Collection of *Prunus mira* (wild peach) in the Himalayan region of India

M.I. Espiau, R. Socias i Company, J.M. Alonso and M.I. Rubio-Cabertas

Unidad de Fruticultura, Centro de Investigación y Tecnología Agroalimentaria de Aragón (CITA), Av. Montaña- na 930, 50059 Zaragoza, Spain

*Prunus mira* is a wild relative of peach, growing extensively in cold/dry regions of north western Himalaya in India and southern Tibet, at elevations of 2000-4000 m over the sea level.

A tree at about 1000 years old was recently found in the Tibet region and at present it is widely used in China as a rootstock for peach growing. The hypothesis that *P. mira* could be a natural hybrid between peach and almond because it is crossable with both species has not been confirmed.

This self-fertile species it is considered to be cold and dry tolerant, as well as resistant to powdery mildew and to root knot nematodes. The interest of this species it is to introduce these traits in peach, almond and rootstock breeding programs.

In September 2012, within the framework of a national project aimed at enlarging the peach variability in Spanish collections, a team from CITA went to Baspa Valley, in Kinnaur Region, in the state of Himachal Pradesh in India to prospect this species.

As a result, 130 seeds from 13 different accessions of *P. mira* were collected, representing the wild variability of this species in this valley. Fruits, leaves and seeds were collected to make pictures and stones were removed from the fruits. Passport data, including GPS location, were recorded following the descriptors recommended by Biodiversity International. Some ethnobotanical data could also be recorded thanks to collaboration of local people from the small villages of the valley.

The seeds will be germinated and the material will be used for genetic studies and pomological and molecular characterization.

This work has been financed by INIA, RF2009-0002-C04 project and A12 group from Gobierno de Aragón.

**Keywords:** *Prunus mira*, wild peach