



FOREST INSECTS AS FOOD: HUMANS BITE BACK. A WORKSHOP FOCUSED ON ASIA-PACIFIC RESOURCES AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

**CHIANG MAI, THAILAND
19-21 FEBRUARY 2008**

Humans have consumed insects for thousands of years – in some cases as emergency food, in other cases as a staple, and in still other cases as delicacies. In modern times, consumption of insects has declined in many societies, and has often been shunned as old-fashioned, dirty or unhealthy. Yet, among various cultures scattered throughout the world, insects remain a vital and preferred food and an essential source of protein, fat, minerals and vitamins. For some members of the rapidly growing upper and middle classes of urban society, insects are “nostalgia food,” reminding them of earlier, simpler days in the rural countryside.

Worldwide, over 1 400 insect species are reportedly eaten as human food. Most are harvested from natural forests. But, while insects account for the greatest amount of biodiversity in forests, they are the least studied of all fauna. Surprisingly little is known, for example, about the life cycles, population dynamics and management potential of many edible forest insects. Similarly, little is known of the impacts that overharvesting of forest insects might have on forest vegetation, other forest fauna and the ecosystems themselves.

Among forest managers, there is little knowledge or appreciation of the potential for managing and harvesting insects sustainably. There is almost no knowledge or experience in manipulating forest vegetation or harvest practices to increase, maximize or sustain insect populations. Indeed, as many insects cause massive damage and mortality to valuable commercial trees, virtually all insects are considered undesirable pests by many forest managers. What knowledge does exist in these respects is often held by traditional forest dwellers and forest-dependent people.

The capturing, processing, transporting and marketing of edible forest insects provide interesting income and livelihood opportunities for an undetermined number of people around the world. Traditionally, these activities were all locally based and largely under-recognized. Recently,

however, more sophisticated and wide-reaching marketing and commercialization of edible forest insects have been advanced, including attractive packaging and advertising. Some advocates believe that creating a wider market for food insects could provide an economic incentive for conserving insect habitat.

To promote further forest insects as human food, six major areas need to be addressed:

- geographic information gaps;
- improved insect identification;
- better understanding of the ecological roles of edible forest insects;
- assessment of the potential for rearing insects for food and other purposes;
- post-harvest handling of insects and improved processing and storage; and
- economic and marketing data and information.

The Chiang Mai workshop will attempt to address these issues and discuss strategies to promote edible forest insects for enhancing human nutrition and forest management. The workshop will focus on all aspects of edible forest insects, including management, collection, harvest, processing, marketing and consumption. Social, environmental and economic aspects will be explored, including opportunities and issues related to income and livelihoods. The focus of the workshop will be on knowledge and experiences from Asia and the Pacific, but the workshop will also draw on examples and resource persons from other regions of the world as well. Consideration will be given to insects and their edible relatives, such as spiders and scorpions.

Workshop themes and subjects

Edible forest insects as a natural resource.

Overview of current status of forest insect exploitation for food in Asia and the Pacific. Insect conservation issues. Thematic presentations by participants, with particular attention to the identified geographic gaps (i.e. Viet Nam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Peninsular Malaysia and the Pacific Islands). ***Models of insect management for food and other products.*** Examples from beekeeping, silk worm farming and palm grub harvesting. Complementary and competing economic non-food insect products and uses (i.e. medicine, livestock feed, ritual, ornamental and integrated pest management). The relationship of insect exploitation to the extraction of common non-wood forest products (NWFPs) and linkages to forest management.



Development potential for edible forest insects.

The role of edible forest insects in food security. Insect protein as a contribution to better nutrition. Economics of collecting edible forest insects. Harvesting, processing and marketing of edible forest insects. Promoting insect eating: snacks, dishes, condiments, recipes, etc.

The workshop is co-organized by FAO and Chiang Mai University. Local support is provided by the Forest Restoration Research Unit (FORRU), Chiang Mai University.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY IN THE AMERICAS

**SMITHSONIAN TROPICAL RESEARCH CENTER (STRI) IN PANAMA
25-29 FEBRUARY 2008**

This symposium is being organized by Environment Canada, the Adaptation and Impacts Research Division and the Smithsonian Institution, National Zoological Park, Center for Conservation Education and Sustainability.

