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## **STUDIES ON THE TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT, AND PROCESSING OF MATSUTAKE MUSHROOMS IN OAXACA, MEXICO\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

**In central Mexico, matsutake mushrooms [*Tricholoma magnivelare* (Peck) Redhead] are gathered commercially by differing rural communities since the middle of the 1980's. We describe the way rural communities (indigenous Zapotecs and peasants) from the State of Oaxaca are organized to make use of matsutake from their communal forest. Mexican exports of matsutake, however, have decreased significantly during the period 1996-2000. Long-term management of matsutake mushrooms will be mainly based on the social, economic, and land tenure systems associated to traditional mushroom gathering in every community or region. In general, the traditional use, management, and conservation of wild edible mushrooms by rural communities follow different strategies from the ecosystem management philosophy carried out in other regions. Fresh matsutake mushrooms gathered by peasants were also processed (freeze-drying, freezing, drying, and canning) in order to explore potential alternatives for developing marketing strategies by rural communities. Advantages and disadvantages of methods studied are discussed.**

**Key words:** Matsutake mushrooms, processing, non-timber forest products, traditional management, traditional organization, Zapotecs, Oaxaca, Mexico.

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