COLLECTION POLICY FOR TREE PROPAGATION

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Background

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is a not-for-profit, research-for-development institution that generates agricultural innovations to meet Africa's most pressing challenges. Founded in 1967 and based in the Sub-Saharan Africa, IITA, Africa's leading institute for agricultural research and development, works with partners to improve livelihoods, enhance food and nutrition security, increase employment, and preserve natural resource integrity across Africa. IITA is a member of CGIAR, a global agriculture research partnership for a food-secure future and a recipient of the 2018 African Food Prize. As well as doing agricultural research, IITA provides opportunities for managing and utilizing forest resources for conservation, research, livelihood, and education, which are coordinated by its Forest Center.

The IITA Forest Center adopts participatory approaches to promote biodiversity conservation through monitoring, habitat restoration and agroforestry practices. The experiences gained in propagating native tree species have led to the development of one of the best botanical nurseries in West Africa, ethnobotanical garden, manual of tree propagation and Tree Heritage Park (THP) detailed on the website. While the Forest Center conducts reforestation in-situ in various forest patches in Nigeria, the THP, covering about 10 ha within the IITA-Ibadan campus, holds important ex-situ collections of endemic, rare and threatened native trees.

Purpose

The goal of this policy is to provide guidelines for the collection of propagation materials and ex-situ conservation of native tree species.

Applicability

This policy shall apply to all activities relating to ex-situ conservation of native tree species (particularly in the THP), research and ecotourism coordinated by the IITA Forest Center.

Primary collections
1. Native tree species classified as threatened on the IUCN Red List.
2. Endemic (site or regionally) native tree species.

General collections
1. Native non-woody plant species classified as threatened on the IUCN Red List.
2. Woody and non-woody tree species suspected to be seriously declining locally/regionally but not classified by the IUCN.
3. Endemic non-woody plant species.
4. Culturally important and biodiversity-rich native plant species used for ceremonial planting.
5. Native ornamental plants (e.g. herbs, shrubs, climbers and orchids).

Criteria for accession
1. Assessment of at least threatened and endemic native woody and non-woody plant species.
2. Collections of propagation materials in different provenances to enhance genetic diversity.
3. Collection of only 5% of seeds from each mother tree to reduce impacts on natural regeneration.
4. Trials of collected propagation materials to determine the best techniques for propagation.

Records
1. Data on taxonomy, collection/accession site, accession date and name of collectors in accessible and verifiable format.
2. Propagation protocol detailing collection and propagation procedures for each primary and important general collection.
3. Flowering and fruiting phenology prioritized for record and research purposes.
4. Assessment of associated biodiversity for record and research purposes.
5. Management and silvicultural practices, capacity building, fund-raising and research activities.
6. Seed storage facilities and records, ex-situ conservation in other patches using genetic resources from the THP and future reintroduction programs in sites of origin (e.g. collection sites).
7. Photographic evidence curated in accessible formats and available for research and promotional purposes.
8. Ecotourism potentials and visiting rate.

Collection Management
1. Assessment of funding opportunities through grant application and other fundraising initiatives. This will be useful for managing the THP and its staff, interns and volunteers.
2. Granting approval for requested research activities. Findings/reports from such research activities must be submitted to the Forest Center for record keeping and knowledge advancement.
3. Collection of propagation materials, plants or animals in the THP without written approval from the Head of the Forest Center is prohibited.
4. Removal of dangerously leaning/falling and/or diseased trees in the THP should be conducted under the supervision of the Forest Center.
5. Carrying out of other silvicultural operations and maintenance (e.g. forest trails and labels) appropriately.

6. Fund-raising and other environmental education initiatives (e.g. ceremonial tree planting, nature tours and camping) aimed at promoting the THP are allowed under the supervision of the Forest Center.

Access
1. Data generated from the above activities will be stored in relevant IITA repositories.
2. Posting of relevant newsletters on the Forest Center website and social media platforms.
3. Publication of research findings in suitable peer-reviewed journals.
4. Posting of downloadable propagation protocols (i.e. Manual of Propagation for Nigerian Trees) on the Forest Center website.
5. Sharing of requested data with conservation partners, networks and donors after approval by the Head of the Forest Center.
6. Granting of access to propagules following written request from interested public gardens, researchers, and collectors. The approval of such request will be by the Head of the Forest Center based on its relevance and current capacity of the Forest Center (e.g. supervision and budget).
7. Availability of checklist of tree species conserved in the THP here.