

Ecology

Bioecological Peculiarities of Introduced Exotic Species of Japanese Laurel (*Aucuba japonica Thunb*) at the Black Sea Coast of Ajara, Georgia

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ABSTRACT. As a result of intensive influence of anthropogenic factors, the soil structure changes, the amount of plant populations diminishes and some of them disappear. Therefore, it is necessary to create cultural phytocenosis and preserve plant biodiversity. Many species of the flora of eastern Asia are introduced at the Black Sea coast of Ajara. Multi-year introduction of plants showed that different varieties and forms of ornamental shrubs of Asian origin adapt well to the local soil- and climatic conditions of Ajara. Subtropical climate conditions increase of plant resource potential and biodiversity. Most of the introduced shrubs at the Ajara Black Sea coast give self-seed crops or rootlets, bloom, yield fruits as they usually do in their countries of origin, but some of them change their regime.

The study of the bioecological peculiarities of Eastern Asian plants was conducted on the species of Japanese Laurel (*Aucuba japonica Thunb*). Degree of their acclimation and introduction was determined and analyzed. Climatic conditions at Ajara Black Sea coast are unstable, especially in winter and early spring sharp change of temperature is noted. Increase of temperature in this period provokes early budding. Hence, frost resistance of plants is one of the essential factors which determine the cultivation of introduced plants. © 2013 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: *bioecological peculiarities of plants, Japanese laurel, Aucuba japonica Thunb.*

Problems and aim of the study. Our aim was to study bioecological features and frost resistance of the introduced species Japanese Laurel (*Aucuba japonica Thunb*) at Ajara Black Sea coast and specify their environmental peculiarities.

Seasonal growth and development of representatives of both local and introduced exotic plants depend much on the activity of abiotic factors because their response shows the degree of influence of abi-

otic factors and ecological valence of concrete species.

In the process of adaptation of introduced plants their frost resistant indices are most important. Frost resistance is one of the restrictive factors of the distribution of aliens at the Black Sea coast of Ajara. Over the last 25 years a relatively strong winter was in 1984-85 with minimum temperature 6.4 °C below zero and 1.6 m snow cover.

Table 1. Seasonal development rhythms of *Aucuba Japonica*

N	Plant specimens ##	Budding	Blooming			Fruit maturity		Length of 1-year branch
			Begin.	Mass	End.	Begin.	End	
1	5	12.01-5.02	13.02	5.03	27.03	18.11	9.01	20
2	7	15.01-7.02	15.02	2.03	25.03	12.11	5.01	22
3	9	10.01-3.02	11.02	1.03	22.03	7.11	2.01	24
4	10	13.01-5.02	14.02	6.03	25.03	10.11	4.01	25
5	13	12.01-5.02	15.02	5.03	23.03	13.11	5.01	20

Subject and methods of study. The subject of the study was Japanese laurel (*Aucuba japonica* Thunb). It is native to subtropic forests of eastern Himalayas, Taiwan and Japan. It is an ornamental evergreen shrub from the Garryaceae family. *Aucuba japonica* is a shrub of 5 m high, Leaves are opposite, shiny green, large, prolonged, oval, leather-like, dentate. *Aucuba japonica* is dioecious, it has separate male and female plants, which do not differ before flowering. Male flowers are produced in apex-paniculate clusters of 5-10 cm in length; female flowers are red, of pyramidal-panicle shape, smaller and less attractive than male ones. The fruit is a dark-red berry approximately 1 cm in diameter, it is ornamental only, inedible [1].

Under conditions of Ajara sea coast *A. japonica* blooms in February-March. Development of floral buds starts from 10 January and lasts till 7 February. Flowering begins from 11 February and continues till

27 March. Mass period for flowering is early March. The length of one-year branchlets is 20-25 cm (Table 1). Phenological rhythms were studied by Beidemann's method [2].

Frost resistance of plants changes according to their physiological state, which, in turn, depends on environmental conditions and inner changes occurring in the organs of plant in winter. Therefore frost resistance of the plant especially is assessed by its natural endurance ability to the low winter temperature.

Japanese laurel (*Aucuba japonica*) flowers in winter and early spring, therefore for the assessment of its frost resistance it is important to study the endurance of vegetative and reproductive organs against low temperature.

