



## ISU-Botanical Excursion to Armenia 24<sup>th</sup> of June – 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2021

*Armenia is a small mountainous country located in the Caucasus Ecoregion - one of the Planet's biodiversity hotspots. With the area of just 30,000sq km the country is remarkable for very rich and diverse flora and vegetation. Flora of Armenia includes about 3800 vascular plant species, 144 of which are local endemics. Here one can observe the abundance and diversity of plants and landscapes just in some hours of driving - most of the main habitat types characteristic to the region are found in the country.*

*Territory of Armenia belongs to one of the most ancient areas of origin and development of agriculture where donors and progenitors of many cultivated plants, represented with great number of forms, have survived till now. Many plant species form an important component of local menu, are used in medicinal purposes and in various areas of industry.*

*On the tour we will explore landscapes from 900 to 3200m above sea level: will stop for botanizing at semideserts, steppes and meadows, will walk in forests and drive up to alpine zones. From Yerevan, its surroundings and crossing Ararat Valley we will enjoy the majestic view to Biblical Ararat mountain. We will spend almost two days by Sevan Lake – a jewel of Armenian Highland and the largest lake in the Caucasus region, which is located on the altitude of 1900m above sea level.*

*The tour dates match the period when the mountain meadows, especially on the subalpine altitudes, are luxuriant and full of flowers. Our program is designed the way to introduce flora and habitat diversity with focus on subjects of special botanical interest: rare and endemic species, Important Plant Areas, remarkable trees and groves. We will also experience ethnobotany in practice and make a tree nursery visit. Numerous historical monuments are spread all over the country's territory and form an inseparable part of its landscapes, so visits to the cultural sites of both pre-Christian and Christian periods will make our trip more interesting and inspiring.*

*On the tour we will meet people, who keep alive millennia old traditions of their ancestors, who care about the environment and open their heart for every guest. Every trip is not just an excursion, but joint exploration, which may bring new findings!*

*I invite you to unforgettable journey to my country of sun, flowers and history, recorded in stones.*

*Anna Asatryan, PhD, Leading researcher  
Institute of Botany, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia*

**Day 1. Arrival.**

Meeting point will be communicated later.

**Overnight in Yerevan****Day 2. Yerevan city tour – Karin - brandy factory - Yerevan**

The day in Yerevan will start at 10:00 with city tour after which we will drive out of the city towards Ushi village in the north.

- Lunch in a private house in Ushi village

After lunch we will make a visit to Armenia Tree Project (ATP) nursery in Karin village.

<https://www.armeniatree.org/>

Back to Yerevan by 17:00 for an excursion to brandy factory (1 hour).

- Welcome dinner in one of the city's restaurants.
- **Overnight in Yerevan**

**Day 3. Yerevan: food market, Matenadaran - Garni – Geghard – Yerevan.**

The day program will begin at 9:00 with about an hour long excursion to the food market, where we will explore enormous selection of dry fruits and nuts, diversity of fresh fruits and vegetables, spices, local cheese sorts and other goods. The market with its special atmosphere will brighten the beginning of the tour. Then we will visit Matenadaran ancient manuscript museum (1,5 hours).

- Lunch in one of the city's restaurants

After lunch we will leave Yerevan for remarkable cultural sites Garni and Geghard, located by an Important plant area. On the way we will make about an hour stop by Charents arch for botanical explorations of semidesert-steppe vegetation and to enjoy fascinating view to Biblical Ararat Mountain and the foothills of Ararat Valley. Here we will see *Centaurea carduiiformis*, Red Data book listed *Centaurea erivanensis* and *Gundelia armeniaca* (endemic of Armenia), also *Xeranthemum squarrosum*, *Aegilops* sp., *Helichrysum graveolens* and other plants. Our next destination will be the UNESCO World Heritage Site Geghard rock monastery built in IV-XIII centuries. Then we will drive back and stop at Garni village for the temple - the only Pagan Temple survived in Armenia.

Back to the city by 18:00 – 18:30.

- Dinner in a restaurant in Yerevan.
- **Overnight in Yerevan.**

**Day 4. Yerevan - Noravank – Jermuk**

We are leaving Yerevan at 8:30 and driving to the south through Ararat Valley.

There will be a couple of botanical stops at the foothills of Ararat Valley to see flora of semidesert zone: *Euphorbia marschalliana*, *Salvia hydrangea*, *Stachys inflata*, *Teucrium polium*, *Scorzonera rigida*, *Rhamnus pallasii*, *Astragalus szovitsii*, a very rare cushion plant *Gypsophila aretioides*. etc.



Then we'll visit the picturesque Noravank gorge, where we are going to see XIII-XIV century Noravank monastery complex and some plants: *Ziziphus jujuba*, *Amygdalus fenzliana*, *Pistacia mutica*, *Clematis orientalis*. Lunch in a restaurant nearby.

