

Caffè Scientifico – Dipartimento di Agraria  
Aula Cinese, 16 gennaio 2019

## Le colture fuori suolo: dai giardini di Babilonia alle plant factory

**Stefania De Pascale**

Dipartimento di Agraria

Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

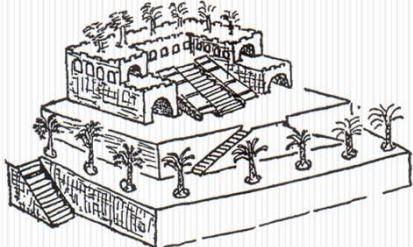
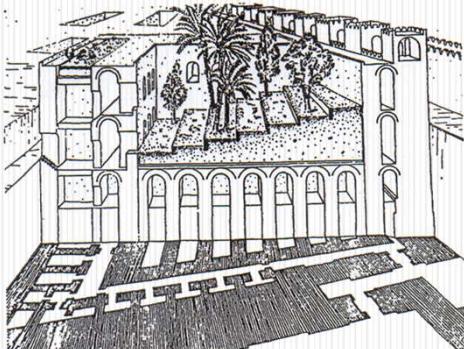


### Indice

- La storia
- Il glossario
- Suolo vs. fuori suolo
  
- La ricerca per le colture fuori suolo
- Usi, nuovi usi e ri-usi
- Le colture fuori suolo per la ricerca
  
- Considerazioni conclusive



## La storia

Ricostruzione dei giardini pensili di Babilonia (VI sec. a.C.)

## La storia

- Età antica:
  - Giardini pensili di Babilonia
  - Zattere galleggianti degli Aztechi
- 1666 - Boyle: coltura delle piante in acqua
- 1699 - Woodward: importanza del fattore terrigeno
- 1803-73 - Justus von Liebig
- 1860 - Sachs e Knop: importanza degli elementi minerali sulla crescita
- 1923 - Gericke: prime applicazioni commerciali (Deep Water Culture)
- 1938 - Hoagland e Arnon: «The Water-Culture Method for Growing Plants without Soil» sulla preparazione della soluzione nutritiva
- 1937 - Shive e Robbins: coltivazioni su substrato (Sand e Gravel Culture)
- 1941-1945 - Guerra del Pacifico: esercito americano utilizza l'idroponica per la produzione di ortaggi freschi in Giappone



Zattere galleggianti degli Aztechi  
(Chinampa, XIV – XVI sec.)

- ...
- Anni '60 - diffusione della plastica in agricoltura
  - Anni '70
    - 1965 - Allen Cooper: sistema NFT (Nutrient Film Technique)
    - Impianti in California, Arizona, Abu Dhabi
    - Impianti in Europa Settentrionale
  - Anni '80
    - 1976 – Franco Massantini: attività di ricerca presso l'Università di Pisa
  - Anni '90
    - Diffusione nel Bacino del Mediterraneo
    - Primi impianti in Italia (~ 50 ha in Sardegna)
  - Oggi
    - 5-10% della superficie a colture protette (~ 40,000 ha)
      - Italia ~ 2500 ha (3% della superficie a serre)



## Glossario

### • DEFINIZIONE

- Coltivazioni condotte in assenza di terreno in cui le piante, opportunamente sorrette in contenitori vuoti o in substrati solidi, sono alimentate con soluzioni nutritive complete in macro- e micro-elementi

