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Conference Abstract

The spiders (Arachnida: Araneae) community of an agroecosystem

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Abstract

The agricultural areas, especialy the orchards, of more ancient cultivation, are characterized by having plant and animal communities of great interest. Plant and vertebrate communities are well studied in theese agroecosystems, but the same cannot be said for invertebrates. Among these are generally known taxonomic groups of agricultural interest, including also beetles (Coleoptera) and moths (Lepidoptera). Little known are other arthropods such as those belonging to the Arachnida. In a historic orchard of the Conca d'Oro, the plain around Palermo city, systematic observations and catches of Arachnidae have been conducted, with particular interest in spiders (Araneae) but also involving other orders such as Opiliones and Pseudoscorpionida. The surveys showed a great species richness. It is in fact a historic orchard characterized by the presence of numerous species of fruit trees (*Citrus* spp., Loquat *Eriobotrya japonica*, etc.) interspersed with small vegetable garden surfaces. Many of the individuals found are in the process of being determined, but it is so far the community is exceeding sixty species. The research is ongoing and will further aim to clarify the ecological relationships between the different species and the other components of the agro-ecosystem.

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Presented at

V[th] International Congress on Biodiversity: „Taxonomy, Speciation and Euro-Mediterranean Biodiversity"