



Trade of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. Potential Improvements on Forestry Management Practices

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Introduction

Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) constitute a core part of peoples' livelihoods in regards to traditional practices and subsistence. Wild harvesting has long been connected both historically and culturally with local communities and places. However, MAPs play a key role in a thriving pharmaceutical industry and market. In Greece, as in most similar cases, high market demands and subsequent over-exploitation of resources, bring to the fore issues of legislation insufficiency and the lack of a well designed and inclusive management practice.

Objective

To make an overview of MAPs market current trends, which could inform management practices of sustainable harvest in Greece.

Fieldwork

Tübingen, Germany.

Germany has a leading role in MAPs trade both as a country of import and export.¹ Around 1.500 types of plants are traded and 45.000tons are annually consumed in the country.² In Tübingen, retailers notice an increasing consumer interest in herbal tea and the uses of medicinal plants, especially for natural based and eco - friendly products.

References

1. Schippmann U., Leaman D., Cunningham A., Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, 2006, 75-95
2. BfN (Federal Agency for Nature Conservation)
3. <http://www.pfaf.org/user/plant.aspx?latinname=Origanum+vulgare>
4. <http://www.pfaf.org/user/plant.aspx?LatinName=Hypericum+perforatum>
5. <http://www.fragrantica.com/news/MOUNTAIN-TEA-Sideritis-The-Humble-3706.html>

How

The research was based on the following list of species, which naturally grow in Greece and were selected on the basis of common use, cultural aspects, market interests and over-exploitation risks.

Salvia officinalis *Thymus vulgaris*
Sideritis scardica *Origanum vulgare*
Hypericum perforatum
Boletus edulis *Cantharellus*



fig.1 Origanum vulgare³



fig.2 Hypericum perforatum⁴



fig.3 Sideritis scardica⁵

Research included 23 retailers and a total of 92 products. Data collected regard their frequency in the market, distribution in different markets, geographical origin, certification and whether they are wild harvested/cultivated.

Results

The market for the particular species is well established and growing. In particular, *Sideritis scardica* appears as a speciality infusion traded by small retailers. *Salvia officinalis*, *Sideritis scardica*, *Origanum vulgare* and *Thymus vulgaris* appear in the market at a percentage higher than 50%.

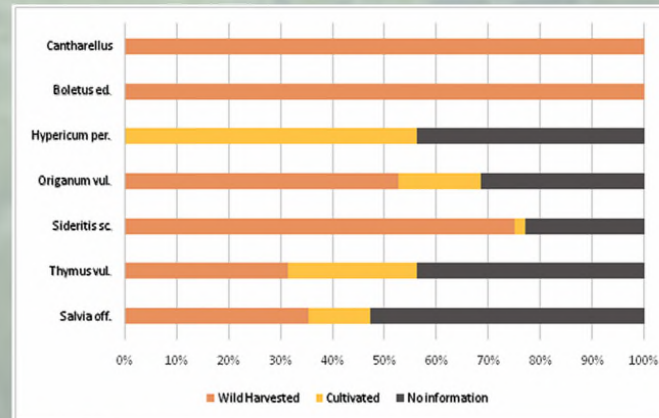


fig. 4 Wild/Cultivated percentage of respective species

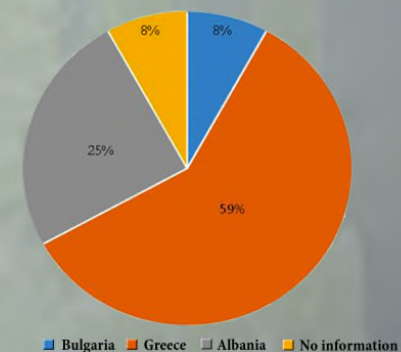


fig. 5 Source countries of Sideritis scardica

Greece is a main source country mostly for *Sideritis scardica* and *Origanum vulgare*. Therefore, forestry management should seek for a thorougher understanding of the multiple factors that control the sustainable use of these popular species. Finally, certification was not found on 52 % of the products, while a 36% bears a biological or organic one.

An emerging part of what is usually called ecological trade, opts for more direct routes and transparency.