

BIOFERTILIZERS IN ALMOND CROP

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A high level of dependence on chemical fertilizers as a means of increasing food production has damaged the ecological balance of agricultural soils. Long-term application of mineral nitrogen fertilizers reduces soil microbial activity resulting in a loss of biodiversity and fertility.

From this perspective, biofertilizers represent an important resource which, combined with sustainable agronomic practices, could help to face the current agricultural problems and improve soil fertility over the long term.

The exploitation of beneficial soil microorganisms in the formulation of biofertilizers, such as plant growth-promoting bacteria and fungi, is one potential solution to this problem, providing plants with nutrients required to enhance their growth, increase yield, and prevent abiotic and biotic stress and phytopathogens attack.

In this scenario, the objective of the current work was to evaluate the agronomic efficiency and the effect of different biofertilizers on the biological soil fertility in an experimental almond field located in Modugno (Bari), in southern Italy.

The experimental field was randomised by splitting up the area into four sub-sections for a total of twenty-four plants per treatment over the whole experimental site. Six treatments were performed, among which the organic biofertilizer Biovegetal®, two products enriched with microbial consortia, another organic biofertilizer, a stable manure and an organo-mineral fertilizer.

The activity was focused on monitoring the effects of the application of the different biofertilisers on plant physiological parameters (biometric parameters, foliar diagnostics, water use efficiency, NDVI index detection), chemico-physical properties, soil enzymatic activities (FDA, phosphatase) and soil microbiological properties (DNA extraction and quantification, PCR, bacterial and fungal counts, DNA sequencing).

The effect of biofertilisers on the release and spread of antibiotic resistance genes in agricultural soils is also being studied.

Preferenza per la presentazione: orale

Qualifica del proponente: Dottoranda

Tematica di interesse: (7) Pratiche tradizionali e innovative di gestione del territorio agricolo e forestale, delle risorse idriche e del suolo e loro ruolo nella riduzione degli impatti antropici, nella protezione dal dissesto geo-idrologico, nella conservazione della salute del suolo e nell'impatto sull'economia dei territori.

SSD principale: AGR/13



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The results of the first year of monitoring showed the first positive responses on the plants treated with the biofertilizers. Particularly, the products enriched with fungal consortium seem to improve the agronomic performance of the plants.

Keywords: *Biofertilizers; Sustainable agriculture; Beneficial microorganisms; Almond production ; Antibiotic resistance*

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