

Indigenous pulses grower farmers from Samtskhe-Javakheti region, Georgia

Acronym: Geo 1

Name: Iamze Khutsishvili

Age: 50

Function / profession: Farmer

Address: Tsnisi village, Akhaltsikhe municipality, Samtskhe-Javakheti Region, Georgia



I have been cultivating old Georgian varieties of pulses since 2005, 0.15-0.20ha of my fields are sown with grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus* L.) – Georgian name “Tsulispira” and faba bean (*Vicia faba* L.) – Georgian name “Tsertsvi” every year. I used to grow cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp.) – Georgian name “Dzadza” as well, but I do not grow it any more as it is not resistant to spring frosts which is quite frequent in our region. Grass pea and faba bean are well adapted to my region’s natural conditions, they are resistant to frosts and droughts as well as plant pests and diseases, they develop well both in irrigated and non-irrigated soils, as there is no need for agrochemical inputs they are cultivated organically, they give stable, good harvests, grains are easily threshed. Thus, their cultivation is cheap and easy, these are the reasons why I sow them every year. I always sow some maize in the grass pea rows as according to my experience these two crops do not hinder each other’s development and grow well together. I cook very tasty dishes with grass pea and faba bean for my family, the dishes are nutritious as these pulses contain significant amounts of proteins and fats. I sell some part of my pulses harvest and have financial income. Sometimes I use them as forage as well.

I learned about old Georgian varieties of pulses from Biological Farming Association Elkana, I had not known anything about them before. I learned about their biological features and how to cultivate

them at the seminars and consultations organized by Elkana. Elkana provided me with the seed material as well. Now, I sow my own seed material of grass pea and faba bean, but sometimes I need to take some seeds from Elkana again, this happens when I run out of the seeds or when I want to renew my own. I always share my experience of cultivation and usage of these pulses with other farmers and give them some seed material if they are interested in sowing them. Cultivation of these endangered indigenous pulses is of great importance to me as I would like to contribute to their conservation process.

I would like to share the recipe of one of my favorite dishes cooked with faba bean. The dish is very tasty and nutritious.

Georgian: Tsertsvis Shechamandi (informant: Geo 1)

English translation: Faba Bean Meal

Ingredients

Faba bean

Onion

Garlic

Oil

Coriander

Parsley

Salt

Black pepper

Amounts

0,5 kg faba bean

4 onions

5-6 cloves of garlic

250 g oil

100 g coriander

100 g parsley

Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Soak the washed faba beans in cold water for 5-6 hours in a lidded pot, then rinse, add enough water to cover them and boil. When the faba beans are well cooked remove the pot from heat and rinse leaving them a bit damp with liquid.

Meantime fry the finely chopped onions and cloves of garlic in the oil and add to the faba bean mass in the pot, add finely chopped coriander and parsley as well, season with black pepper and salt. Finally, mix all the ingredient together.

Acronym: Geo 2

Name: Valida Gachechiladze

Age: 56

Function / profession: Farmer

Address: Tsnisi village, Akhaltsikhe municipality, Samtskhe-Javakheti Region, Georgia



I have been cultivating grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus* L.) – Georgian name “Tsulispira” and chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.) – Georgian name “Mukhudo” for 10 years already, I sow them on 0.10-0.15ha every year. I have tried to grow cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp.) – Georgian name “Dzadza” and lentil (*Lens culinaris* Medic.) – Georgian name “Ospi” as well, but I do not grow them any more as it is quite difficult to cultivate them in my region due to the unfavorable natural conditions for these crops. Grass pea and chickpea are easy to cultivate as they are well adapted to my region’s natural conditions, they are resistant to frosts and droughts as well as plant pests and diseases, they develop well both in irrigated and non-irrigated soils, as there is no need for agrochemical inputs they are cultivated organically, thus, they are healthy and useful products. I do all the cultivation works of these crops by hand, including threshing – grass pea grains are easily threshed, while chickpea threshing is a bit more difficult. They give stable, good harvests. I mainly use these pulses for cooking the dishes for my family, out of which their most favorite dish is the chickpea cutlets. The dishes are tasty and nutritious due to the high level of protein and fat contents of these pulses. I sell some part of my pulses harvest every year and use some part as animal forage.

Cultivation of these pulses is very important to me as I would like to contribute to their conservation and multiplication. I actively participate in the seminars, farmers’ days and consultation meetings organized by the Biological Farming Association Elkana in my region. I learned about the endangered Georgian varieties of pulses from Elkana’s consultants and was actively involved in the project - Recovery, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Georgia’s Agrobiodiversity, implemented by Elkana in Samtskhe-Javakheti region. I received the seed material of the pulses from Elkana and cultivate

them since then. Now I have my own seed material and share them with my neighbors and relatives. I would strongly advise the farmers to grow these indigenous pulses and make their food diverse, especially during the fast period.

