

Conserving Vanilla

The world's favorite flavor

Only 1% of global vanilla extract is made from vanilla pods, the rest is produced through chemical synthesis of organic compounds

8,000 tons
Produced per year globally.

95% of the world's vanilla crop is derived from *Vanilla planifolia* which has two flavor profiles:

- **Bourbon vanilla:** most popular, creamy, bourbon flavor and spicy aroma
- **Java vanilla:** smoky aroma with hints of chocolate

Vanilla conservation in genebanks relies on maintaining live plants in fields or shade houses, rather than as seeds

Vanilla pods are the fruit of orchids

Vanilla species are threatened by environmental and human factors

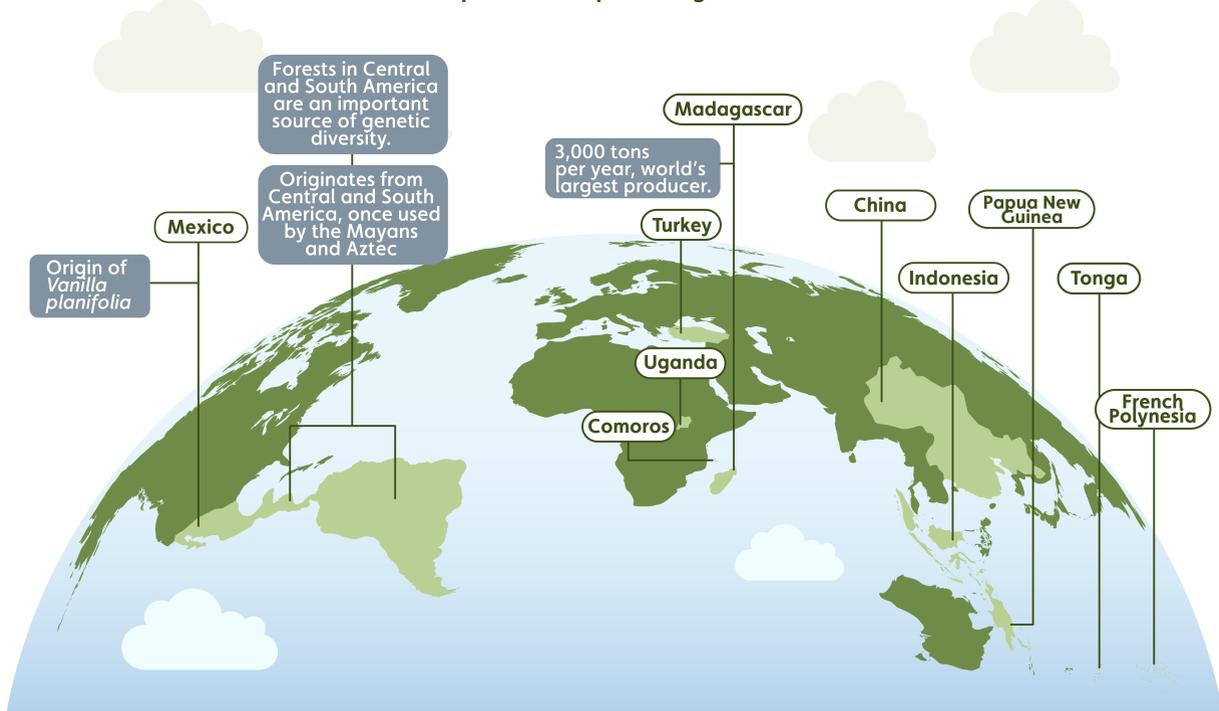
Many wild relatives of vanilla are still not conserved in any genebanks

Vanilla's high market value makes it an important source of income for smallholder farmers and communities. Cultivation of vanilla can reduce the exploitation of forest resources and increase food security.

Paula Bramel, Lead Author, *Global Strategy for the Conservation and Use of Vanilla Genetic Resources*

GLOBALLY DELICIOUS, GLOBALLY GROWN

Top 10 vanilla-producing countries



DID YOU KNOW?

Vanilla is the second-most expensive spice in the world, after saffron

Nearly all natural vanilla produced commercially today is hand-pollinated

A fresh vanilla pod has no taste or aroma and has to undergo a curing process to gain its distinctive flavor

Vanilla is the most common flavor of ice cream

The vanilla flavor we love can also be produced synthetically

About 85% of synthetic vanilla flavoring comes from guaiacol (an aromatic oil) that is made from petrochemicals

A FAVORITE FLAVOR FOR ALMOST EVERYTHING



Food and drinks



Perfumes



Cosmetics



Natural medicines



Aromatherapy oils

There is an urgent need to protect vanilla plants against habitat loss and overharvesting and to preserve them in collections.

VANILLA IS THREATENED BY...



Pests and diseases, such as *fusarium* root rot



Genetic erosion—commercially produced vanilla has very little genetic diversity



Insufficient conservation efforts and vulnerable collections



Vanilla is highly vulnerable to dry spells, heatwaves and extreme winds

SAVING FLAVOR FOR EVERYONE FOREVER

We're making sure vanilla will always add spice to our lives. Here are the ingredients to a global crop conservation strategy:

Secure long-term storage of vanilla resources

- ✓ Improve routine operations for growing and maintaining plants
- ✓ Duplicate collections of vanilla diversity
- ✓ Invest in conservation research
- ✓ Protect plants in farmers' fields and natural areas

Make it easier to share and exchange materials

- ✓ Provide a good supply of disease-free materials for distribution
- ✓ Enact policies to allow transport of vanilla seeds, cuttings and pollen

Improve the use of conserved resources

- ✓ Establish a comprehensive online database for all vanilla genetic materials
- ✓ Update the database continually with latest information
- ✓ Establish a global core collection of vanilla materials available to researchers, farmers and industry with appropriate benefit-sharing



A secure global collection of vanilla resources will have multiple benefits

It will make vanilla cultivation more resilient to the threats of new pests and diseases and it will increase the diversity of vanilla resources used by researchers, farmers and industry. This will help diversity markets, sustain agroforestry systems and improve rural development.

...but it must be a united effort

The Crop Trust is an international organization working to safeguard crop diversity, forever.

Learn more at croptrust.org.

