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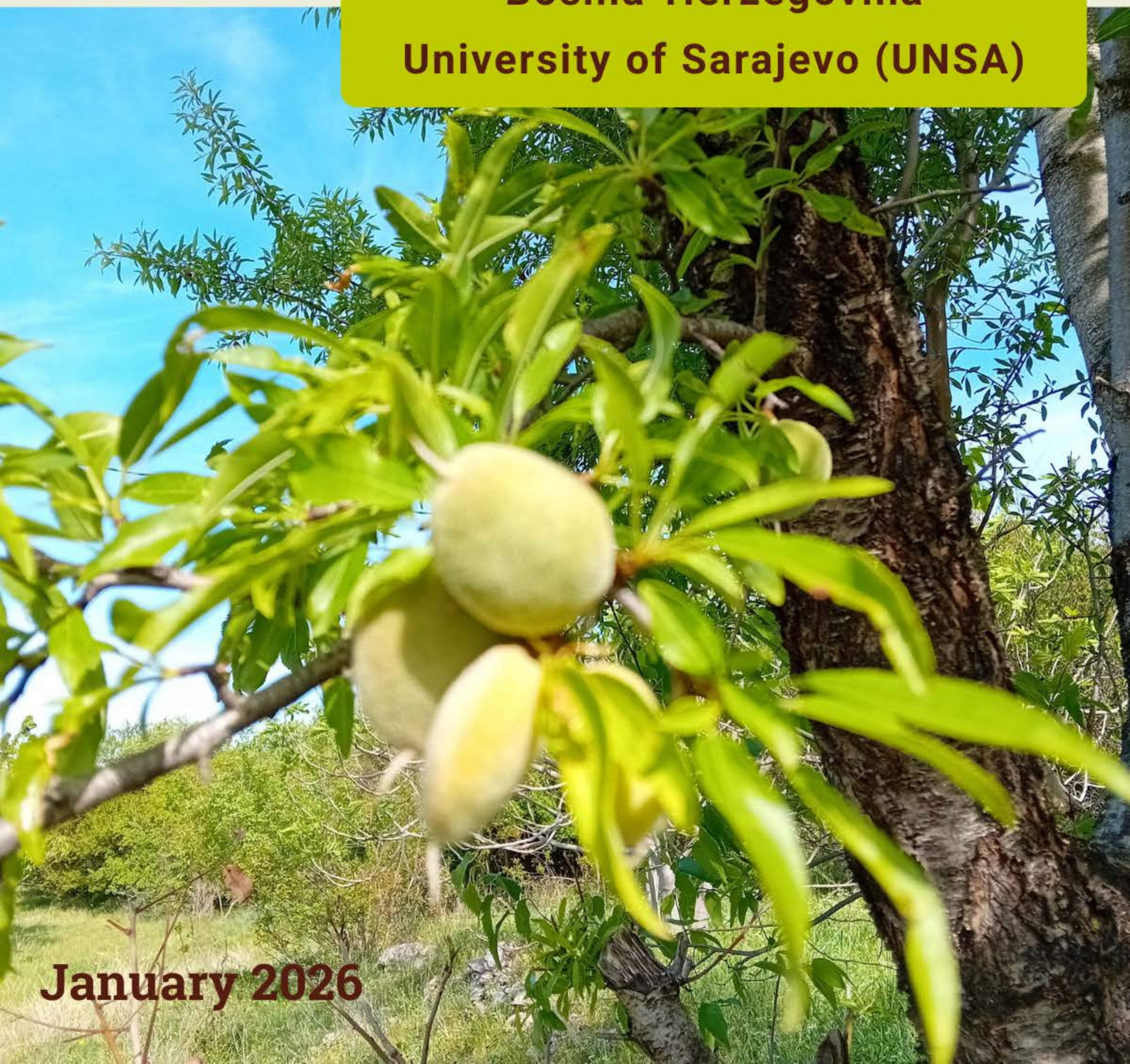
Wild Fruit Population of the Month

