

Editors' Note

Dear Readers and Authors,

In recent years, despite the difficulties, thanks to the joint efforts of the editorial board and the leadership of the SDPS, it was possible to save the journal and even increase its category. Despite tangible progress, we still have a lot to do to improve the quality of the journal and its citation in order to attract more domestic and international contributors. Recently, the official website of the journal has been updated (<https://sdpz.rs/casopis-zemljiste-i-biljka/>). We have implemented an online submission system as well as online peer review (<https://sdpz.rs/submission/>).

I would like to take this opportunity to address the journal audience about the recently published book "Advances in Understanding Soil Degradation" by Springer Nature: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-85682-3>. Many members of the Soil Science Society of Serbia contributed to the book, which covers wide range of soil degradation issues.

Land degradation is undermining the wellbeing of two fifths of humanity, raising the risks of migration and economic and social conflict, according to the most comprehensive global assessment of the problem to date. As reported by the UN, a third of the planet's land is severely degraded and fertile soil is being lost at the rate of twenty-four billion tonnes a year. A decrease in productivity is observed on 20 % of the world's cropland, 16 % of forest land, 19 % of grassland and 27 % of rangeland

Paradoxically, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that our environment can recover. Only about couple of years ago, we could not have imagined how nature would behave under the sharply reduced impact of human activity as many activities were forcibly suspended due to the pandemic at the beginning of 2020. However, as reported by a number of studies, even a few months of enforced human inaction not only immeasurably pleased the flora and fauna of the planet; it also had a positive effect on the quality of water and air and ultimately on the drivers of climate change.

This new reality has already shaken up economics and politics, but will the new reality help raise our awareness and change our attitude to natural resources and particularly to soil? I really want to believe that, in spite of the economic difficulties ahead, and thanks to united, collaborative wise decisions and efforts, we will be able to understand and accept that we can get by with fewer needs than we thought. Especially because an excessive consumerist attitude to natural resources, including the soil, will not save the poor from hunger and will not make the rich happier. Although the growing population must be fed and housed while conserving natural resources, we should not forget that 95 % of our food comes from the soil and about a third of the world's soil has already been degraded. It is not the high population density that is necessarily related to land degradation, but it is the attitude of the population to their soil resources that determines the extent of that degradation. This attitude, among others, is reflected in our inability to prevent our soil resources from being lost to degradation and its quality permanently declining, even though soil scientists have been aware of the issue for decades.

The editorial board thanks all the authors and staff of the journal and encourage both young and experienced researchers to contribute to the improvement of its quality by publishing interesting research results, review articles or short communications of ongoing research.

Be healthy and active,

Sincerely,

Editor-in-chief

E. Saljniko ✓