

Plant genetic resources as a part of the biodiversity

G. Stukeniene*, S. Gataveckiene, and V. Kuzma

Vilnius University Botanical Garden, Vilnius, Lithuania

*Corresponding author email: stukeniene@gmail.com

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Conservation of plant genetic resources (PGR) is a priority worldwide. According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the sustainable use and conservation of crop diversity is a national task, duty, and responsibility of each country. The CBD was ratified in Lithuania in 1995. In 2001, the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Law on National Plant Genetic Resources, which regulates the accumulation, preservation, and use of national PGR and stipulates how to provide for the sustainable use of these resources, protect them from devastation, extinction and compete for destruction as well as to save the biological diversity. According to the provisions of this law, PGR, which have ecological, selective, and economic value for the Republic of Lithuania, are selected and included in the central database of the national PGR. It might be plant populations or their parts, single plants or their groups, or reproductive parts of plants. The Plant Gene Bank (currently – State Forest Service) with coordination centers of different plant groups (agricultural plants, forest trees, fruits and vegetables, ornamental plants, and medicinal plants) has been established. The existing system of conservation of plants includes ex situ and in situ methods. At the end of 2023, there were more than 6000 accessions on the List of National Plant Genetic Resources in Lithuania. It is important to note that genetic resources of ornamental plants involve 329 accessions (e.g. 65 accessions of *Paeonia*, 43 accessions of *Iris*, 27 accessions of *Dahlia*, 26 accessions of *Gladiolus*, 18 accessions of *Lilium*, etc.). The largest collections of ornamental plants are accumulated in Vilnius University Botanical Garden and Vytautas Magnus University Botanical Garden. Moreover, every year exhibitions of plants are held in the above-mentioned Botanical Gardens of Lithuania.