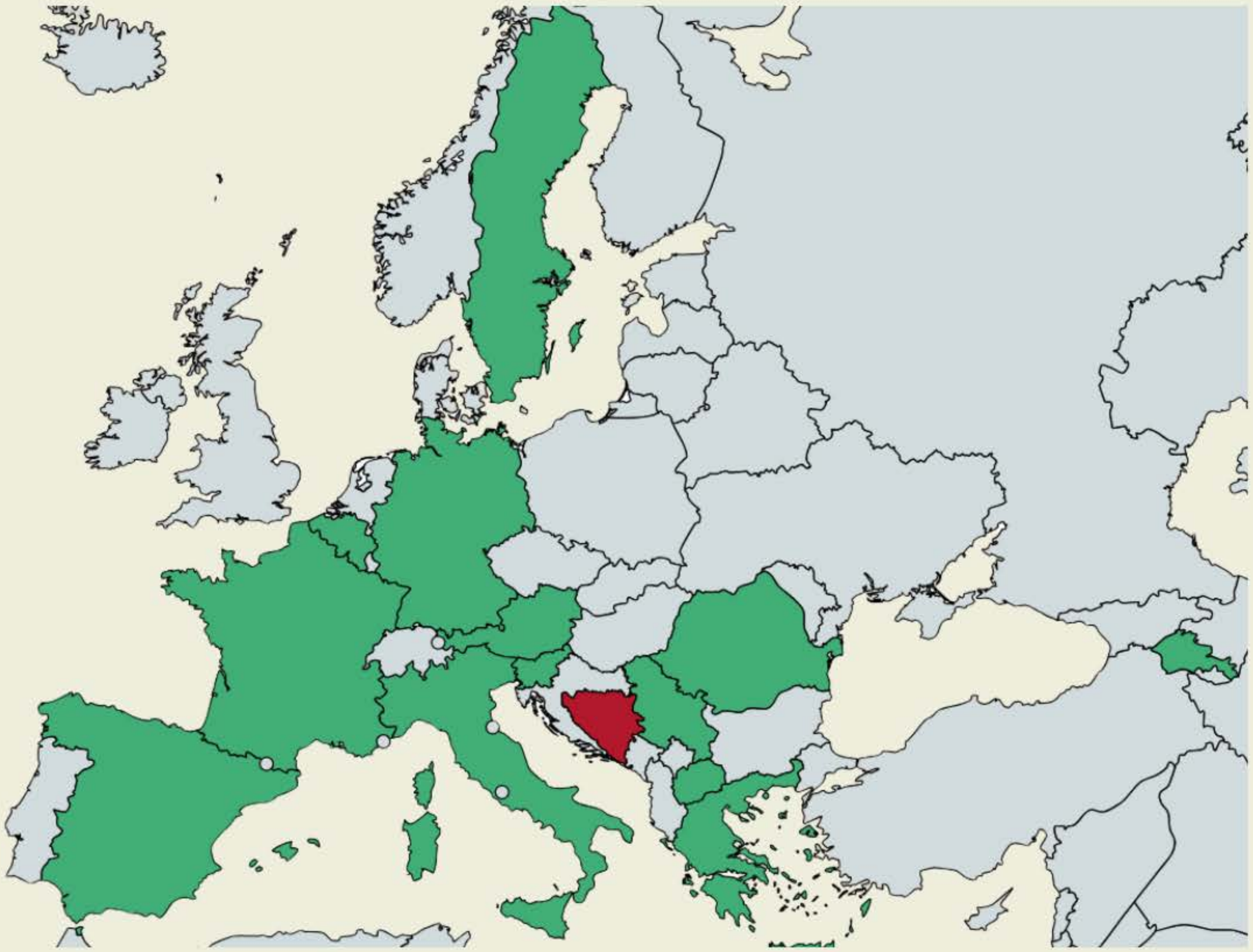
Bosnia-Herzegovina

University of Sarajevo (UNSA)



January 2026

This month, we pack our bags for Bosnia and Herzegovina, where FRUITDIV partner UNSA and its researchers have uncovered previously undocumented populations of wild almond in challenging Mediterranean and sub-Mediterranean landscapes.



📍 **Regions explored include Trebinje, the Neretva valley, and the wider Herzegovina area**

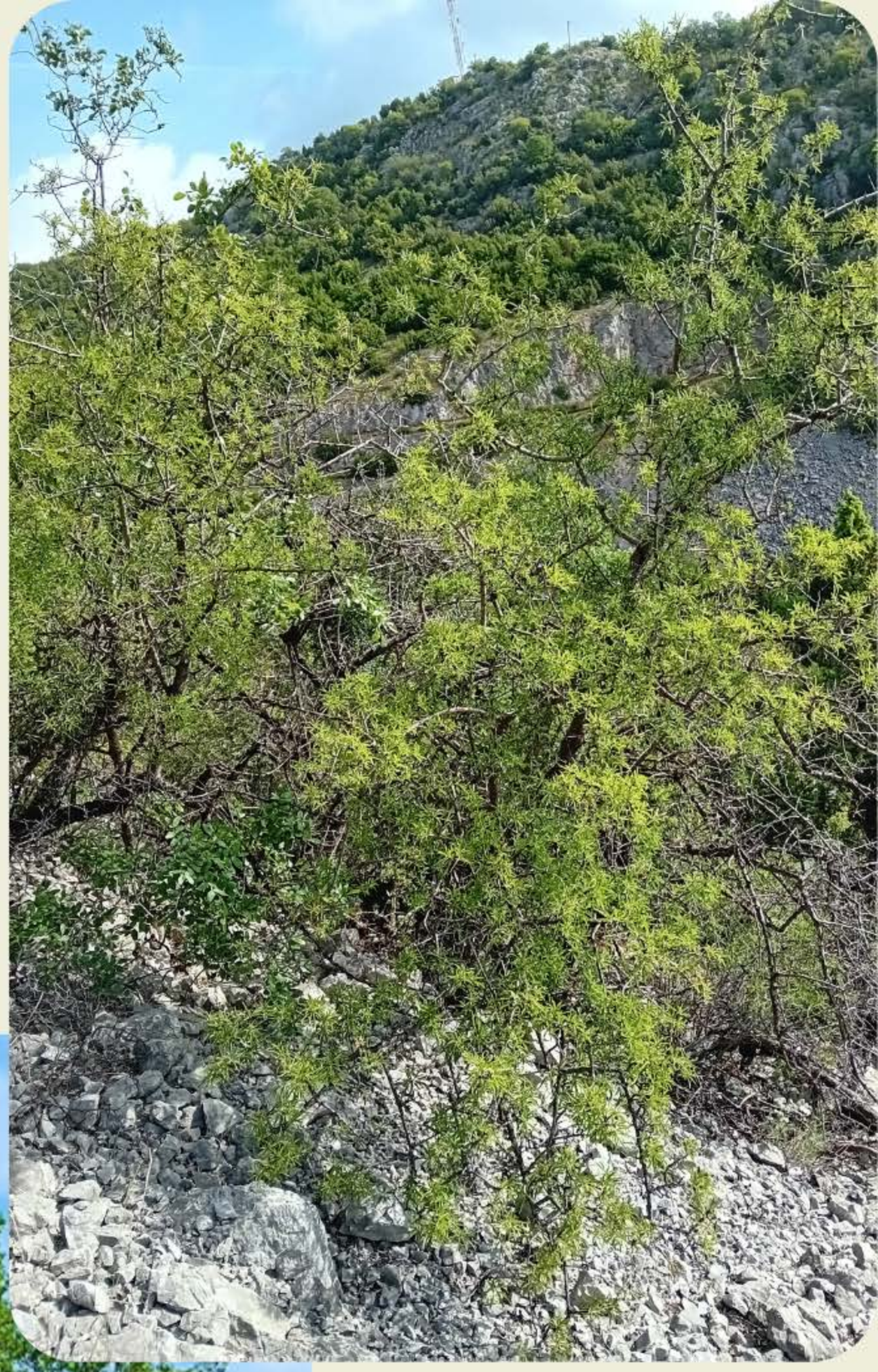
🌱 **Species focus: wild almond (*Prunus webbii*)**

