

NA OVOCE

Your descendants will pluck your fruit.

Vergilius

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Fruit trees and orchards once formed irreplaceable parts of a colorful city and the landscape mosaic. Nowadays they slowly overgrow, wither away and dry up. While fruit travels half the globe to land on the shelves of supermarkets Czech orchards lie fallow and nobody picks their fruit.

We perceive fruit trees and orchards as part of our heritage and wealth that we got from previous generations and that it is necessary to maintain it in a right way. Current technologies and new ways of communication are helping us to relight social interest in local sources of fruit, spread awareness, educate and lead the positive example to the others. Not just to take and receive but also to give and take care of specific places.

Development of mapping application

In 2014 we started the development of our mapping application that helps people to find out where fruit trees and bushes grow in their neighborhood from which they can pick fruit for their own needs freely – regardless of income and social belonging. The year after the first version of the website was launched and due to the large media interest our community started to grow immediately. With help of the German organisation mundraub.org and the joint database of Slovak fruitmap.sk we registered more than 1000 users who marked nearly 8000 fruit trees.

Next to the web application allowing for the intended low-threshold citizen participation we decided to create its native mobile version that would also work offline. We usually don't carry a laptop and high quality internet connection to our hikes into the wild. Thanks to the success of our crowdfunding campaign on hithit.cz and winning the Open App competition in 2015 we started developing the Na ovoce app with a group of developers. The mobile application has been launched in 2016, it is for free for download via our website and runs on Android and iOS.

Popularization of Prague orchards

Besides the mapping of freely accessible fruit trees we aim to popularize Prague city orchards. They are important units of cultural landscapes offering relaxation and direct contact with nature. Equally important is their productive function. Especially in times when people got used to regular intake of fruits from the market shelves although the quality and origin is often questionable.

There are dozens of orchards in the capital that gradually go through renewal. Trees of different age, state and type can be seen in the orchards. And all those locations are freely accessible and everybody is allowed to pick fruits for free.

The current state of Prague's orchards serves us as an excellent teaching material. Since 2015 we organize walks around Prague orchards in order to show people these unique and often completely forgotten places which may play an important role in the future – in terms of active leisure time in the city and local sources of quality fruit.

The annual series of public walks culminates in the annual Fruit festival in one of the biggest Prague orchards Na Klíčově. The festival visitors can actively join the harvest and processing of local fruit into juice, participate in educative lectures and workshops. To this various activities for children are included. Prague's Na Klíčově orchard was totally unknown to the local citizens for many years. Thanks to our activities it is gradually becoming a popular destination for walks – rich in quality and tasty fruits.

During the entire year we are preparing educational workshops for public that guide us through the annual cycle of fruit trees. We welcome spring with practical workshops teaching participants the basic principles of cutting fruit trees. Summer is dedicated to the processing of fruit into sweet jams. In autumn we rediscover forgotten varieties of fruit trees. All workshops are designed in a way that each participant can directly test the gathered information in practise.

All the events are designed low-threshold and foster mutual cooperative learning in an informal environment. Especially elderly people bring in long-term experience and local knowledge and find opportunity to share it with younger participants, parents and kids. As discovering the city nature through the lens of fruit connects with the everyday experience of people round the globe our events also bring together the long-established and new citizens of Prague.

Edible parks

In cooperation with the city of Prague and selected city districts we are preparing the founding of new orchards – edible parks. These edible parks will play an important role as vital public spaces and as a valuable source of local and freely accessible fruit in the future. The projects take care of the civic participation since the very beginning. Local citizens will be given the opportunity to stand sponsor for these public fruit trees and plant it together with a professional tutor. This adoption programme shall strengthen the people's belonging to the localities. A personally planted tree stands as a rooting down symbol for many people and creates a stronger bond between the citizens themselves and their environmental surrounding.

Great fruit trail

In parallel with founding edible parks and the popularization of historical prague orchards we would like to connect chosen localities into a coherent unit – the Great fruit trail. In its final form the Great fruit trail can represent an element of “intelligent recreation” providing visitors with a wide range of activities – from a simple stay in a harmonious and gaming environment for families with children to education in historical, urban and environmental issues. Together with the physical level of the trail, a virtual trail would be created by using online applications and media containing a wide informative spectrum of materials to the individual localities. This virtual trail would be reachable by smartphones directly from the place. At least some parts of the trail should be accessible to people with limited mobility.

Beneficial e-shop Na ovoce

In autumn 2016 we launched a beneficial e-shop selling old varieties of fruit trees together with the leading Czech pomologist Stanislav Boček. The e-shop includes 10 selected old varieties of fruit trees – apples, pears and cherries. Part of the income goes directly to our educational activities and planting new trees. The purpose of the e-shop is mainly getting back the traditional varieties of fruit trees into the open land and private gardens and inspire citizens to help preserving our fruit heritage with its diversity of forgotten flavors and smells.

Na ovoce team

Our team consists of five permanent members, external collaborators, lecturers of the educational programs for public and volunteers. Permanent members of the team work on the projects in their spare time without any financial compensation.

The key members and competences

Katka Kubánková – graphics, communication, strategy

Jana Kosová – social media, copywriting, web

Ondřej Nejedlý – web development

František Marčík – communication and PR, coordination, strategy

Marek Navrátil – logistics, professional guarantee

Organisation financing

To finance our activities we apply for the grant programs of the City of Prague. The Fruit festival is realized thanks to the financial support of the city district of Prague 9. The development of the mapping application was in parts funded by winning the Open App competition and in parts by crowdfunding via the platform hithit.cz. There are some few individual supporters in our user community contributing via the portal Darujme.cz. Since 2016 interested parties can also contribute through the purchase of a fruit tree via our beneficial e-shop on eshop.na-ovoce.cz.