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“Solidarity in a competing world —  
fair use of resources”

## Wild Edibles and Organic Minor Crops for Household Food Security and Upkeep of Diversity

MAGDALENA WANAWAN

*Cordillera Integrated Agricultural Research Center, Dept. of Agriculture, Philippines*

### Abstract

Ensuring food security and maintaining biodiversity are part of the pressing concerns for a country with fast growing population. Edible wild plants and endemic minor crops offer a wide range of nutrients as well as interesting and distinctive flavours. Moreover, they are healthful since they are free from synthetic fertilisers and pesticides.

The study profiled 15 edible wild plants and 20 minor cultivated crops (including pulses) that are organically grown in eco-tourism towns in the Cordillera, Philippines. The profile included the physical description of the plants, their elevation habitat, peak harvest season, crop utilisation, and nutritional analysis. The richness of the wild and endemic crops in nutritional content implies that such plants could fill the nutrition gaps of rural household consumers during the growing stages of their cultivated crops when there is no harvest.

Alongside the issue of food sustenance is the preservation of biodiversity which should not be ignored in sustaining the ecosystems where food is produced or naturally present as in the case of wild edibles. Conserving or restoring key elements of biodiversity supports the production of food and sustains beneficial organisms. The study found out that tribal farmers preserve cultivated plant diversity within agricultural ecosystems. The practices of astute seed selection, proper seed storage, organic seed production and seed exchange have made the crops sustainable. Seeds of organic endemic plants are preserved through continuous seed production, seed exchange and proper storage in tightly covered containers using charcoal, ash, and pine wood chips as preservatives. The soil which cradles plant biodiversity is conserved through terracing, edge bordering, hedge row planting organic crop production, and canal installation to divert run-off water from washing out the top soil.

Such practices confirm a trademark of the organic farmers in the Cordillera which is the instinctive preservation of the natural ecosystem including nature's biodiversity endowments.

**Keywords:** Biodiversity, edible wild plants, food security, minor crops, nutritional content