

Centre for Economic Botany, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE, U.K.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF PNE'S BRAZILIAN COORDINATOR

After two and a half months of travelling in Northeast Brazil with Karen Pipe-Wolferstan (the UK Coordinator) to familiarize myself with PNE, I have finally settled down in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. First, I would like to thank and congratulate everyone involved in PNE for their warm welcome and excellent work. Your friendship and frankness have given me the confidence to look forward to successful collaboration in the future.

Our fellowships (bolsas) from CNPq are a tremendous benefit to the Programme. I am grateful for the time, help and advice of the Superintendência de Cooperação Internacional, Dr. Tundisi (President of CNPq), other CNPq staff, and Fabiano de Carvalho in Sobral, Ceará. I would also like to thank Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance (Director of Kew) and all at Kew for their support.

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PNE'S FIRST GENERAL WORKSHOP

PNE's first General Workshop will take place on the 17th and 18th April 1996, in Recife, Pernambuco. During this Workshop we will show the products of Phase 1 projects, identify our successes, discuss our methodologies and present new projects.

This self-evaluation will provide fundamental feedback for the restructuring of PNE's future strategy and policy, ensuring that PNE's activities bring real socio-economic benefits to local people. The Workshop will bring together all those supporting PNE, working in or collaborating with PNE. It is an opportunity for you to make suggestions and exchange ideas.

NATIVE FORAGE PLANTS OF PARNAÍBA RIVER BASIN

This PNE project started in August 1994 and is carrying out a survey to identify, and determine the nutritional value of, forage plants in the Parnaíba River Basin.

The Basin extends over three states, Piauí (77.9%), Maranhão (17.6%) and Ceará (4.5%), occupying an area of approximately 320,000 km². Its vegetation is particularly rich since it is a region of transition

The more abundant and important species for animal feed are being chemically analysed for crude fibre, protein, calcium, phosphorus and other minerals. The grasses are generally poor in nutrients whilst the legumes are generally valued as richer forage: e.g. *Bauhinia sp.*, *Aeschynomene scabra*, *Desmanthus virgatus*, *Desmodium sp.*, *Macroptilium lathyroides*, *Mimosa caesalpinifolia* and *Senna obtusifolia*.

Dr Maria P. Socorro C.B. do Nascimento

between the humid Amazonia, the semi-arid *caatinga* and *cerrados*.

Traditionally, the principle economic activity in this area is ranching of cattle, goats, sheep, horses, mules and donkeys.

700 numbered plant collections have been made, representing some 110 genera from 47 families, according to identifications made to date. The grasses and legumes are the main forage plant groups. Other important families include Amaranthaceae, Malvaceae and Rubiaceae.

and Steve Renvoize in Kew Herbarium

As a result of this study an illustrated manual will be published containing data on the occurrence, use and nutritional value of the more promising forage plants. The project is also providing, with grants from CNPq, training opportunities for students to expand their knowledge and expertise.

It is hoped that a better understanding of forage plants will in turn contribute to more sustainable use of native plants, and in the future encourage the increased cultivation of more promising species.

COLLECTION AND INVENTORY OF NATIVE FORAGE SPECIES IN PETROLINA, AFRÂNIO, OURICURI (PE) AND JUAZEIRO (BA).

This PNE project started in March 1994 and is based in CPATSA/EMBRAPA (Centro de Pesquisa Agropecuária do Trópico Semi-Árido) - Petrolina, Pernambuco. Phase I consisted of a bibliographic survey and interviews with local farmers about some of the native species considered to have forage potential in four selected municipalities.

Phyto-ecological studies have been undertaken following analyses of maps and satellite images of the area. From ten transects per municipality 85 species have been recorded (from 18 families) the majority of which are found in all four municipalities.

Botanical material collected for identification is stored in the CPATSA Herbarium. Duplicate specimens have been sent to Kew and IPA (Empresa Pernambucana de Pesquisa Agropecuária - Recife/PE).

In each study area plant material was also collected for analysis and soil samples analysed for fertility.



Luciano Lima in the seed section of

In each transect the diameter and height of individuals were recorded and these data analysed for each municipality to provide information on population density, frequency and other phytosociological parameters.

The results obtained will be disseminated through technical-scientific symposia, non-government organisations,



the CPATSA/EMBRAPA Herbarium

local TV and radio programmes.

An illustrated handbook covering fifteen species with high forage potential will be published to help agriculturalists and small farmers. It will include information about the time of flowering, fruiting, key species characteristics, methods of multiplication and nutritional value.

NEWS

✠ **SYMPOSIUM ON DRYLANDS, 5 JULY 1996, RBG, KEW - Part of the joint meeting of the Society for Economic Botany and the International Society for Ethnopharmacology: PLANTS FOR FOOD AND MEDICINE, LONDON, 1-6 JULY 1996.**

This Symposium will focus on the role of botany in drylands development, and explore practical ways of integrating botanical expertise on useful plant resources with that of other disciplines.

It is aimed at a wide audience - NGOs, governments, environmental consultancies and academia as well as scientists - especially those who want to establish links with other fields.

The Drylands Symposium will have ten lectures including two by Kew on its Survey of Economic Plants of Arid and Semi Arid Lands (SEPASAL) database and on the role of its Seed Bank in the dry tropics in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The registration fee for the five day conference is £110. For full conference details please contact: The Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0LQ, UK Tel:+44 (0) 171 434 4479 Fax:+44 (0) 171 287 9364. or Hew Prendergast, CEB, Kew, E-mail: h.prendergast@rbgkew.org.uk

NEWS

✠ **DAY OF THE MEDICINAL PLANT**

Medicinal Plant Celebration date

The mayor of Fortaleza city Sr. Antônio E. Cambraia approved celebration of a Medicinal Plant Day on 21 May (Prof. Matos' birthday) as a tribute to the benefits derived by the local public health programme from Matos' Living Pharmacies project

The Governor of Ceará State is implementing a programme to use phytotherapy in many municipalities following Prof. Matos' work on scientifically proven regional medicinal plants. The Brazilian Health Minister, Dr Adib Jatene, has also authorized FIOCRUZ to plan and implement the use of phytotherapy throughout the North and Northeast of Brazil along similar lines to those established by Matos.

✠ **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Plantas do Nordeste team would like to thank the VARIG Brazilian airline, for allowing when necessary, excess baggage to transport research materials.

VISITOR

✠ Michael Way (Seed Bank, Kew at Wakehurst Place) visited Brazil in October 1995 in a collaborative programme with CENARGEN. Seeds from tree species in the semi-arid regions of North-east Brazil were collected.

Whilst in Brazil, Way met up with botanists working on Plantas do Nordeste and discussed the Seed Bank's collaborative projects with CNPq, (Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technical Development).

WHAT IS PNE?

PNE is a multidisciplinary research programme contributing to the identification and sustainable use of plant resources in Northeast Brazil. PNE combines conservation and improvement of ecosystems with positive socio-economic benefit to the local community.

PNE raises funds independently to support its activities.

Please direct any comments or contributions on this publication to Amélia B. Baracat, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Tel: +44 (0)181 332 5718 Fax:+44 (0)181 332 5740 E-mail: a.baracat@rbgkew.org.uk