Diversity of uses of tree species in agroforests of Guinée Forestière (Guinea, West Africa)

Guinée Forestière is located in the South West of the Republic of Guinea. This is a forest geobotanical area with a rural population. In this region, traditional agricultural systems preserve some diversity of forest species through agroforests. The area devoted to coffee-based agroforests is increasing over the last 25 years. Floristic composition, uses of forest species and farmers practices in these systems remain poorly understood.

From botanical records conducted in 7 villages in the West of Guinée Forestière, chosen to represent the diversity of situation in the region, and surveys of the population of these villages on the uses of forest species, we suggest a first characterization of diverse uses of agroforest tree species of Guinée Forestière.

232 species have been inventoried, including 189 tree species and 43 shrub species. All these species have one or more uses. Among them, 75 tree and shrub species provide marketable products. The main uses listed where for food (45 species), medicinal (64 species), timber (47 species), firewood (86 species), fencing (19 species), handcraft (22 species), and significant social use (3 species e.g. Cola nitida).

Farmers in Guinée Forestière manage complex systems characterized by a great diversity of trees, filling a wide range of uses. Better knowledge of these cropping systems, their performances and their constraints is necessary to support local development in the region.