

In situ Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives

Crop wild relatives represent the genetic origins of most of the world's food crops, but these precious resources are being irreplaceably lost through habitat degradation and global change

In the challenge to reduce world hunger and sustain agricultural systems, the wild relatives of crops are important sources of new genes for crop improvement and adaptation

A large, multi-faceted project supported by UNEP/GEF aims to protect wild populations of crop wild relatives while setting precedents that the rest of the world can follow.

The project is being implemented through partnerships in Armenia, Bolivia, Madagascar, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan.

These countries are centres of diversity of a number of globally important crops and contain a remarkably rich and unique diversity of crop wild relatives.



Top, Mango season in Madagascar
Right, Wild Pepper, Sri Lanka
Photos by A. Lane



The project is enhancing efforts to conserve and sustainably use crop wild relatives by:

- 1) increasing understanding of species distribution and conservation status
- 2) prioritizing species and areas for conservation actions
- 3) making information on crop wild relatives available to the global community
- 4) raising national and global awareness of the importance of crop wild relatives and
- 5) strengthening breeding programmes using crop wild relatives.

Genera prioritized for conservation actions:

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|  | <i>Aegilops, Beta, Pyrus, Triticum, Vavilovia</i> |
|  | <i>Anacardium, Ananas, Annona, Arachis, Bactris, Capsicum, Carica, Chenopodium, Cyphomandra, Euterpe, Ipomoea, Manihot, Phaseolus, Rubus, Solanum, Theobroma</i> |
|  | <i>Coffea, Dioscorea, Musa, Oryza, Vanilla</i> |
|  | <i>Cinnamomum, Musa, Oryza, Piper, Vigna</i> |
|  | <i>Allium, Amygdalus, Hordeum, Juglans, Malus, Pistacia</i> |

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¹ With effect from 1 December 2006, IPGRI and INIBAP operate under the name "Bioversity International", Bioversity for short. This new name echoes our new strategy, which focuses on improving people's lives through biodiversity research.