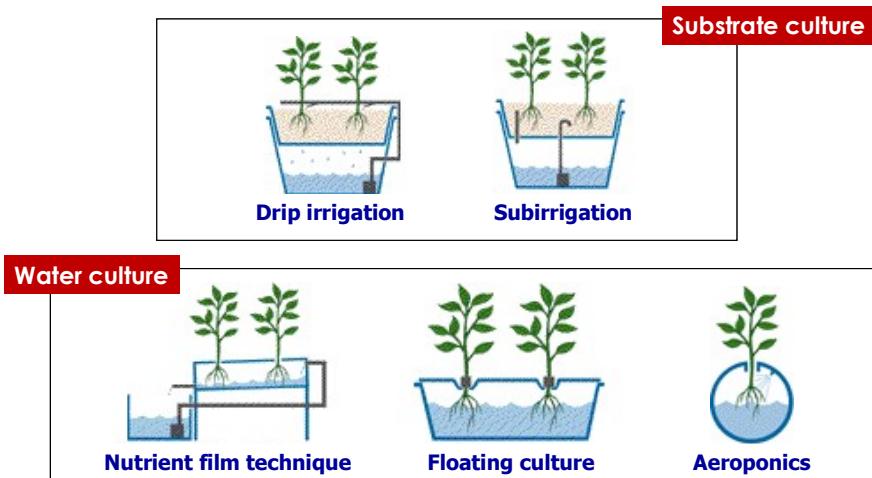


### • CLASSIFICAZIONE

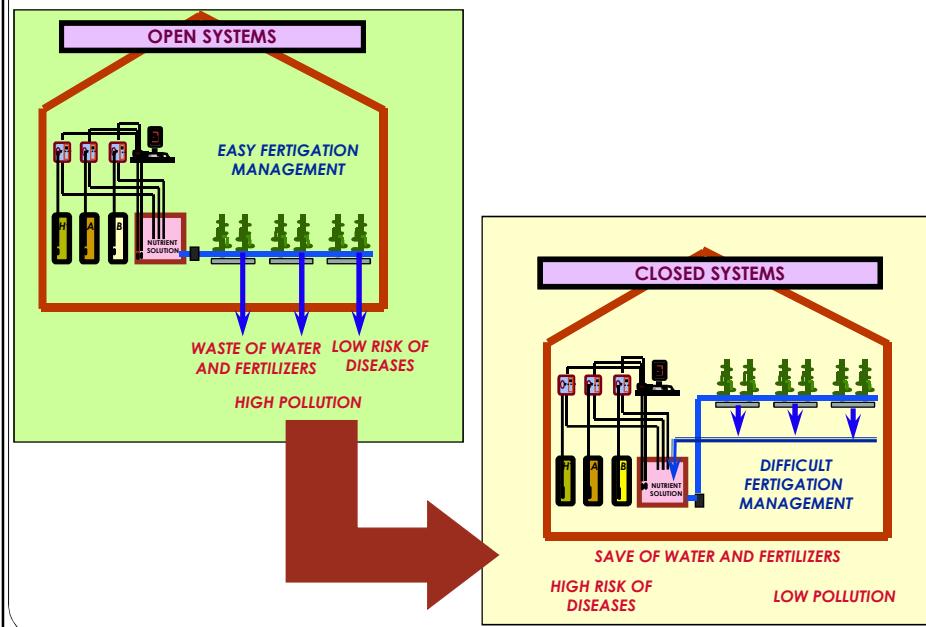
- Substrato (SI/NO)
  - Organico vs. Inorganico
  - Drip- vs. sub-irrigation
- Gestione della soluzione nutritive (open- vs. closed-systems)
- ...



## Substrato SI/NO



## Gestione della soluzione nutritiva



## Suolo vs. fuori suolo

- Potenzialmente «ubiquitaria»
- Difesa fitosanitaria
- Gestione della nutrizione idrica e minerale
- Controllo della crescita
- Impiego di manodopera
- Quantità e qualità della produzione
- Sostenibilità (ciclo chiuso)



- Costi di investimento
- Know-how
- Strutture
- Qualità dell'acqua di irrigazione
- Sostenibilità (ciclo aperto)



## La ricerca per le colture fuori suolo

Ottimizzazione del sistema produttivo  
Sostenibilità del processo produttivo  
Qualità dei prodotti



## Water culture - Floating System

Pannelli di polistirolo alveolato  
 Soluzione nutritiva in vasche  
 (altezza 20-30 cm, volume 100-300 L m<sup>-2</sup>)  
 Pompe sommerse per areazione  
 (concentrazione di O<sub>2</sub> min: 5-6 mg L<sup>-1</sup>)



