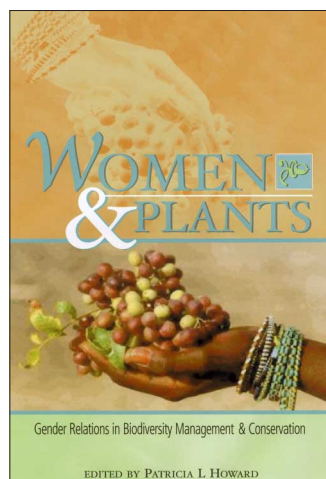


# WOMEN AND PLANTS

Gender Relations in Biodiversity Management and Conservation

*Edited by Patricia L. Howard*



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**T**HIS UNIQUE COLLECTION of in-depth case studies from Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe and North America demonstrates the importance of women and gender relations in plant genetic resource management and conservation. It provides a state-of-the-art overview of the concepts, relationships and contexts explaining the relatively hidden gender dimensions of people-plant relations.

The contributors come from a rich range of disciplines including ethnobotany, geography, agronomy, anthropology, plant breeding, nutrition and development economics. They demonstrate how crucial women are to plant biodiversity management and conservation at household, village, and community levels; and how gender relations have a strong influence on the ways in which local people understand, manage, and conserve biodiversity. Continued access to biological resources is crucial to rural women's status and welfare, and their motivations therefore are a principal driving force countering processes of biological erosion.

The contributors highlight the gender biases evident in much contemporary scientific research, policy and development practice. And they seek to contribute to a number of important debates, including the determinants of genetic erosion, the significance of gender in indigenous ethno-botanical knowledge systems, indigenous intellectual property rights systems and women's entitlements therein, and ecofeminist and other debates about the nature of gender-environment relations.

**'This is a very important book. Taken together, the collected papers present a rich picture of the vital role played by peasant women around the world. They are struggling to preserve, in the face of modern agribusiness, the agricultural wisdom of the past and the diversity of plants that have been used for both food and medicine. It is vital that decision makers, especially in the developing world, heed the knowledge of these women who understand so well the art of a sustainable lifestyle. *Women and Plants* must be in the library of every individual who cares about the future of our planet'** - Dr Jane Goodall

**'Focusing on traditional knowledge of indigenous people and local communities, and especially on the relationship between biodiversity and women in traditional societies worldwide, this book provides a well-marked path for the better understanding of biodiversity, its values and its importance for humans while at the same time highlighting community and ecosystem inter-relations'** - Dr Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biodiversity

**'*Women and Plants* offers a uniquely gender-sensitive perspective on the management of biodiversity. These case studies empirically substantiate a broad range of cultures and ecologies, and offer keen insights for policy development and application'** - Professor Nina L. Etkin, Associate Editor, Pharmaceutical Biology

**'At long last, the predominant role of women in the management of plant genetic resources has begun to be scientifically documented in this highly important book. While men were occupied by hunting and defending their territories, women were most likely domesticating many of the world's crops. Recognition that they hold much of the related knowledge and skills today is clearly overdue. But recognition is not enough - Farmer's Rights as per Article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture must be assured now and for the future, if we are to give farmers - both women and men - incentives to continue to be the developers and custodians of the world's genetic resources. All those with responsibilities for promoting the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources should certainly read this book'** - Professor Jose Esquinas Alcazar, Secretary of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Food and Agriculture Organization, and Father of 'Farmers' Rights'

**'Wonderfully rich in evidence, persuasive in its argument, and wide-ranging in coverage, this timely edited volume on the gendered nature of knowledge about biodiversity enriches both scholarship and policy. It points to the need not only to recognize the specificity of women's knowledge about plant species, but to strengthen their conservation efforts and bring their interests to bear in arrangements for biodiversity development and benefit sharing'** - Dr Bina Agarwal, Professor of Economics, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University

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