

19th April 2017

New Xylella-Resistant Olive Cultivar Announced



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Photo: Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno [<http://www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/news/home/880710/xylella-cnr-scopre-nuova-variet%C3%A0-di-ulivo-resistente.html>]

Numerous news sources, following a report that first appeared in *L'Informatore agrario* [<http://www.informatoreagrario.it/>] (N.11, p.59), are announcing the discovery, in the laboratories of the National Research Council (CNR) in Bari, of a second *Xylella*-resistant olive cultivar that may be a godsend for growers in the Infected and Containment Zones of southern Puglia, where the leaf-dessication syndrome known as CoDiRO appears to be spreading rapidly.

Scientists had already identified the Leccino cultivar as resistant to infection by the *Xylella* bacteria. The new subspecies is called FS-17, or "Favolosa" and is described as "a selection of seedlings of the cultivar Frantoio obtained by Professor Giuseppe Fontanazza and patented by the [Mediterranean Institute for Agricultural and Forestry Systems, of the National Research Council \(Isafom-CNR\)](#) [<http://www.isafom.cnr.it/>]."

The *Informatore agrario* reports that only 12.4% of 201 FS-17 plants exposed to *Xylella* tested positive for infection, and the level of absorption of *Xylella* in the positive FS-17 plants was marginally lower than the level of absorption in the Leccino cultivar.

Research into sources of resistance in olive trees is one of the principle objectives of two projects of the H2020 Program financed by the European Union and coordinated by the [Institute for Sustainable Plant Protection](#) [<http://www.ipsp.cnr.it/?lang=en>] of the CNR. The two projects are the [POnTE Project](#) [<http://www.ponteproject.eu/>] (Pest Organisms Threatening Europe) and [Xf-Actors](#) [<http://www.ponteproject.eu/news/xf-actors-new-eu-h2020-funded-research-project-entirely-dedicated-xylella-fastidiosa/>] (*Xylella* Fastidiosa Active Containment Through a Multidisciplinary-Oriented Research Strategy).


According to Francesco Loreto, Director of the Department of Bio-Agricultural Sciences of the CNR, "There are already nearly 300 olive cultivars under experimentation, not an exhaustive number but certainly a significant one, considering the variety of the Mediterranean olive germoplasm."

The announcement of the discovery of FS-17 appeared in nearly identical form, often word for word, in a surprising number of media outlets. See among other sources: [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno](http://www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/news/home/880710/xylella-cnr-scopre-nuova-varieta-di-ulivo-resistente.html) [http://www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/news/home/880710/xylella-cnr-scopre-nuova-varieta-di-ulivo-resistente.html], [Le Scienze](http://www.lescienze.it/lanci/2017/04/18/news/cnr_scoperta_un_altra_cultivar_di_olivo_resistente_alla_xylella-3496580/) [http://www.lescienze.it/lanci/2017/04/18/news/cnr_scoperta_un_altra_cultivar_di_olivo_resistente_alla_xylella-3496580/], [La Repubblica Bari](http://bari.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/04/18/news/xylella_il_cnr_scopre_una_nuova_coltivazione_di_olivo_resistente_al_batterio_c_e_speranza_-163283652/) [http://bari.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/04/18/news/xylella_il_cnr_scopre_una_nuova_coltivazione_di_olivo_resistente_al_batterio_c_e_speranza_-163283652/], [Affari Italiani](http://www.affaritaliani.it/cronache/xylella-scoperta-un-altra-cultivar-di-olivo-resistente-474537.html?refresh_ce) [http://www.affaritaliani.it/cronache/xylella-scoperta-un-altra-cultivar-di-olivo-resistente-474537.html?refresh_ce], [ANSA](http://www.ansa.it/canale_terraegusto/notizie/mondo_agricolo/2017/04/18/xylella-cnr-scoperta-altra-coltivazione-olivo-resistente_b08899a7-82cf-405f-8f36-495b4cbaa4b1.html) [http://www.ansa.it/canale_terraegusto/notizie/mondo_agricolo/2017/04/18/xylella-cnr-scoperta-altra-coltivazione-olivo-resistente_b08899a7-82cf-405f-8f36-495b4cbaa4b1.html].


While the news of a practicable *Xylella*-resistant cultivar may restore hope to beleaguered growers in Puglia, there have been **disturbing reports of speculation in prices for the FS-17 cultivar.** [http://xylellacodiro.blogspot.com/2017/04/olive-production-plummets-in-xylella.html] The fact that FS-17 is patented and controlled by a single distributor could lead to a phenomenon of price hikes that put the new product out of reach of growers, who are already suffering from several years of declining harvests.

See also: [PonteProject](http://www.ponteproject.eu/press-review/cnr-scoperta-unaltra-cultivar-di-olivo-resistente-alla-xylella/) [http://www.ponteproject.eu/press-review/cnr-scoperta-unaltra-cultivar-di-olivo-resistente-alla-xylella/]

Posted 19th April 2017 by [Thomas Simpson](#)

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