

Pilot course as a part of the international ESTO project

'Traditional orchards – old varieties of apple trees'

Pilot course titled 'Traditional orchards – old varieties of apple trees' that took place from 16-19 May 2014 in ZSCKR (The Jadwiga Dziubinska Group of Schools - Agricultural Education Centre) in Goładkowo was the first such course in Poland. It is the international initiative of the ESTO project.

ESTO is the project that aims to educate traditional orchards specialists with a European certificate.

The course was conducted by two specialists on the old varieties orchards, i.e. Grzegorz Hodun and Artur Kurzeja.

The course participants were the students of landscape architecture and agribusiness profile as well as the students of a qualifying professional course with teachers of vocational farming subjects. The group consisted of 32 persons.

The training lasted four days during which different relevant issues were discussed: establishment and care of an orchard, obtaining good quality fruit and processing them into juice. The training was divided into theoretical and practical part.

Theoretical part enriched students' knowledge with information concerning pomology, ordination, anatomy, morphology and physiology of fruit trees. The students had an opportunity to learn how to distinguish different species and varieties of fruit trees as well as to design a traditional orchard by themselves.

A very interesting experience was also the opportunity to learn how to propagate and graft fruit trees.

Practical part enabled the students to see a real traditional orchard and to learn about its proper functioning. It was a very interesting experience.

The culmination of the training were classes where the students produced natural apple juice. The process of obtaining the juice indeed held the students' attention. Each of them had to design an information and promotion label on a bottle with a hand-squeezed juice.

The initiative to educate traditional orchards specialist is a very right idea as nowadays European countries took actions to restore biodiversity and old varieties, adapted to local environment conditions are often more resistant to low temperatures and disease than new species. More species of animals, insects and plants can be found on 1ha of a traditional orchards than in a forest. Moreover, for decades traditional orchards were the most characteristic element of rural landscape in Europe.

The students participating in the course were interested and involved in the project. We hope that the course will contribute to the development and use of traditional orchards established and managed by our youth in the local area.