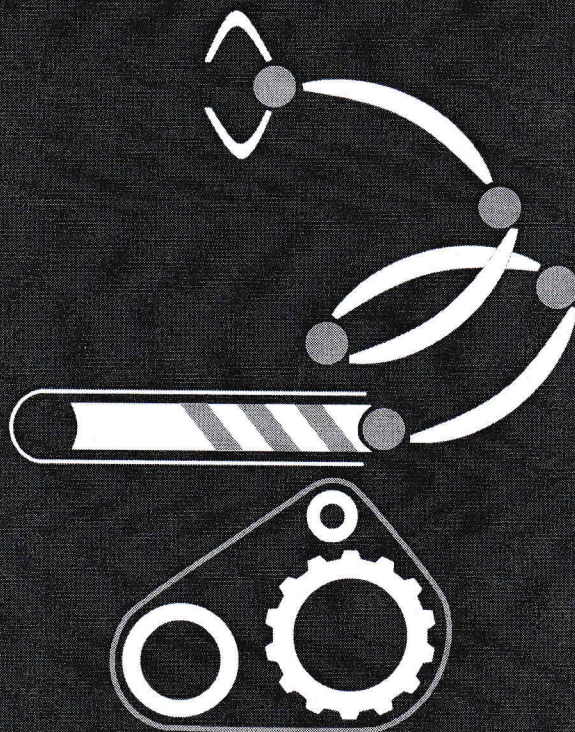




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**A RESEARCH ON ARBORETUMS WITHIN TOURISM CONCEPT****Damla ATİK**  
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Trakya University**Gökçen BAYRAK YILMAZ**  
Trakya University**Abstract**

*Tourism as a social activity comes to the forefront with its cultural and economic dimensions. The tourism sector keeps pace with the changing world. Consequently 3S -sea, sand, sun-; defining tourism and holiday mentality has reached up to substantial character. People prefer to spend time in nature, meet different cultures and experience the values of places by themselves either individually or as a group in holidays. Thus alternative types of tourism occurred against mass tourism called eco-tourism generally. The importance of botanic gardens and arboretums which give an opportunity to explore plant variety and geographical characteristics become significant to support nature tourism and botanic tourism day by day. The functions and benefits of arboretums are handled and then Trakya University Balkan Arboretum Project is mentioned for tourism destination of Edirne in this study.*

**Keywords:** Tourism, Botanic Tourism, Arboretum, Trakya University Balkan Arboretum, Edirne.

**INTRODUCTION**

Tourism and holiday mentality have substantial variety such as religious tourism, thermal tourism, congress tourism, camping tourism, nature tourism and botanic tourism. People desire to be in touch with nature, experience daily life and know about culture of places which they go, see natural and artificial values on side. While the quantitative changes of tourism can be measured by counting visitors or tourism income; qualitative changes are required to be examined. The aim of providing sustainability for natural sources is one of the main qualitative changes of tourism.

Sustainability includes managing, using within their capacity and handing down the next generations of natural sources. Sustainability must be considered in tourism as well as other domains. We -the people-consuming the world rapidly have noticed dangers of future and are in quest of re-shaping our lives. New tourism types occurred against mass tourism and attendant to questing sustainability of natural sources as well as tourism. These new types are known as eco-tourism but also can be given similar names such as nature tourism, alternative tourism,

soft tourism, green tourism, responsible tourism and conscious tourism. Observing butterflies or birds, camping, diving, rafting, parasailing, riding bikes or horses, climbing, fishing and planting can be counted among alternative tourism activities.

**BOTANIC TOURISM**

Botanic tourism arose for exploring different plant variety and geographical characteristics. It plays constructive and positive role for both raising the awareness of visitors besides local people and saving infrequent species of animals and plants especially. Qualification of plants, their rearing habitat, blossom time and most attractive period should be known so that tour route should be planned according to them.

Geographical characteristics, climate variety, and being a bridge between three continents make Turkey auspicious for having a unique plant variety. For instance, Europe has totally 12.000 species of plants. Turkey has 9.000. While the total number of endemic species of plants in Europe is 2.750, it is 3.000 in Turkey. England has 2.000 species of plants in total while Turkey has the number 9.000. Having such richness requires to be used logically and protected well. Increasing

number of botanical gardens and arboretums is a significant way of protecting and sustaining varieties.

