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PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT IN GENETIC DIVERSITY OF MATURE APRICOT (PRUNUS ARMENIACA L.) GENOTYPES GROWN UNDER KASHAN ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

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Apricot (*Prunus armeniaca* L.) is one of the important temperate horticultural crops in the world. Iran is a rich country in the world for fruit tree germplasm and is known as one of the center of origin for apricot with suitable and wide genetic diversity. The most important areas for apricot culture in Iran are East and West Azarbayjan, Semnan, Abarkooh and Abadeh in North of Fars Province, Kerman, Zanjan, Khorasan and also Kashan in Isfahan. The objective of present research is to explore and evaluate the apricot germplasm populations that grown in the Barzook regions in Kashan, Isfahan, Iran. The suitable climate conditions of this region created the suitable environmental conditions for apricot culture with a wide range of traditional orchards. In order to select the superior genotypes and cultivars within the apricot populations in the region, 390 own rooted mature apricot trees seedlings were labeled along with 41 mature commercial apricot trees that budded and grown on seedling rootstock. Phenology, morphology and pomology characters of labeled apricot trees evaluation have been started with the assessments of flowering and fruiting characteristics based on the IPGRI and UPOV descriptors. The labeled apricot trees showed start to bloom from late March to mid April, 2017. The most of studied trees showed in a full bloom period for the first 10 days of April, so the most of trees flowering period was terminated on first mid April. This research will continue to evaluate the flowering and fruiting characteristics of the labeled trees, in order to select the superior genotypes and cultivars in the region for further breeding or commercial purpose.

Keywords: Apricot germplasm, Genetic Diversity, Flowering, Fruiting