

Project Update: August 2014

1. In-depth surveys were carried out in several forest and village areas of north west Himalaya to understand the availability and accessibility of major lesser known wild edibles.
2. During our visit to several far flung valleys, we found that number of wild edible plant species has different phenological patterns and hence, the collection of seeds is fully dependent on the separate seasons of fruiting for the species.
3. In the meanwhile, some fruits and berries were collected from wild edible species. However, we missed to collect several species due to early fruiting (due to climate change variability) in some wild edibles species.
4. Taking reference from Millennium Seed Bank of Botanical Kew Garden, we kept the variety of fruits and berries in different bags i.e. cloth bags and plastic bags. Paper bags are used for hard fruits where as plastic bags are used for more juicy fruits to avoid the juices oozing onto everything else.
5. Bags were opened daily to let some air in to avoid mould and fermentation or lay them out to dry in a cool, airy place out of direct sunlight. The flesh or pulp was removed from the overripe or damaged fruits and berries by using a sieve and cool running water.
6. Some seeds are particularly susceptible to deterioration from moist air conditions, such as those collected during the rainy season or those that are enclosed in an indehiscent fruit (a fruit which doesn't split open). These 'wet seeds' need to be dried as soon as possible and this was done by:
 - (a) Spreading them out in a thin layer on some newspaper in the shade.
 - (b) Raising them off the ground to allow air to circulate beneath.
 - (c) Repacking them before nightfall to minimise moisture absorption as the ambient humidity rises.
7. Once each seed collection is sufficiently clean and dry, it is sealed into moisture-proof containers



Photo 1. Field survey for wild edibles



Photo 2. *Prunus armenica* on tree



Photo 3. *Syzygium cumini* still raw on trees



Photo 4. *Rosa webbiana* in flowering stage