

VARIABILITY OF RECENT AND FOSSIL FRUIT-STONES OF *PRUNUS FRUTICOSA* Pall., *P. CERASUS* L., AND *P.* *AVIUM* (L.) L.

by

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AIM. The aim of the work was to establish the range of variability of *P. fruticosa*, *P. cerasus*, and *P. avium* fruit-stones. This knowledge should be helpful in identification of fossil fruit-stones.

MATERIAL AND METHODS. The study was carried out on representative herbarium material and population collections of fruit stones of all three species (more than 1000 fruit-stones) from European herbaria and private collections, and on subfossil fruit-stones (about 200) from the Middle Ages settlement layers of the Wawel Hill and Main Market Square in Cracow, and from Gniezno, from the collection of the Palaeobotanical Museum of the Botanical Institute PASC. (KRAM-P) .

RESULTS. Five characters: length, width, thickness, ratio of length to width, and width to thickness of fruit-stones were examined. Only the width of the fruit-stones enables one to distinguish between *P. fruticosa* and *P. cerasus*; on the other hand, variability limits of *P. avium* fruit-stones overlap greatly these of *P. fruticosa* and *P. cerasus*. For this reason identification of each species in mixed samples is possible only in extreme cases.

References

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