

## Special Issue

# Plant Foods and Underutilized Fruits as Source of Functional Food Ingredients: Chemical Composition, Quality Traits, and Biological Properties

### Message from the Guest Editors

Today, the role of food is not only intended as hunger satisfaction and nutrient supplying, but also as an opportunity to prevent nutrition-related diseases and improve physical and mental well-being. For this reason, there is a growing interest in novel or less well-known plant foods that offer an opportunity for health maintenance. Recently, interest in plant foods and underutilized fruits is ever more growing and agrobiodiversity exploitation offers effective and extraordinary potentialities. Plant foods could be an important source of health-promoting compounds and functional food ingredients with beneficial properties: the description of quality and physico-chemical traits, the identification and quantification of bioactive compounds, and the evaluation of their biological activities are important to assess plant food efficacy as functional foods or source of food supplement ingredients.

**Keywords:** natural plant foods; healthy properties; phytochemicals; agrobiodiversity; human nutrition; analytical strategies; bioactivity; unconventional fruits; in vitro test; natural antioxidants

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### Deadline for manuscript submissions

closed (30 September 2018)



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