

# BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES

**Opportunity to increase agricultural sustainability**, improve the socio-economic environment and the rural landscape.

**Benefits for human health**, a balanced diet and a cleaner environment.

Lavender, marigolds, roses generate **opportunities for agritourism**.

**Higher profit on small areas**, with premium, ecological and sustainable products.

**Reduced competition, opportunities** on local and international markets, customers looking for unique and sustainable products.

**Supports income diversification and economic development**, by processing products in the form of oils, teas, cosmetics or medicinal products.



## DID YOU KNOW ...

**Quinoa** is a complete food, included by NASA in the astronauts' diet.

**Sea buckthorn** contains 10 times more vitamin C than an orange. Sea buckthorn fruits can withstand temperatures down to -40°C.

**Aronia and goji** are nicknamed "the fruits of longevity" because they reduce oxidative stress and improve heart health.

**Millet** is the "ancestor of polenta", the spring cereal, cultivated since ancient times that has now been replaced by corn.

**Amaranth** was considered the "food of the gods" by the Aztecs. It contains more protein than most cereals.

**Lavender** is very drought-resistant. It is a magnet for bees and butterflies, supporting biodiversity. Its aroma combats insomnia and stress.

**Blueberries** have a high content of antioxidants, protect cells against aging, improve memory and cognitive functions, support vision, reducing eye fatigue.

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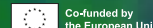
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# NICHE PLANTS. SMALL CROPS, HIGH VALUE.

**Project partners:** Employers' Association Regional Center for Urban Entrepreneurship ("CRAU") South Muntenia Region (Leader), Slivo Pole Municipality, Ruse, Bulgaria (Partner 2), "Udriște Năsturel" High School, Hotarele commune, Giurgiu county (Partner 3)

# WHAT ARE NICHE PLANTS

Medicinal, aromatic plants, fruit bushes and pseudo-cereals grown on small areas, under certain soil, climate or habitat conditions are considered niche plants.

Here are some examples suitable for cultivation in the Giurgiu-Ruse region:

- **Medicinal plants:** lavender, marigold, chamomile, milk thistle, marjoram, thyme, mint
- **Fruit bushes:** aronia, goji, sea buckthorn, blackberry, blueberry, raspberry
- **Pseudo-cereals:** quinoa, millet, buckwheat

## Remember

Cultivating niche crops starts with well-prepared soils for a rich and healthy harvest. The first step before establishing a crop is to analyze the soil. Check the physical, chemical and biological properties of the land to know which plants are suitable, but also to manage the quality of the soil.



# ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

*Niche crops bring economic value and support sustainable agriculture. Choosing them means more fertile land, safer production and a more balanced environment.*

**They are adaptable to climate change** and are resistant, especially to drought and desertification.

**They improve soil quality**, preventing erosion and enriching it with nutrients. Legumes fix nitrogen in the soil, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.

**They reduce water consumption in agriculture**, having deep roots that extract moisture from the soil better than conventional crops. These crops are ideal for areas with low rainfall.

**They attract pollinators, support biodiversity**, beneficial for the rich fruiting of trees and for increasing fruit production.

**They are natural repellents for pests**, protecting both the large crop and the orchards.

**They increase faunal diversity**, attract birds and predatory insects, which help in the natural control of pests, maintaining the ecological balance of the agricultural ecosystem.

**They maintain soil health**, by introducing them into rotation, also reducing the risk of diseases and pests specific to monoculture or short rotations.

# BENEFITS FOR AGRICULTURE

Support sustainable agriculture.

Revitalize the soil, some can be established on abandoned, degraded or pesticide-polluted land.

Use soil nutrients and water that other crops do not have access to.

Reduce economic risks, by reducing dependence on agricultural market fluctuations and climate change.

Have lower costs and greater efficiency.

Create habitats for beneficial microorganisms and useful fauna.