🔬 **Next steps: genetic and phenotypic characterisation**

Locating wild almond populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina proved particularly challenging.

Early searches in areas such as Stolac, Vitina, Ljubuški, Počitelj, and the wider Mostar region yielded no results, as many historical sites had been altered by fires or land-use change

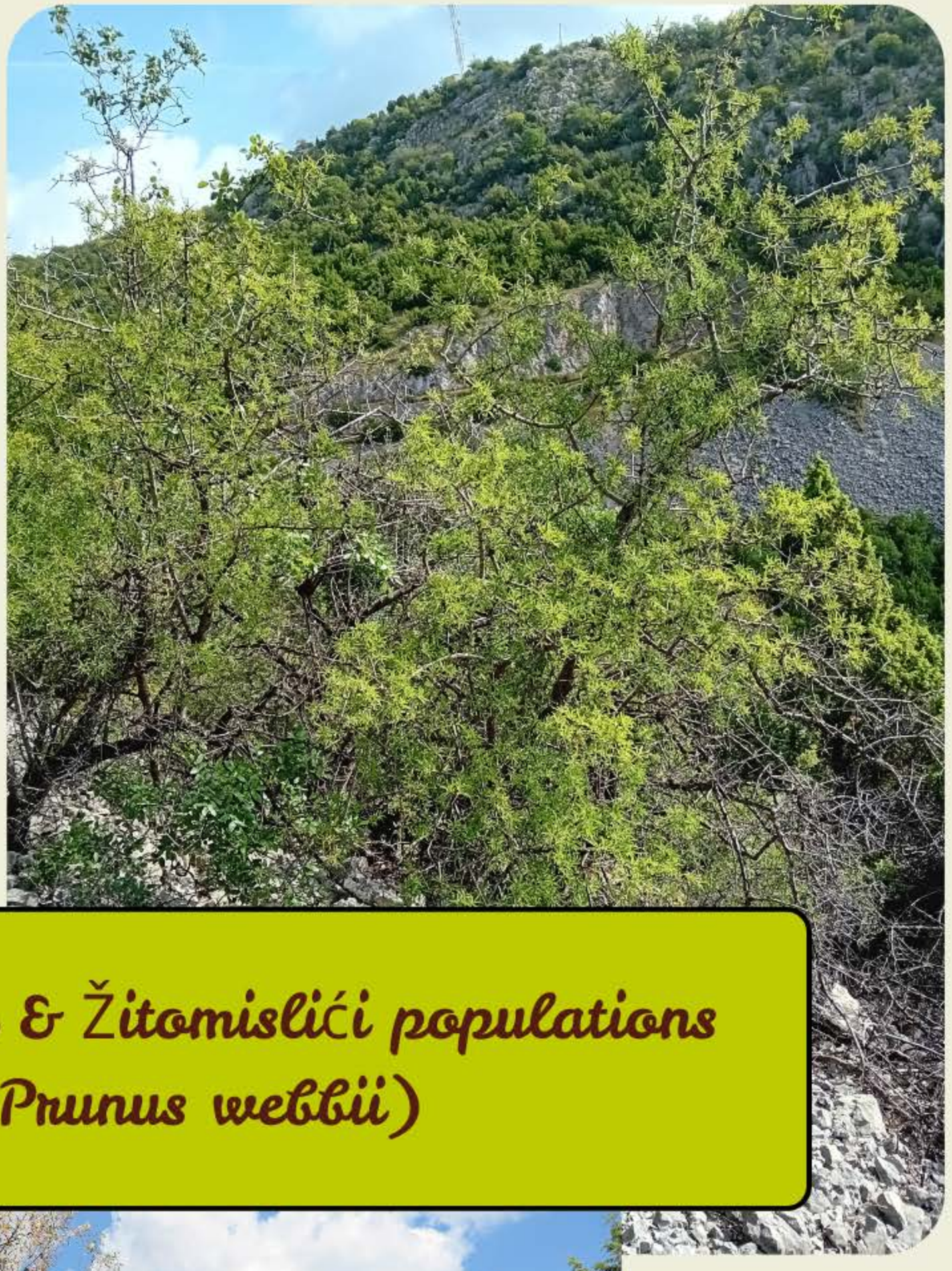
Field work revealed that wild almond populations persist in fragmented, rocky Mediterranean habitats, often on steep slopes and cliffs.



