beličnik (Albino Apple), grafenštajnc (Gravenstein Apple), carjevič, mošancelj, dolenska voščenska, krivopecelj, zlata parmena (King of the Pippins), jonatan (Jonathan), kanadka (Canadian Reinette), lepocvetka (Bellefleur), boskopski kosmač (Belle de Boskoop), koksova oranžna reneta (Cox Orange Pippin), ananasova reneta (Pineapple Reinette), baumanova reneta (Baumann's Reinette), londonski peping (London Pippin), bobovec. The orchard also contains more resilient contemporary apple and pear varieties.



## OTHER FRUIT VARIETIES

A special place in the orchard is established for berry fruits. Berries are distinguished by their high nutritional value, attractive fruits and economical cultivation of small areas of land. Most varieties of berry fruit ripen sequentially. The naturally spaced maturation process enables a steady supply of fresh berries for many continuous months.

The demonstration orchard exhibits many fascinating choices available for growing fruit. In addition to apples the orchard contains a host of other fruit varieties, i.e. pear, peach, apricot, cherry, plum, walnut, hazel, elder, medlar, quince, sorb apple, fig, almond and berries.

Numerous species of fruit should have their place in our local fruit gardens. Fresh seasonal fruit has an important role in a healthy diet. Cultivation of fruit has significant educational value for youngsters to learn to appreciate and acquire our fruit consuming culture and habits.

## BENEFICIAL ANIMALS IN THE FRUIT GARDEN

The orchard highlights the importance of biodiversity. The crowns of the fruit trees provide a home and a source of food for many living organisms. During the vegetation period many insects begin to drink the juices and eat the leaves, fruits and roots. When these creatures of nature proliferate they too become food for many beneficial animals. Nature tends to create a balance among living organisms.

Bees are the most important insect pollinators of fruit trees. In return for their pollination efforts they are rewarded with sweet nectar and pollen. At the fruit orchard one learns about the insect houses which are built for solitary bees and other beneficial insects and are essential in organic food production. The orchard also includes a bee house, the home of many tiny and diligent workers.

