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Ethnobotanical survey of wild vegetables used for food and medicinal purposes

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Summary: The present study deals with ethnobotanical survey of wild vegetables used as food and medicines in North Macedonia. For obtaining information about traditional uses of wild vegetables in North Macedonia 84 respondents were interviewed using structural designed questionnaires, from March to June 2023. 78.6 % of respondents practiced picking wild vegetables, while 94 % of respondents consumed wild vegetables. Obtained results showed that the fourteen plant species from eleven botanical families were recorded as wild vegetables. Most of the mentioned wild vegetables belong to the Polygonaceae family. The botanical family, scientific name, folk name, used plant parts, culinary and medicinal use as well as the relative frequency of citation index (RFC) of wild vegetables are shown for each of the plant species. In this research, *Urtica dioica* L. is the species with the highest relative frequency of citation index (0.25). Also, it was found that among the edible parts, leaves are dominant (59 %). Ethnobotanical studies are key to finding ways to use natural plant resources, and therefore such research should be continued in the future.

Keywords: ethnobotany, food, medicines, North Macedonia, wild vegetables

Introduction

The Republic of North Macedonia is a country with rich cultural and historical heritage. In addition to this heritage, it also abounds with extraordinary flora characteristic only for this area. The flora is consisted of numerous plant species, including wild vegetables, the use of which is still practiced today. According to Matevski et al. (2003), the flora of angiosperms in North Macedonia includes approximately 3200 species. Historically, wild vegetables have been used as considered a crucial component of the human nutrition (Walsh, 2009). The development of modern agriculture, urban development and worldwide expansion causes populations increasingly disconnected from the environment, and the transmission of knowledge from the elderly is not always assured (Agea et al., 2011; Hopkins et al., 2015; Lakić et al., 2022). For this reason, today the younger population is less informed about the use and medicinal properties of wild vegetables.

Wild vegetables have proven to be exceptional micronutrient-rich foods. Turan et al. (2003) found that some wild vegetables from Turkey contained higher levels of calcium, potassium, nitrogen and magnesium compared to several cultivated species.

Wild leafy vegetables have been cherished since ancient times as an essential and distinctive food source (Konsam et al., 2016). A high number of underutilized wild leafy vegetables could be integrated into food systems to vary human nutrition, enhance micronutrient absorption, and boost food availability (Ceccanti et al., 2018).

Despite the declining trend of using wild vegetables, nowadays, there is an increasing interest in ethnobotanical surveys and researches worldwide (Sansanelli et al., 2017; Rexhepi, 2018; Rexhepi et al., 2018; Łuczaj et al., 2019; Bello et al., 2019; Miskoska-Milevska et al., 2020; Ahmad et al., 2021; Rexhepi & Bajrami, 2021; Mohite, 2023; Baydoun et al., 2023; Olaniyi et al., 2024; Kahsay & Welegbriel, 2024). The gathered data were based on the rich traditional knowledge that exists only in the memories of the older people and is likely to fade away within a few decades (Tardío et al., 2006). During the Bosnian War, vegetables emerged as the most widely used category, featured in soups, patties, and sauces (Redžić, 2010). According to the frequency of citation, *Urtica urens* L., *Anethum graveolens* L., *Raphanus raphanistrum* L., *Portulaca oleracea* L. and *Malva sylvestris* L. were found as the most important species among the green vegetables (Dogan et al., 2013).

In ethnobotanical research across 23 villages in North Macedonia, Rexhepi et al. (2018) found that the wild edible plants the Rosaceae family was the most frequently used, but the knowledge of how to use those plants is gradually being lost. According to Miskoska-Milevska et al. (2020), the majority of wild edible plant species belong to the Rosaceae family. *Taraxacum officinale* F.H. Wigg., *Rumex crispus* L. and *Chenopodium album* L. are consumed as salad. The leaves of *Rumex crispus* L. are used in making pie (zelnik). It was mentioned that *Allium ursinum* L. are eaten raw (Miskoska-Milevska et al., 2020). The purpose of this research was conducting an ethnobotanical analysis in North Macedonia about knowledge of wild vegetables and their use as food and medicine.

