
This book was written as a basic resource handbook for grain legume breeders, focusing on common bean, pea, pigeon pea, faba bean, chickpea, cowpea, lentil, lupine, mungbean and azuki bean. Each chapter was written by a highly respected scientist with a short introduction and then covering comprehensive information on the origin, genetic resources, cytogenetics and strategies for breeding methods. Both conventional breeding, as well as molecular breeding methods are covered. The different gene pools for each crop are identified in the light of breeding for high yielding varieties with resistance traits. One of the major contributions of the book is the comprehensive data incorporated on the germplasm resources. The book also has an excellent collection of references associated with each chapter.

Grain legumes are the major protein resources in the diets of humans, and animal husbandry. Grain legumes and cereals are complementary components of the world’s agricultural systems; for example the common bean and maize in South America, lentil, peas and wheat in the Middle East and soybean and millet in northern China. Due to their importance in the food chain and their value in breeding programs, several International Research Centers are working on their genetic improvement. The CGIAR support large research facilities and are maintaining breeding programs such as CIAT in Columbia on common bean; ICRISAT in India on pigeon pea and chickpea; ICARDA in Syria on chickpea, lentil and faba bean.

I highly recommend this book for those who are actively working on breeding of these important species, as well as to those scientists who are interested in the enormous biological diversity of grain legumes. An advantage is that each author summarizes their future prospects for each crop, forming a ‘think tank’ for the future. The book is clearly written and contains very important information. PhD students could use this book as an important reference in their studies. The book is strongly recommended to those committed to higher education and it should be on the shelves of all Libraries at Universities and Research Establishments.

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