Evaluation of Genetic Erosion by Analysing the Fruit varieties listed in Nursery Catalogues from Last Century

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Introduction
The evaluation of the genetic erosion is based on the following thesis:

a) Survival of fruit varieties is strictly linked to their cultivation, that stimuli the varieties nursery propagation and their publication on the catalogues.
b) The un-cultivated varieties, gradually, disappear from the catalogues and can be lost if not kept in some collections.

Materials and Methods
122 nursery catalogues edited from 1897 to 2005 were analyzed. Almond, Apple, Apricot, Cherry, Peach, Pear, Plum, and Quince fruits varieties were grouped in three years periods (1897-1932=P1, 1933-1966=P2, and 1967-2005=P3), fixed taking into account the laws funded the Italian agriculture (R.D. n° 215 of 1933 and Piano Verde 1st and 2nd expired on 1966). These laws promoted the expansion of the fruit orchards with new varieties.

Results and Conclusions
Comparing the period P1 vs P3 the missed varieties in the catalogues resulted proportional to the economic importance of the species with a general average of 75%. By species, the survival rates resulted: Apricot and Pear varieties 12%; Apple, Peach, Plum and Cherry ranged from 20% and 22%; Quince an Almond 24% and 27%. Some of the missed varieties had rare and specific agronomic or pomologic characteristics (Table 1).

Are there in somewhere or missed forever?

Table 1: Some missed varieties (that colourised in the old catalogue paper)