

The Third Taro Symposium

Nadi, Fiji

21-23 May 2003



Call for Papers

Purpose

This Third Taro Symposium will review progress in taro research, analyze needs and priorities, develop a strategy for future work in taro research and development, explore new ways to use genetic diversity and improve taro quality and production, and stimulate international collaboration, information exchange and networking

Background

Taro is one of the most ancient of crops, and still a key component of sustainable livelihoods in the relatively fertile and high-rainfall environments of the Pacific and SE Asia, West Africa and the Caribbean, where it has special cultural, dietary and economic importance. It ranks 14th worldwide among staple crops, with 9 million tonnes produced globally from some 2 million hectares. In the Pacific, where it is of greatest significance, it is considered an essential component of every meal in many countries. The corms are baked, roasted or boiled, and have great importance as a gift on formal occasions, but the leaves also represent a significant source of vitamins, especially folic acid. In addition to being an important traditional food crop, taro is a significant export commodity in a number of countries, such as Fiji and Cook Islands. That this list would have been longer before 1993 is testament that the crop also faces important problems, not least the Taro Leaf Blight, which devastated production in Samoa and threatens other Pacific island countries. However, the recent rebound in Samoan taro cultivation is also evidence that these problems can be overcome, in particular through the management, deployment and use of genetic diversity. Unfortunately, this diversity is fast disappearing from many parts of the world, for example due to dietary changes and urban migration, as well as pests and diseases. These recent trends make it important to review the challenges faced by taro farmers worldwide, and the successes of research over the past half a decade, since the Second Taro Symposium.

Organizers

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), CIRAD, Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)





Who Should Participate?

The symposium will emphasize international collaboration, information exchange and networking with a view to developing a strategy for future work in taro research and development, anyone with an interest in taro is encouraged to participate. There may be funds available for a limited number of participants from developing countries.

Researchers
Academics
Farmers
Extension Agents

NGO/CBO Staff
Social Scientists
Development Practitioners
Private Sector Personnel

Themes

Taro Diversity, Ethnobotany and Conservation

Germplasm collecting, characterization and evaluation, measuring genetic diversity and erosion, in situ and ex situ conservation, safe exchange, traditional knowledge and ethno botanical studies.

Pests and Diseases

Studies of important pathogens and pests affecting production, characterization of viruses and other pathogens, biology and epidemiology of major diseases, studies on taro beetles and other taro pests, methods for control and management of pests and diseases, integrated pest management, novel approaches to manage pests and diseases

Production Constraints

Crop husbandry constraints, harvesting and handling, weed control, soil and water management, mechanical cultivation and harvesting

Breeding and Distribution of Improved Materials

Conventional breeding programmes, Participatory plant breeding programmes, improved varieties, use of novel technologies to improve taro, multiplication of planting material and distribution

New Products and Product Development

Review of taro products and processing, nutritional aspects both pre- and post-processing, enhancing traditional products using appropriate technology, snack foods, industrial uses, taro flours, starches, industrial additives, baby foods, novel products, new technologies, vacuum packed products, frozen products

Quality Standards and Marketing

Production methods, cleaning and grading, quality assessment, packaging, export and quality standards, new and niche markets, transport, shipping and quarantine




Poster Session

A display area will be available for posters. Please inform the organizers if you would like to have a poster presentation.

Submission of Papers and Instructions for Authors

Authors are invited to submit the titles of proposed papers together with an abstract that should not exceed 250 words. Instructions for posters and oral presentations are available from [http:// www.spc.int/cis/tarosym](http://www.spc.int/cis/tarosym) or the Symposium Secretariat.

- Receipt of abstract: 31st January 2003
- Full papers due: 18th April 2003



All correspondence relating to the symposium, including notification of interest and submission of proposals for papers should be addressed to:

The Symposium Secretariat

Third Taro Symposium
Crop Improvement Service
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
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Organizing Committee

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