

Forest Foods: Wild plant consumption in northwestern Ecuador. (Oral Presentation)

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Introduction

Mestizo and Afroecuadorians have migrated to the forested region of northwestern Ecuador. The area in which they live has been delimited as an ecological reserve. Although they practice subsistence agriculture, wild food plants also make up an important part of their diet.

Objectives

To study colonist use and collection of wild forest food plants in a protected land area in northwestern Ecuador.

Methods

32 families were interviewed about their wild food plant consumption, collection, hierarchy of importance. Data also collection also focused on gender, age differences, and sustainability. Semi-formal and formal interviews were conducted, as well as participant observation.

Results

Wild plants comprise an important part of the diet, most collecting is opportunistic, there is a distinct hierarchy of plant importance, most collecting occurs in secondary forest, men were most knowledgeable, and sustainability varies depending on the plant part consumed.

Conclusion

Distinct trends emerge in terms of which plants people collect, what kind of plant and plant parts locals prefer, the type of forest from which most colonists collect, and which members of the community demonstrated the most wild food plant knowledge. Wild plants play a key role in the diet of these colonists.

Keywords: Food, wild plants, sustainability

Selected References

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