I would like to share the recipes of my family's favorite dishes cooked with chickpea and grass pea. The dishes are very tasty and nutritious.

Georgian: Mukhudos Katleti (informant: Geo 2)

English translation: Chickpea cutlet

Ingredients

Chickpea

Onion

Garlic

Wheat flour

Oil

Coriander

Parsley

Dried basil

Salt

Black pepper

Amounts

1 kg chickpea

3 onions

4 cloves of garlic

250 g wheat flour

500 g oil

50 g coriander

50 g parsley

1 teaspoon of dried basil

Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Wash the chickpeas, pour enough cold water to cover them and let them soak in a lidded pot for 4-5 hours. When the chickpeas absorb all the water, mince them together with coriander, parsley, onions and cloves of garlic in a mincer. Add dried basil and 100 g of wheat flour, mix all the ingredients together thoroughly by hand and season the mass with black pepper and salt. Then, form the mass into small balls giving them the shape of cutlets, roll them in wheat flour to coat all the sides with it and fry them in a pan with oil. Cook them until bottom surface turns golden brown, flip each one and cook another side until turning golden brown. You can sprinkle the sliced onions between the cooked chickpea cutlets layers.

Georgian: Tsulspiras Shechamandi (informant: Geo 2)

English translation: Grass Pea Meal

Ingredients

Grass pea

Walnuts

Plum or cherry plum dried juice (fruit leather)

Ground blue fenugreek
Ground marigold
Salt

Amounts

0,5 kg grass pea
200 g walnuts
100 g plum or cherry plum dried juice (fruit leather)
1 teaspoon of ground blue fenugreek
1 g ground marigold
Salt to taste

Procedure

Wash grass peas, pour enough cold water to cover them and boil. Meantime ground the walnut kernels and add some boiling water from grass pea pot in order to dissolve in it. When the grass peas are well cooked add the walnut mass, finely chopped plum or cherry plum dried juice (fruit leather), ground blue fenugreek and ground marigold, mix well and season with salt to taste. Bring the mass to a boil before removing from the heat. The seasoned dish must have a little water.

Acronym: Geo 3

Name: Darejan Komoshvili

Age: 57

Function / profession: Farmer

Address: Tsnisi village, Akhaltsikhe municipality, Samtskhe-Javakheti Region, Georgia



I have been cultivating indigenous pulses - grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus* L.) – Georgian name “Tsulispira” and lentil (*Lens culinaris* Medic.) – Georgian name “Ospi” on 0.10-0.15ha every year for 10 years already. These crops were cultivated by our ancestors for many centuries, but they have been endangered for almost one hundred years during the Soviet period in Georgia as the imported crops replaced them. Thus, it is especially important to cultivate them again in order to conserve these endangered crop varieties. I learnt about indigenous pulses from my neighbor and later took the seed material from the Biological Farming Association Elkana’s Seed Multiplication Plot in Tsnisi village – indigenous pulses are cultivated there. I received consultations on the pulses cultivation from Elkana’s consultants. Now, I sow my own seed material of the pulses and sometimes take some seeds from Elkana again if I run out of the seeds or when I want to renew my own. I grow these crops as they are easy to cultivate and well adapted to my region’s natural conditions, they are resistant to frosts and droughts as well as plant pests and diseases, as there is no need for agrochemical inputs they are cultivated organically, this makes them healthy and useful products. Grass pea gives good harvests while lentil gives less. They are good predecessors for almost all the field crops in crop rotation. I use grass pea as green manure to improve the soil fertility. I grow the pulses mainly for the family consumption – cook tasty dishes. Due to the high level of protein content, pulses are excellent food sources when meat is scarce.

I am happy to contribute to the indigenous pulses conservation process in Georgia. I recommend them to my neighbors and relatives as well and give them the seed material. I hope one day the Georgian farmers will cultivate these crops as actively as they did many centuries ago.

Here is a recipe of the delicious lentil meal I usually cook for my family.

Georgian: Ospis Shechamandi (informant: Geo 3)

English translation: Lentil Meal

Ingredients

Lentil

Onion

Garlic

Oil

Coriander

Parsley

Dill

Crocus leaves

Salt

Black pepper or chili pepper

Amounts

1 kg lentil

5 onions

5-6 cloves of garlic

200 g oil

50 g coriander

50 g parsley

20 g dill

2 crocus leaves

Salt and black pepper or chili pepper to taste

Procedure

Wash lentils, pour enough cold water to cover them and boil. Meantime fry the finely chopped 3 onions and cloves of garlic in the oil and add to the lentils in the pot when they are well cooked, add finely chopped coriander, parsley and dill as well, season with black pepper or finely chopped chili pepper and salt to taste. Bring the mass to a boil before removing from the heat. Finally, add the sliced onions (the rest 2 onions) to the hot meal and mix well. The seasoned dish must have a little water.