

REVIEW

NORMAN C. ELLSTRAND: **Dangerous liaisons? When cultivated plants mate with their wild relatives.** The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London, 2003. xx, 244 pp. ISBN 0-8018-8190-0. Price: USD 29.95 (paperback).

Although the book from its title and the titles/subtitles of several chapters gives the impression of a popular book about the dangers of gene-modified plants, it is not! 'Dangerous liaisons' is a thorough discussion of the dangers of gene flow between cultivated plants and their wild relatives. In three sections and twelve chapters the book discusses gene flow, hybridization, (evolutionary) consequences and implications of gene flow. A large set of case studies is used to illustrate the ideas discussed here.

Part 1: 'Foreplay' discusses hybridization and gene flow, natural hybridization and evolutionary consequences with 'The case of the bolting beet' as an example. Part 2: 'Caught in the act' discusses the evidence for recognition of hybrids, tries to answer the question whether or not crops mate with their wild relatives and if this hybridization is the rule or not. Again 'The case of the bolting beet' is the main example. However, this part includes many case histories of crop-wild relatives hybridizations. Part 3: 'Dangerous liaisons?' discusses some of the impacts of gene flow demonstrated and discussed in earlier chapters, asks if there is a special case for genetically engineered plants and whether and how to manage domesticated gene flow into wild populations. Of course, 'The case of the bolting beet' is the main example.

A useful book for those interested in the impact of cultivated, genetically engineered or not, plants on wild populations of their relatives.

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