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Diversity of medicinal wild fruits in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh in Northeast India

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ABSTRACT

A study of wild edible fruits and the threats to them was conducted in Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh, India. The objective was to identify and document wild edible fruit plants, the associated ethnobotanical knowledge of the local people and the threats that exist to these plants. Ethnobotanical data on wild edible fruits were collected using a guided methodology, questionnaire and field observations. The information was verified by cross-checking it among the informants. Descriptive statistics and pairwise ranking of threat factors were employed to gather the ethnobotanical data. We documented 33 lesser-known edible wild fruit species, distributed in 23 genera and 14 families. The common families that encompass more wild edible fruit species were Rosaceae (ten species), followed by Actinidiaceae (four species), Fagaceae (three species), Anacardiaceae and Moraceae which contributed two species each. Within the dominant families, the species richness shows a significant positive correlation ($r(5) = 0.94$, $p < 0.01$) with the number of genera. The study reveals wild fruits as palliatives for certain ailments and as a food supplement. Some of these fruits are under the "IUCN Red List of Threatened Species", as "Endangered" and "Least Concern" categories, which the informants claimed, is due to the increased anthropogenic pressure.

Key words: Household Consumption, Medicinal Importance, Relative Frequency of Citation, Use Value, Wild Fruits