Material and Methods

Information about traditional knowledge of wild vegetables was gathered through an ethnobotanical field survey by direct interviewing 84 respondents from different region of North Macedonia. North Macedonia is situated in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula and is divided into eight statistical regions. The survey was conducted from March to June 2023 and included respondents from all eight regions of North Macedonia. During the interview, respondents shared their knowledge and experience about using wild vegetables as food and medicines. The botanical name, folk name, used plant parts, culinary and medicinal use of wild vegetables were presented.

Taxonomic identification of plants is based on standard references for the Macedonian flora (Micevski, 1985–2005). Species taxonomy and nomenclature follow the International Plant Names Index (www.ipni.org), while plant family classifications are in accordance with the latest guidelines of the APG IV system (APG, 2016). Fourteen plant species were mentioned in this research: *Allium ursinum* L., *Bellis perennis* L., *Taraxacum officinale* F.H. Wigg., *Sempervivum tectorum* L., *Chenopodium album* L., *Equisetum arvense* L., *Mentha longifolia* (L.), *Malva sylvestris* L., *Oxalis acetosella* L., *Rumex acetosa* L., *Rumex alpinus* L., *Primula vulgaris* Huds., and *Urtica dioica* L. The Relative Frequency of Citation (RFC) index was calculated for each plant species mentioned, using the following formula:

$$RFC = FC \backslash N$$

where FC represents the number of respondents who mentioned the use of the species, and N denotes the total number of respondents in the survey (Sansanelli et al., 2017). The RFC value ranges from zero (when no respondents identified a plant as useful) to one (when all respondents identified a plant as useful).

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the data obtained through a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Additional analysis was conducted to compare the field data with existing ethnobotanical literature (Bellakhdar, 1997; Jan et al., 2008; Hussain et al., 2008; Qureshi et al., 2009; Gasparetta et al., 2012; Mustafa et al., 2013; Nedelcheva, 2013; Mikaili et al., 2013; Vasas et al., 2015; Rexhepi, 2018; Bello et al., 2019; Miskoska-Milevska et al., 2020; Motti, 2021; Rexhepi & Bajrami, 2021; Baydoun et al., 2023; Talreja & Tiwari, 2023; Dhakal et al., 2024; Tiwari et al., 2024; Krstin et al., 2024). Further analysis was carried out to compare the field data with the ethnobotanical literature.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

A total of 84 respondents were included in this study. Most participants belonged to the age group from 18-35 years (42.8 %), followed by above 50 years (41.7 %) and 36-50 (15.5 %). The majority of the interviewed respondents were females (75 %), while only 25 % were males (Table 1). Most of the respondents were Macedonian (90.5 %) and the rest were Serbian (9.5 %). 54.7% of respondents are from the Skopje region, followed by 10.7% each from the Northeastern and Pelagonia regions, 8.3% from the Vardar region, 6% from the Southeastern region, 4.8% from the Southwestern region, 3.6% from the Polog region, and 1.2% from the Eastern region. Most participants in this study had received university degrees (53.6 %), 44 % had secondary-school education and only 2.4 % had primary-school education.

Table 1. Age distribution of the informants interviewed

Age	Male	Female	Total number	Percentage
18-35	7	29	36	42.8 %
36-50	3	10	13	15.5 %
Above 50	11	24	35	41.7 %
Total	21	63	84	100 %

In this survey, 78.6 % of respondents practiced picking wild vegetables while 94 % of respondents consumed wild vegetables. Source of information for uses of wild vegetables was from the elderly (55.3 %), from literature (23.7 %) and from internet (21 %).

Diversity of wild vegetables

According to presented results in Figure 1, fourteen plant species from eleven botanical families were mentioned as wild vegetables. It is evident that most of the species belongs to Polygonaceae (3) and Asteraceae (2). The other botanical families are presented with only one species (Figure 1). Different parts of wild vegetables are used as food and for medicinal aims. As shown in Figure 2, in this ethnobotanical research, among the edible plant organs, leaves are the most dominant (59%), then stems (18%) and roots (14%).

