SUSTAINICUM COLLECTION
LEHRMATERIALIEN FÜR BILDUNG ZUR NACHHALTIGKEIT

Organic Herb Production and Cultivation Methods 1 (short version - part 1)

(Resource ID: 362)

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This teaching resource is allocated to following University:
UL - University of Limerick

Institution:
University of Limerick

http://www.sustainicum.at/en/modules/view/362.Organic-Herb-Production-and-Cultivation-Methods-1-short-version-part-1

Group work

11 to 30 students

Up to 3 lecture units

English, Shqip

"Organic Herb Production and Cultivation Methods (short version - part 1, 2, and 3)" is a set of 3 teaching resources based on the 1 semester course of the same title. The original teaching resource has been developed to teach students about organic herb production and the best practices in the wild collection of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs). It will also include two case studies and field trips to Sonnentor LTD in Albania or Agroprodukt LTD in Kosovo, both of which are exporters of organic MAPs. Other methods of teaching used include Brainstorming, Problem Based Learning, and Discussion. The set describes three independent teaching resources, which are designed to be completed one after

another (but not necessarily), these include: 1. Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Identification and Problem Solving 2. Case Study Teaching - Sonnentor LTD and Agroproduk LTD 3. Fieldwork - Sonnentor LTD and Agroproduk LTD The original teaching resource was split into several parts to make it easier to introduce innovative teaching methods at different points in the lectures. You do not need to complete all parts.

Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Identification and Problem Solving

Before beginning the lecture, students will be presented with a variety of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and asked to identify the plants using an identification key. The students will then be asked to implement the Problem Based Learning (PBL) Method. They will work in groups of 3 (or multiples of 3 depending on the size of the class group). They will be presented with a problem to which there is no right answer - some of these plants require methods of cultivation that are not sustainable for agriculture, suggest alternative methods of cultivation. Before beginning the topic, the teacher will have determined the students level of previous knowledge.

Main text:

Activities of harvesting, cultivation, processing and trade of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) are major agro-forestry businesses, with huge potential for the sustainable development of rural areas of Albania. Organic farming seems to be one of the promising sub-sectors with huge potential for both farmers and processors.

Albania is one of the richest and highest quality sources of many botanicals, making it an already known source of supply – 15% of its 3250 species medicinal, aromatic, spice and tannin are of significant value. The MAP industry contributes to 18% of agriculture exports. Besides being a major revenue source for the economy reaching ~20 Million EUR/year in 2013, this sector plays an important socio-economic role, contributing up to 35% of household income, because it is estimated that about 80.000 people, especially from disadvantaged mountainous areas, are involved as harvesters or farmers. Recognizing the role and potential of this sub-sector, the Inter-Sectorial Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development considers the MAP industry as a very important sector for rural diversification and is among the priority sectors to be supported through various instruments.

Most of the MAP businesses are made by wild products. However, there is increasing labour costs in collecting wild-grown MAPs due to overexploitation of natural resources in some areas and depopulation in some other areas, increasing procurement cost, competition between wholesalers and difficulty to match the market potential only with wild products are increasing the interest of the operators for cultivating some MAPs, especially herbs. Other factors, especially the high profitability and support by government subsidy schemes have drastically increased cultivation in recent years offering a considerable source of income for thousands of households. The cultivation surface has increased from 1877 ha in 2001 to 5000 ha in 2013 out of which 4000 ha are planted with sage and the rest with other plants such as lavender, thyme, and other plants.

There is potential for market expansion for many wild-grown MAPs but most importantly (for farmers) for many cultivated MAPs. However, this requires upgrading of cultivation, harvesting and post-harvesting technology. Organic farming seems to be one of the promising sub-sectors with huge potential for both farmers and processors.

Based on the need for resources on organic herb growing and good agricultural practices in harvesting of medicinal plants, this component aims at preparing such resources which are useful for students, farmers and operators. These teaching methods include Brainstorming, Problem Based Learning, Discussion and will be combined with case studies and field trips to two companies, Sonnentor LTD in Albania and Agroproduk LTD in Kosovo.

Teaching Tools & Methods

Written material

Integration of Social Stakeholders

Sonnentor LTD in Albania and Agroprodukt LTD in Kosovo, both specialise in the production (both cultivated and wild collected) of organic raw materials. They will be involved in the teaching process as active partners and students can get in direct contact with the network of farmers and wild collectors in several regions of Albania and Kosovo. The resources produced would be of benefit to these farmers and wild collectors.

Moreover, students could offer business ideas to farmers and wild collectors.

Strength

·Active learning experience for students
·Mutual learning for students, farmers and business stakeholders
·Students learn to develop a sustainable business idea on the basis of existing enterprises active in the field of sustainability and social entrepreneurship
·Students think about their own opportunities and responsibility in the context of global change

Weakness

·Some farmers may not like to share all of their cultivation practices or may not be open to change

Learning Outcomes

· Identify Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
· Select Sustainable Methods of Cultivation
· Solve the problem of non-sustainable cultivation methods

Relevance for Sustainability

· Depopulation of inner areas undermine the existing collection network of wild medicinal plants and hamper the sustainability of the value chain.
· Damaged wild MAPs population risks both sector sustainability and biodiversity.
· Moreover, too much focus on some MAP might cause over-supply. Risk is increased with the use of nitrites in farming.
· These teaching resources contain good collection practices for wild medicinal and aromatic plants.
· Development of a competitive and coordinated sector oriented towards increased volume and value added products which can meet the market standards and requirement preserving biological diversity and contributing to social and economic sustainability of rural families.

Related Teaching Resources

No specific previous knowledge / related resources required

Preparation Efforts

Medium

Preparation Efforts Description

Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Access

Free

Assessment

NA

Credit/Certification Description

N/A

Sources and Links

Original Teaching Resource – AUT - http://sustainicum.at/en/modules/view/261

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