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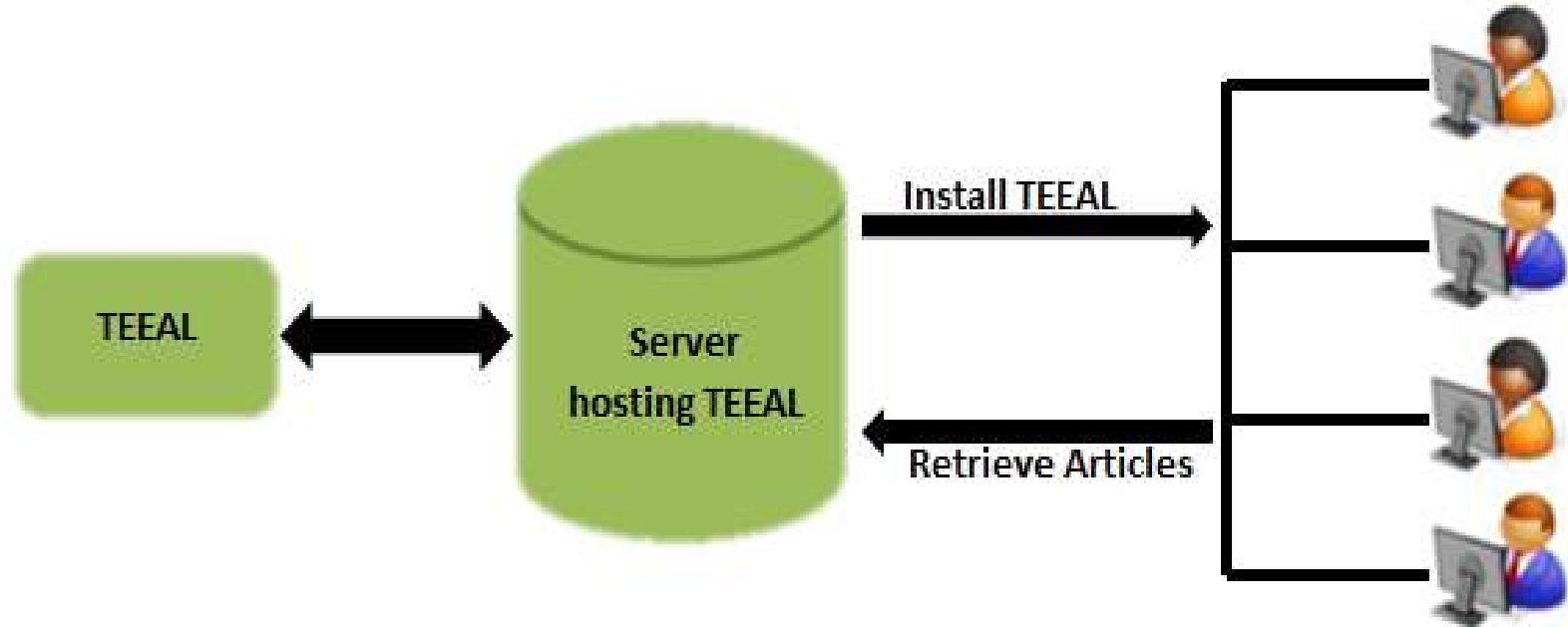
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The PROTA database has information on over 7000 varieties of plants in tropical Africa



Prota 1: Cereals and pulses/Céréales et légumes secs
Record display

Zea mays L.

Protologue
Sp. pl. 2: 971 (1753).

Family
Poaceae (Gramineae)

Chromosome number
2n = 20

Vernacular names
Maize, corn, Indian corn (En). Maïs (Fr). Milho (Po). Mhindi, mihindi (Sw).

Origin and geographic distribution
Maize was domesticated in southern Mexico around 4000 BC. Early civilizations of the Americas depended on maize cultivation. When the Europeans arrived in the Americas, maize had already spread from Chile to Canada. Maize was reported for the first time in West Africa in 1498, six years after Columbus discovered the West Indies. The Portuguese brought floury grain types from Central and South America to São Tomé, from where they spread to the West African coast. Portuguese and Arab traders introduced Caribbean flint maize types into East Africa in the mid 1500s, from where they spread to southern Africa. Through the trans-Saharan trade, the Arabs introduced the flinty types that had been brought to northern Africa into sub-Saharan Africa. The flinty types still predominate in northern parts of West Africa while the floury types prevail in the southern parts, with some variation from this pattern. Maize had become a staple food in East and southern Africa by the 1930s.

Maize has an extremely wide distribution. It is grown from latitude 58°N in Canada and Russia, throughout the tropics, to latitude 42°S in New Zealand and South America, and in areas below sea level in the Caspian Plain up to areas as high as 3800 m in Bolivia and Peru. It is grown in all countries of Africa, from the coast through savanna regions to the semi-arid regions of West Africa, and from sea-level to the mid- and high-altitudes of East and Central Africa.

Uses
Maize grain is used for three main purposes: as a staple food, as feed for livestock and poultry, and as a raw material for many industrial products. In tropical Africa nearly all maize grain is used for human food, prepared and consumed in many ways. It may be eaten fresh on the cob and simply roasted, but the grain is usually ground and the meal is boiled into porridge or fermented into beer. In tropical Africa maize is mainly consumed as thick porridge ('ugali' in East Africa, 'sadza' in Zimbabwe). It is commonly eaten with cooked vegetables and, when available, meat. A thin porridge ('uji' in East Africa,



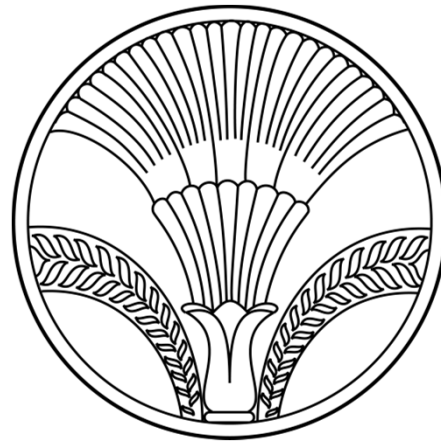
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The TEEAL project greatly appreciates past and ongoing support of global and regional organizations that help raise awareness of TEEAL and, in some cases, assist institutions that wish to acquire it.



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“Our scientists and researchers were very amazed. TEEAL is a very useful and user-friendly database ... and I strongly recommend it.”

– Luisa G. Pacino, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), Philippines





We invite you to contact us or visit our informational website to find out more about TEEAL.

TEEAL Project

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