

W17 Medicine and species conservation: Challenge for Man and Nature in the new millennium

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In every corner of the world, medicinal plants are harvested from the wild to cover the local supply or to be traded on the international market. The global sales amounted to about USD 6 million by the mid-90s. The increasing demand for medicinal herbs puts nature's scarcer resources under constant pressure. According to the Medicinal Plants Specialist Group of IUCN, about 9000 species of medicinal plants are endangered world-wide. Medicinal plant specialist Dr. Dagmar Lange assumes that about 10% of the European plant species used for medicinal applications (about 150 species) are endangered.

The protection of these species in the wild is only possible if harvest and trade are sustainable. Excessive use of certain species has to be identified early in order to initiate conservation steps in time. Sustainable use can be ensured by: 1) controlled and considerate gathering from the wild, 2) organic farming and 3) restrictions and prohibitions, where necessary. The joint endeavour of science, industry, governmental and non-governmental organisations will be crucial. This process will decide if future generations are still able to use the remedies of nature.

For these reasons, WWF and TRAFFIC have started the initiative "Medicine and Species Protection" on the occasion of the 2000 EXPO in Hanover, Germany. Meanwhile, over 100 organisations, companies and persons have signed a common declaration committing themselves to actively contribute to the protection of natural, medicinal resources. A platform has been created to exchange ideas and start co-operation programmes between the industry, trade, health sector stakeholders, political institutions and organisations involved in nature conservation. Anyone who would like to join this working-group is most welcome.

W18 Certified wild crafting of medicinal plants?

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The aim of this work is to give a statement point of view about contamination and quality of wild plants, protection's possibilities of natural resources and its sustainable use. We have tried to give an idea about which is the actual situation of the amounts of wild medicinal plants harvested in Spain and the possibility of changing to cultivation for each one. At the same time we have introduced the situation of medicinal plants cultivation in Spain, and the possible collaboration with suppliers and cultivation research institutions, for some wild medicinal plants used in big quantities or in dangerous situation. In the same line, we have talked about the legal situation in Spain. In that sense, we have made an analysis of production, trade and market bibliographic researches and a poll of wild medicinal plant rural collectors.

The results allows us to conclude that the quality of these medicinal plants are according to Pharmacopeia normally. In Spain, there is a decreasing tendency regarding the number of wild medicinal plants harvested and the wild rural collectors, as well. The contrary situation is happening in South and East of Mediterranean countries. Only some medicinal plants are harvested in big amounts (more than a ton/year) in Spain, like *Equisetum ramosissimum* Desf. ssp. *ramosissimum* or *E. telmateia* Ehr., *Lepidium draba* L., *Juniperus communis* L., *Taraxacum officinale* Weber., *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* Spreng., *Gentiana lutea* L., *Malva sylvestris* L., *Viscum album* L., *Rosmarinus officinalis* L., *Thymus* spp., *Salvia* spp., *Lavandula* spp., *Paronychia* spp., *Jasonia glutinosa* De Cand., *Centaurea aspera* L., *Artemisia campestris* L., *Spiraea ulmaria* L., *Capsella bursa-pastoris* Medik., *Santolina* spp., *Sideritis* spp., and *Satureja* spp. For some ones is really necessary certified wild crafting of medicinal plants.