Frost resistance of *Aucuba japonica* was studied under laboratory artificial climate conditions with the method of cut branches worked out by Z. Ladaria

Table 2. Frost resistance of the cut branches of *Aucuba japonica*

##	Plant specimens ##	Plant's organs	Blooming	Frost temperature, °C								
				-2	-4	-6	-8	-10	-12	-14	-16	
1	5	sprout leaf knot	13.02-27.03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7%
				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11%	
				-	50%	75%	100%	-	-	-	23%	
2	7	sprout leaf knot	13.02-27.03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14%	
				-	40%	70%	100%	-	-	-	25%	
3	9	sprout leaf knot	13.02-27.03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8%
				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%	
				-	30%	80%	100%	-	-	-	24%	
4	10	sprout leaf knot	13.02-27.03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13%	
				-	60%	75%	100%	-	-	-	25%	
5	13	sprout leaf knot	13.02-27.03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12%	
				-	55%	70%	100%	-	-	-	25%	

[3]. The percent of the damage was determined by the ratio of the length (in cm) of the damaged part to the total branch length (cm). The degree of leaves damage was determined by the ratio of the number of frozen leaves to their total number.

The study showed that injured leaves take dark colour, become inelastic, twisted and fall. Damaged knot becomes dark brown and falls as well. The percent of damaging of leaves and knots increases with the decrease of temperature. (Table 2).

Thus, analysis of the study conducted shows that natural frost resistance of the plant and indices

of the damage of cut branches are almost identical, but there are some differences in the frost resistance of branchlets, leaves and knots, which can be explained by different biological peculiarities of those forms.

As a result of visual observation of the ecological state of planting of Japanese laurel we focused our attention on the fact that it fully realizes its own biological potential. This is proved also by their morphological and bioecological peculiarities, regular flowering, fruitage and ecological effectiveness.

ეკოლოგია

ინტროდუცენტ იაპონური აუკუბას (*Aucuba japonica Thunb*) ეკოლოგო-ბიოლოგიური თავისებურებების შესწავლა აჭარის შავი ზღვის სანაპიროზე

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თანამედროვე პირობებში ბუნებაზე ანთროპოგენული ფაქტორების გაძლიერებული ზემოქმედების შედეგად იცვლება ნიადაგის ლანდშაფტი, ხოლო მცენარეთა პოპულაციების რაოდენობა მცირდება და ქრება. ამიტომ აუცილებელია კულტურული ფიტოცენოზის შექმნა და მცენარეთა ბიომრავალფეროვნების შენარჩუნება. განსაკუთრებით უნდა აღინიშნოს აღმოსავლეთ-აზიური ფლორა, რომლის მრავალი წარმომადგენელი ინტროდუცირებულია აჭარის შავი ზღვის სანაპიროზე. მცენარეთა მრავალწლოვანმა ინტროდუცენტმა გვიჩვენა, რომ აღმოსავლეთ-აზიური წარმოშობის დეკორატიული ბუჩქების სახეობები და ფორმები კარგად შეეგუენ ადგილობრივ ნიადაგურ-კლიმატურ პირობებს, რამაც თავის მხრე განაპირობა მცენარეთა რესურსის პოტენციალის გაზრდა და მრავალფეროვნება. აჭარის შავი ზღვის სანაპიროზე ინტროდუცირებული დეკორატიული ბუჩქების უმრავლესობა ყვავილობს, იძლევა ნაყოფს, თვითნათესარებს ან ფესვის ამონაყარს. აღმოსავლეთ აზიის მცენარეთა ეკოლოგო-ბიოლოგიური თავისებურებების შესწავლის შედეგად გაანალიზებული და განსაზღვრულია მათი აკლიმატიზაციისა და ინტროდუქციის ხარისხი. კლიმატური პირობები აჭარის შავი ზღვის

სანაპიროზე არასტაბილურია, განსაკუთრებით ზამთრის და ადრე გაზაფხულის პერიოდში აღინიშნება ტემპერატურის მკვეთრი ცვალებადობა. კერძოდ, ტემპერატურის მომატება ამ პერიოდში იწვევს მცენარეთა პროოცირებას ნაადრევი კვირტის გაშლისათვის. აქედან გამომდინარე, მცენარეთა ყინვაგამძლეობა ერთ-ერთი მნიშვნელოვანი ფაქტორია, რომელიც განსაზღვრავს ინტროდუცენტების კულტივირებას.

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