



# Alliums in Sweden

Matti Leino, Swedish Museum of Agriculture

# Globe onion



- Large commercial horticultural crop in Sweden (1300 ha)
- Increased cultivation last 5 years.
- No breeding activity for several decades.
- Obsolete cultivars (33 accs) stored as seed in NordGen

# Leek

- Commercial horticultural crop in Sweden (100 ha)
- Decreased cultivation last 5 years.
- No breeding activity since 1990s.
- Obsolete cultivars (24 accs) stored as seed in NordGen



# The historical importance of onions

”Ef maðr gengr í laucagarð manns eðahvangarð. sá a ecki á ser þó at menn beri hann oc beysti oc taki öll föt af honum.”

Frostating law (13th century)



”Förutom barnskriken, kom en outhärdlig löklukt, nästan alla hade de med sig små lökknippen som de satt och åt av, jag orkade inte med det, jag gick ut på kyrkogården”.

HC Andersen in Leksand church, Midsummer 1849

”Lökar [var] till större eller mindre antal fästa i lisskullornas hår, medelst hufvudets kvicka vridning hafva de kunna slänga lökarna i munnen, den ene efter den andre.”

Rickard Dybeck, ”I Dalarne”, 1918



# Viking onion



Scandinavian vikings seldomly show signs of scurvy.  
Onions was a possible source of vitamin C during sea travels

# Chives

- Very small commercial horticultural crop in Sweden.
- Very common in household gardening.
- Suggested centre of origin in the archipelago of the Baltic sea.
- Wild material (77 accs) stored as seed in NordGen
- Morphological and DNA (AFLP) analyses performed at NordGen in 2003.



# Garlic



- Very small commercial horticultural crop in Sweden
- 3 accs stored in field collection by the National programme (POM).

# Potato onion / shallot

- No commercial production
- Common in household gardening.
- 29 accs stored in field collection by the National programme (POM).
- Morphological characterization and DNA analyses performed 2011-2016.
- Always clonally propagated in Scandinavia
- Hardy – can be grown in northernmost locations
- Extremely good storer
- Many historical records
- Could be used as genetic source for common onion breeding







# Other Alliums



*Allium carinatum*



*Allium x proliferum*



*Allium scorodoprasum*



*Allium angulosum x nutans*