### Pro

- costi bassi
- ciclo chiuso
- semplicità di gestione

### Contro

- controllo dell'ossigenazione

## Ortaggi da foglia e aromatiche



*Journal of Horticultural Science & Biotechnology* (2008) 83 (6) 743-748

Sulphur fertilisation affects yield and quality in *friarielli* (*Brassica rapa* L. subsp. *sylvestris* L. Janch. var. *esculenta* Hort.) grown in a floating system



«Fritelli napoletani»



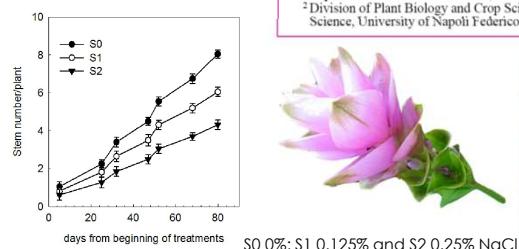
Basilico



## Coltivazione su substrato



## «Bulbose»



### Closed-Loop Soilless Cultivation System of *Curcuma alismatifolia* under Moderate Saline Stress



G. Raimondi<sup>1</sup>, E. Di Stasio<sup>2</sup>, C. Cirillo<sup>2,a</sup> and S. De Pascale<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Experimental Station Torre Lama, University of Napoli Federico II, Italy  
<sup>2</sup>Division of Plant Biology and Crop Science, Department of Agricultural and Food Science, University of Napoli Federico II, Italy



### Soilless Cultivation of Saffron in Mediterranean Environment

A. Maggio, G. Raimondi, A. Martino and S. De Pascale  
 Department of Agricultural Engineering and Agronomy  
 University of Naples Federico II  
 Via Università 100, 80055 Portici (Naples)  
 Italy



Table 1. Flowers, replacement corms characteristics and spice yield of saffron in the first experiment (Mean values; ns = not significant; \* = significant at P<0.05; \*\* = significant at P<0.01).

Substrate	Flowers (N. corm <sup>-1</sup> )	Stigma dry weight (mg flower <sup>-1</sup> )	Saffron spice yield (kg ha <sup>-1</sup> )	New corms (N. m <sup>-2</sup> )	Corm weight (g)	Corm diameter (mm)
Perlite	5.2	9.0	23.4	230	11.1	29
Peat+Perlite	3.8	11.0	20.9	150	14.3	33



## Sostenibilità: definizione

- Sostenibile è uno «sviluppo che soddisfa i bisogni delle generazioni presenti, senza compromettere la possibilità che le future generazioni possano soddisfare i propri»

