

Oral presentation

Relationships between a peripheral market and the central market in the commercialization of medicinal plants: the Ozumba tianguis and Mercado Sonora in Central Mexico.

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Introduction. Since prehispanic times, the southeastern region of the Valley of Mexico has been a major source area of plant resources for the central market. Today the peripheral Ozumba “tianguis” (traditional prehispanic market) provides twice weekly supplies of fresh medicinal plants to the central market (Mercado Sonora) in Mexico City.

Objectives. To identify the important fresh medicinal plants that move from Ozumba to Mexico City, to determine the source areas of these plants, and to establish their origin.

Methods. Weekly inventories were conducted in the medicinal plant section of the Ozumba tianguis over a two year period during which the following activities were realized: 1) presence/absence of species, 2) estimate of relative abundance for selected vendors, 3) purchase of voucher specimens for taxonomic identification, 4) application of semi-structured interviews with selected collectors-vendors-buyers as to names, uses, production and management of plants, and 5) use of upstreaming interviews with key plant providers.

Results. Over 200 species of fresh vascular plants are concentrated principally from the pine-oak forests and to a lesser extent from the higher fir forests and the lower, seasonally dry tropical selva. The presence of wild, collected species vary with the season and source areas along the ecological gradient. About 25% of the taxa are non-Mexican species that are grown commonly in home gardens and small cultivated plots. About 1% of the plants are Mexican species that are not native to the zone but have been introduced retroactively from the central Mercado Sonora to the periphery including: *Agastache mexicana* ssp. *xolocotziana*, two varieties of *Heterotheca inuloides*, *Chiranthodendron pentadactylon*, and *Magnolia grandiflora*.

Conclusion. Exotic cultivated species are present throughout the year while the availability of native gathered and cultivated species vary due to the season and production along the ecological gradient. Limited bidirectional movement of preferred plants has increased the diversity of fresh medicinal plants by the introduction of perennial herbs and trees from the central market to the periphery during at least three periods.

Keywords: *Agastache*, *Heterotheca*, *Chiranthodendron*, *Magnolia*, introductions

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