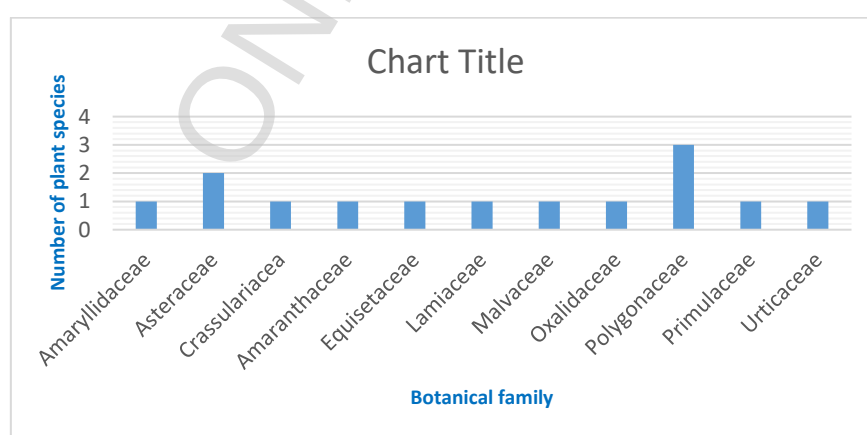


Figure 1. Number of plant species across botanical families

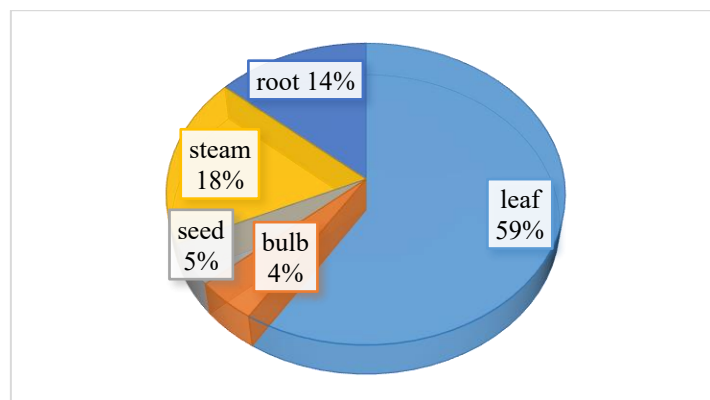


Figure 2. Plant parts used for food and medicinal purposes

Figure 3. Harvesting and drying of *Urtica dioica* (Photograph by E. Miskoska-Milevska)

Many wild vegetables are rich in biologically active compounds that contribute to their nutritional and therapeutic benefits, making them valuable both as food and medicine (Ignjatov et al., 2020; Popović et al., 2021; Stevanović et al., 2024; Aćimović et al., 2024). Wild vegetables are utilized in various ways, using assorted cooking methods in agreement with through local traditions (Figure 3). The culinary applications of the wild vegetables in this study are illustrated in Figure 4. The botanical family, scientific name, folk name, used plant parts, culinary and medicinal use as well as the relative frequency of citation index of wild vegetables were shown for each of the plant species. In this research, *Urtica dioica* is the species with the highest RFC (0.25), followed by *Taraxacum officinale*, *Malva sylvestris* and *Rumex acetoca* (RFC = 0.08) (Table 2).

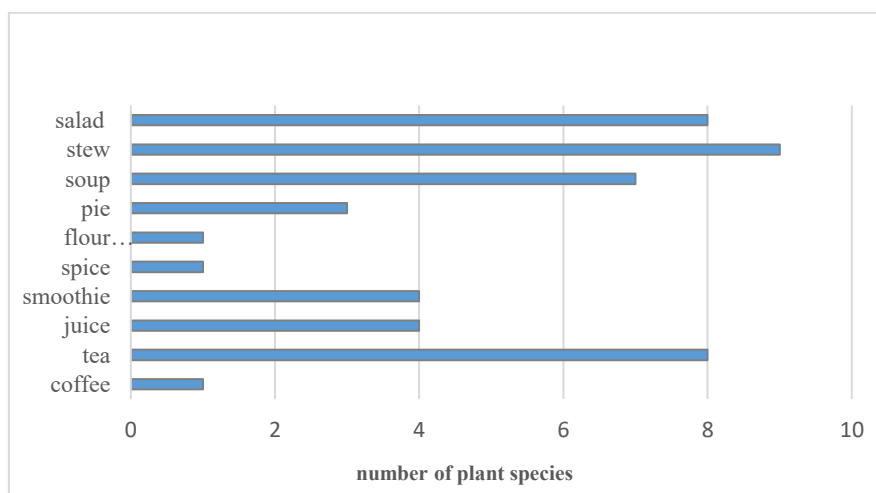


Figure 4. Diverse culinary uses of the researched wild vegetables in North Macedonia

Table 2. List of wild vegetables traditionally used for food and medicinal purposes in North Macedonia

