

Developing Tools for Conserving the Plant Diversity of the Transcaucasus

Initiative: Zwischen Europa und Orient - Mittelasien/Kaukasus im Fokus der Wissenschaft

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The Caucasus region is among the 25 global "biodiversity hotspots", with a particularly diverse flora and vegetation with 25 % of endemic species. This diversity is severely threatened by rapid transformation processes following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Three important habitat types have been selected as models (Arcto-Tertiary forests, xerophytic woodlands, high mountain ecosystems) to be studied. Three of the five subprojects centre on a PhD study, each led by a particular country (Georgia: Developing tools for monitoring the quality of mesophytic broad-leaved forests of the Caucasus; Azerbaijan: Conservation genetics of selected trees of Arcto-Tertiary forests in the Transcaucasus; Armenia: Species characterisation and evolution of the fruit-tree genus *Pyrus* as a characteristic element of xerophytic woodlands). Satellite projects, carried out by staff of the collaborating institutions or by MSc students, deal with specialised topics. For the sustainable management of the natural resources of the selected habitat types, effective and easy-to-apply tools for assessing and monitoring the plant diversity at the molecular, species and ecosystem levels will be developed.

Projektbeteiligte

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