

8. Diversity in nature

Natural vegetation in the orchards and vineyards depends on the characteristics of the given area (exposition, soil, diversity of species etc.) as well as the time interval of abandonment. Endangered species of vineyards are white broom (*Chamaecytisus albus*), variegated iris (*Iris variegata*), Hungarian pink (*Dianthus pontederiae*), needlegrass (*Stipa sp.*), flax species (*Linum sp.*), lady orchid (*Orchis purpurea*), toothbrush orchid (*Orchis tridentata*), green-winged orchid (*Orchis morio*), lesser butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera bifolia*), fragrant orchid (*Gymnadenia sp.*), soldier orchid (*Orchis militaris*).

The high diversity of plants provides suitable habitat for several animals. Burnets and foresters (*Zygaenidae*) are feeding on species of the pea family (*Fabaceae*), oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) and thyme species (*Thymus sp.*) are important for blues species (*Lycaenidae*), while the species of the aster (*Asteraceae*) and bellflower families (*Campanulaceae*) are essential for noctuid moths (*Noctuidae*).



Soldier orchid



Burnets

9. Interesting farm fields

Wheat, oat and barley have been produced in the surrounding areas. Herbicides are not used at all, only the large number of thistles (*Cirsium sp.*) are removed. That is why rare weed species for example cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), field poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), forking larkspur (*Consolida regalis*), common corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*) still can be observed at the edges of farm

fields in Gömöraszölös. The modern way of living is a threatening factor for diversity resulting in the loss of several local crop varieties. However, the variety of bean species is still abundant: „Vese” bean, „Ló” bean, „Szent Anna” bean, „Vaj” bean, „Gersli” bean, „Erzsi” bean, „Juliska” bean, „Gyöngy” bean, „Tarka” bean etc.



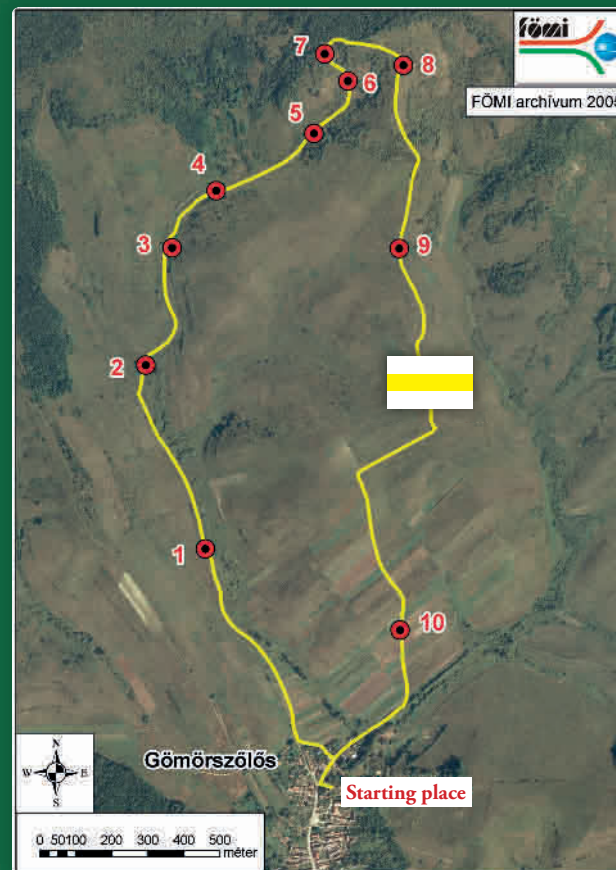
Forking Larkspur

10. Old tools and machines, useful farming inventions

Most of the farming tools used in South-Gömör were prepared by local craftsmen (wheelwrights, smiths, rope-makers, coopers, saddlers). Since 1986 László É. Kovács has been collecting the local farming tools and machines that are introduced to the public at the Open-air Exhibition of Gömöraszölös.



