

# WILD EDIBLES AND ORGANIC MINOR CROPS FOR HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY AND UPKEEP OF DIVERSITY

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## INTRODUCTION

Maintaining biodiversity is a vital concern for the present and future generations. Information on the diversity of plants, their nutritive values and how these species are maintained by the mountain tribes is an important contribution to the body of knowledge concerning mountain agriculture.

## OBJECTIVES

- Identify wild edibles and organically grown minor crops in the highlands of Cordillera, Philippines;
- Produce plant data sheets (profiles) of the wild edibles and organic minor crops grown;
- Find out ethnic ways of preserving the diversity of organically grown crops in the study sites.

## METHODOLOGY

### Data Collection and Analysis

- Key informant interviews and informal group discussions to determine wild edibles, organically grown minor crops and ethnic ways of preserving plant biodiversity;
- Field reconnaissance to get elevation of identified plants, observe their habitat, photo-document and collect plant samples;
- Secondary data sourcing to collect other available information as inputs for the individual plant data sheets or profiles.

Qualitative methods and descriptive statistics were employed to describe and analyze the data gathered. The plants with no available nutritional values were subjected to laboratory analysis.

## RESULTS

### CROP DIVERSITY

A total of 15 wild edibles and 20 organically grown minor crops were identified and profiled. The profile included among others the scientific name, physical description of the plants, their elevation habitat, harvest season, crop utilization and nutritional analysis.

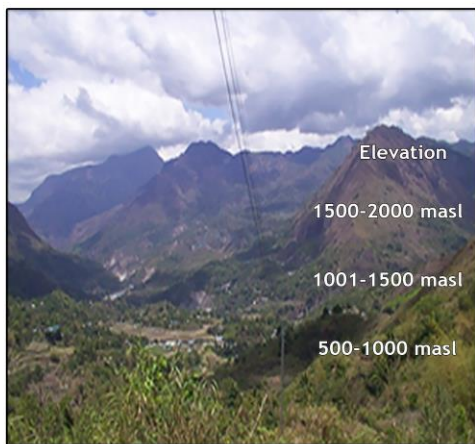


Figure 1. Geographical representation of the Cordillera highlands and the number of plants identified in different elevations

### Supply Availability

The peak season for most organically grown crops is from April to June with January to March as the lean months. The scarcity of harvest during this period is supplemented by 67% of the wild edibles that are in season.

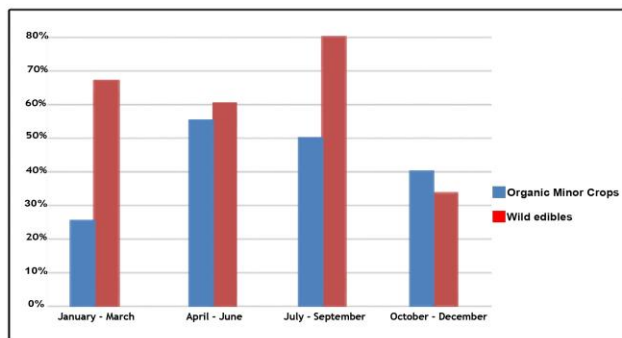


Figure 2. Seasonality of wild edibles and organically grown minor crops

## PLANT UTILIZATION

Wild edibles are harvested for home consumption and for sharing to neighbors. Only what is used at home are being collected which contributed to the perpetuation of these species. All respondents indicated that these uncultivated plants are not for sale except in very rare instances.

For the cultivated minor crops, 65% is for household consumption and the remaining is brought to market for cash.

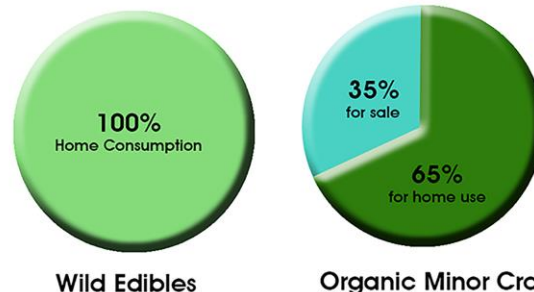


Figure 3. Utilization of wild edibles and organically grown minor crops

## SUSTAINING CROP DIVERSITY & HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

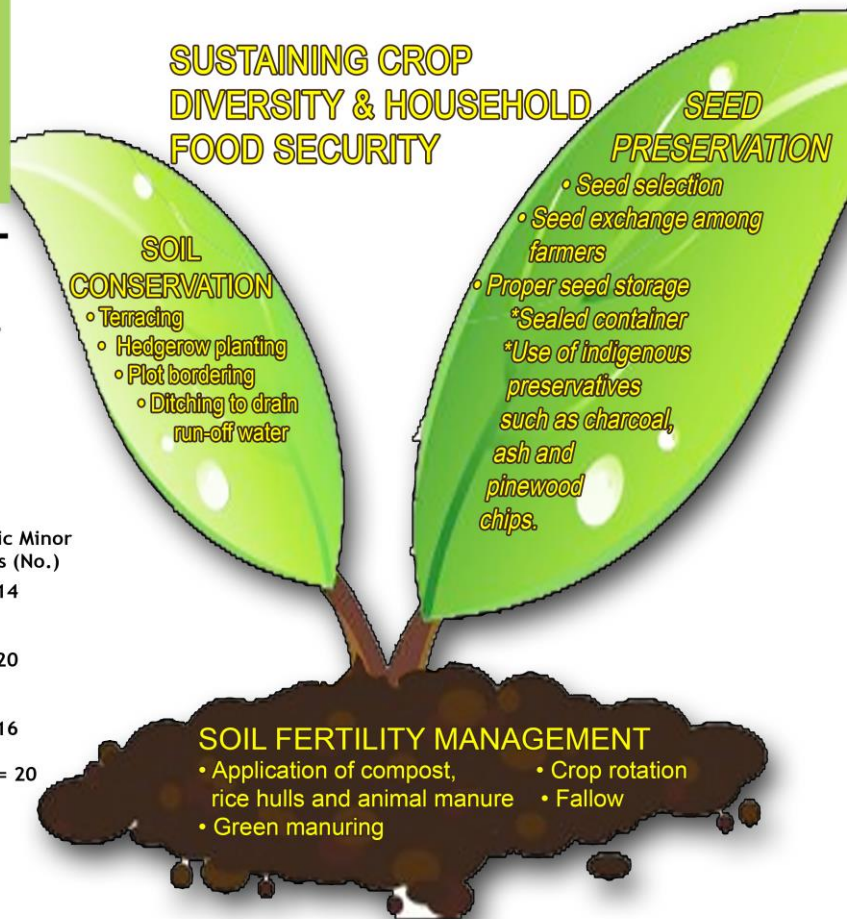


Figure 4. Sustainable traditional agricultural practices in the Cordillera highlands

## CONCLUSIONS

There are 15 wild edibles and 20 organic minor crops that form part of the household consumption of the Cordillera highlands. The profiling of said plants showed a variety of nutrient sources for the households.

The organic crop production practices of seed preservation, soil fertility management and the practical soil conservation techniques sustained the diversity of crops being grown and consumed by the mountain tribes.

