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Forest Week 2026: How to Plant a Future

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From April 6 to 12, 2026, Bulgaria traditionally celebrates Forest Week – a holiday with over a century of history that unites experts, businesses, and environmentalists. This year, the event is marked by the contrast between the significant achievements in the sector and the urgent challenges related to climate change and the health of forest stands.

Solemn Opening in Yundola and Messages of Statehood

The official start of the initiative dedicated to sustainability, knowledge, and care for nature was given with a solemn ceremony at the "G. St. Avramov" State Forestry School – Yundola. The event was jointly organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Executive Forest Agency, and the University of Forestry. The festive atmosphere was complemented by Bulgarian traditions,

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bagpipers, and a dance program, with the official guests including Acting Prime Minister Andrey Gyurov, Minister of Agriculture and Food Ivan Hristanov, and Regional Minister Nikolay Naydenov.

The culmination of the holiday was the traditional tree planting. As a sign of shared responsibility for the future of our forests, Prime Minister Gyurov, Ministers Hristanov and Naydenov, as well as the Rector of the University of Forestry Assoc. Prof. Hristo Mihaylov, planted a black pine together.

During the event, Andrey Gyurov recalled the historical significance of the sector, noting that the Forest Guard is one of the first institutions of modern Bulgaria. He highlighted the key role of over 17,000 foresters, firefighters, and volunteers who annually stand between the fiery elements and life. The Prime Minister also drew special attention to the problem of poaching – illegal logging not only destroys the landscape and nullifies the work of generations of foresters but also leaves a deep hole in trust in the state.

Wealth and Economic Potential

Our country welcomes the holiday with statistics that inspire pride – 39% of Bulgaria's territory is covered by forests, and the timber stock has tripled over the past six decades. The forest is the most complex terrestrial ecosystem, acting as an oasis of biodiversity, a regulator of the water balance, and a shield against erosion. Furthermore, it is a key factor in the fight against climate change through the long-term storage of carbon dioxide.

Parallel to its ecological functions, the forest is also an invaluable economic resource. The Bulgarian Chamber of Woodworking and Furniture Industry (BCWFI) emphasizes that the successful development of business and responsible attitude towards nature must go hand in hand. Only through proper management can the forest remain a fully renewable resource.

Alarming Forecasts and Need for Renewal

Despite the overall positive picture, the condition of a huge part of the forests requires urgent measures. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Kostov from the University of Forestry warns that about 2 million hectares of forests (primarily coppice oak and artificial plantations in the lower parts near populated areas) are in critical health condition.

The trees are at the limit of their age and are highly vulnerable to the modern climate. According to the expert, if no action is taken, in the next 10-15 years these forests could collapse and fall

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victim to devastating fires. The solution is large-scale replacement with young, more resilient plantations – a process that would cost the state about 15 billion euros.

In the era of climate change, the mission for the future of the Bulgarian forest lies in finding a delicate balance. This requires both huge investments for the renewal of aging stands and uncompromising protection from illegal logging and fires, through the united efforts of state institutions, the scientific community, businesses, and the entire society.