Open-air exhibition



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English

Fields Surrounding the Village Education Trail



Building partnership

European Union
European Regional Development Fund



Mark: yellow line 
Length: 5 km
Duration: about 2 hours

It had been a ritual habit of tribes who used to live in Europe before Christianity became widespread that the inhabitants of a settlement had walked around it by following a ring-like trail so that the farm fields would have been more fertile. Try this ancient ritual by walking along the 5 km long trail while get to know the wildlife of fields surrounding Gömörszőlős. Start your exploration at the Gömörszőlős Education Centre of the Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development.

1. Hay meadow at the bottom of the Csató Peak

Creating a hay meadow at the bottom of a valley took a long time and regular enduring work. Where used to be a reedbed with only a few number of species, new habitats were created housing several dicotyledonous species. Plenty of sedges grew in those meadows where there was acid soil, the hay gained from these areas was used as a litter for household animals. Where meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), meadow fescue (*Festuca pratensis*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) grew in large numbers, the good quality hay was used for feeding animals.

2. Abandoned fields

Succession occurs in those fields that have not been mowed for several years. It can either be a slow or a fast process, depending on the nutrient content of rainwater that flows down the slopes



Hay meadow in the Pozsok Valley

towards the valley as well as the ground water level at the bottom of the valley. The diversity of plants has become poor due to the large number of common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and lesser pond sedge (*Carex acutiformis*) only a very few other species are able to survive at the edges of reedbeds like marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). Besides, these species have to compete with weeds such as the goose-grass (*Gallium aparine*) and the annual fleabane (*Stenactis annua*).



Marsh Marigold

3. Former pasture with remnant trees

Due to the former grazing of household animals, a grassland rich in species with a mosaic-like structure has evolved. Several insects and birds can be observed in these areas characteristic to grassland habitats, but at the same time remnant trees provide habitats for species preferring trees as nesting and living places.



Pasture with a remnant tree

4. Current farming methods

Farming methods and the way of living have changed during the latest decades. Recently hunting and game management are very important in the area, that is why high-stands and fields where

crops for games are produced can be seen nearby. However, the seeds used for crop production are of poor quality and most of the time the seeds of invasive plant species eg. ragweed (*Ambrosia elatior*) or jimson weed (*Datura stramonium*) are mixed with them that are unwelcomed in natural habitats.



Landscape surrounding Gömörszőlős

5. Orchards on the Vineyard Hill

Fruit trees were planted at the lower or on the upper parts of vineyards. Grasslands rich in species have been evolved under the fruit trees. The most characteristic species of these grasslands is the Hungarian thistle (*Cirsium pannonicum*) but herbs from the undergrowth of the nearby forests also enrich the flora. Due to the high abundance of plants, soil erosion and the spread of weeds are prevented. Mowing the grass under the trees prevented the spread



of shrubs as well as a good quality hay was gained. Besides hay and fruits, honey production and use of dry wood also contributed to the most economical way of use of orchards in the old times.



Flowering apple tree

6. Remnant marks of a previously famous vine culture

In 1749 Mátyás Bél historian made a significant note on the excellent quality of wine produced in the areas surrounding Gömörszőlős. Unfortunately, about 100 years later wine production ceased to exist because of the devastating phylloxera disease. Some of the vineyards were replanted by resistant species imported from America (Konkord, Noah, Delaváre etc.) but nowadays the produced wine is of poor quality.

7. Diversity of fruit tree types

Several types of fruits can be tasted by walking along the education trail: „Fehér”, „Durkó”, „Elein érő” („Sivákló”), „Besztercei” and „Bógyi” plums, at least six different types of cherries, 6-7 local types of apples and some local types of walnuts and pears. Local families always planted several species and types of fruit trees so that fruits could be continuously harvested from the beginning of the summer till winter. Due to the high variety of species and types, diseases and pests meant no real harm for the overall fruit production.



„Durkó” plum