

Under-exploited Crops

In the mountains, there are several under-exploited crops which are gathered/collected by the farmers for local consumption and marketing. If these crops are developed for commercial cultivation, they will help to improve the economy by improving the farmers' income.

Mushrooms grow in a wild state in the forests of Swat, Dir, and Kohistan (NWFP), and also in Muzafarabad (Azad Kashmir). There are about 10 species distributed throughout these areas. Most of them are edible while a few are poisonous. In the past, the local people used to collect the edible types mainly for local consumption. However, the attractive price offered by the market encouraged people to sell the mushrooms. The local shopkeepers buy the mushrooms and ship them to the cities. In Swat and Azad Kashmir, the rate for dried mushrooms varies from Rs 5,00 to 1,000 per kg.

The hazelnut (*Corylus jacquemontii*) grows in abundance on the high, north facing mountain slopes of Swat. In Kalam it is called "Mizeer". A considerable quantity of nuts are collected by the farmers and sold to the local shopkeepers. According to a local shopkeeper from Matalan Village in Kalam Valley, he buys 500 to 1000 kgs of the nuts during a season. The intensive cutting of hazelnut trees for fodder purposes is practised in this area. Special measures are recommended to protect the hazelnut species.

The *chilgoza* (*Pinus geradiana*) grows in Baluchistan, the NWFP, and the Northern Areas. The cones are collected by the people and the seeds are extracted and sold. The needed protection and proper management of the *chilgoza* pine forest is neglected.

In addition to the above, the other non-crop resources in the mountains include *Rubus*, *Ribes*, *Indigofera*, and *Ephedra*.