No.	Plant family	Latin name	Macedonian folk name	Used plant parts	Culinary use	Medicinal use	RFC
1.	Amaryllidaceae	<i>Allium ursinum</i> L.	Divorastecki luk. mechkin luk, shumski luk	Leaf, bulb	Smoothie, tea, juice, soup, salad	- for treatment of skin diseases, - for detoxification, - for blood pressure regulation, - against cancerous diseases	0.01
2.	Asteraceae	<i>Bellis perennis</i> L.	Bela rada	Leaf	Tea, salad, soup	/	0.01
3.	Asteraceae	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> F.H. Wigg.	Gluvarche, Obichno gluvarche	Leaf, stem, root	Tea, coffee, juice, salad	- treats inflammation of liver, - treats gallstones and inflammation of gallbladder, - treats cirrhosis, - regulates cholesterol, - for digestion improving, - as diuretic, - for detoxification,	0.08
4.	Crassulaceae	<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i> L.	Chuvar-kukja	Leaf	Smoothie, stew, syrup	/	0.01
5.	Amaranthaceae	<i>Chenopodium album</i> L.	Diva loboda, Guskina noga	Leaf	stew	/	0.01
6.	Equisetaceae	<i>Equisetum arvense</i> L.	Konjsko opavce	Stem	Stew	for urinary infections	0.01
7.	Lamiaceae	<i>Mentha longifolia</i> (L.)	Dolgolisno nane	Leaf	Tea, salad, stew, spice	- treats inflammation of liver and stomach ulcer, - against diarrhea, - for treatment bronchitis	0.11
8.	Malvaceae	<i>Malva sylvestris</i> L.	Crn slez	Leaf, stem, root	Soup, stew, salad, tea	- against inflammation, - for treatment gastritis, - for cough, asthma and lung disease, - for better immunity	0.08
9.	Oxalidaceae	<i>Oxalis acetosella</i> L.	Kisela detelina, Zajachka krasatka	Leaf	Tea and juice	- treats skin rashes, - as a digestive aid	0.01
10.	Polygonaceae	<i>Rumex acetosa</i> L.	Kiselec, kiselica, obichen shtavej	Leaf	Salad, soup, flour from seed	- as a purgative - against diarrhea, - improves the work of the intestinal tract, - Treats scurvy - for detoxification,	0.08
11.	Polygonaceae	<i>Rumex alpinus</i> L.	Planinski stavej	Leaf	Soup, salad, pie,	for burns and insect bites,	0.06

					stew, smoothie	• treats rheumatism, • for better immunity	
12.	Polygonaceae	<i>Rumex crispus</i> L.	Kadrav shtavej	leaf	Stew, pie	• as a purgative	0.06
13.	Primulaceae	<i>Primula vulgaris</i> Huds.	Јаглица/ Jaglika	Leaf	Salad, soup, stew, tea	• against cough and fever	0.01
14.	Urticaceae	<i>Urtica dioica</i> L.	Kopriva	Leaf, root, stem, seed	Smoothie, soup, stew, juice, tea, pie	• against kidney stones, • reducing inflammation, • reducing joint swelling, • treats rheumatism, • treats anemia, • against cold and fever, • regulates cholesterol levels, • relieves the problem of arthritis, • preserves the elasticity of blood vessels	0.25

Nutritional use of wild vegetables

Nine wild species (*Sempervivum tectorium*, *Chenopodium album*, *Equisetum arvense*, *Mentha longifolia*, *Malva sylvestris*, *Rumex alpinus*, *Rumex crispus*, *Primula vulgaris* and *Urtica dioica*) have been used in preparation different type of stew. In the previous ethnobotanical research, Miskoska-Milevska (2020) found that *Urtica dioica*, *Mentha longifolia* and *Rumex crispus* were cooked as vegetable. Leaves of *Primula vulgaris* are cooked in stew or pie filling (Baydoun et al., 2023). According to Baydoun et al. (2023), the leaves of *Urtica dioica* are used in making stews, mixed with meat and garlic. Also, the same authors mentioned that leaves of *Chenopodium album* are prepared as a stew, combined with onions, garlic, coriander, and olive oil. The leaves of *Rumex alpinus* can be consumed fresh or prepared as a vegetable in the traditional cuisines of various places (Martin et al., 1951). According to Gentscheva et al. (2021), the ethanol extracts of *Sempervivum tectorium* can be effectively employed in culinary and medicinal applications because of the solvent's safety and its high polyphenol content.

