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| **Abstract / Content summary** | This article provides an overview over taxonomy, distribution, cultivation and use of giant taro, Alocasia macrorrhizos (L.) G.Don. The species belongs to the Araceae (aroid) family, which consists of 3700 species grouped into 107 genera. Among those species are several important crop species from tropical Asia and America. Giant taro, with a thick stem, large leaves and inflorescences, is cultivated as a food crop in several Pacific countries and in tropical Asia. In other parts of the world, it is mainly cultivated as an ornamental species. With a high starch content and its pest resistance, it often forms part of local traditional polycropping and agroforestry systems, e.g. in Tonga, and it contributes to local food security in particular during periods of food scarcity. Few production statistics are available as giant taro is mainly cultivated on a small scale and as part of subsistence agriculture. We consider giant taro a neglected crop. To our knowledge, no breeding or research programmes for crop improvement are currently happening. A database query and literature review revealed only 59 gene bank accessions, held in 7 different gene banks worldwide. We suggest further research into the conservation of landraces and into an increase of the productivity of this crop. Keywords: Aroids, Araceae, Neglected crop, Plant genetic resources, Breeding, Gene bank, Conservation |
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