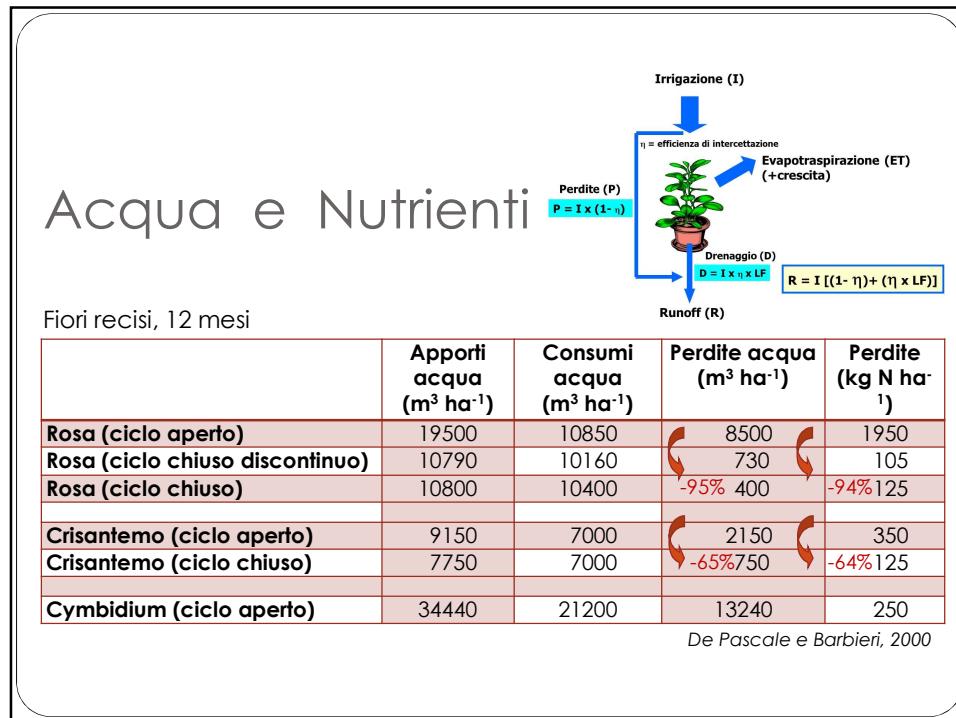
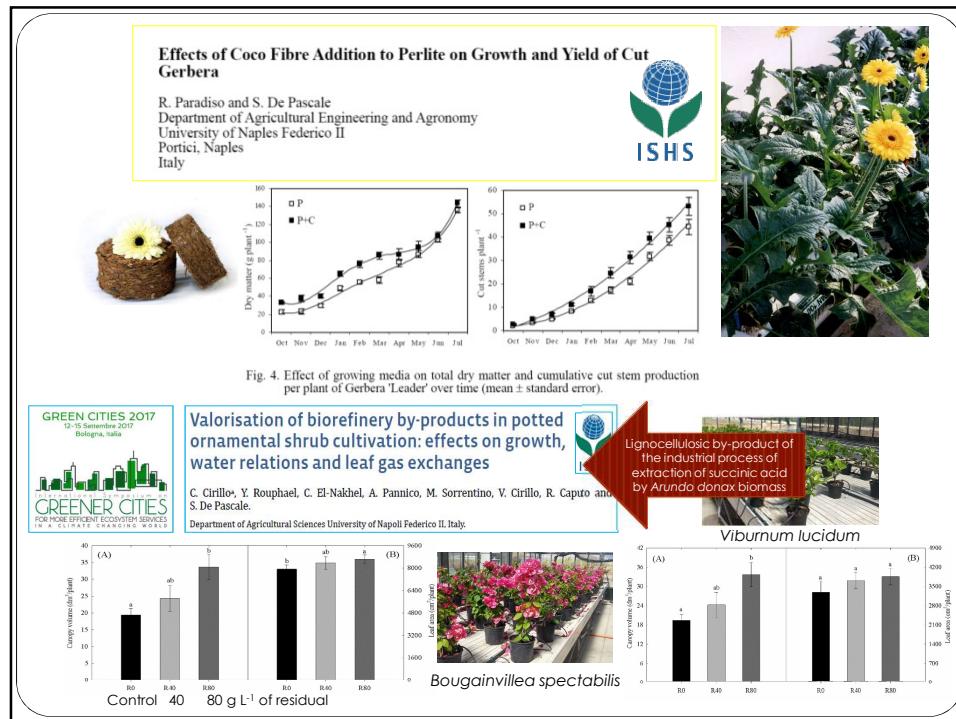
*Rapporto Brundtland (Our common future, 1987) – Commissione delle Nazioni Unite – WCED, World Commission on Environment and Development*

The diagram consists of three overlapping circles labeled 'Social' (top), 'Ambientale' (bottom left), and 'Econ' (bottom right). The central intersection area is labeled 'Sostenibile'. The regions around the perimeter of the circles are labeled 'Vivibile' (top-left), 'Equo' (top-right), and 'Realizzabile' (bottom-left).

Triple Bottom Line

## Substrati per il fuori suolo

<b>Minerali</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sabbia</li> <li>Pomice</li> <li>Lapillo</li> <li>Perlite</li> <li>Argilla espansa</li> <li>Lana di roccia</li> <li>Vermiculite</li> <li>Zeoliti</li> </ul>	<b>Pomice</b> <b>Lapillo</b>
<b>Sintetici</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polistirolo espanso</li> <li>Schiuma di poliuretano</li> </ul>	<b>Perlite</b> <b>Argilla spansa</b>
<b>Organici</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terricci</li> <li>Torbe</li> <li>Fibra di cocco</li> <li>Corteccia</li> <li>...</li> </ul>	<b>Lana di roccia</b> <b>Torba bionda</b> <b>Torba bruna</b> <b>Fibra di cocco</b>



HORTSCIENCE 51(6):684–689, 2016.

