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EDIBLE, AROMATIC AND MEDICINAL PLANTS OF THE ALPS: A RESOURCE TO VALUE

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The increased interest of the consumers towards natural products, has involved a growing request of aromatic and medicinal plants by processing industries. Such demand became so high to raise the preoccupation of the WHO concerning the conservation of natural resources of these plants, from which, even nowadays, the health of 80% of the human population (mainly that of developing countries) is depending.

In Trentino, numerous medicinal and aromatic species are naturally growing. The collecting of these species was widespread up to about 50 years ago, but since 30 years ago the Provincial Law for the protection of the wild flora (n. 17/73) allows their collection only to authorized professionals. According to recent studies, however, several wild plants species, some of whose medicinal and aromatic plants, are endangered in Trentino as well, mainly due to the disappearance of traditional farming.

The aim of this project is to exploit some species of the alpine environment which are especially promising because of their taste (*Cicerbita alpina* (L.) Wallr), and/or medicinal properties *Euphrasia rostkoviana* Hayne, *Hieracium pilosella* L., *Lytrum salicaria* L. e *Rhodiola rosea* L. (*Sedum roseum* Scop.). The above species, after they have been characterised both from the chemical and the molecular sides and having been domesticated, could be cultivated locally with sustainable methods and they could form the raw material which some local herbal/cosmetic workshops could utilise and transform into products of added value.