

Zeitschrift: Veröffentlichungen des Geobotanischen Institutes Rübel in Zürich
Herausgeber: Geobotanisches Institut Rübel (Zürich)
Band: 8 (1932)

Artikel: The beech forests of Czechoslovakia
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Kapitel: "The study of our beech forests..."
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-307034>

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The Beech Forests of Czechoslovakia.

By *Karel Domin*, Praha.

The study of our beech forests from the sociological and ecological standpoints is not, as yet, finished even in rough outline. Therefore, I am endeavouring here to give, for the first time, a geobotanical synopsis of the Czechoslovakian beech forests based upon my own experiences gained in various parts of our Republic, and upon the synthetic works done by other authors. This paper is but a general survey, since a monographic treatment of these characteristic forest types would fill a thick volume.

I. Area covered by beech forests in Czechoslovakia.

According to the latest statistics, of 1920, the forests in Czechoslovakia cover an area of 4,662.790 ha or 33.19% of the whole country's area. It is therefore quite evident that Czechoslovakia is a typical forest country. At the beginning of historic times, almost all of the Republic was covered by one continuous virgin forest, with the exception of some steppe areas in the Bohemian valley of the Labe (Elbe) River, in southern Moravia, in southern Slovakia, and in southern Subcarpathian Russia.

Striking to-day is the predominance of the coniferous forests in the Sudetic-Hercynian regions — in Bohemia 85,96% of the whole forest area is coniferous. However, in the Carpathian region, the deciduous forests cover a far greater area than do the coniferous forests. As we approach the deciduous and mixed forests, we notice their striking increase eastward. Deciduous and mixed forests occupy 14,24% of the entire forest area in Bohemia, 37,45% in Silesia, 39,98% in Moravia, 69,42% in Slovakia and 77,67% in Subcarpathian Russia.

Beech forests are most abundantly developed in Subcarpathian Russia where they take up 58,9% of the forest-covering while in Slovakia 32,1%, whereas in Silesia only 9,8%, in Moravia 8,2%, and