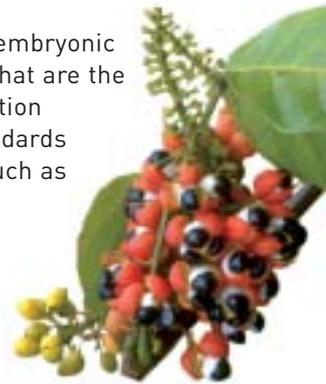




HARVESTING WILD AND SEMI-DOMESTICATED SPECIES

As an outgrowth of the expanding market for organic food products, mechanisms are being developed to certify organically produced non-wood forest products (NWFP). NWFP are defined as biological goods, other than wood, that come from forests, other wooded lands and trees outside forests. This can include wild or semi-domesticated products, such as edible nuts, mushrooms, fruits, herbs, spices, gums, aromatic plants, bush meat and fodder, as well as plant or animal products for medicinal, cosmetic or cultural uses.

Organic certification of NWFP is still embryonic compared to the cultivated products that are the main focus of existing organic production systems. However, many organic standards provide specific sections on NWFP, such as IFOAM's *Basic standards for organic production and processing*.



Guarana is a tonic food

**Organic certification promotes economically viable and environmentally friendly use of natural resources.** The certification mechanisms that already exist for monitoring and evaluating production or commercialization of agricultural and timber products can be expanded and adapted for certifying organic NWFP.



**Hundreds of millions of people, mostly in developing countries, derive a significant part of their subsistence needs through the use of NWFP.** Income generated through local, national and international trade in NWFP is estimated at US\$11 billion annually.



Harvesting medicinal herbs (*Combretum Glutinosum*) in the wild, Senegal



There are four main certification schemes relevant for NWFP:

**Organic certification** focuses on criteria such as the renunciation of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Under these criteria, wild and semi-domesticated NWFP such as pinenuts, mushrooms and herbs could be considered organic.



**Forest management certification** assesses the ecological aspects of resource management, both at the forest and species or product level, and ensures the sustainable production of forest resources.

**Social certification**, such as fair and ethical trade, assures that labour conditions are acceptable and benefits are shared equally among those involved in production and trade.

**Product quality certification** covers production standards that focus on the product as well as on the way it is processed and manufactured.

Organic systems are based on precise standards of production that work towards supporting optimal agro-ecosystems. These standards focus mainly on ecological aspects of production.

In order to be recognized as organic products, wild harvested or semi-domesticated products should meet the following criteria:

*harvesting plan is in place and up to date;*

*harvest must not have negative influences on growth and production, should not be destructive to the environment or biodiversity, and should not cause depletion of population or soil erosion;*

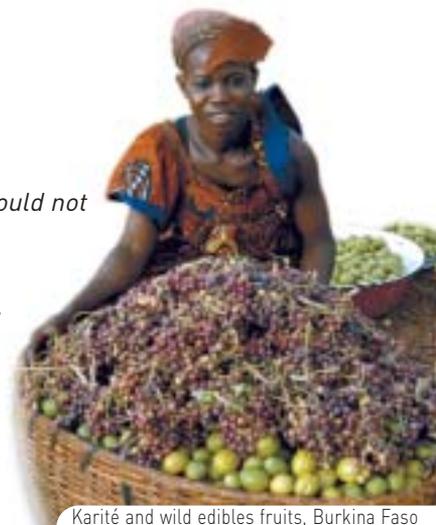
*harvesting areas must be clearly defined with identifiable boundaries;*

*buffer zones must be delineated around the harvested area to avoid contamination from external sources; and*

*prohibited substance should not have been used for at least three years preceding harvest.*



Children collecting fruits of *Santaloides Afzeli*, Guinea



Karité and wild edibles fruits, Burkina Faso

