

### Workshop 3

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## Gradual destruction of wild plants and the botanist's responsibility: the example of *Polygonatum* and *Vaccinium* in Iran

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The destruction of the Iranian forest is considered the world's most alarming conservation problem. The rudimentary knowledge of the thousands of species that inhabit such a fragmented biome highlights the importance of taxonomy as a basic tool for conservation.

Various wild plant parts e.g. leaves, shoots and fruits, are very valuable, as their showy colours vary with the stages of growth and development.

*Vaccinium arctostaphylos* is one of the most characteristic elements of the Querco-Alnatum and Alnato-Fagutum communities in Iran and Middle Asia. This species is distributed in north of Iran, west Caucasus and north-eastern Turkey. The ripened fruits of this species is edible with an astringent-sweet taste.

*Polygonatum* spp. occur predominantly in woodland habitats of north America, Europe and Asia. *Polygonatum polyanthemum* is a dependable 30-40 cm tall plant with an attractive appearance in any soil and grown in fertile humus-rich, moisture-retentive and semi-shade or shade conditions. The rhizomes of this species has a high starch content and is used for making jam.

These elements contribute significantly to biodiversity and support the capacity of the communities in which they live. Gradual destruction is described as a phenomenon caused by errors in human decisions and none- presence of such plants may create a negative impact on the biodiversity and environment.

Conservation activities and political policy benefit these species. However, I must recommend domestication and widespread cultivation of *polygonatum*, *Vaccinium* and other edible wild plants in Iran and other countries in order to preserve their habitats and survival. Exact Methods of domestication of the taxa examined, is described