



BIODIVERSITY WEEKEND IN HUNGARY ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY 2009

On the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity (IBD) the Ministry of Environment and Water organized a 3-day **biodiversity weekend** in 2009. As a preparation of this event, a nation-wide thematic fairy-tale writing competition on biodiversity was announced on the IBD in 2008.

The main objective was to raise awareness of the various groups of the general public and decision-makers on the importance of biodiversity, in particular agro-biodiversity.

22ND OF MAY (FRIDAY)

The **International Biodiversity Day** was celebrated **at the most prominent place, the Parliament of the Republic of Hungary through a Parliamentary Open Day** focusing on agro-biodiversity, namely the conservation of local varieties and the diversity of national crop and animal genetic resources. Approximately 500 people participated on the event including all relevant stakeholders, among others high-level representatives from state administration as well as Members of Parliament, scientific and research institutions and NGOs. The participants adopted recommendations on the conservation of Hungary's genetic diversity, which is planned to be presented to the Parliament in order to approve a decree on this important issue. More details (in English): <http://www.essrg.hu/parlament/programen.html>

Parliamentary Open Day on agrobiodiversity





23RD OF MAY (SATURDAY)

The award ceremony of the nation-wide agrobiodiversity-related fairy-tale writing competition titled ‘Are there still any sky-high bean stalks at your village?’ was held on the second day of the biodiversity weekend in the Hungarian Open Air Museum of Szentendre. The title of the competition refers to a wide-known fairy-tale called 'Jack and the bean stalk'. Children and adults were invited to write a tale or a short story related to crop, vegetable or fruit varieties. For our great surprise almost 1000 stories were sent from all over Hungary and by Hungarians living in the neighbouring countries such as Slovakia, Austria, Serbia, Romania and Ukraine. Several stories were written also by families (grandfather with grandchildren, parents with children) or teachers together with pupils.

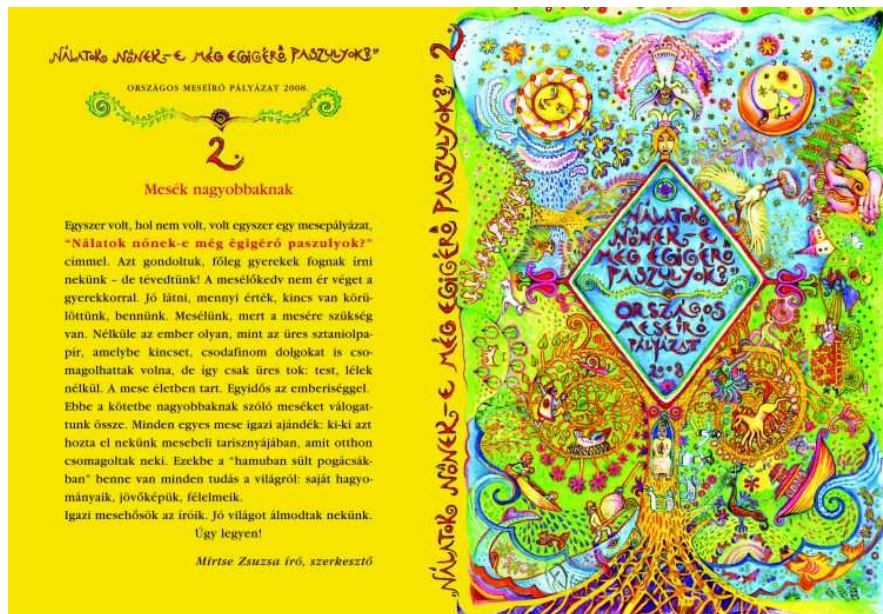
Venue of the award ceremony of the biodiversity weekend



On the occasion of the International Biodiversity Day a beautifully illustrated 2-volume fairy-tale book titled “Are there still any sky-high bean stalks at your village?” was launched by the Ministry of Environment and Water, containing the best 163 agrobiodiversity-related tales written and painted for the competition. This book is a perfect tool for environmental education; therefore the main libraries and all eco-schools will receive a copy. It will also be available at bookstores.



Cover of the book launched on the IBD titled “Are there still any sky-high bean stalks at your village?”



The main presents for the winners were a copy of the published fairy-tale book and a memory game of Hungarian bean varieties. On the last day of the weekend, the writers of the 10 best stories were invited to an excursion to the Bükk National Park.

Award ceremony of the agrobiodiversity-related fairy tale writing competition (State Secretary and the CBD National Focal Point congratulate to one of the winners)



Handing out the books to the winners of the competition launched on the International Biodiversity Day



After the official celebration, various programmes related to agro-biodiversity were offered for the participants, such as an exhibition of traditional plant varieties, joint baking of home-made bread, painting with organic materials, folk games related to field crops, story-telling, folk dances etc.

Agro-biodiversity related programmes (use of the manual mill, joint baking of home-made bread, use of organic paints, exhibition of traditional field crops)





More photos of this day: <http://biodiv.kvvm.hu/PhotoArchive/dijkioszto-2009>

The agrobiodiversity-related fairy-tale book, launched on the International Biodiversity Day, has received great media attention. Several magazines, web-based news sites and radio channels reported on the IBD and the fairy-tale book. Moreover, it was presented at the famous Book Fair of Budapest and it is available at libraries and bookstores. As the book has a big success, the Ministry of Environment and Water approaches sponsor companies in order to republish and distribute it all over the country.

Half-an hour biodiversity programme at the Book Fair of Budapest (writers together with the CBD Focal Point)



Following the previous years' tradition, a new competition was also announced titled “*Send a message to the world to conserve biodiversity*” with a deadline of 21 October 2009 (World Day of Caring for the Earth). Primary and secondary school children are invited to design postcards for the celebration of the International Year for Biodiversity (2010) showing the importance of diversity of life on earth. The best postcards will be used as the official postcards of the Ministry of Environment and Water.

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