Prunus dulcis near Solac (Dalibor Ballian)

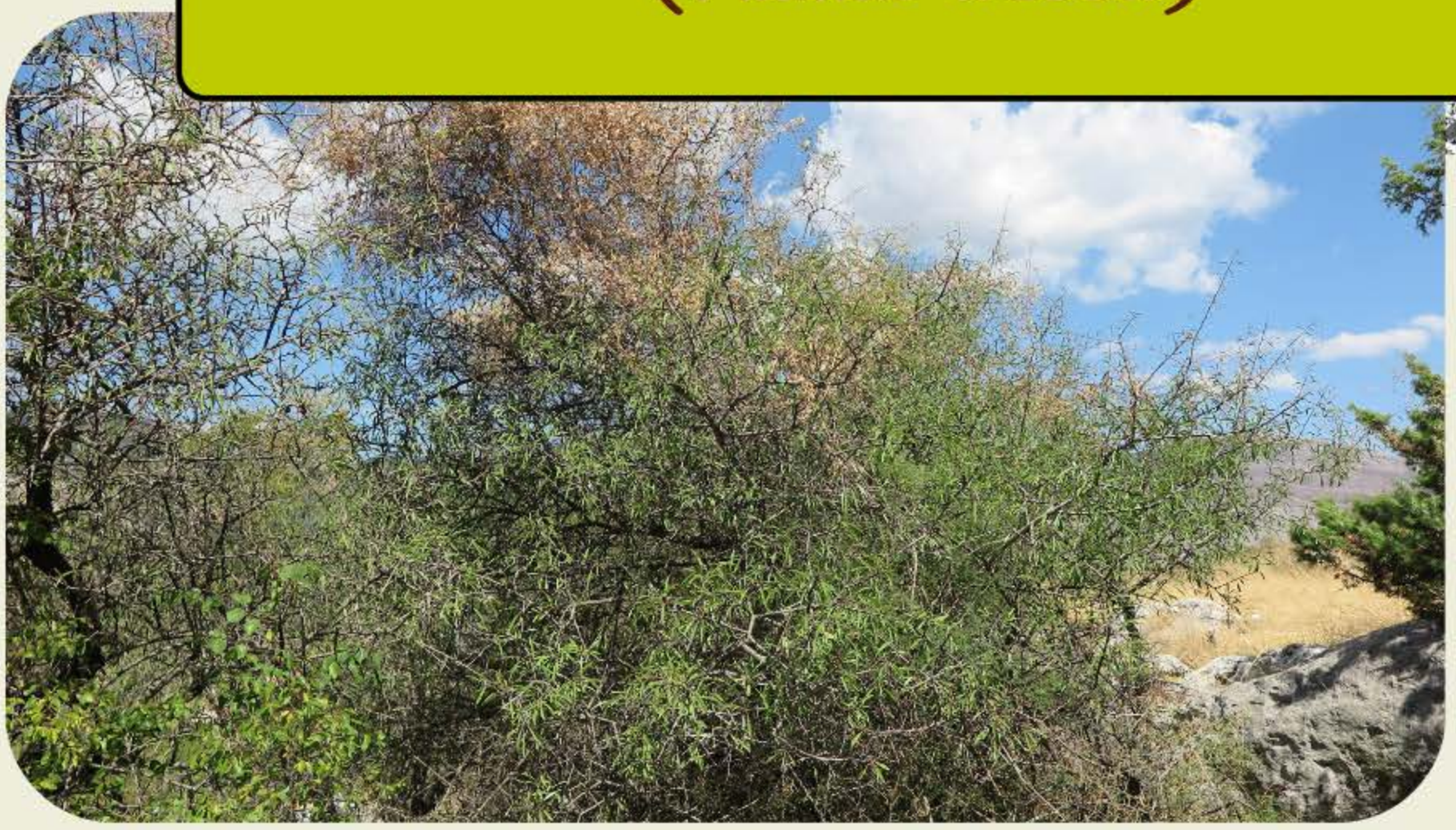
Where it often shares its habitat with the crop almond, *Prunus dulcis*

Prunus webbii, Zitomislici (Dalibor Ballian)



UNSA researchers Dalibor Ballian & Mirzeta Memišević Hodžić uncovered two rare & previously under-documented populations of wild almond :

