

## The Potential of Organic Laurel Production (*Laurus nobilis* L.) in the Mediterranean Region of Turkey

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**Aim of the study:** Laurel (*Laurus nobilis* L.) is a native species of Turkish flora. It has been grown and used as medicinal and aromatic plant in the Mediterranean Basin for centuries. Meantime, it is also a very important ornamental plant used in parks and gardens for its pruning and shaping suitability. Nearly 95% of the world laurel leaf consumption is provided by Turkey alone. According to the data of 2013, annual laurel leaf production is 15,000 tons and export revenue is 32 million \$. In this paper was explained how the potential of organic laurel production can increase and its importance for environmental sustainability in the Mediterranean Region.

**Material and Methods:** Laurel is an important evergreen small tree species of Lauraceae family. Laurel grows naturally throughout Turkey's coastal regions. Manavgat-Sırtköy sample was studied in detail and taken into consideration for organic laurel leaf production. Manavgat-Sırtköy laurel research area is located within the borders Antalya Department of General Directorate of Forestry and has a size of 1318.3 hectares. Other studies on laurel production have also been examined.

**Results:** Laurel leaf collection is mostly done by conventional methods in Turkey, so this causes some unwanted damages on the trees. Overgrazing is another serious problem of the trees. These undesirable production and collections of laurel leaves should be done under control. Unfortunately, there have not been enough technical and scientific researches on laurel cultivations in Turkey yet. The demand for organic products is becoming popular all over the world. In this sense, organic laurel production and laurel leaf collections become quite important. According to the related article 13 of the regulations concerning the principles and implementation of organic agriculture, transitional period does not apply to the products collected from the wild. Environmental sustainability can be assessed by many indicators: biodiversity, landscape, soil, water, climate, air and energy. These regulations concerning the principles and implementation of organic agriculture also contribute to improvement of environmental sustainability.

**Keywords:** Laurel, *Laurus nobilis*, Mediterranean Region, organic agriculture.