



Fruit production in Bulgaria – harvest 2023

The area under fruit, berries and nuts in agricultural holdings in 2023 occupied 59.9 thousand hectares. 40.8 thousand hectares were harvested. The fruit production was 179.6 thousand tons.

The area under fruit, berries and nuts in 2023 was 59 904 ha – 5% less than the previous year. The harvested area decreased by 10% compared to 2022. About 18% of the area under fruit-bearing orchards were not harvested due to climatic and other reasons. Cherries occupied the largest share of harvested area – 24%, followed by plums – 23%. 25% of the total area* under fruit, berries and nuts were irrigated.

The area under young orchards, not yet in production amounted to 7.5 thousand ha. The largest relative share of young plantations was occupied by walnuts – 25%, followed by plums with 18%.

Of the new plantations in 2023, 61% were stone fruits, 20% were nuts, and pome fruits and berries occupied 19%. Plums accounted for the largest share of stone fruits with 39%, followed by apricots and cherries with 23% each. Of the nuts, the largest share took the walnuts with 83% and hazelnuts with 12%.

In 2023, 179 613 tons of fruit were harvested, which was 19% less than in 2022. The Yugoiztochen and the Yuzhen tsentralen region had the leading place in fruit production with 25% each.

Table 1. Area, production and average yield of fruit, berries and nuts – harvest 2023

| Fruit | Total area* (hectares) | Young, not yet production (hectares) | Harvested area (hectares) | Production (tons) | Average yield (kg/hectare) |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Apples | 4 314 | 284 | 3 562 | 34 933 | 9 807 |
| Pears | 713 | 93 | 468 | 2 511 | 5 365 |
| Peaches and nectarines | 3 305 | 360 | 1 483 | 10 799 | 7 282 |
| Apricots | 3 503 | 311 | 2 199 | 10 855 | 4 936 |
| Plums | 12 316 | 1 354 | 9 256 | 57 737 | 6 238 |
| Cherries | 11 709 | 723 | 9 648 | 46 222 | 4 791 |
| Sour cherries | 1 453 | 225 | 934 | 3 274 | 3 505 |
| Walnuts | 13 258 | 2 596 | 7 509 | 3 450 | 459 |
| Almonds | 2 631 | 445 | 1 077 | 622 | 578 |
| Hazelnuts | 2 700 | 546 | 1 727 | 799 | 463 |
| Raspberries | 1 742 | 75 | 1 572 | 5 656 | 3 598 |
| Cultivated rose hips | 1 236 | 191 | 851 | 1 273 | 1 496 |
| Other | 1 024 | 292 | 530 | 1 482 | – |
| TOTAL | 59 904 | 7 495 | 40 816 | 179 613 | – |

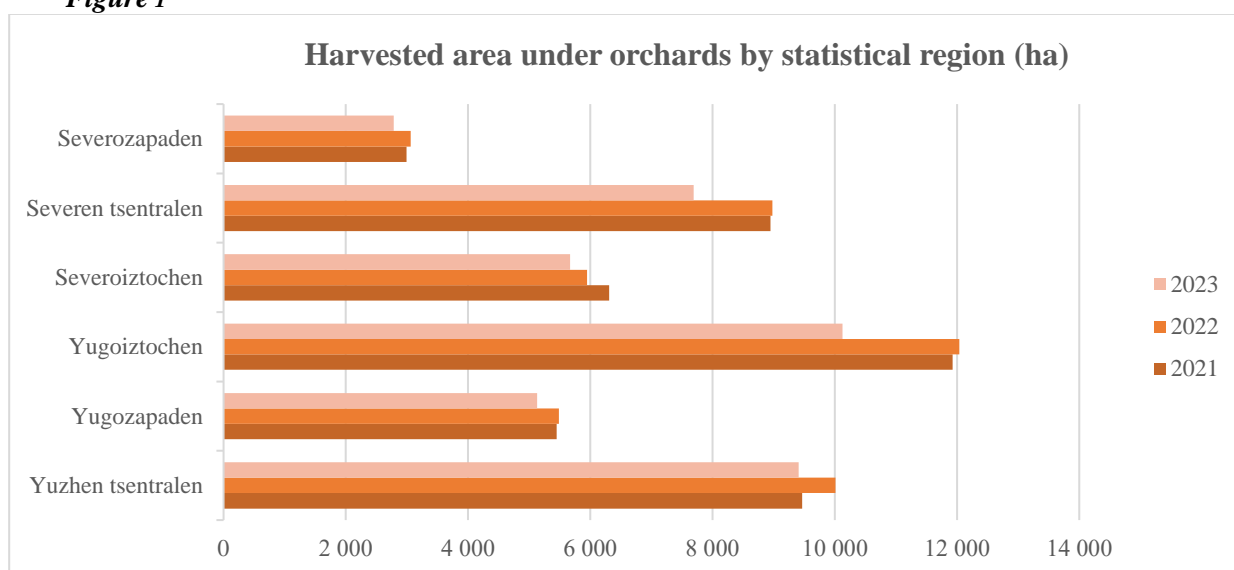
* Total area – orchards, young, not yet in production and abandoned area with the possibility of restoration
Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Fruit production – harvest 2023

