

GLOBAL CONSERVATION CONSORTIUM FOR FOOD PLANTS



Global
Conservation
Consortium

Food Plants

Growing a More Diverse Food Future

There is far more on the menu than we usually put on our plates. Around the world, more than 26,000 plant species have been used for food. Today, only a small proportion are widely eaten. Much of the diversity within our crops, their wild relatives, and other edible plants is at risk.

The Global Conservation Consortium for Food Plants (GCCFP) connects people and organizations to conserve and use the extraordinary diversity of plants that can contribute to healthier people and a healthier planet.

The GCCFP brings together experts, practitioners, and advocates across conservation, agriculture, and food systems to tap the potential of food plants. Together, Consortium partners work to:

- Better understand the diversity of food plants
- Identify the food plants and varieties that most urgently need protection
- Conserve food plant diversity in nature, on farms, and in repositories
- Make food plant diversity more available for use
- Strengthen knowledge and capacity
- Build greater awareness of why food plant diversity matters



Launched in 2025, the GCCFP brings together botanic gardens, genebanks, farmer and seed saver organizations, agricultural research and plant breeding institutions, food marketing and product development communities, chefs, education programs, and other communities working in food systems.

The Consortium is hosted at the New York Botanical Garden and is supported by Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the United States Botanic Garden, Gothenburg Botanic Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the Crop Trust, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, CGIAR, and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

About the Global Conservation Consortia

Global Conservation Consortia is a program of Botanic Gardens Conservation International that connects botanic institutions and experts to protect priority groups of threatened plants.

Participating organizations take on different but complementary roles. Together, their individual collections and conservation activities form a larger, coordinated “metacollection.”

The GCCFP tailors this approach to food plants by connecting the botanic garden community with genebanks, farmer and seed saver organizations, agricultural research and plant breeding institutions, food marketing and product development communities, chefs, education organizations, and other communities working in food systems.

Connecting Conservation and Use

Protecting and using food plant diversity requires action across many areas.

Food plant diversity needs to be conserved where it grows—in natural habitats, farms and gardens where it can continue to adapt to new conditions. It also needs to be safeguarded in genebanks, botanic gardens, and other repositories where it can be securely maintained for the future. Both approaches are essential.

But conservation is only the beginning. Food plant diversity also needs to be studied, shared, used, and celebrated. When farmers grow it, and people eat it, diversity remains part of a dynamic, evolving food system. Food plant diversity thrives by appearing on our plates.

The GCCFP connects these different parts of the food system. It strengthens information sharing and conservation, supports culinary traditions and innovation, builds institutional capacity, informs policy, and helps people understand the value of food plant diversity.

The Consortium bridges organizations and sectors that have not always worked closely together. Its focus is on making sure that food plant diversity is valued, conserved, and available for generations to come—contributing to more resilient, sustainable, and nutritious food systems.

The Food Plant Challenge

The diversity of edible plants is enormous. More than 26,000 plant species are known to have been used as food, while thousands of wild relatives of our crops contain genetic diversity that can help breeders improve cultivated plants.

Yet much of this diversity is under pressure. Environmental and societal change threatens wild edible plants and traditional crop varieties, as well as the knowledge associated with them. Losing this diversity reduces options for scientists, farmers, communities, and consumers to respond to climate change, changing dietary needs, and other challenges.

Protecting and using food plant diversity requires several actions:

- **Conserve plants where they grow**—Cultivated diversity needs to be maintained on farms and in gardens, while wild edible plants and crop wild relatives need protection in their natural habitats.
- **Safeguard diversity in collections**—Genebanks, botanic gardens, and other repositories provide an essential layer of conservation and enhanced availability for wider use.
- **Make diversity available for use**—Conserved plants must be accessible to researchers, breeders, farmers, and others who can use them, and through use these plants are more likely to persist in food systems.
- **Protect plant knowledge**—Traditional and local knowledge about how plants are grown, prepared, and used is an important, and threatened component of food plant diversity, which must also be safeguarded.
- **Raise awareness**—Policymakers and the public need to understand why food plant diversity matters and what is at risk.

What the GCCFP Does

The Consortium connects organizations, projects, and initiatives so they can achieve more together. Its work focuses on four areas:

Knowledge

Build a stronger picture of the world's food plant diversity – what exists, where it occurs, what is threatened, where conservation gaps remain, and what action is needed.

Conservation

Strengthen coordinated conservation of food plants in natural habitats and on farms, as well as in genebanks, botanic gardens, and other repositories. This includes helping preserve traditional knowledge associated with food plants.

Promotion and Use

Help put food plant diversity to work for more productive, sustainable, ethical, and resilient food systems, including by supporting culinary traditions, culture, and new uses for diverse foods.

Connection And Capacity

Bring people and institutions together to share expertise, strengthen capacities, educate new audiences, and build wider support for conserving and using food plant diversity.

The diversity of food plants is one of humanity's most important resources. By connecting the people who conserve it with those who grow, study, improve, prepare, and use it, the GCCFP is helping keep more options on the table for the future.



Photo courtesy of Crop Trust



Learn more at
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GARDENS
CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL**



**UNITED STATES
BOTANIC GARDEN**



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



**International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources:
for Food and Agriculture**



**Global
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