We may also visit archaeological site Areni-1 cave where both the earliest known leather shoe and earliest winery in the world were discovered in the last 10 years.

- Dinner and **overnight in a hotel in Jermuk** town

#### Day 5. Jermuk - Artavan – Jermuk

We will spend the day in Vayots Dzor province on botanical and cultural explorations of Artavan village and its picturesque surroundings. Plants to see there: *Phlomis tuberosa*, *Campanula glomerata*, *Astragalus aureus*, *A.lagurus*, *Pyrus salicifolia*, *Ornithogalum shelkovnikovii*, *Dianthus calocephalus*, *Prangos ferulacea*, *Inula britannica*, *Juniperus polycarpus*, *Acer iberica*, *Amygdalus fenzliana*, *Cephalaria gigantea*, *Stachys iberica* etc.

After there will also be time to spend in Jermuk – a resort town known for its mineral waters and picturesque landscapes.

- Picnic -lunch in the mountains
- Dinner and **overnight in a hotel in Jermuk** town

#### Day 6. Jermuk – Zorats Karer – Ughtasar – Sisian

Leaving the hotel at 9:00 will drive further to the south. We are planning to make about an hour stop at Zorats Karer – ancient megalithic monument near Sisian town. Not only the monument, but some plants around are of interest. We expect to see here *Astragalus calycinus*, *A.kirpicznikovii* (*Red Data book of Armenia*), *Cerasus incana* etc.

Our target for the day is Ughtasar mountain not only for its rich flora, but for amazing landscapes, including small alpine lake and ancient petroglyphs. Local jeeps will bring us up to 3,200m above sea level. We will make stops for plants on different altitudes; some of the plants for the day are *Galium verum*, *Rhinanthus minor*, *Scabiosa caucasica*, *Allium schoenoprasum*, *Centaurea cheiranthifolia*, *Pedicularis crassiostris*, *Corydalis alpestris*, *Vavilovia formosa* (*Red Data book*).

- Picnic-lunch
- Dinner and **overnight in hotel in Sisian** town

#### Day 7. Sisian – Selim Pass – Noratuz – Sevan

Leaving Sisian at 8:30 and driving to the north to Sevan Lake via Selim Pass. Some stops on it will be done to see medieval caravansaray on the pass and an old cemetery with very rich collection of khachkars (crosses engraved stones) in Noratuz village. Among plants we will see on the route are Red Data book listed species *Tomanthea daralaghezica* and Armenian endemic *Smyrniopsis armena*, also *Rindera lanata*, *Stachys lavandulifolia*, *Onobrychis cornuta*, *Hypericum scabrum*, *Spiraea crenata*, *Viburnum lantana*, *Aethionema armenum*, *Euphorbia sequierana* etc.





- Picnic-lunch
- Dinner and **overnight in the hotel at Sevan.**

#### Day 8. Artanish peninsula – Sevan

Leaving the hotel at 9:00. We are going to visit Artanish peninsula, located on the south-eastern shore of Sevan - one of the most interesting sites of “Sevan” national park and one of 32 Important Plant Areas of Armenia. Plants for the day are *Cousinia macrocephala*, *Juniperus polycarpus*, *J.oblonga*, *J.sabina*, *Berberis iberica*, *Centaurea rhizantha*, *Melampyrum chlorostachyum*, *Linum tenuifolium*, *Dracocephalum multicaule*, *Hedysarum elegans* (Red Data book of Armenia), *Thalictrum foetidum*, *Sedum sempervivoides*, *Campanula sibirica*, *Psephellus somcheticus*, *Inula aspera*, *Lonicera iberica* and others.

- Picnic –lunch on the peninsula
- Dinner and **overnight in the hotel at Sevan.**

#### Day 9. Semyonovka Pass – Dilijan – Yew Grove – Lermontovo

Leaving the hotel at 8:30 we will spend around 1,5 – 2 hours at beautiful wet meadows of Semyonovka Pass on the way to Dilijan. Here we are going to explore meadow vegetation with *Lilium armenum*, *Centaurea cheiranthifolia*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Inula orientalis*, *Trifolium trichocephalum*, *T.spadiceum*, *Veratrum album*, *Hesperis matronalis*, *Papaver paucifoliatum*, *Betonica macrantha*, *Polygonum bistorta*, *Astrantia maxima*, *Geranium ibericum* and other species.

After we will make a short visit to Dilijan town for some walk, souvenir shops and craft workshops.

The day program will continue with an excursion to the relict Yew Grove - an area with special protection regime in Dilijan National Park’s territory. Yew (*Taxus baccata*) is in the Red Data Book of Armenia and it is a rare habitat type for the country. Yew is mixed with beech *Fagus orientalis*. We will see also *Paliurus spina-christi*, *Carpinus orientalis*, *C.betulus*, from herbaceous flora - *Geranium robertianum*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Asperula odorata*, *Arum orientale*, *Euphorbia macroceras*, *Salvia glutinosa* and other species.