Results and analyses

Table 2. Harvested area – harvest 2023, by statistical zones and statistical regions (hectares)

| Statistical zone, statistical region | Apples | Pears | Peaches and nectarines | Apricots | Plums | Cherries | Sour cherries | Walnuts | Raspberries | Cultivated rose hips | Other fruit types | TOTAL |
|---|--------------|------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Bulgaria | 3 562 | 468 | 1 483 | 2 199 | 9 256 | 9 648 | 934 | 7 509 | 1 572 | 851 | 3 334 | 40 816 |
| <i>Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria</i> | 1 489 | 224 | 986 | 2 077 | 6 147 | 5 204 | 473 | 5 751 | 1 127 | 501 | 2 297 | 26 276 |
| Severozapaden | 353 | 22 | 29 | 25 | 1 457 | 118 | 83 | 368 | 99 | 50 | 182 | 2 786 |
| Severen tsentralen | 281 | 59 | 220 | 1 854 | 1 880 | 702 | 179 | 1 738 | 279 | 24 | 477 | 7 693 |
| Severoiztochen | 346 | 76 | 114 | 73 | 1 252 | 516 | 104 | 1 857 | 557 | 104 | 672 | 5 671 |
| Yugoiztochen | 509 | 67 | 623 | 125 | 1 558 | 3 868 | 107 | 1 788 | 192 | 323 | 966 | 10 126 |
| <i>Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria</i> | 2 073 | 244 | 497 | 122 | 3 109 | 4 444 | 461 | 1 758 | 445 | 350 | 1 037 | 14 540 |
| Yugozapaden | 703 | 114 | 241 | 22 | 874 | 2 242 | 94 | 216 | 205 | 144 | 277 | 5 132 |
| Yuzhen tsentralen | 1 370 | 130 | 256 | 100 | 2 235 | 2 202 | 367 | 1 542 | 240 | 206 | 760 | 9 408 |

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Fruit production – harvest 2023

Figure 1

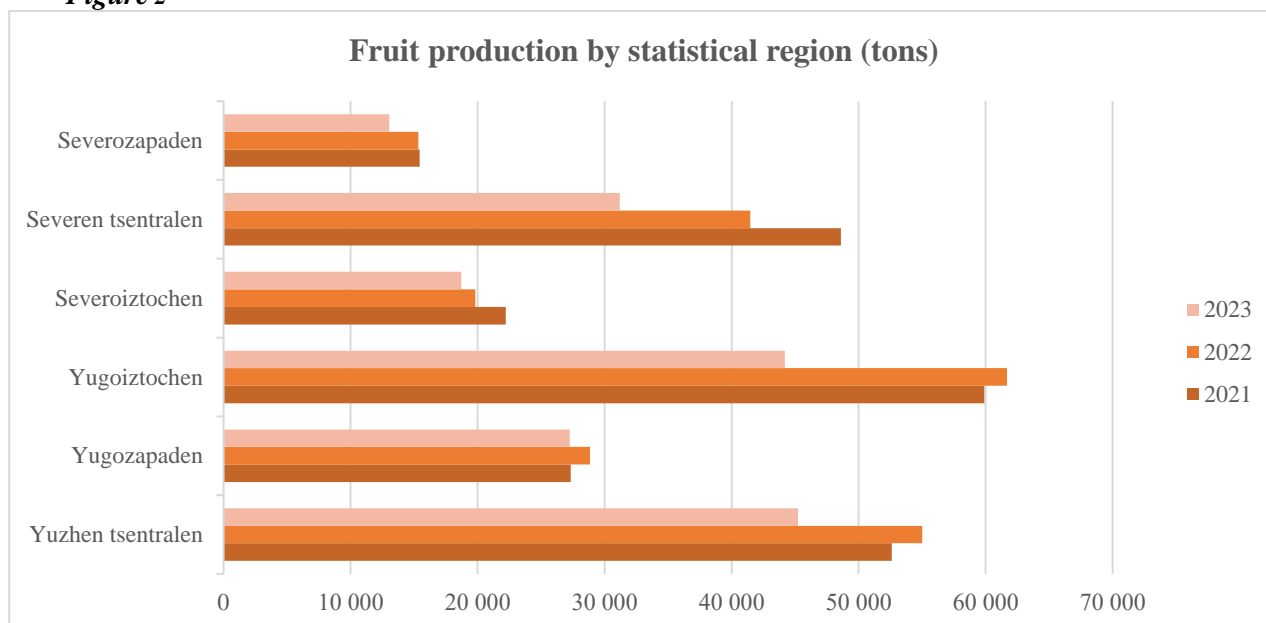
Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Fruit production – harvest 2023