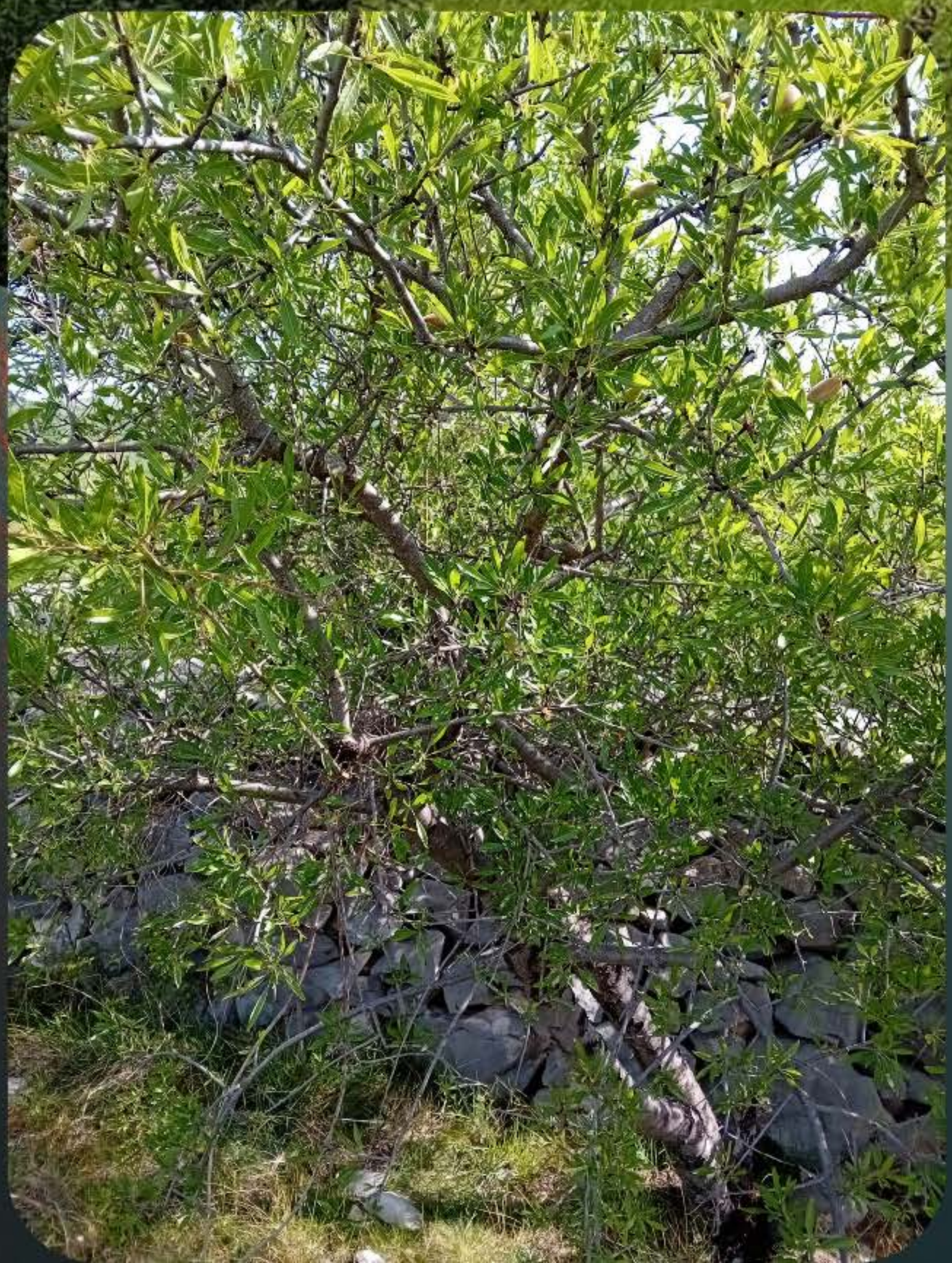
The Trebinje & Žitomislići populations (Prunus webbii)



Prunus webbii, Trebinje (Dalibor Ballian)

Trebinje population (*Prunus webbii*)

- ~50 individuals observed
- Leaves sampled from 20 individuals
- Fruits collected from 1 individual (limited availability)



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Žitomislići population (*Prunus webbii*)