- Lunch in a restaurant by the road or picnic-lunch.
- Dinner and **overnight in Tezhler Resort.**

*In the evening – presentation on the Caucasian rhododendron in Armenia by the botany guide*

#### Day 10. Margahovit (Bazum Mountain Range, Pambak Mountain Range) – Lermontovo

We will spend the whole day in botanical explorations of the Bovaqar mountains (Bazum range) and Pambak mountain’s flora not far from Margahovit village. Off-road drive route will bring us to high mountain meadows, rhododendron heaths, forests and tall-herb vegetation. Among the species we will see are *Rhododendron caucasicum*, *Campanula glomerata*, *Galega orientalis*, *Cephalaria gigantea*, *Knautia montana*, *Acer trautvetteri*, *Pimpinella rhodantha*, *Polygonum alpinum*, *Linum hypericifolium*, *Psephellus dealbatus*, *Nepeta nuda*, *Silene depressa*, *Angelica tatiana*, *Centaurea abbreviata*, *Prunella*



*vulgaris*, *Silene compacta*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Dactylorhiza sp.* *Quercus iberica*, *Fagus orientalis*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Acer platanoides*, *Leucanthemum vulgare* etc.

- Picnic lunch in the mountains.
- Dinner and **overnight in Tezler Resort.**

*In the evening* - 15-20 min presentation by our botany guide called “Armenia– a bread country”. It will be supported with interpretation material and will represent wild cereals found in Armenia and local bread linked traditions, which have passed ages and survived till our days.

### **Day 11. Lermontovo – Aragats – Yerevan**

Leaving the hotel at 8:30, will drive back to Yerevan through Vanadzor town. Mountain Aragatz (4095m) – the highest mountain in the republic will be our target for the day. We will make a few stops on different altitudes including one by Amberd Fortress.

The plants we are going to see on Aragats are *Orchis coryophora*, *Papaver orientale*, *Rhinanthus pectinatus*, *Arenaria dianthoides*, *A. gypsophylloides*, *Prangos ferulacea*, *Isatis tinctoria*, *Jurinea moschus*, *Chamaescadium acaule*, *Campanula tridentata*, *Pedicularis armena*, *Myosotis alpestris*, *Plantago atrata*, *Draba bruniifolia* etc.

- Picnic - lunch

Arrival to Yerevan around 18:30.

Farewell dinner and **overnight in Yerevan.**

### **Day 12. Departure**



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Participants

Up to 28 people can join the excursion. Date of application is important for getting the confirmation. Spoken language will be English with the guide.

### Expenses

Prices in EURO per person based on double/twin occupancy and on the number of participants from 13-28. Payment per Person - the final prices will be stated in June 2020.

Current price overview (plus taxes 19%):

Accommodation for another night: 105,00 €.

Participants	13-15		16-18		19-21		22-24		25-28	
Room	Double	Single	Double	Single	Double	Single	Double	Single	Double	Single
ISU-Member	1.290,0 €	1.540,0 €	1.200,0 €	1.450,0 €	1.110,0 €	1.360,0 €	1.055,0 €	1.305,0 €	990,0 €	1.240,0 €
Non-ISU-Member	1.390,0 €	1.640,0 €	1.300,0 €	1.550,0 €	1.210,0 €	1.460,0 €	1.155,0 €	1.405,0 €	1.090,0 €	1.340,0 €

### Tour includes

- Airport Transfer
- Accommodation as described in the tour itinerary
- 4 nights at a 4 stars heritage hotel in Yerevan  
<https://tufenkianheritage.com/en/> – include SGL suppl.
- 2 nights at “Tegh Ler” Resort hotel <http://www.tezhler.am/> – include SGL suppl.
- 2 nights at Jermuk town in hotel <http://www.jermukverona.am/> – include SGL suppl.
- 1 night at Sisian town in hotel – include SGL suppl.
- 2 nights at by lake Sevan in hotel <http://www.bluesevan.com/> – include SGL suppl.
- All transportation throughout the tour (air-conditioned bus or minivan, included special car for visiting to the mount. area).
- English-speaking culture guide service
- English-speaking botanical guide services
- All admission fees to museums and sights.
- Meals, in Yerevan - HB, outside of Yerevan - FB. as shown in the tour description (B= breakfast - 11; L = lunch-10; D = dinner -11)
- Non-alcoholic beverages (spring water, mineral water)
- All taxes.

### Contacts:

- “Seven Springs Tour” travel agency

**Director - Contact (for organizational related inquiries)**

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- **Guide – (for botany related questions)**

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