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ERA Chair: Striving for Excellence in the Forest Ecosystem Research

This is the 5st newsletter of the EXCELLENTIA project, WHERE YOU CAN:

- get information on the highlights of the second half of 2025
- learn more on the communication and dissemination activities

CHALLENGES IN FOREST ECOLOGY - FFWT SEMINAR SERIES

EXCELLENTIA continued on **CHALLENGES IN FOREST ECOLOGY** – **FFWT Seminar Series** with leading experts presenting and discussing the latest findings in forest ecology. Martin Lukac (University of Reading, UK) gave an interesting lecture on Landsharing: can agroforestry enhance biodiversity?, and Francis Martin (INRAE Nancy, France) talked about Harnessing Genomics to Unravel the Saprotrophy-to-Symbiosis Continuum in Forest Soil Fungi

If you missed previous talks see the links for video recordings and the invitation to future lectures bellow.

SEMINAR SERIES'S VIDEO RECORDINGS

INVITATION TO WINTER SEMESTER SEMINAR SERIES

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION EVENTS

**the 2nd EXCELLENTIA Summer school
22 - 26 September 2025**

**Venue:
FFWT MENDELU, University Forest Enterprise**

The free-to-attend 5-day summer school was designed for individuals interested in the hidden half of forest ecosystems, whether they are beginners or seeking to enhance their knowledge of root and mycorrhizal traits, belowground ecosystem functioning, and methodology.

FER group experts provided theoretical insight into the state-of-the-art in root and mycorrhizal research, and participants practised techniques ranging from field sampling and root imaging to morphotyping of ectomycorrhiza and molecular analyses of soil fungal communities.



Researchers' night

26 September 2025

Venue: FFWT MENDELU

Researchers' Night, an event that, for one evening, brings life to hundreds of science buildings that no ordinary mortal can enter. EXCELLENTIA participated in the programme:

Hidden Wealth Beneath Our Feet

Soil may look like ordinary dirt, but it's one of Earth's richest treasures. Beneath the forest floor lies a living, breathing network of tiny roots, fungi, and microbes—working together to sustain our forests. These underground communities help trees grow, protect them from disease, store carbon, and even break down rocks to release nutrients in a process called weathering. Visitors uncovered this “hidden wealth” by exploring the secret partnerships between trees and fungi— (mycorrhizal pictures) i.e. pictures or microscope. **“Draw me your fungus, and I’ll show you mine!” What pathogens look like on roots if we can find any, fungi are forest doctors and destroyers.**





Sponge City and Blue Infrastructure for climate resilience

20 - 22 October, 2025

Venue: Sarajevo

Members of the FER group, Douglas Lawrence Godbold, Boris Rewald, and Marian Schonauer, visited the University of Sarajevo and participated in the SPONGE CITY-BH conference (Oct 20–22), united with @UNSA_BiH Mendel University—Faculty of Forestry to advance SpongeCity and BlueGreenInfrastructure for climate resilience. Funded by CzechDevelopmentAid



Science Café with Přemysl Mácha

8 December 2025

Venue: FFWT MENDELU

How to make a forest, or an ethnologist among foresters, was presented by Přemysl Mácha. In an interview with Michal Pavlík from the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Přemysl Mácha presented his current research focuses on the human dimension of Central European forestry, in particular how the general public perceives forestry and how public and private forestry enterprises perceive forest research. A very lively discussion with colleagues from FFWT MENDELU and FSS MU followed.

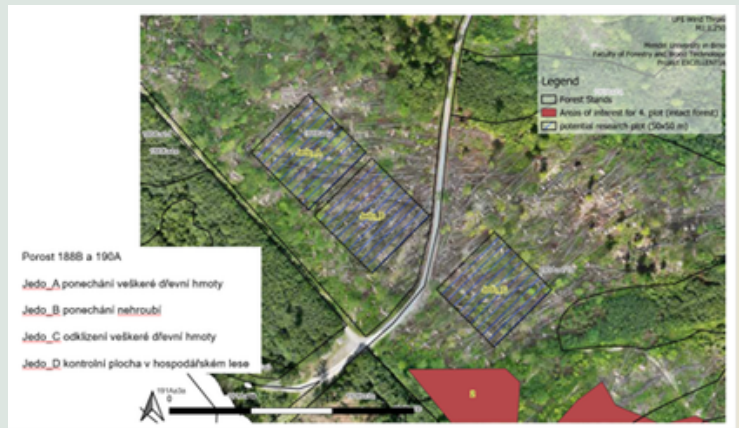


Science Day at the University Forest Enterprise (UFE)

26 September 2025

Venue: University Forest Enterprise, Křtiny

The meeting provided an opportunity to present ongoing research activities at the UFE, where more than 100 active research plots are maintained under a wide range of experimental and semi-operational regimes, and to discuss how scientific findings can be effectively applied in forestry practice.



As part of the programme, the FER Group presented its research on post-calamity forest plots to the management and staff of the UFE and FFWT. The presentation highlighted the research questions the group addressed and the practical relevance of the findings for managing and restoring forests affected by large-scale disturbances.

The Science Day created a platform for exchanging knowledge between researchers and forest managers and for identifying opportunities to translate research results into practical forestry applications.

PF 2026

Please get in touch with Mrs Alena Šamonilová, alena.samonilova@mendelu.cz if you have questions or would like to suggest a seminar topic / invite a guest speaker on topics related to forest diversity and functioning above and below ground.

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