

non-wood

news

EDITORIAL

The editorial for this issue of Non-Wood News has been written by Maxim Lobovikov, Chief of the Forest Products Service.

Non-wood forest products play a vital part in the livelihoods of many millions of people worldwide and are becoming increasingly important as a result of population growth, logging restrictions and environmental and health concerns. It is a paradox, therefore, that NWFP information – especially statistics on NWFPs – is still scarce, scattered and insufficient. Better and more consistent data are urgently needed for NWFP policy research and development.

Through *Non-Wood News*, FAO has been instrumental in highlighting the many facets of the world of NWFPs – from their role in food security and traditional medicines for the poor, to their growing importance in the multimillion dollar pharmaceutical and cosmetic business. Since its first issue in 1993, *Non-Wood News* has been collecting, systematizing and disseminating valuable information and data from around the world. The bulletin consequently serves as an excellent source of information and research ideas. Since it has always covered a broad range of products and issues, *Non-Wood News* has been able to monitor successfully global NWFP development trends, putting the subject into a historical perspective.

This 16th issue highlights some of these historical aspects in a Special Feature, "History of NWFPs", with articles ranging from "The forgotten heritage" and "Old glory", to others that demonstrate how NWFPs were useful and important for people in ancient times, and are still so today (e.g. edible insects, *Morinda citrifolia*). This traditional knowledge is an essential component of the NWFP world and has been underlined not only in "History of NWFPs", but also in "NWFPs in the Pacific Islands" (the first Special Feature in this issue), where we have highlighted the many different traditional uses of the trees of the Pacific Islands.

Non-Wood News is distinctive not only for its broad coverage of products and issues over a long period of time, but also for its readers and their willingness to contribute to its success by sharing their knowledge of their NWFP world, as is amply demonstrated in this issue. In addition, many authors have again generously permitted us to use extracts from their books.

Finally, we bring news that will sadden the forestry community: the death in September 2007 of Cherukat Chandrasekharan, the founder of *Non-Wood News*. Please see our obituary for him in this issue.

It is our intention to continue what Chandra started in 1993 – to bring to our readers the multifaceted and fascinating world of NWFPs. We hope that you will enjoy this volume and will continue to contribute to future issues.

NON-WOOD NEWS

is compiled and coordinated by Tina Etherington, Forest Products Service of the FAO Forest Products and Industries Division. For this issue, editing support was provided by Regina Hansda; language editing by Roberta Mitchell, Josiane Bonomi and Deliana Fanego; design, graphics and desktop publishing by Claudia Tonini.

Non-Wood News is open to contributions by readers. Contributions are welcomed in English, French and Spanish and may be edited to fit the appropriate size and focus of the bulletin.

If you have any material that could be included in the next issue of *Non-Wood News* for the benefit of other readers, kindly send it, before before 15 April 2008, to:

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FAO home page: www.fao.org

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A strong characteristic of *Non-Wood News* is that it is open to contributions from readers. Should you have any interesting material on any aspect of NWFPs that could be of benefit to all our readers, please do not hesitate to submit it. Articles are welcomed in English, French and Spanish and should be between 200 and 500 words. The deadline for contributions for *Non-Wood News* 17 is 15 April 2008.

For more information, please contact Tina Etherington at the address on the front page or by e-mail to non-wood-news@fao.org



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Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) are goods of biological origin other than wood, derived from forests, other wooded land and trees outside forests. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs), another term frequently used to cover this vast array of animal and plant products, also includes small wood and fuelwood. However, these two terms are used synonymously throughout this bulletin. Other terms, such as "minor", "secondary" or "speciality" forest products, are sometimes used to keep original names and/or titles.
