

# 58TH ANNUAL MEETING

of the **SOCIETY**

**FOR ECONOMIC BOTANY**

**BRAGANÇA - PORTUGAL**

**JUNE 4-9, 2017**

Living in a global world:

local knowledge and sustainability

## **BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

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**SPRINGER NATURE**



## Traditional plant-based remedies used to treat wolf bite injuries in Portugal and Spain: phytotherapeutic sources and cultural values for the conservation of an emblematic animal species.

**Authors:** González, José Antonio González [1], Carvalho, Ana Maria [2], Vallejo, José Ramón [3], Amich, Francisco [4].

The Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus* Cabrera, 1907), an endemic subspecies, is an important element of the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal and Spain). Despite the decline of this large carnivore species over the last few decades, wolves are still in the imaginary of Iberian rural communities that perceive this canid as both a diabolic creature and a mythic and benign animal. At the present time, livestock attacks attributed to the wolf are more and more frequent in the Iberian Peninsula, resulting in serious social problems. Most problems are due to economic damage caused to domestic animals in isolated rural areas. According to several researchers, some interesting strategies for Iberian wolf conservation might be related to traditional livestock practices. Medical and veterinary popular remedies in the past, many of them largely forgotten and already abandoned, might contribute to wolf conservation strategies, as well as minimise the causes of livestock damage. Based on several documentary sources and literature review of ethnobotanical studies conducted in Portugal and Spain, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, a total of 37 remedies for healing wolf bites in humans and livestock were reported, highlighting the medicinal use of 30 species of vascular plants, belonging to 16 botanical families. Leaves were the predominant plant part mentioned. Boiling plant materials in water for topical uses was the most frequent method of preparation found. Some traditional remedies combined two or more plant species in order to potentiate their effects. This communication emphasises the great interest of local knowledge in terms of biodiversity conservation strategies and provides useful information about several potential sources of phytochemicals.

**Keywords:** Iberian wolf, Wolf bites, Herbal remedies, Ethnomedicine, Iberian Peninsula.

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