In 2023, among the fruit produced with the largest relative share were plums, followed by cherries and apples, respectively with 32%, 26% and 19%. A production increase compared to the previous year was observed for hazelnuts by 5 % and for plums by 2%. The production of the other fruit species was lower due to bad climatic conditions, with peaches and nectarines revealing the largest decrease (–55%), followed by apricots (–43%), almonds (–35%), cultivated rose hips (–30%) and apples (–25%).

Table 3. Fruit production – harvest 2023, by statistical zones and statistical regions (tons)

| Statistical zone, statistical region | Apples | Pears | Peaches and nectarines | Apricots | Plums | Cherries | Sour cherries | Walnuts | Raspberries | Cultivated rose hips | Other fruit types | TOTAL |
|---|---------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Bulgaria | 34 933 | 2 511 | 10 799 | 10 855 | 57 737 | 46 222 | 3 274 | 3 450 | 5 656 | 1 273 | 2 903 | 179 613 |
| <i>Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria</i> | 17 157 | 1 238 | 7 356 | 10 397 | 35 560 | 24 047 | 1 808 | 2 679 | 4 310 | 791 | 1 798 | 107 141 |
| Severozapaden | 3 135 | 115 | 194 | 119 | 7 789 | 392 | 568 | 102 | 305 | 160 | 158 | 13 037 |
| Severen tsentralen | 2 442 | 297 | 1 565 | 9 294 | 11 566 | 3 450 | 590 | 801 | 963 | 10 | 205 | 31 183 |
| Severoiztochen | 4 723 | 403 | 755 | 293 | 6 628 | 2 265 | 303 | 590 | 2 278 | 116 | 362 | 18 716 |
| Yugoiztochen | 6 857 | 423 | 4 842 | 691 | 9 577 | 17 940 | 347 | 1 186 | 764 | 505 | 1 073 | 44 205 |
| <i>Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria</i> | 17 776 | 1 273 | 3 443 | 458 | 22 177 | 22 175 | 1 466 | 771 | 1 346 | 482 | 1 105 | 72 472 |
| Yugozapaden | 6 024 | 536 | 1 755 | 93 | 6 077 | 11 216 | 322 | 139 | 569 | 209 | 307 | 27 247 |
| Yuzhen tsentralen | 11 752 | 737 | 1 688 | 365 | 16 100 | 10 959 | 1 144 | 632 | 777 | 273 | 798 | 45 225 |

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Fruit production – harvest 2023

Figure 2

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Fruit production – harvest 2023

The average yield of plums was 3% higher compared to the previous year. Lower average yield was observed for the rest of the fruit species, with the largest decrease for peaches and nectarines and for cultivated rose hips – by 24% each, followed by apples and apricots by 21% each. For pears and raspberries, average yield did not change significantly.

Table 4. Average yield – harvest 2023, by statistical zones and statistical regions (kg/ha)

| Statistical zone, statistical region | Apples | Pears | Peaches and nectarines | Apricots | Plums | Cherries | Sour cherries | Walnuts | Raspberries | Rose hips |
|--|--------|-------|------------------------|----------|-------|----------|---------------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Bulgaria | 9 807 | 5 365 | 7 282 | 4 936 | 6 238 | 4 791 | 3 505 | 459 | 3 598 | 1 496 |
| Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria | 11 522 | 5 527 | 7 460 | 5 006 | 5 785 | 4 621 | 3 822 | 466 | 3 824 | 1 579 |
| Severozapaden | 8 881 | 5 227 | 6 690 | 4 760 | 5 346 | 3 322 | 6 843 | 277 | 3 081 | 3 200 |
| Severen tsentralen | 8 690 | 5 034 | 7 114 | 5 013 | 6 152 | 4 915 | 3 296 | 461 | 3 452 | 417 |
| Severoiztochen | 13 650 | 5 303 | 6 623 | 4 014 | 5 294 | 4 390 | 2 913 | 318 | 4 090 | 1 115 |
| Yugoiztochen | 13 472 | 6 313 | 7 772 | 5 528 | 6 147 | 4 638 | 3 243 | 663 | 3 979 | 1 563 |
| Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria | 8 575 | 5 217 | 6 928 | 3 754 | 7 133 | 4 990 | 3 180 | 439 | 3 025 | 1 377 |
| Yugozapaden | 8 569 | 4 702 | 7 282 | 4 227 | 6 953 | 5 003 | 3 426 | 644 | 2 776 | 1 451 |
| Yuzhen tsentralen | 8 578 | 5 669 | 6 594 | 3 650 | 7 204 | 4 977 | 3 117 | 410 | 3 238 | 1 325 |

