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Wild olives

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Jonathan B Weitzman

Email: jonathanweitzman@hotmail.com

Domestication and cultivation have resulted in the generation of wild-looking forms of Mediterranean fruit crops derived from cultivated plants (cultivars). In the October 18 *Nature*, Lumaret and Ouazzani describe a genetic hunt for genuinely wild olives in forests of the Mediterranean (*Nature* 2001, **413**:700). They collected samples from ten forests (40 trees per forest) in seven countries around the Mediterranean basin, scored them for allozyme markers, and compared them with the same loci from 802 domesticated olive clones. In the forest samples they found alleles associated with characteristics unsuitable for domestication. Lumaret and Ouazzani conclude that ancient wild olive stocks persist today within the western part of the Mediterranean basin.

References

1. *Nature*, [<http://www.nature.com>]
2. The Olive Research Group, [<http://www.waite.adelaide.edu.au/HVO/groups/olives/olives.htm>]