

Title The importance of regional pear cultivars for the Portuguese consumers
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Abstract

In order to collect, concentrate, preserve and improve the available genetic resources, several collections of Portuguese pear cultivars, a great many of which are absent from commercialization circuits, have been set up in Portugal from public resources. The collections of local pear cultivars can accomplish several objectives: i) preserve the genetic heritage, which is in danger of being lost; ii) satisfy the increasing need of diversification on the demand of certain consumption market segments; iii) contribute to decreases in the use of pesticides, by conventional production, integrated pest management or organic production. However, in order to introduce these cultivars into the market it is necessary to research the extent to which consumers are acquainted with these products and their relevance for their fruit consumption. Within the scope of the Experimental Development and Demonstration Project AGRO 740 – Valuation of pip trees regional cultivars through organic production methods – we applied a questionnaire aiming at the survey of what kind of knowledge and acceptance consumers showed for some regional pear cultivars. The inquiries took place in four regions which cover increased consumption and productive regions. From the results it is possible to conclude, among other outcomes, that a huge number of consumers are unfamiliar with regional cultivars. An exception was found for the regional cultivar “Rocha”, for which great diffusion action is underway and a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) has already been created, which was familiar to the majority of those surveyed.