The Art of Balance

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RADIANT project

The RADIANT project is part of the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme, designed to raise awareness about the importance of underutilised crops. Underutilised and neglected crops are crop species and varieties that have limited geographical and socio-economic use, but hold great nutritional, economic and environmental potential. The RADIANT project includes 20 AURORA farms in various parts of Europe. The farms, farmers, researchers and communities involved in growing underutilized crops play a crucial part in contributing to the ecosystem services in these areas. They are helping ensure the continued availability and use of certain underutilised crops (UCs), now and in the future.

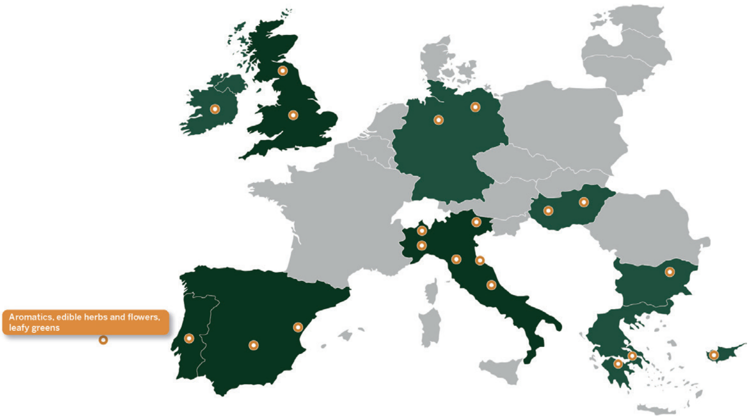
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

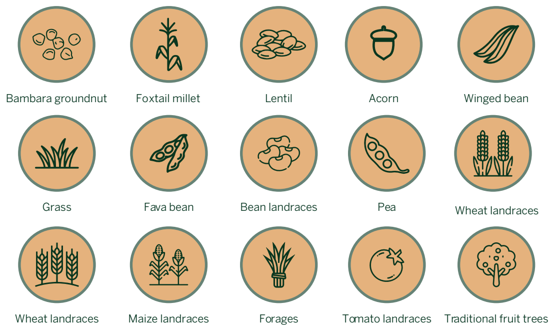
This has global implications for the conservation and sustainable use of the plants upon which the world relies for food, nutrition and agriculture. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is the entity within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that works with farmers, researchers and policymakers to save, share and take care of the plants that feed the world. These conservation and sustainable use efforts include traditional and UCs, the assignment of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) for plant genetic material, and the global sharing of this material and its related data. The FAO's International Treaty is working with the RADIANT project to help raise awareness about the importance of these UCs.

BioFontinhas, Terceira

Leafy greens

BioFontinhas is a small organic farm located on Terceira, one of the nine volcanic islands in the Mid-Atlantic that form the Portuguese Azores archipelago. Situated about 1500 km west of Portugal's west coast, Terceira is known for its livestock and wide green pastures. The farm is characterised by greenhouses, outdoor cultivation beds and compost circuits, where 100 species of plants are grown, all within 750 square meters. The farm uses an organic, full plant lifecycle approach where nothing is wasted, and seeds are saved to be replanted the following season. Everything produced here is consumed on the island. It is one of the Aurora farms participating in the EU's RADIANT project.





The Crops

Of the 100 plant varieties grown at *BioFontinhas*, 16 are edible herbs, flowers, leafy greens and aromatics that are among the UCs included in the European Horizon 2020 project (e.g. Atriplex Hortensis Red). They are being revitalised to encourage a healthy diet, and help highlight the importance of agricultural biodiversity, and the rich nutritional, environmental and economic potential of UCs.

Biofontinhas list of Under Utilized Plants

Plantago Coronopus	Used in salad mixes, veggie mixes and green smoothie mixes
Atriplex Hortensis	Used in salad mixes and microgreens
Basella Alba	Used in salad mixes, veggie mixes and green smoothie mixes
Mesembryanthemum Crystallinum	Used as notes of flavor in restaurant chefs' signature dishes
Mesembryanthemum Cordifolium	Used in salad mixes and veggie mixes
Mesembryanthemum Cordifolium (variegata)	Used as notes of flavor in restaurant chefs' signature dishes
Gynura Procumbens	Used in veggie mixes and green smoothie mixes
Gynura Procumbens (bicolor)	Used in veggie mixes and green smoothie mixes
Tetragonia Tetragonoides	Used in veggie mixes
Talinum Paniculatum	Used in salad mixes, veggie mixes and green smoothie mixes
Vicia	Used as shoots without chlorophyll
Disphyma Crassifolium	Used as notes of flavor in restaurant chefs' signature dishes
Halimione Portulacoides	Used as notes of flavor in restaurant chefs' signature dishes
Crithmum Maritimum	Used as notes of flavor in restaurant chefs' signature dishes
Plantago Major	Used in green smoothie mixes
Helosciadium Nodiflorum	Used in green smoothies

Farmer

Avelino Ormonde is a self-taught farmer, who made a huge career switch, from cyber transport systems at the American military base on Terceira to farming. He started with conventional agriculture, before realizing the dangers of chemicals, and becoming an exploratory organic farmer. Thirty years ago, he founded *BioFontinhas*, an organic way of farming leafy greens, through which he strives to create “the art of balance.”

He is involved in the entire plant life-cycle: he grows the plants; encourages the right kinds of insects and worms; composts the soil; creates his own fertilizer with help of some chickens, a duck and a pig; saves the seeds and replants them season after season. He recycles everything and wastes nothing. He aspires “to do more with less.”

"If man one day decides to respect the soil food web, then we will have no need to worry about the continuation of the flourishing of our planet."

Avelino Ormonde

Avelino shares his knowledge and experience by teaching others about his *BioFontinhas* system of organic farming, and the value of eating a healthy diet. His hope is that everyone will respect the natural "food web" in the soil and in doing so, will help maintain a natural art of balance between nature and human needs.

RADIANT
Project Coordinator

Marta Vasconcelos is a professor and a research scientist who is the Head of the Plantech Laboratory at the Catholic University of Porto, Portugal, a partner of the RADIANT project. She is also the person responsible for the overall coordination of the RADIANT project, working to diversify the crops grown in farmers' fields, as well as the variety of foods consumed in Europe.

Recipe for taro tacos with barracuda fillet

Ingredients

- Taro*
- Talinum Paniculatum*
- Plantago Lanceolata*
- Barracuda
- Micro basil
- Red Amaranth leaf*
- Sweet onion pickle
- Sweet cucumber pickle
- Sambal mayonnaise

*Underutilised crop

Instructions

- Boil taro in water until it stops producing foam. (This removes alkaloid from the rhizome, making it safe to eat).
- Grind mixture into a purée and strain through a sieve.
- Stretch resulting dough on a flat surface and shape into tacos.
- Bake at 50°C until dry.
- Fill with fried fish fillet and garnish with: the micro basil, amaranth leaf, sweet onion and cucumber pickle, roasted peppers, sambal mayonnaise, *Talinum Paniculatum* and *Plantago Lanceolata*.

The careful attention put into growing the organic leafy greens and other edible plants at *BioFontinhas* is evident in their rich colours, aromas and flavours. These are among the factors that have made the plants grown here popular on the island, not just amongst the chefs, but also amongst other locals.

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