Assessment of variability in morphological traits of apricot germplasm issued from various genetic and environmental resources in Morocco

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Agro-morphological traits were evaluated for 92 Moroccan apricot accessions issued from different geographical sites, using 34 morphological qualitative and quantitative characters. Strong correlations between studied traits were observed, especially between fruit weight, stone weight, fruit dimensions, flesh firmness and color traits. Significant variations ($p \leq 0.001$) were observed among studied parameters which can help differentiate between different apricot accessions. The analysis of structure was able to show that the dimensions of the leaf and the fruit as well as the skin color of fruit represent the discriminating parameters of studied apricots. No clear morphological structure was displayed according to the geographical origin of accessions. However, the apricot genotype had a marked effect on the observed variability (More than 48 % of the total variance revealed in PCA analysis) and morphological structure of studied apricots. This study would provide a solid and genuine basis for effective management and sustainable use of apricot genetic material in future breeding programs in the Mediterranean region.

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