

Foreword

Three months before the Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Paul Egger of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) came to the International Potato Center to discuss the startup of what later became the Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion, called CONDESAN. Now, thanks to funding from SDC, CONDESAN partners work in a collaborative program on Andean root and tuber crops to conserve genetic diversity and invigorate the region's research capabilities to address issues related to these crops.

Historically, farmers in the Andes domesticated some 25 species of edible roots and tubers. These have helped sustain generations of Andean populations and some of them continue to be cultivated in the region. While they may be commonplace in the Andean highlands, they are truly exotic elsewhere. Like potato, these crops could have an important role worldwide.

This booklet, prepared by CONDESAN partners, is intended as a field identification guide for extension agents, researchers, and the general public. It describes nine exotic Andean root and tuber crops, and includes information on their use. Many Andean researchers, especially Carlos Arbizu, Miguel Holle, and Mario Tapia, have contributed to this publication, and their cooperation is greatly appreciated.

José Luis Rueda
Coordinator, CONDESAN