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**Xylella, the Plain of monumental olive trees is in grave danger**

***The regional association of agricultural technicians and researchers Arptra takes stock, at Agrilevante, of the state of research on the epidemic that has hit the olive groves. Scientific acquisitions must be accompanied by timely political action with clear indications to farmers.***

The Plain of monumental olive trees, threatened by the Xylella, risks disappearing over an unquantifiable but certainly short time. One of the most beautiful landscape resources not only in Puglia, but throughout the Peninsula, is being threatened by the advance of this bacterium, but also by the difficulty of the political system to intervene with timely measures. This is the alarm raised by the talk on "Good practices and innovation to safeguard the Plain of monumental olive trees from the *Xylella fastidiosa*", organized by the Regional Association of Agricultural Technicians and Researchers (Arptra). "To combat the Xylella in the Plain of monumental olive trees, we can do nothing more than fight the carrier through weed control and the elimination of infected plants - said Franco Nigro, professor at the University of Bari -. A final answer must come from research, without considering how much research has been done in just six years on the relationship between plant, pathogen and vector, and on the epidemiological aspects". "The decisive answer to contain the bacterium is lacking - Nigro added - but considering the work carried out over a few decades by American research, it is already positive that in such a short time, two resistant varieties have been identified. Faced with the certain death of olive trees, there is no alternative to grafting with resistant varieties. Monitoring is also uncertain, seeking the symptom of infection, while the bacterium's incubation time is 12-18 months!".

Among the olive growers of the Plain there is a passive awareness of the problem, said Carmela Riccardi, landscape architect and president of the anti-Xylella Committee composed of olive growers from the Alto Salento. "First they complained about the olive growers of Salento - Riccardi said - then they realized that the spread of the bacterium does not depend on the way the olive groves are run; now they are looking for immediate answers. Instead we need to understand what to do now, so we ask the political world to cooperate with us, to give us precise directions on how to proceed also for the grafts".

 **Bari, 11 October 2019**