In the research, eight wild species have been used as salad (*Allium ursinum*, *Bellis perennis*, *Taraxacum officinale*, *Mentha longifolia*, *Malva sylvestris*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Rumex alpinus*, and *Primula vulgaris*). In the previous study, Miskoska-Milevska et al. (2020) recorded that *Taraxacum officinale* was used for making salad. The above-ground parts of *Taraxacum officinale* are consumed fresh in salads and prepared into soup, tea, wine, and soft drinks (Di Napoli & Zucchetti, 2021; Escudero et al., 2003; Lis & Olas, 2019). Nedelcheva (2013) presents information about the use of *Allium ursinum* and *Bellis perennis* as a salad in Bulgaria. Gasparetta et al. (2012) mention traditional use of *Malva sylvestris* as salad and soup. *Malva sylvestris* plays a significant part as a functional food, particularly due to its content of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids (Baross et al., 2010).

Seven wild species were mentioned for making soup (*Allium ursinum*, *Bellis perennis*, *Malva sylvestris*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Rumex alpinus*, *Primula vulgaris*, and *Urtica dioica*). According to Sobolewska et al. (2015), fresh leaves of *Allium ursinum* are generally mixed with soups, risotto, and ravioli, and used for flavoring cheeses or spreads. The leaves of *Rumex* species (e.g. *R. acetosa*, *R. acetosella*, *R. abyssinicus*, *R. crispus*, *R. sanguineus*, *R. tuberosus* and *R. thyrsiflorus*, *R. vesicarius*) are used as food, primarily for preparing salads, sauces and soups. (Vasas et al., 2015). Also, according to Krstin et al. (2024) and Nedelcheva (2013), *Urtica dioica* is used for preparing soup and juice. Flowers of *Bellis perennis* were included in different meals (starters, salads, soups, and desserts) and might have a significant impact on our everyday nutrition (Albien and Stark, 2023).

Rumex alpinus, *Rumex crispus* and *Urtica dioica* have been included in making pie. According to Miskoska-Milevska et al. (2020) *Rumex crispus* was used in pie (zelnik) making. Baydoun et al. (2023) mentioned that leaves of *Rumex acetosa* and *Rumex crispus* were cooked as pie. Nedelcheva (2013) found information about using of *Urtica dioica* in making pie in Bulgaria. As in previous study (Miskoska-Milevska et al., 2020), in this research was recorded that dried leaves of *Mentha longifolia* was used as spice. Also, Motti (2021) noted the use of *Mentha longifolia* to flavor salads and omelettes in Italy.

Four wild species have been used in making smoothie (*Allium ursinum*, *Sempervivum tectorum*, *Rumex alpinus* and *Urtica dioica*). According to Krstin et al. (2024), herb and leaves of *Sempervivum tectorum* and *Urtica dioica* are used for preparation juice in Croatia. Four wild species were reported as used for juice (*Allium ursinum*, *Taraxacum officinale*, *Oxalis acetosella* and *Urtica dioica*). Eight species have been included in the preparation tea (*Allium ursinum*, *Bellis perennis*, *Taraxacum officinale*, *Mentha longifolia*, *Malva sylvestris*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Primula vulgaris* and *Urtica dioica*). *Urtica dioica* has a long-standing tradition in preparing folk remedies and meal habits, typically partaken as tea, salads, and vegetables (Otles and Yalcin, 2012; Maietti et al., 2021; Miskoska-Milevska et al., 2020).

Traditional medicinal uses of wild vegetables

Folk remedies made from *Mentha longifolia* leaves are prepared for digestive disturbances. The leaves of *M. longifolia* are boiled in water with cardamom seeds, or the powdered leaves are mixed with green tea and given to children. Additionally, these leaves are used in cases of persistent diarrhea (Jan et al., 2008; Hussain et al., 2008).

The root of *Taraxacum officinale* is consumed as tea, coffee, tinctures, and capsule products. On the other hand, flowers are used in the production of wines, teas, and syrups, as well as flavor additives in different foods (González-Castejón, 2012; Lis & Olas, 2019; Miskoska-Milevska et al., 2020). Also, in this research, was found that the root of *Taraxacum officinale* has been used for making coffee.