## **ARBORETUM**

Consuming the eco-systems rapidly and trying to make living in environments that are lack of healthy conditions, arboretums are one of the most important solution ways for people, animals and plants. Arboretum is a nature part that is rigged with native and exotic woody plant taxon which are:

- collected and named properly according to their origin and age,
- planted, cultivated and exhibited in suitable areas,
- used for the purpose of protection, exhibition, education and scientific examination.

In another words, arboretums are living tree museums that are composed with knowledge, labor and patience. The idea of "arboretum concept" was thought in Europe by the middle of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Arboretums and botanical gardens were the source of pride for developed cities besides their civil architectural and historical values. Most of the arboretums in the world were founded long years ago and serve generally within the scope of universities. Thus an arboretum is a sign for level of development of that university. The number of arboretums and botanical gardens is over 1.500 worldwide. More than %60 of them is located in Europe, America and the country of the former Soviet Union. Annual numbers of visitors are also remarkable. Morris Arboretum, University of Pennsylvania with 130,000 visitors annually, Westonbirt, The National Arboretum in UK is managed by the Forestry Commission and is renowned worldwide for its tree and shrub collection. Home to five national collections, the arboretum covers 243 hectares (600 acres) and contains 16,000 labelled specimens. Visitor numbers are 350,000 a year, with a membership of over 28,000.

Visitor numbers are up at the National Arboretum and the National Botanic Gardens in Canberra, Australia despite an overall fall in international tourism in the Canberra region.

During the past financial year 530,000 people visited the arboretum, an increase of almost 40,000 on the 490,700 recorded in 2013-14. According to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13 number of visits to the gardens (millions) (2008/2009)1.818, (2009/2010) 1.701, (2010/2011) 1.630, (2011/2012) 1.668, (2012/2013) 1.363. Founded in 1872 as the first public arboretum in North America, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University is a leading center for the study of plants and biodiversity and has over 250,000 visitors annually. Karaca Arboretum in Yalova Turkey is settled on 6.5 hectare and has 15.000 visitors annually.

## **FUNCTIONS OF ARBORETUMS**

Arboretums are sort of public establishments serving a recreational mission for local people besides floristic education and research of instructors and students. They increase the variety, economic value and efficiency of the region by bringing exotic species. Thus it can be determined which variety and form can be planted at that region besides researchers can make scientific studies without travelling long and spending much. By introducing different species, love of nature and tree can be developed and consciousness of protection can be spread. Arboretums can also be a source of material production for nursery gardens.

### **Being a part of green area system in cities:**

Arboretums are planned as huge open spaces to serve as a gathering place for among recreational areas. Generally they are located far away from city center. They can be either a space by their own or a part of botanical garden. They also have an importance with their esthetical and prestige value in cities and urban landscape.

### **Research-educational and social functions:**

Arboretums are cultural wealth and living laboratories for each level of education; from students of primary school to master ones (Fig.1). They serve local people of every age also. Tree, shrub, bush, and several plant varieties can be learned from arboretums. People can observe and explore these plants in

rearing habitat thus this improves consciousness for protection.



*Fig. 1. Trakya University Department of Landscape Architecture Students is Visiting Atatürk Arboretum,*

**Bio-climatic and ecological functions:** Arboretums constitute an eco-system and integrity with rich plant varieties and all animals from living on sky to under the soil. The existence of arboretums establishes ecological balance and has influence for rehabilitating the climates in cities where dynamic balances of bio-diversity are ignored.

**Psychological functions:** Urban green and open areas are places where people take refuge in; running from crowd, dirt, noise and monotone life style. These places being retreat center, restful and fresh areas, have great importance for mental health. Arboretums also make connection between people and green areas. They make benefit both physically and psychologically for people living in cities.

**Recreational functions:** Arboretums contain several functional areas with multi-functioned usages and supply relaxation in terms of visual and physical. Viewing platforms, lakes, playgrounds, picnic areas, cafeterias, walking trails, bicycle lanes and many other opportunities are preferable for families and children. Thus arboretums are accepted as multi-functional recreational centers.

