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1.11 Contribution of the Spanish Vegetable Genebank BGHZ-CITA to crop diversification

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The Spanish genebank BGHZ was founded in 1981 and holds a collection of 17,425 accessions belonging to more than 300 vegetable species, mainly of Spanish landraces/farmers' varieties, but also crop wild relatives and neglected and underutilized species. Information about stored accessions is available in the Spanish National Inventory and EURISCO databases (FAO code: ESP027). The BGHZ is an active bank that contributes to crop diversification by attending genetic resources requests from researchers, plant breeders and farmers, as well as by carrying out specific projects for studying and promoting the use of interesting landraces. The requests are increasing year by year and include a great number of important vegetable species such as tomato, lettuce, bean, onion, carrot, pepper, or melon, but also minor crops as borage, orache, chard, black salsify, smooth loofah, celery, wild asparagus, or curly dock. Most of these accessions are used by breeders and researchers for searching of valuable traits related to quality aspects or disease and pest resistance. Besides their use in the breeding of new varieties, nowadays there is a great interest in recovering the landraces and many farmers are involved in growing these varieties. The BGHZ working group has participated actively in the valorization of local varieties, such as: Alcaparra de Ballobar (*Capparis spinosa* L.), Judía Caparrona de Monzón (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.), Zanahoria Morada del Maestrazgo (*Daucus carota* L.), Borraja Movera (*Borago officinalis* L.), Melón de Torres (*Cucumis melo* L.), etc. The characterization and selection studies have been carried out in participatory approaches involving farmers, public research institutes, the seed industry and other entities (seed networks, local action groups, cooperatives, NGOs, etc.), and remarkable results have been obtained. Recently, as a consequence of these works, the pink tomato 'Tomate Rosa de Barbastro' has been registered as a conservation variety and our research center, in coordination with a local agricultural cooperative, is currently producing seeds for the local farmers. Other studies related to the sweet onion 'Cebolla Dulce de Fuentes' have contributed to the concession of a Protected Denomination Origin and nowadays growers use selected seeds obtained in the frame of a breeding program for obtaining low pungency onions.