Seeds, leaves, and flowers of some *Rumex* species are used as vegetables, while in other areas, *Rumex* species are considered harmful weeds due to oxalic acid (Siener et al., 2006). Consuming oxalates in large amounts may result in major complications such as stone formation in kidneys and decreased iron uptake (Farré et al., 1989). In our study, seeds of *Rumex acetosa* have been ground into flour, which is used in food. Uses of basal rosettes and leaves of *Bellis perennis* as salad and stew was mentioned in the ethnobotanical research of Baydoun et al. (2023).

Many wild vegetables are also used for medicinal purposes in ethnopharmacology. In this study, many medicinal benefits were found for mentioned wild vegetables. *Allium ursinum* is used for treatment of skin diseases, while *Oxalis acetosella* treats skin rashes. *Rumex alpinus* are useful for burns and insect bites. According to Sobolewska et al. (2015), *Allium ursinum* has been helpful in wound healing and treat chronic dermatological issues. Plant sap of *Oxalis acetosella* treats dermatological disorders (Qureshi et al., 2009).

Three wild vegetables (*Allium ursinum*, *Taraxacum officinale* and *Rumex acetosa*) are used for body detoxification. Detoxifying effect of *Allium ursinum* was mentioned by the Greek physician Dioscorides (Meyer et al., 1999; Richter, 1999). According to Krstin et al. (2024), *Taraxacum officinale* is used for detoxification in Croatia. Ethnomedicinal uses of *Taraxacum officinale* are presented in research of Tiwari et al. (2024). Also, leaf juice of *Rumex acetosa* are used as “blood cleanser” (Bello et al., 2019). *Allium ursinum* is useful for blood pressure regulation, while *Urtica dioica* preserves the elasticity of blood vessels. Role of *Allium ursinum* as blood pressure regulator was mention by Motti (2021), while Bnouham et al. (2003) wrote the contribution of *Urtica dioica* root in mitigating hypotensive effects by reducing vascular pressure.

During this ethnobotanical research, *Allium ursinum* is mentioned to be practiced against cancerous diseases. Namely, diallyl disulfide from *Allium ursinum* essential oil, suppressed the multiplication of different human cancer cell, such as lung, breast, colon cancers, neuroblastoma and lymphomas (Lai et al., 2012). Two wild vegetables (*Malva sylvestris* and *Rumex alpinus*) were suitable for better immunity. Aqueous extract of *Malva sylvestris* can enhance the natural immune system (Hajyani et al., 2015).

Several plants documented in our study are utilized to treat gastrointestinal problems. *Taraxacum officinale*, *Oxalis acetosella* and *Rumex acetosa* improve digestion. *Mentha longifolia* and *Rumex acetosa* can be used against diarrhea, while *Rumex crispus* and *Rumex acetosa* as purgative. *Taraxacum officinale* and *Mentha longifolia* treat inflammation of the liver. Also, *Taraxacum officinale* treats gallstones, inflammation of the gallbladder, as well as cirrhosis. For treatment of stomach ulcer was mentioned *Mentha longifolia*. *Malva sylvestris* was used for treatment gastritis. *Taraxacum officinale* was mentioned by Mustafa et al. (2013) in the treatment of hepatitis. Also, *Taraxacum officinale* is used for gastrointestinal problems in Croatia (Krstin et al., 2024). Ulcer-preventing effect of *Malva sylvestris* was confirmed (Gasparetto et al., 2012; Filipović et al., 2021; 2023). The extract from *Mentha longifolia* leaves has a calming impact on intestinal smooth muscle, which correlates with the traditional use of this plant to cure diarrhea (Mikaili et al., 2013; Popović et al., 2021; Petrović et al., 2021; 2022; Dimitrijević et al., 2024). *Rumex* species have many applications in folk medicine, including treatments for diarrhea, constipation, infections, mild diabetes, jaundice, and more (Vasas et al., 2015).

Two wild vegetables (*Taraxacum officinale* and *Urtica dioica*) regulates cholesterol level. *Taraxacum officinale* is a good diuretic. The use of *Taraxacum officinale* as a diuretic is also mentioned by Rexhepi & Bajrami (2021). *Equisetum arvense* is used for urinary infection, while *Urtica dioica* against kidney stones. Uses of *Equisetum arvense* and *Taraxacum officinale* in treatment of urinary infection was noted by Mustafa et al. (2013) and Krstin et al. (2024). According to Bellakhdar (1997) the seeds of *Urtica dioica* is used for treating kidney stones.

