

Editorial

SILAE special issue on “Natural Sources of Food and Drugs”

Luca Rastrelli

**Guest Editor, Dipartimento Scienze Farmaceutiche e Biomediche,
University of Salerno, Italy**

The Italo-Latin American Society of Ethnomedicine (SILAE, www.silae.it) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to advancing science around the world by serving as an educator, leader, spokesperson and professional association. The fundamental objective of SILAE is to promote research and development into the use of medicinal and food plants in different countries of the World. SILAE welcomes and actively seeks opportunities to work cooperatively, activating and intensifying scientific relations between countries and between SILAE members. Since SILAE was founded (1990) its objective has been set to contribute to the close examination of the themes of great interest and actuality in the context of the relationships between Latin America and the European Union. In addition to this, SILAE aimed to individualize new ways of collaboration between its member countries and other European as well as Asiatic countries to sign accords with intergovernmental organizations. SILAE proposes to establish contacts with Scientific Communities, Universities, and Research Centres for the pursuit of medicinal and food plants knowledge and to encourage the exchange and mobility of professors, researchers, and PhD students. Moreover SILAE_live, the one-to-one live Chat and Messenger on our website (www.silae.it), is the first scientific chat on the web and is a developed tool to engage the interest and imagination of the public and for helping non-scientists to understand and enjoy scientific discoveries and the scientific processes. In addition to organizing membership activities, SILAE publishes the SILAE Special Issues, as well as many scientific newsletters, books and reports, and spearheads programs that raise the bar of understanding for science worldwide.

The Emirates Journal of Food and Agriculture is publishing a special issue, that is, a Hot Topic entitled “Natural Sources of Food and Drugs”. Ten papers are included in this HT focusing in various aspects related to food and medicinal plants. The special issue provided an opportunity for publication of original peer-reviewed full-length research on new plants, trees and fruits that can be used as a source of food in Latin America. Several are collaborative works between two or more countries.

In Latin America, alimentary and medicinal plants are an essential part of traditional health care systems; this has recently attracted the attention of many scientists and encouraged them to screen plants to study the biological activities of their compounds from chemical and pharmacological investigations to therapeutic aspects and to improve technological processes related to vegetal matrices.

The Guest Editor would like to thank the contributors who gave so generously their time and experience and who made this publication a valuable tool for scientists in the field of essential oil and aromatic plants chemistry, analysis and biology. Thanks are also due to the referees for their valuable comments and for the very detailed and accurate review of manuscripts; their comments certainly helped to improve the papers.

The Guest Editor is also very grateful to the Editorial Board of EJFA for embracing this project with interest and enthusiasm, and for the opportunity to publish this Special Issue. We hope that this will be part of a long series in this attractive and interesting Journal.