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Ethno-Medicinal Diversity of *Tadehagi triquetrum* in Northeast Viet Nam

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Abstract

Since 3–4 decades, the mountainous North of Viet Nam has been experiencing dramatic environmental and social changes which subsequently created a severe threat to the biological and cultural diversity of the region. Despite the loss of diversity, little systematic research was conducted in order to conserve plant genetic diversity. Yet, physical loss of plants and rapid transformation processes consequently lead to the loss of indigenous plant use knowledge associated with these plants.

Tadehagi triquetrum (L.) H. Ohashi was among 33 native legume species investigated in a comprehensive ethno-medicinal survey conducted among four ethnic groups, the Tay, Nung, Dao and Hmong in Bac Kan province, North Viet Nam. *T. triquetrum* provides therapeutic virtues as medicinal plant as well as livestock feed under marginal conditions and thus represents an agronomically and economically interesting species. The objective of this study, carried out in 1999–2000, was to document the indigenous knowledge about *T. triquetrum* concerning its medicinal uses as a conservation strategy of cultural diversity. A herbarium voucher containing *T. triquetrum* and other 32 wild legume species was presented to 327 households in 28 villages of Bac Kan province.

Medicinal uses attributed to *T. triquetrum* ranged from treating urinary problems, stomach ache, and diarrhoea to applications as general restorative and tonic. Medicinal uses and number of informants are listed. Ethnic groups in North Viet Nam undergo a rapid transformation process from traditional rural to a more modern, market oriented lifestyle causing the loss of ethnic authenticity and indigenous knowledge as a side effect. Thus recording the diversity of plant use knowledge of ethnic groups represents a means to prevent loss of knowledge as an essential part of cultural diversity.

Keywords: North Viet Nam, cultural diversity, ethno-medicinal diversity, indigenous knowledge, knowledge conservation, medicinal plants, *Tadehagi triquetrum*