Anti-inflammatory effects are characteristic for *Malva sylvestris* and *Urtica dioica*. As well as, *Urtica dioica* is used in reducing joint swelling. *Urtica dioica* is used as a vegetable, functional food, and in folk medicine, and has demonstrated significant pharmacological properties, including anti-inflammatory, antioxidative, anti-ulcer, and more (Dhakal et al., 2024). *Malva sylvestris* leaves have a potent anti-inflammatory effect (Gasparetto et al., 2012).

Rumex alpinus and *Urtica dioica* are used in treating rheumatism. Also, *Urtica dioica* relieves the problem of arthritis. Anti-rheumatic effect of *Urtica dioica* was found in ethnobotanical research of Mustafa et al. (2013) and Rexhepi (2018). For treatment anemia is used *Urtica dioica*. Anti-anemic effect of *Urtica dioica* was noted by Mustafa et al. (2013) and Krstin et al. (2024). *Rumex acetosa* treats scurvy. Namely, the concentration of vitamin C is significant in *Rumex acetosella* for this reason, it is used as a therapeutic food for conditions associated with vitamin C deficiencies, such as scurvy (Bello et al. (2019).

In this research was recorded that some wild vegetables were used in treatment of different respiratory diseases (*Mentha longifolia*, *Malva sylvestris*, *Primula vulgaris* and *Urtica dioica*). These plants were utilized in preparing teas, syrups, decoctions, tinctures, and essential oils, according to the guidelines outlined in traditional recipes (Sadikovic, 1928). The use of *Mentha longifolia* and *Malva sylvestris* in combating pulmonary diseases was noted in previous researches. (Mustafa et al., 2013; Krstin et al., 2024). Breathing in dried nettle leaves eases asthma, while the whole plant is used for respiratory difficulties, cardiac ailments, coughs, rheumatic diseases, and muscle exhaustion (Kirtikar & Basu 2008). *Primula vulgaris* has been an important part of folk medicine due to its capacity to alleviate symptoms linked to many respiratory issues (Talreja & Tiwari, 2023).

Conclusions

It was noted that fourteen plant species from eleven botanical families were recorded as wild vegetables. Most of the mentioned wild vegetables belong to the Polygonaceae family. *Urtica dioica* had the highest relative frequency of citation index. The leaves are the most commonly used part in food. Mentioned wild plants are consumed as food and used for medicinal purposes. For increasing food variety and revenue for local inhabitants, further ethnobotanical researches are necessary to be conducted. Also, communities should be involved in the long-term management and conservation of traditional knowledge related to these important plant resources.

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Etnobotanička analiza divljeg povrća koje se koriste u ishrani i u lekovite svrhe

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Sažetak: Ova studija bavi se etnobotaničkim istraživanjem divljeg povrća koje se koristi u ishrani i lekovite svrhe u Severnoj Makedoniji. Za dobijanje informacija o tradicionalnoj upotrebi divljeg povrća u Severnoj Makedoniji 84 ispitanika intervjuisano je pomoću strukturalno dizajniranih upitnika, od marta do juna 2023. 78,6 % ispitanika bavilo se branjem samoniklog povrća, dok je 94 % ispitanika konzumiralo samoniklo povrće. Dobijeni rezultati pokazali su da je četrnaest biljnih vrsta iz jedanaest botaničkih porodica evidentirano kao samoniklo povrće. Većina navedenog divljeg povrća pripada porodici Polygonacea. Za svaku biljnu vrstu prikazana je botanička porodica, naučni naziv, narodni naziv, korišteni delovi biljke, kulinarska i medicinska upotreba kao i indeks relativne učestalosti citiranja (RFC) samoniklog povrća. U ovom istraživanju *Urtica dioica* L. je vrsta s najvećim indeksom relativne učestalosti citiranosti (0,25). Takođe, utvrđeno je da među jestivim delovima dominira lišće (59 %). Etnobotanička istraživanja ključna su za pronalaženje načina iskorištavanja prirodnih biljnih resursa, pa bi takva istraživanja trebalo nastaviti i u budućnosti.

Ključne reči: etnobotanika, hrana, lekovi, Severna Makedonija, divlje povrće