- ~200 individuals observed
- Leaves and fruits sampled from 20 individuals

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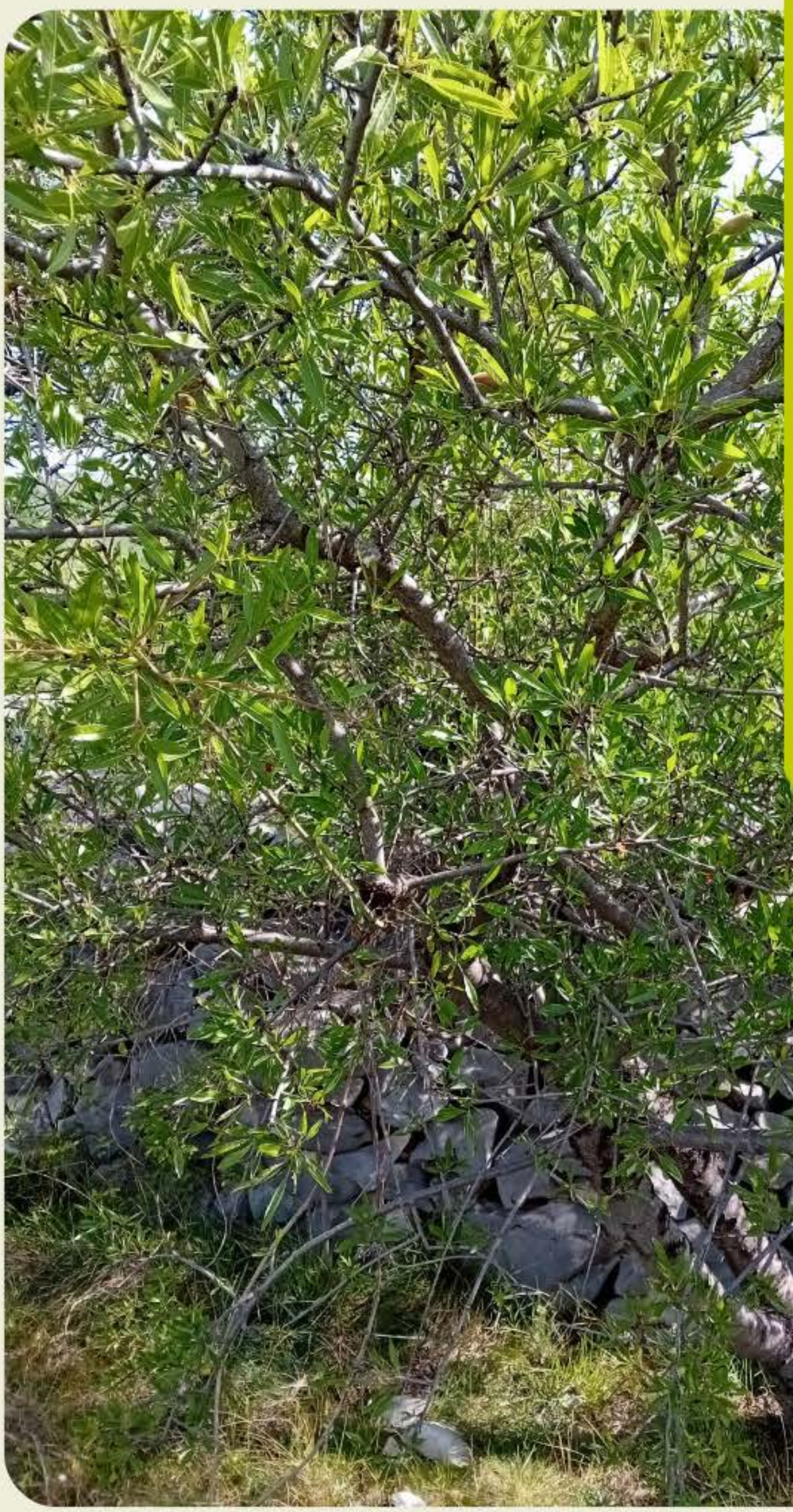
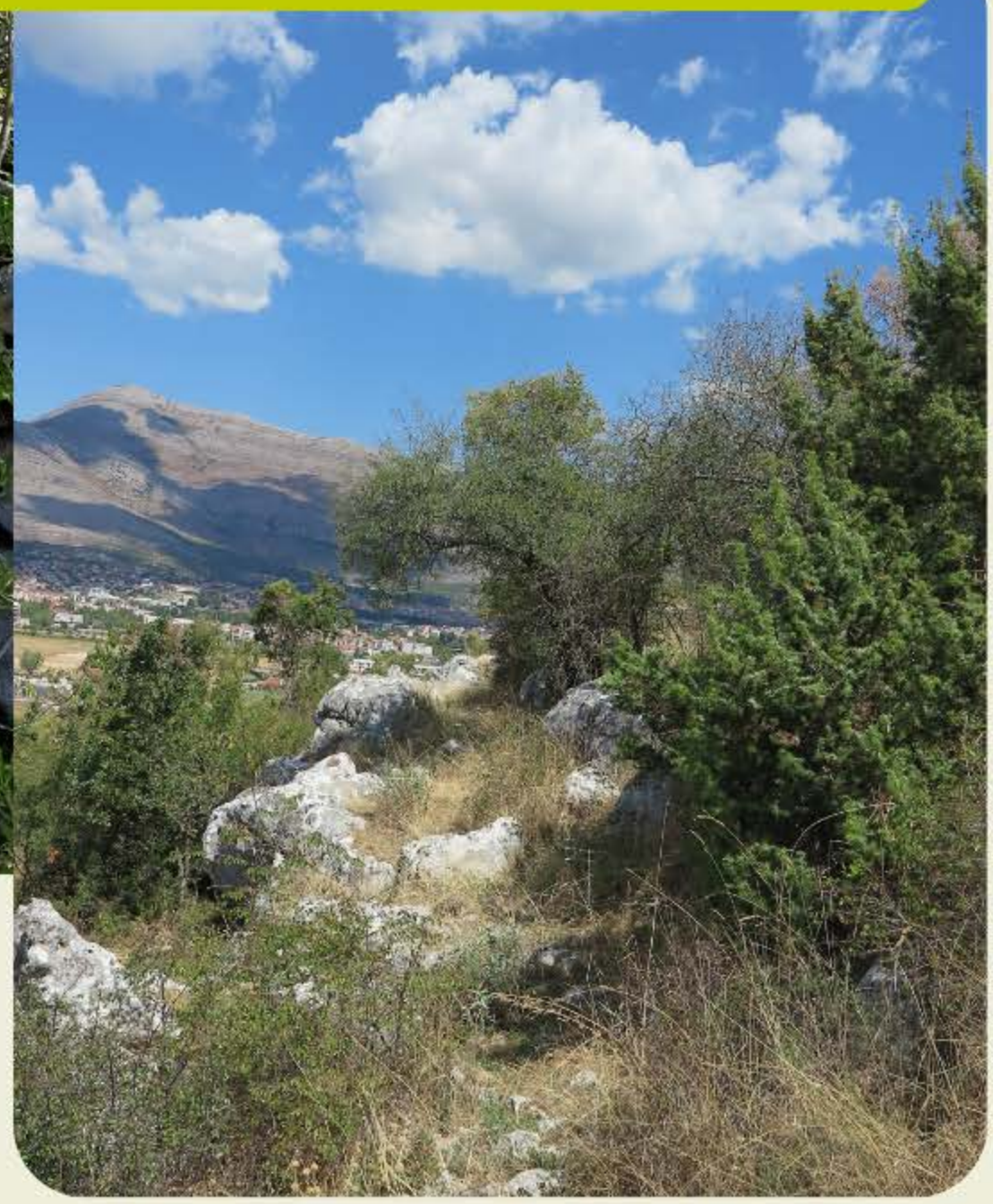


