

Steppes: Legacy from past to future

The most important component in the adaptation of plant species to changing environmental conditions is the genetic diversity of the species. Today, genetic diversity in new varieties developed by modern breeding studies is gradually decreasing. Wild relatives of cultivated plants still continue to have characteristics suitable for changing environmental conditions and human needs. But, wild relatives of cultivated plants also face many threats. The most important of these are the replacement of traditional species with improved species, overgrazing, clearing, using weed killers, excessive plant collection from nature and habitat loss. If this continues, it may not be possible to find these gene resources that have survived for thousands of years in nature when needed in the future.



Wild siyez-Triticum baeroticum

It is the biggest responsibility towards the earth and future generations to know and protect the values of the steppes.

Photos: Nihan Yenilmez Arpa - Şenay Boyraz Topaloğlu



CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PROJECT OF STEPPE ECOSYSTEM OF TURKEY GCP/TUR/061/GFF

Conservation and Sustainable Management Project of Steppe Ecosystem of Turkey is being conducted by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (TOB), General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks (DKMPGM), Directorate General of Plant Production (BÜGEM) and General Directorate of Forestry (OGM) with the financial support of Global Environment Fund (GEF).

For detailed information

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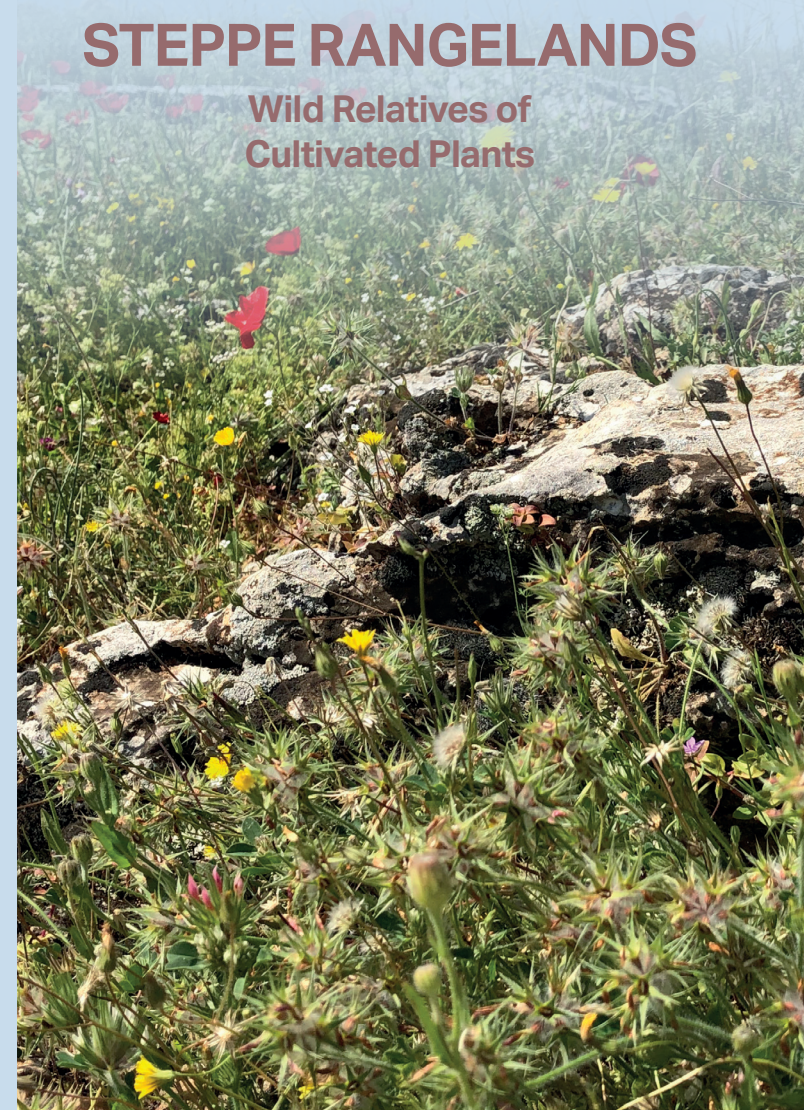
Food and Agriculture
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RICHNESS OF THE STEPPE RANGELANDS

Wild Relatives of
Cultivated Plants

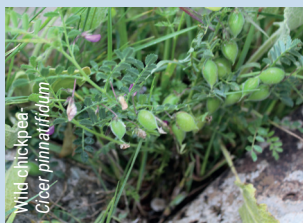


The Richness of the Steppes: Wild Relatives of Cultivated Plants

Primitive forms of many grains, which are used as main food sources and are indispensable for meals, were first cultivated in the steppes of Southeastern Anatolia.



Wheat is the first plant to be cultivated. Local wheat varieties such as einkorn and gernik, which are still cultivated in various parts of Anatolia today, have taken their present forms with the selection of their wild relatives in nature for centuries by people.



The steppes are a shelter for the wild relatives of many cultivated species and are extremely important living spaces for many bird, butterfly, mammal and reptile species.

The steppes are a natural gene center for wild relatives of cereals, edible legumes and forage crops and food security of the future.

Many grains and legumes, which constitute our source of nutrition today, have been obtained by cultivating their wild relatives in the steppes. Wild relatives of many plants still cultivated in the Anatolian Steppes are showing natural distribution. Some of those are: wheat (*Triticum* spp. *Aegilops* spp.), barley (*Hordeum* spp.), rye (*Secale* spp.), chickpea (*Cicer* spp.), lentil (*Cicer* spp.), pea (*Lens* spp.), vetch (*Vicia* spp.), chickling (*Lathyrus* spp.), medic (*Onobrychis* spp.).



Conservation of Steppe Ecosystems

“Conservation and Sustainable Management Project of Steppe Ecosystem of Turkey” which is being conducted in Şanlıurfa Province, Tek Tek Mountains National Park (MP), Kızılkuyu Wildlife Development Area (YHGS) and Karacadağ Steppes showed its importance once again in terms of the conservation of wild relatives of cultivated species in the steppes. As a result, wild relatives of barley and wheat in Kızılkuyu YHGS, wild relatives of barley, wheat, lentil, pea, chickling and chickpea in Tek Tek Mountains MP have been determined with this project. The Karacadağ steppes are the region where the oldest known ancestor of wheat is found and where it is cultured.



Şanlıurfa steppes are the gene center which serves as a very important guarantee in terms of food security.