#### **TRAKYA UNIVERSITY BALKAN ARBORETUM**

Trakya University and related foundations proved scientifically that despite Edirne has a rich flora including Balkan plant species, there exist no arboretum nearby. University rector and academicians agreed about a foundation of

arboretum in Edirne at 1996. Several enterprises and researches were done with periodical interruptions caused by changing management since then. Finally at 2013 arboretum project came to the fore by appeal of Trakya University Rectorship. “Hayat Ağacım” (Tree of Life) project has been accepted and supported by Trakya Development Agency 2013-2014 / Socio-Economic Development Financial Support Program / Priority Area for Improving “Culture and Tourism” and “Collaboration and Attempts for Introduction of the Region”.

The arboretum area is in Trakya University Balkan Settlement and is about 20 hectare. Existent flora includes 34 species of tree and bush; 14 of hydrophytic plant and Güllapoğlu River. Protecting natural formation, 6 areas are constituted during planning. First of all dominant tree species will be located; and then bushes will be transferred after 4-5 years to complete the vegetation of the area according to this program. Thus Balkan Arboretum will consist of the following parts (Fig.2):

- Trakya Region Forest Land
- Exotic Plant Exhibition Areas
- Anatolian Trees Exhibition Areas
- Education Prairie
- Tree Exhibition and Education Area
- Natural Formation

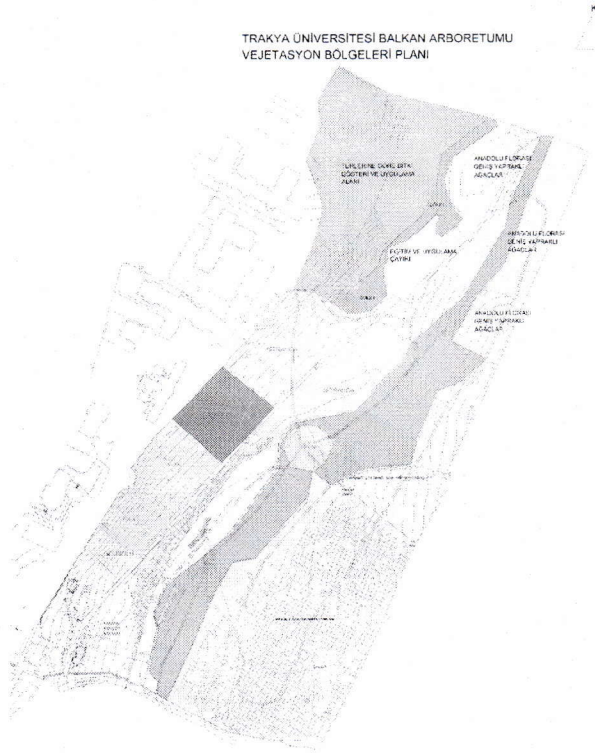
The 1.Stage of Trakya University Balkan Arboretum has been completed by “Hayat Ağacım” Project on June 2015 with collaboration of Department of Landscape Architecture and Department of Biology.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The natural potentials of Balkan Arboretum are being in the university settlement, visual richness, Güllapoğlu River, variety of vista points and sloping topography. By establishing this arboretum:

- Great opportunity will be given to students and researchers
- Conscious and aware population will grow about environment and nature

- People will know well about and love nature more,
- Recreational services will be supplied,
- Natural values will be hand down the next generations.



**Fig. 2.** Plan of Trakya University Balkan Arboretum Vegetation Areas

Arboretums should be irreplaceable destinations within their functions and spatial services. Multi-dimensional contributions of arboretums for alternative tourism types are put forward with this study. It is recorded that several tourists passes through Edirne border gate\*. Attracting local and foreign tourists by Balkan Arboretum will make benefit for Edirne in terms of culture, economy and prestige. Introduction of Balkan Arboretum will also prove the respect of our city for the environment. It is obvious that Trakya University Balkan Arboretum will play a significant role for increasing tourism potential of Edirne.

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\*: Border gates of Edirne becomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> city in Turkey January-August 2016, see the link: <http://www.ktbyatirimisletmeler.gov.tr/TR,9854/si-nir-giris-cikis-istatistikleri.html>