

Poster

Documentation of folk uses and management of baobab (*Adansonia digitata* L.) and tamarind (*Tamrindus indica* L.) in four West-African countries

Marianne Gütler^a, Christian R. Vogl^a, Anna Hartl^a, Patrick Van Damme^b

^aWorking Group Knowledge Systems and Innovations, Institute for Organic Farming, University for Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna, Austria; ^bLaboratory of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Ethnobotany, University of Ghent, Belgium

Introduction. Their many qualities as foods, cures, fodder, wood and processed goods make baobab and tamarind precious plants for arid and semi-arid regions in developing countries. While both species are used at the local and regional scales, they are not cultivated. Through the recently funded European Community project "DADOBAT," sustainable production systems for both species shall be developed over the next 48 months in Benin, Ghana, Mali and Senegal, which shall serve to improve food security and income generation.

Objectives. Within the project, a workpackage on baobab and tamarind ethnobotany shall provide reference data and guidelines for preferential traits in plant breeding: uses of the whole trees and their parts, management and propagation methods, harvesting, processing and storage techniques of several ethnic groups in the four countries.

Methods. Besides an exhaustive literature study, field data will be collected. Per country, in at least two ethnically different villages, a stratified sample of 32, complemented by specially knowledgeable persons will be worked with using various types of interviews, group discussions, (non-)participant observation, and further methods as turn out appropriate in the field.

Results. Literature exists documenting both species' versatility for utilization. Baobab, hitherto omnipresent Africa, has not reproduced for several years; reasons unknown. While tamarind is exploited commercially elsewhere, neither adapted genotypes nor know-how for cultivation are available in Western Africa.

Conclusion. Little data has been collected on indigenous and local techniques for plant management, propagation, harvesting, processing and storage. These are, however, pertinent aspects for developing community-based conservation and cultivation.

Keywords: ethnobotany, Benin, Ghana, Mali, Senegal

Selected References

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Presenting Author: Marianne Gütler, marianne.guetler@boku.ac.at