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Fruit production – harvest 2023

Table 5. Fruit distribution – harvest 2023

| Crop | For own consumption | Sales | For processing | Other |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Apples | 2.0% | 68.3% | 25.4% | 4.3% |
| Peaches and nectarines | 1.6% | 75.4% | 20.0% | 3.0% |
| Apricots | 1.4% | 57.4% | 20.5% | 20.7% |
| Plums | 2.4% | 50.6% | 43.3% | 3.7% |
| Cherries | 0.9% | 53.4% | 41.9% | 3.8% |
| Sour cherries | 0.8% | 37.9% | 60.9% | 0.4% |
| Walnuts | 5.2% | 56.0% | 31.5% | 7.3% |
| Raspberries | 0.9% | 24.1% | 72.7% | 2.3% |

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Fruit production – harvest 2023

97% of the produced fruit were sold. The largest share of production – 56%, was intended for direct sales and retail, and 37% were processed.

In total, mineral fertilizers were applied on 38% of the planted area, and organic fertilizers on 9%. Mineral fertilizers were applied to 65% of the area under apricots, 62% of the area under cherries, 60% of the area under peaches and nectarines and 51% of the area under apples. About 46% of the planted area under fruit, nuts and berries species were treated against diseases and against enemies – 39% of the total area.

Methodological notes

Purpose:

The survey purpose is to establish the harvested area under fruit, nuts and berries, fruit production and average yield for 2023, the production distribution, the fertilized area and the applied agro–technical measures for the cultivation of the fruit species. The survey data is used to develop analyzes and programs in the sector. It is provided to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF), the National Statistical Institute (NSI), scientific and industry organizations, Eurostat, FAO, etc. and serves to make management decisions in the agrarian policy implementation at national and community level.

Regulations:

- Regulation (EC) No. 543/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/1557;
- Statistics Act;
- National Statistical Programme.

Object of research: agricultural holdings that grow fruit, nuts and berries.

Research method: the survey is sampled and conducted online (farms can provide the necessary information by filling in the questionnaire electronically) or by interviewing the farmers. The sample is random and stratified and is based on data from the 2020 farm census. New holdings established after 2020 were added. A threshold is applied above which all units are exhaustively surveyed.

Method of conduct: the survey is carried out by experts and employees in the regional directorates Agriculture.

Geographic scope: the survey covers the territory of the entire country. Data at the statistical region level is presented by the agricultural holdings location, not by the orchards location.

Reference period: crop year 2022/2023.

Questionnaire: includes administrative data for farm identification and questions about fruit–bearing and harvested area under fruit species, for the production of fruit from the 2023 harvest, for area under young orchards, not yet in production, the distribution of produced fruit, irrigated area and fertilization. Cultivated rose hips, intended for human consumption – marmalade, etc. were also included in the survey among the observed crops during the reference period.

Statistical indicators studied:

Harvested area – the area from which the produce was harvested. It may be equal to or less than the planted area after excluding all non–productive area (e.g. young orchards, not yet in production).

Production – volume of harvested produce, incl. post–harvest losses and waste. The quantities used directly on the farm and distributed on the market, expressed in weight units of the main product, are included.

Average yield – a result value calculated on the basis of production and harvested area, i.e. the harvested production per unit harvested area.

Confidentiality: in order to ensure the confidentiality of individual data, some of the indicators are published in aggregated positions or replaced by the sign "C" (confidential data). These are the cases when: there are less than 3 holdings in the considered category or when one of the holdings in the considered category covers more than 85% of the activity in this category.

Availability of statistical information: the results of the survey conducted by the Agrostistics department are published on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food at the address:

<http://www.mzh.government.bg/bg/statistika-i-analizi/izsledvane-rastenievadstvo/danni/>

The information is provided to Eurostat and published in the NSI statistical yearbook and statistical directory.

The statistical regions cited in the publication are in accordance with the requirements of the general classification of territorial units for statistical purposes applied in the European Union (NUTS), according to Regulation (EU) No. 31/2011.

Statistical regions, on second (NUTS 2) level, are as follows:

Severozapaden: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Lovech, Pleven;

Severen tsentralen: Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Ruse, Silistra, Razgrad;

Severoiztochen: Varna, Dobrich, Targovishte, Shoumen;

Yugoiztochen: Burgas, Sliven, Stara Zagora, Yambol;

Yugozapaden: Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Pernik, Sofia–cap., Sofia region;

Yuzhen tsentralen: Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Smolyan, Haskovo.