



Nut enthusiast enthuses public about nuts in Renda, Latvia

Walnuts have potential as a commercial crop in Latvia and are an industry that needs to be developed - a farmer from Renda parish in Kuldīga municipality, Latvia's largest commercial plantation, is convinced of this. Everyone was invited to an informative seminar on Monday to learn more about growing walnut trees and creating gardens, Skrunda Television reported.

Bukmeķi in Renda parish has the largest commercial walnut plantation in Latvia with a total area of 8.5 hectares. The owner, Eduards Ostrobrods, started working in this sector three years ago, following on from his father. This is what brought him to Latvia. He has become an ambassador for walnuts in Latvia because he is convinced that the potential of walnut cultivation should be exploited here.

"The walnuts that grow in Latvia, in the Nordic countries, are much sweeter because of the cold, because they have to survive in winter. The tree therefore takes in a lot more vitamins and minerals. And that makes the nut sweeter. So Latvian walnuts are of a higher quality than those in southern California or Chile, where walnuts do not see snow and are slightly bitter. The Latvian walnut is sweet. It is premium quality", said Eduards Ostrobrods, owner of Westlake Ltd.

Although walnuts have been known in Latvia for about 300 years, mainly growing in manor gardens, and have also attracted the attention of breeders, it is only now becoming a commercial crop. The seminar covered the possibilities and conditions for farms to apply for direct payments or investment support



Photo: Novadu Ziņas LTV

"At the moment, nut growers do not apply intensively for this support. When commercialisation is at such a level that we will have farms that have planted more than 10 and 20 hectares of nut plantations, I think at that point it will bring with it the need for this investment," said Ģirts Osis, Head of the Southern Kurzeme Regional Agriculture Office of the Rural Support Service (LAD).

The participants at the seminar admitted that they already grow walnuts in their gardens, but it is more of a hobby. "Here it was told in depth - what you do today, what it will give you in three years," said Valdis Plaudis, a seminar attendee.