In Bosnia, wild almond populations occur as small, fragmented groups on rocky slopes, cliffs, and fire-refuge habitats, often in areas where their presence had not been formally recorded before.



They show **strong adaptation** to drought, poor soils, and extreme terrain, making them highly relevant for **future resilience-focused breeding and conservation** efforts.

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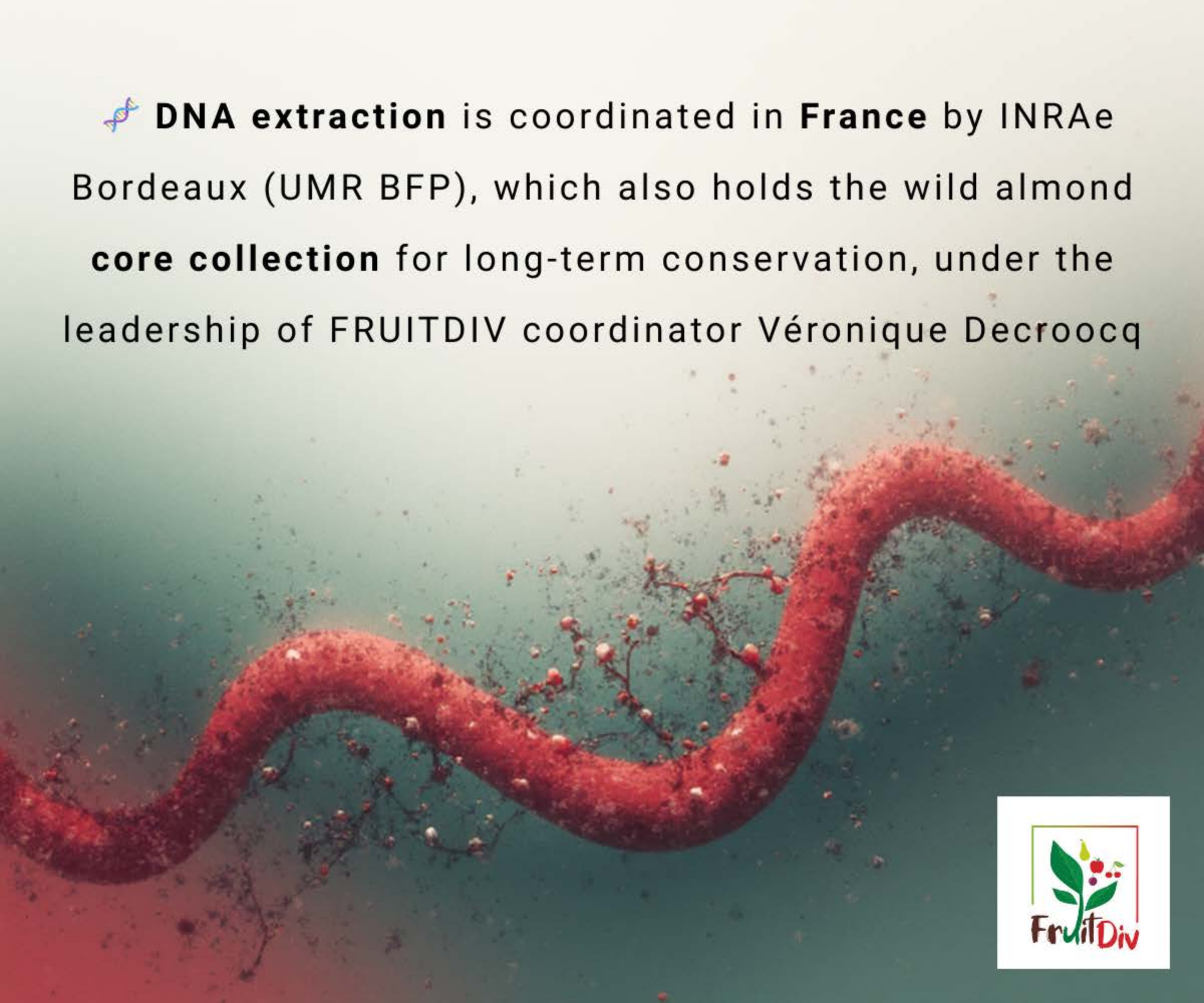
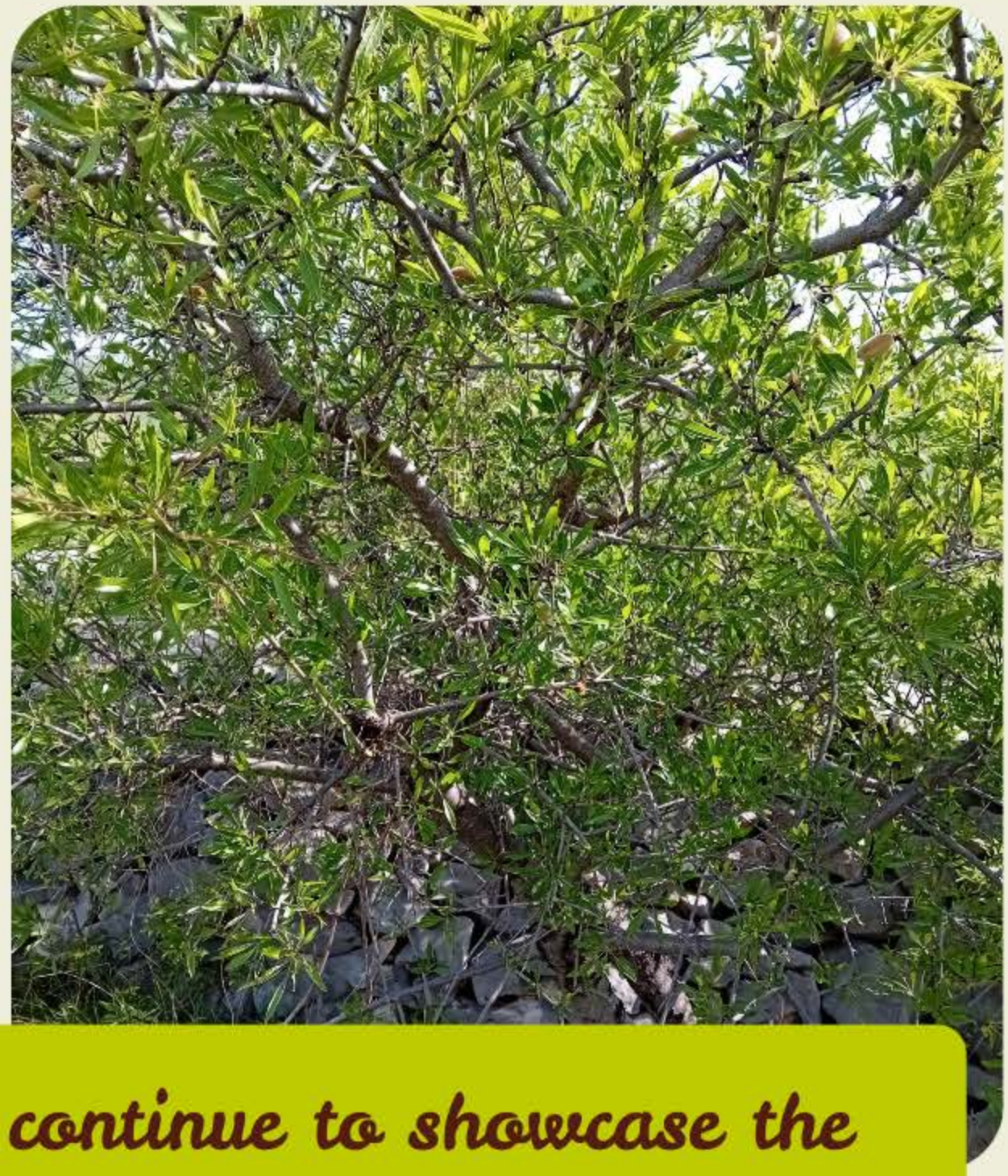
Collected material is now integrated into the FRUITDIV research pipeline

🔬 Leaves were sent to **Romania** and the IBRC team of Anamaria Roman for **phenotypic analysis**

🧬 **DNA extraction** is coordinated in **France** by INRAe Bordeaux (UMR BFP), which also holds the wild almond **core collection** for long-term conservation, under the leadership of FRUITDIV coordinator Véronique Decroocq



The Bosnian wild almond populations will allow us to better understand adaptation and resilience in wild fruit species across Southeast Europe.



Stay tuned as we continue to showcase the remarkable diversity hidden in Europe's wild fruit trees!

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