The focus of the symposium is to provide a forum for leading scientists to present the results of research and monitoring activities of climate change and forest biodiversity throughout the Americas. The aim is to establish a cooperative science, research and monitoring network of activities that interlink biodiversity conservation and sustainability, policy responses and adaptation to climate change throughout the Americas.

The changing climate is a significant driver of biodiversity and is already affecting many ecosystems throughout the Americas. It is necessary to mitigate and prevent these changes to preserve the biodiversity and ecological integrity of these regions. Increasingly, governments, organizations, industries and communities need to consider

adaptation to impacts of current and future changes in forest biodiversity and sustainability in their planning, infrastructure, and operations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM "UNDERUTILIZED PLANTS FOR FOOD, NUTRITION, INCOME AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"



**ARUSHA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
3-7 MARCH 2008**

Underutilized plants are species with underexploited potential for contributing to food security and nutrition by combating "hidden hunger" caused by micronutrient deficiencies; they often have medicinal properties and other multiple uses and they provide options for improved incomes to the poor and for environmental services to the global community. These species collectively receive little attention from research, extension services, farmers, policy- and decision-makers, donors, technology providers and consumers.

The symposium will be organized around four main areas of importance for underutilized plants: food security, nutrition and health, income generation, and environmental sustainability.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Dr Hannah Jaenicke (Convener), International Centre for Underutilised Crops, 127 Sunil Mawatha, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Fax: +94-11-2786854; e-mail: Symposium08@avrdc-rca.co.tz; www.icuc-iwmi.org/Symposium2008



XIII WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

**BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
18-25 OCTOBER 2009**

The World Forestry

Congress is held every six years and is cosponsored by FAO and the host country. The main objective of the congress is to provide a forum for the exchange of personal experiences and for discussions on topics related to forestry activities, involving professionals and other interested people from all over the world.

Approximately 6 000 participants from more than 160 countries are expected at the XIII World Forestry Congress, which is being organized by the Government of Argentina in collaboration with the FAO Forestry Department. Activities at the congress will include conferences, roundtable discussions, poster presentations, parallel events, exhibits, study and technical tours. All will focus on subjects related to the main subject theme of the congress: "Forests in development: a vital balance".

This theme guarantees opportunities to analyse social, environmental and economic aspects of natural resources in a local, regional and global context. The importance of the sustainable management of all types of forests will be emphasized, as well as the contribution of forest resources to the sustainability of the planet. The congress will provide an opportunity to learn about the diverse ecosystems of the different regions of the world, as well as the diverse perspectives of people and organizations sharing an interest in forests, including academics, forest producers, environmentalists, rural and indigenous people, forest managers, technical experts and policy-makers. The congress will offer a truly global view of the future of the world's forests.

First call for voluntary papers and posters

We invite every interested person to submit voluntary papers and posters expressing new ideas and providing information on experiences, theoretical models and interesting initiatives. Papers will be published in the congress proceedings and posted on the official Web site of the congress. Papers and posters can be submitted to the FAO Forestry Department before 30 June 2008.

Information or guidelines for presentations can be downloaded from our



Web page www.wfc2009.org or be requested by e-mail at info@wfc2009.org or by mail or fax. Abstracts should not exceed 250 words and the complete paper no more than 4 500 words, tables included.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

XIII World Forestry Congress, FAO, Forestry Department, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy. Fax: +39-06-5705-5137; e-mail: WFC-XIII@fao.org; www.wfc2009.org or www.wfc2009.org/version2/registroSimple_ingle.s.aspx



18TH COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY CONFERENCE

**EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND,
UNITED KINGDOM
28 JUNE - 2 JULY 2010**

The Commonwealth Forestry Association (CFA), founded in 1921, is the world's longest-established international forestry organization. It works to enable people to manage and sustain their forests and trees effectively. It is a professional association linking foresters throughout the world to exchange information on developments in forest policy, forest science and forestry practice. It also publishes the *International Forestry Review* and assists in reviewing voluntary papers. The CFA is represented on the Standing Committee and is closely involved with planning the conferences.

Preparations are now under way to agree a theme, develop a Web site and appoint an organizing committee for the CFA's 18th Conference.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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