Contents

Preface iii

Acronyms used in text v

1. The Scope of Genetic Conservation 1
   - Vanishing resources 2
   - The need to conserve and utilize genetic diversity 3
   - History of plant genetic resources conservation 5
   - Feeding the world 9

2. Crop Evolution and Diversity 10
   - The origins of agriculture 10
   - The evolutionary dynamics of plant domestication 13
   - The time and place of the origin of agriculture 16
   - Patterns of crop diversity 17
   - The genetic variability of crop plants 21
   - Conclusions 35

3. Plant Genetic Resources Exploration 37
   - Early days — the botanical collectors 37
   - Early germplasm collectors 38
   - Genetic resources exploration 39
   - Sampling strategies 39
   - Collecting sites 44
   - Field documentation 45
   - General considerations 47

4. Conservation 50
   - In situ conservation 50
   - Ex situ conservation 51
   - The role of genebanks 52
   - Storage of seeds 53
   - The problem of vegetatively-propagated crops 61
   - In vitro storage of germplasm 63
### Table of Contents

5. **Management of Genetic Resources Data** 69  
   Magnitude of the problem 69  
   The need for information retrieval 69  
   The form of descriptive information 70  
   Models for data management 77  
   Data preparation 78  
   Examples of systems in use 80

6. **Utilization** 81  
   Wheat 82  
   Maize 83  
   Rice 85  
   Barley 86  
   Potato 87  
   Cassava 89  
   Sweet potato 90  
   Grain legumes 90  
   The international transfer of genetic resources and quarantine 92

7. **Vegetables, Industrial Crops, Medicinal and Forage Plants** 94  
   Vegetables 94  
   Industrial crops 102  
   Medicinal plants 108  
   Forage grasses 110

8. **Forest Genetic Resources** 115  
   The scope and nature of the problem 115  
   Breeding systems and population variation 117  
   Conservation strategies 120  
   The future 124

9. **Plant Genetic Resources — Future Prospects** 125  
   Political considerations 126  
   New procedures for utilization of genetic resources 127  
   Prospects 130

References 132  
Appendix 143  
Index 147