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Commercial orchards 2023: fewer farms, smaller areas

Significantly less commercial apple cultivation, pear cultivation with growth

Vienna, 2025-02-03 – There were 3 200 commercial fruit holdings in Austria in 2023. This is the result of the survey of commercial orchards conducted by Statistics Austria with reference date 1 April 2023. The number of fruit farms was therefore 19% lower than in the previous survey in 2017. The total fruit-growing area was 13 500 hectares (–14% compared to 2017), 34% of which was organically farmed.

Styria still has the largest fruit area despite decline

In 2023, Styria had the largest share of the total area of all fruit types surveyed at 59% and thus remained the most important federal province in Austrian fruit cultivation, despite the 21% decline in area compared to 2017. Lower Austria accounted for 21% of the fruit areas, Upper Austria for 10% and Burgenland for 5%. In 2023, most fruit species continued to be grown in Styria, although Lower Austria dominated apricot cultivation with almost two-thirds of the area (63%) and also accounted for the lion's share of strawberries with 42% of the growing area.

Almost half (48%) of the fruit area was accounted for by apples, 18% by soft fruit, 9% by nuts, 7% apricots, 6% elderberry, 5% pears, 2% each cherries (incl. sour cherries) and plums and 1% were peaches (incl. nectarines).

Austria-wide apple cultivation in decline, significant plus for pears

The area under apples decreased by 15% compared to 2017, with a total of 6 500 hectares, while the area under pears increased by 11% to 690 hectares. More than three quarters of the apple area (76%) was located in Styria. In the case of pears, the Styrian share was also highest at 59%, while Lower Austria still accounted for just over a quarter (26%) of the pear area.

For apricots, the area fell below the 1 000 hectares mark at 960 hectares (–5%). The area under soft fruit (2 400 hectares, –5%), elderberry (780 hectares, –45%) and nuts (1 300 hectares, –21%) also declined. Plums, on the other hand, increased noticeably to 280 hectares (+6%).

Compared to the 2017 survey, tree density continued to increase, most strongly for pears and peaches; on average, there were 36 more trees per hectare than in 2017, and there were even around 185 trees more for pears. A total of 22.7 million fruit trees were counted, which corresponded to a decrease of 12% or 3.2 million trees compared to 2017.

Gala remains in first place in the variety ranking

Within the winter apple varieties, which accounted for 98% of the apple area, the Gala variety group was able to secure its top position compared to 2017 with a 28% share of the area, ranking ahead of Golden Delicious, whose share fell from 22% in 2017 to 16%. The Topaz variety, which is more than 70% organically cultivated, ranked third (8%), followed by Jonagold (7%), Elstar (7%), Braeburn (5%) and Pinova (5%). Despite the general trend towards more diversity of varieties, the variety group Klosterneuburger Marille/Ungarische Beste/Keckskemeter Rosenaprikose remained in the foreground (29% of the area), followed by Orangered with 10% and Goldrich with 9%.

For detailed results and further information please refer to our [website](#).

Information on methodology, definitions: The survey of commercial orchards was carried out in accordance with Federal Law Gazette II No. 69/2023 with a reference date of 1 April 2023 by surveying all cultivators of commercial orchards whose area was at least 30 ares (or 15 ares of apple and apricot area or 10 ares of soft fruit). Important structural parameters such as area and tree population, fruit varieties as well as irrigation and organic farming were asked. This is the first time since 2017 that a comprehensive survey of commercial fruit cultivation has been carried out. Since earlier surveys used slightly different survey criteria, a direct comparison is only possible to a limited extent.

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