

**Ethnobotany of chile piquin (*Capsicum annum* var. *aviculare*) of the Sierra Gorda of Queretaro, Mexico.** (Poster)

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**Introduction**

The chili piquin (*Capsicum annum* var. *aviculare* (Dierb.) D'Arcy & Eschb.) is the ancestor and wild relative of the domesticated forms of the species. The wild populations are a valuable germplasm source for plant breeders. In order for in situ conservation to be successful, we must take into account the traditional uses and exploitation.

**Objectives**

We aimed to document the uses, traditional collection, geographic distribution and population structure of the chile piquin in the Sierra Gorda of Queretaro, an area known for commerce with this taxon. Also, the economic contribution of this plant to the local gatherers and salespeople was studied.

**Methods**

Collectors and market salespeople were interviewed systematically. The structure of wild populations of chili piquin were documented with transects.

**Results**

We found 5 use categories for this plant: food, medicine, ornament, animal fodder and ceremonial. There were 6 subtypes of medicinal use, 4 ways to use it as food and 2 ceremonial subtypes. Although all of the 72 collectors had another main activity (farmer 28%, day laborer 38%, craftsman 24%, migrant worker 10 %), wild chili piquin was the main source of income during the harvest season for 18%, and 24% considered it important for their income. The plant populations are small and located in patches along streams and roads. The plants usually grow in the shade of other vegetation, and are fomented, but not cultivated, by people in grasslands and around maize fields. The populations are decreasing according to the gatherers.

**Conclusion**

Chile piquin the Sierra Gorda is felt to be part of the regions cultural identity, a natural resource important for the local economy, and it is much appreciated for its flavor. Good management could improve commercialization in other markets and the incomes of the collectors, and help to preserve the germplasm in situ.

**Keywords:** traditional uses, wild resources, harvesting.

**Selected References**

1. Martinez-T., H.L.; H. Vibrans; S. Montes and T. Corona.(2005) Ethnobotany of chile piquin(*Capsicum annum* var. *aviculare*) in the Sierra Gorda of Queretaro. Memories of the Second World Pepper Convention, Zacatecas, Mexico.

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