
ITEMS FROM LATVIA**GENETIC RESOURCE CENTRE****Latvian State Forest Research Institute 'Silava', Rigas 111, Salaspils LV-2169, Latvia.*****Long-term storage of plant genetic resources in the Latvian genebank.***

A. Gailite, A. Gaile, and D. Rungis.

The Latvian genebank of cultivated plants preserves seed of 72 agriculturally important species and their hybrids. Most accessions are of Latvian origin, and information about stored accessions is available in the SESTO and EURISCO databases. The genebank stores material of Latvian origin collected and bred in Latvia, as well as Latvian accessions repatriated from other gene banks. Most regeneration activities have been concentrated on the repatriated accessions.

The first accessions were put in long-term storage conditions in freezers at $-18\pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ in 1999. Germination tests of accessions representing 20 species (cereals, forage grasses, peas, and flax) were made after ten years of storage and only small changes were observed. Germination tests were repeated on the same accessions after 15 years of storage. A slight decrease in germination was observed in cereals, peas, and most of the grass species accessions (2–10%) depending on species and variety. A significant decline in germination was found only for three grass accessions (more than 15%). Close monitoring of grass accessions is required and, in case of a further decline in germination, regeneration will be necessary.

ITEMS FROM LITHUANIA**PLANT GENE BANK****Stoties str. 2, Akademija, Kedainiai distr., Dotnuva, Lithuania.*****Long-term seed conservation of plant genetic resources in Lithuania.***

A. Baliuckiene, A. Blazyte, R. Baltrenas, A. Biviliene, S. Dapkuniene, B. Gelvonauskis, B. Markeviciene, and L. Sveistyte.

The collection and studies of the genetic diversity of agricultural crops in Lithuania were initiated by Professor D. Rudzinkas in 1922 after the Plant Breeding Station was established in Dotnuva.

In 1994, the Baltic-Nordic project for plant genetic resources was initiated by the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (formerly the Nordic Gene Bank). The main objective of the project was to develop a national plant genetic resources conservation network in Lithuania. In 1997, long-term seed storage was established at the National Plant Genetic Resources Coordinating Centre. The Nordic Gene Bank provided all necessary facilities.

The law on National Plant Genetic Resources was enacted in 2001 by the Parliament of Lithuania and the Plant Gene Bank was established in 2004. Currently, eight institutions in Lithuania are involved in the activity of collecting, investigating, and conserving plant genetic resources. The main activity of the Plant Gene Bank is long-term preservation of plant genetics resources. Seeds of old landraces and cultivars of agricultural crops, advanced cultivars, and valuable breeding material, and distinguished populations of wild relatives of cultivated plants and forest trees, ornamental, and medicinal plants are stored in the airtight aluminium foil bags at -18°C in the long-term seed storage.

To date, 3,014 accessions of 179 plant species are stored for the long-term conservation. Agricultural crops represent the largest number of accessions (2,176). Long-term seed storage is supplemented annually with new accessions.