

Institute: Institute of Botany

Topic: Ethnobotanical survey of wild plants used by Indonesians in selected provinces of central Sumatra

Name of supervisor: prof. dr hab. Marcin Nobis

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Background information:

In terms of geographic size, Sumatra is the sixth-largest island on the planet. The island is divided into two sections by the Barisan Hills, stretching from the north to the south end of Sumatra. The western part with steep slopes and deep beaches is relatively narrow and hardly available, whereas the eastern part, relatively wide is more suitable for people and their activities, such as agriculture and trade. The knowledge of local communities about wild food plants developed for a long time and has been passed down from generation to generation until now. Open-air markets continue to be a significant hub of plant trade for residents of urban and rural areas, even with the introduction of convenience stores and supermarkets in more developed areas. Traditional markets illustrate also the identity of ethnic groups and play an important role in cultural development and become an element that distinguishes one ethnic group from another. On markets, the diversity of wild plants traded reflects the richness of regional natural resource, used by local populations as food, medicines, or used for religious purposes. Therefore, ethnobotanical studies are so important for preserving the local knowledge on food plants and their local species richness.

Information on the methods/description of work:|

Field research will be conducted in the West Sumatra, Riau and Jambi provinces of central Sumatra (Indonesia). Data will be collected by conducting open-ended, semi-structured interviews with key informants and respondents - indigenous people. Data collected in the interviews will include the diversity of food plant species in markets, harvesting locations, parts utilized, processing methods, frequency of utilization, market price, and other uses. Particular plants will be identified in the laboratory and preserved in a herbarium (as documentation). Statistical analysis will be performed using R and/or Statistica software.

The main question to be addressed in the project:

What is the diversity of plants sold in the local markets?; Which plants are considered important by local communities?; For which purpose do people use particular species of wild plants? Do different ethnic groups use the same plants in the same way?; Are some endangered species sold on the market?

Additional information:

A potential candidate should possess knowledge and experience in designing and conducting interdisciplinary research. Excellent written and oral skills in English language are required.

Name of foreign collaborator:

Prof. Fitmawati Fitmawati, Universitas Riau, Indonesia.

References:

- [1] Neuman WL. 2003. Social Research Methods Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. New York (NY): Allyn and Bacon.
- [2] Kasper-Pakosz R, Pietras M, Łuczaj Ł. 2016. Wild and native plants and mushrooms sold in the open-air markets of south-eastern Poland. J Ethnobiol Ethnomed 12(1):45.