

Oral presentation

Cultural ecology of native fruits and affiliate species: traditional plant use of the Kempo Manggarai, Flores Island (Indonesia)

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Introduction. In the southwestern corner of Flores Island, eastern Indonesia, rapid ecological and social change threatens the survival of indigenous biocultural diversity for the Tado, a Kempo Manggarai community.

Objectives. Ethnobotanical inventories of native plant taxa across different use categories highlight the range of Tado ecological knowledge and the relationship of that knowledge to Tado daily life and cultural integrity.

Methods. A bilateral collaborative research venture, the Tado Cultural Ecology Conservation Program, combines scientific study with community development initiatives to institutionalize intergenerational conservation of native taxa and traditions. The project's participatory research methodology demonstrates the relevance of applying international conventions regarding traditional indigenous knowledge (TIK) and intellectual property rights (IPR) to ethnobotanical field research.

Results. Amongst the 700 recorded ethnobotanically important plant taxa of the Manggarai region, over 100 edible native fruit taxa are being studied in the managed and unmanaged ecosystems of the Tado. A range of utilitarian, ceremonial, social, narrative and medicinal uses of edible native fruit plants and affiliated taxa is presented within the context of demonstrating the important roles played by plants in Tado culture.

Conclusion. Practical applications of ethnobotanical research to the conservation of biological and cultural diversity are presented within the context of promoting long-term, cross-institutional cooperation.

Keywords: biocultural diversity, conservation, cultural ecology, participatory research, biocultural diversity, conservation, cultural ecology, Flores Island, Indonesia, participatory research, traditional ecological knowledge

Selected References

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