

ABSTRACT

Over the course of history the plant species and mushrooms gathered as food in the Albacete province and bordering areas have been numerous. Many of them have also been used as medicine both within the study area and other nearby areas. Researchers from Germany, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Poland and the United Kingdom, coordinated by the Professor Heinrich of the Center for Pharmacognosy and Phytotherapy of the School of Pharmacy, University of London, are working with selected rural communities from the south of Europe and specifically in Spain, from the Mountains of Albacete and Cuenca to gather and analyze nutritious plants and mushrooms used traditionally, in order to determine their potential beneficial effects for health. In this paper, information regarding 145 species, included 50 selected for the project previously mentioned, have been recorded. The results are here presented in form of tables where the medicinal and nutritional uses are shown, demonstrating that more than half of the species consumed in these areas have been used in popular medicine. Coincidences between the consumption of certain parts and the medicinal use of these parts have been analyzed. The aerial parts and the fruits are most used in both cases.

Keywords: Ethnobotany, Gathered plants, Local food, Medicinal plants, Nutraceuticals, Phytotherapy, Wild plants.

0. INTRODUCCIÓN

Las plantas silvestres han sido y son un complemento alimenticio de temporada, aunque en determinadas épocas de escasez se emplearon como alimento de emergencia, permitiendo la subsistencia de determinados sectores sociales (Rivera y cols., 2004). Los alimentos silvestres están disponibles todo el año, aunque se produce una mayor abundancia en otoño, final del invierno y comienzo de la primavera, continuando en mayor o menor medida hasta bien entrado el verano. Tradicionalmente constituyeron un recurso de emergencia para la época en que se agotaba la cosecha almacenada. El tipo de alimento recolectado varía según la época del año, así en el caso de las verduras, la mayor abundancia y diversidad se da en primavera y ocasionalmente en otoños suaves y húmedos. Por el contrario, los frutos se recolectan fundamentalmente en verano y otoño.

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