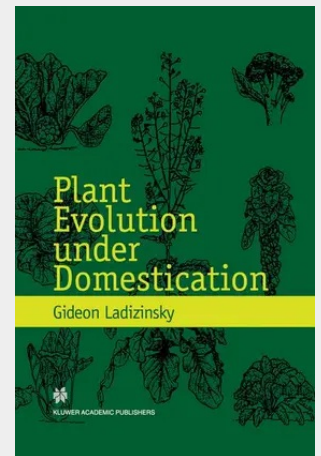


Plant Evolution under Domestication

This book emerged from a series of lectures on crop evolution at the Faculty of Agriculture of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. While many textbooks are available on general evolution, only a few deal with evolution under domestication. This book is a modest attempt to bridge this gap. It was written for advanced undergraduate and graduate students in the fields of crop evolution, ethnobotany, plant breeding and related subjects. Evolution under domestication is unique in the general field of plant evolution for three main reasons: (a) it is recent, having started not much more than 10 000 years ago with the emergence of agriculture; (b) the original plant material, i. e. the wild progenitors of many important crop plants, still grow in their natural habitats; (c) man played in this process. These factors enable a more reliable a major role assessment of the impact of different evolutionary forces such as hybridization, migration, selection and drift under new circumstances. Interestingly, a great part of evolution under domestication has been unconscious and a result of agricultural practices which have created a new selection criteria, mostly against characters favored by natural selection. Introducing crop plants to new territories exposed them to different ecological conditions enhancing selection for new characters. Diversity in characters associated with crop plants evolution is virtually absent in their wild progenitors and most of it has evolved under domestication.

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