Bambara Groundnut Collecting in Togo

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Introduction

In December 1984 and December 1985, 2 collecting missions for Bambara groundnut (Vigna subterranea) were carried out in Togo. These missions were funded by the University of Maryland, USA, and organized by the Direction de la Recherche Agronomique du Togo and IBPGR.

The missions took place 19-22 December 1984 in the Région de la Kara and 12-21 December 1985 in the Région des Savanes, Région de la Kara and Région Centrale. Following a collecting route of 5500 km, a total of 326 samples of Bambara groundnut was collected in 41 villages.

The good growing seasons which prevailed in Togo in 1984 and 1985 permitted collection of adequate number of seed samples. Duplicate samples were sent to the University of Maryland, USA, and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria.

The Bambara groundnut crop matures in December, but is earlier in the north than in the central region.

Method of sampling

Most of the samples gathered were of seeds brought by farmers from all parts of each village. Although this method is not the best sampling technique, it allowed for the collection of most of the existing variability. Only in a few cases were pods directly collected from the field.

Generally, farmers grow mixtures of seeds of different colours. Such samples were sorted out into different sub-samples. The interval between sampling sites was about 20 km but varied slightly depending upon population density and topography.

Collection and exploration

3 of the 5 administrative regions of Togo were covered: Savanes, Kara and Centrale. The importance of Bambara groundnut is decreasing, but it is not yet threatened by genetic erosion. In most of the tribes, its consumption is associated with funeral ceremonies and in some tribes with fetish activities.

Bambara groundnut is more resistant to drought than groundnut (Arachis hypogaea), and was an important food source for people of the Katchamba region during the prolonged drought of 1983.

It is considered more nutritious than groundnut and mashed seeds are used as a medicine against diarrhoea. Nevertheless, farmers prefer to grow Arachis hypogaea because of its value as a cash crop. The market for Bambara groundnut is rather small in most regions and more than 50% of production is reserved for local consumption. Black-seeded types are more rarely grown because they are often linked with fetish activities, except in the Bassar region.

The seeds of Bambara groundnut can be made into small flat cakes, biscuits and mash. The seeds can also be eaten boiled or roasted and, after harvest, they are usually conserved in their pods which are shelled just before cooking or sowing. Bambara groundnut is less commonly grown south of Bassar and Sokode.

In the Moba tribe, the growing of traditional cultivars is forbidden to young people; however, this does not

1/ IBPGR intern based at time of writing in Togo

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All the cultivars belong to the large seeded group, which is the main group of the species. They differ from the small-seeded group in that they are generally larger and have more seeds. The large-seeded group is also more common in the wild type, whereas the small-seeded group is more common in the cultivated type. The large-seeded group is also more common in the wild type, whereas the small-seeded group is more common in the cultivated type. The large-seeded group is also more common in the wild type, whereas the small-seeded group is more common in the cultivated type. The large-seeded group is also more common in the wild type, whereas the small-seeded group is more common in the cultivated type. The large-seeded group is also more common in the wild type, whereas the small-seeded group is more common in the cultivated type. The large-seeded group is also more common in the wild type, whereas the small-seeded group is more common in the cultivated type. 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