

Svetlana Bancheva

Diversity and conservation of subfam. *Carduoideae* (Asteraceae) in Bulgaria

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Depth floristic and taxonomic studies on Bulgarian flora began in the late XIX century. As a result several editions of Floras have been published. In 1963 a long-term project to develop a critical Flora of Bulgaria was started, which is still in place. Up to now, 11 volumes have been published and the last 12 volumes are currently being developed by a team of scientists under the framework of the project 'Flora of the Republic of Bulgaria, vol. 12: Biological Diversity in *Asteraceae* subfam. *Carduoideae* and *Cichorioideae*' (ДН-01/7/16.12.2016), financed by the Bulgarian National Fund for Scientific Research. All species included in vol. 12 of the Flora of the Republic of Bulgaria are illustrated by professional artists. The main part of the volume is devoted to the diversity of subfam. *Carduoideae*. This sub-family includes 20 genera and 145 species that represent annuals, biennials and herbaceous perennials, distributed throughout the country from the sea shore to the highest mountain peaks. More than 25% of the species are of conservation significance being Bulgarian or Balkan endemics. The percentage of endangered species is not small. The richest genus is *Centaurea*, with 75 species and 12 subspecies. It is also the richest in species with conservation status: 10 species are Bulgarian endemics; other are Balkan endemics (18 species); 18 species are of conservation significance and are included in the Bulgarian Biodiversity Act. The state of the populations of some of these is quite worrying and action plans have been developed for its improvement. There have been detected 21 medicinal and aromatic species from subfam. *Carduoideae* which are subject to collection by the local people and are included in the National Law on Medicinal Plants.

Address of the author:

Svetlana Bancheva,

Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,
Acad. G. Bonchev, bl. 23, Sofia, Bulgaria. E-mail: sbancheva@yahoo.com.

