

## EVALUATION OF THE DIVERSITY OF COMMON JUNIPER (*JUNIPERUS COMMUNIS* L.) FROM THE TYPICAL GEOGRAPHIC AREAS IN ALBANIA

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*Juniperus communis* L., a wild shrub species, growing especially in mountain areas of Albania in association with the other most important coniferous species. It is included in the Red Book of Albania as an endangered species growing wild in Albania. Nowadays, berries of *Juniperus*, are exported from Albania to many countries and especially in EU countries and are considered as the important income source for the local people that live in the poor mountain areas of the country. Assessment of geographic distribution of several populations of *Juniperus*, observed in 10 districts of Albania (Malesi e Madhe, Tropoje, Kukes, Diber, Elbasan, Librazhd, Bilsht, Korce, Erseke, Leskovik), was carried out. Berry fruits were also collected from 18 different natural growing areas of *Juniperus* in Albania. Spatial analysis, using grid square cells of 1 x 1 km, and 10 x 10 km, detects the areas of high diversity of *Juniperus* populations. The geographic areas were separated into small grid square cells, and grid cells of 1 x 1 km, and 10 x 10 km was used to assess the geographic distribution, diversity indices, and richness estimators of oregano populations. The biodiversity monitoring of Juniper populations, growing naturally in different mountain areas of Albania, contributes to the increasing efficiency and enhancement of beverages and food industry.

**Key words:** *Juniperus communis*, geographic distribution, Albania