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Genetic Diversity and Conservation of Woody Species

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Trees and other woody plants, such as shrubs and lianas, form the principal components in forests and many other ecosystems on our planet. Being among the largest and longest-living organisms, they support an immense share of the Earth's terrestrial biodiversity, providing food and habitats for innumerable microorganisms, epiphytes, invertebrate, and vertebrate species. Woody species are perfect study objects, giving us a link between the past, present, and future.

However, the future of many trees and shrubs is uncertain. Ten of thousands of species are threatened by overharvesting, non-native pests and diseases, changes in accelerated land use, and climate warming. Many aspects of their biology, ecology, and biogeography are still unexplored or insufficiently understood. These knowledge shortfalls, concerning their genetic diversity, for example, significantly hinder the development of protection strategies and the elaboration of efficient action plans.

This book, dedicated to this very diverse group of plants, aims to encourage ongoing research and conservation efforts worldwide. In nine chapters, the most up to date research and case studies bring the reader to the most fascinating regions of our planet: from Madagascar and Mexico, via China and Japan, to the Hyrcanian Forest of Iran.

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