

Collection and ethno botanical investigation of lentil (*Lens culinaris* Medik) cultivated in Algeria**Djouher Gaad**

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Lentil (*Lens culinaris* M.) is one among the historic crop cultivated since time immemorial time. In Algeria, the cultivated lentil was introduced in 1920, during the colonial period. Significant variability has been built up since their introduction and acclimatization. However, genetic erosion linked to the loss of local crop varieties being replaced by high yielding improved cultivars is becoming a notable concern. Therefore, accessions collected and information gathered regarding the farmers traditional knowledge are the first steps to undertake before starting plant breeding work. Surveys and collection of lentil accessions were conducted in different agro-ecological zones of Algeria in 2011. From ten regions (Departments), fifteen villages were surveyed and 30 lentil accessions were collected. The information on ethno botanical uses was collected through semi-structured questionnaires with local villagers, elders and those people having knowledge

associated with the production and utilization of lentil. The study revealed that among the interviewed farmers, 64% were males while 36% were females. The commonest cropping system found was the cultivation of lentil alone (95.5% of producers) and associated with grass pea (2.5%). Low yield (40% of responses), disease and insect attack (36%), and low rainfall (24%) were the main production constraints reported by the interviewees. The objectives of this study were (1) Draw the geographical distribution map of lentil accessions in Algeria using DIVA-GIS software, to (2) gather information regarding knowledge related to the use, traditional cultural practices of lentil, (3) collect samples to establish a national germoplasm collection of lentil for *ex situ* conservation and further research and development studies.

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