## Fertigation Strategies for Improving Water Use Efficiency and Limiting Nutrient Loss in Soilless *Hippeastrum* Production

Youssef Roushaf, Giampaolo Raimondi, Rosanna Caputo, and Stefania De Pascale<sup>1</sup>  
Department of Agricultural Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, 80055 Portici, Italy

**Table 4.** Effect of the nutrient management strategy on the cumulative evapotranspired water ( $W_{ET}$ ), water loss ( $W_L$ ), total water use ( $W_{use}$ ), number of nutrient solution discharges (flushing events), leaching fraction (LF =  $W_L/W_{use}$ ), and loss of nutrient ions ( $\text{NO}_3^-$ ,  $\text{K}^+$ , and  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ ) of *Hippeastrum* grown in semiclosed soilless culture.

Nutrient management strategy	$W_{ET}$ ( $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$ )	$W_L$ ( $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$ )	$W_{use}$ ( $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$ )	Flushing events	LF	$\text{NO}_3^-$ ( $\text{kg} \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$ )	$\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ ( $\text{kg} \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$ )	$\text{K}^+$ ( $\text{kg} \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$ )
Electrical conductivity-based method	1,647.9	1,159.9	2,807.7	10	0.41	739.0	410.2	163.6
Nitrate-based method	1,417.1	321.2	1,738.3	5	0.18	31.7	91.6	46.8
Significance	NS	***	**	***	***	***	***	**

ns, \*\*, \*\*\*Nonsignificant or significant at  $P \leq 0.01$  and  $0.001$ , respectively.

**Fig. 1.** A photograph of a greenhouse showing red Hippeastrum flowers in bloom.

**Fig. 2.** Bar chart showing the effect of nutrient management strategy on EC-based strategy (EC value =  $3.0 \text{ dS} \cdot \text{m}^{-1}$ ) and Nitrate-based strategy ( $[\text{N}-\text{NO}_3^-] < 1.0 \text{ mol} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$ ). The Y-axis represents WUE<sub>ET</sub> (kg dry weight/m<sup>3</sup> ET) ranging from 0.0 to 3.0. The X-axis shows two strategies: EC-based strategy and Nitrate-based strategy. The EC-based strategy has a significantly higher WUE<sub>ET</sub> than the Nitrate-based strategy. Vertical bars indicate ±SE of means. Different letters indicate significant differences according to Duncan's test ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

# Controllo ambientale

Scientia Horticulturae 139 (2012) 302–307

Moderate variations of day/night temperatures affect flower induction and inflorescence development in *Phalaenopsis*

Roberta Paradiso\*, Albino Maggio, Stefania De Pascale

Time for flowering of *Phalaenopsis Premium* (days from the beginning of thermal treatment) subjected to different day/night thermal regimes for flower induction: RT (21/19 °C), HT (23/21 °C), and LT (19/17 °C).

	First flower bud appearance	First flower anthesis	Complete anthesis
RT	127.1	160.6	196.5
HT	112.4	138.2	166.5
LT	136.0	168.5	201.5
LSD ( $P \leq 0.05$ )	10.0	10.3	9.3

**Fig. 3.** Developmental stages of *Phalaenopsis Premium*: emergence of the first leaf (A); appearance of the first visible flower bud (B); first flower anthesis (C); and detail of flower (D).

Paradiso R. and De Pascale S.  
Effects of plant size, temperature, and light intensity on flowering of *Phalaenopsis* hybrids in mediterranean greenhouses  
Scientific World Journal, 2014, art. no. 420807

**(a)**

**(b)**

**Contents lists available at ScienceDirect**

**Scientia Horticulturae**

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/scihorti](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/scihorti)

**Biostimolanti**

**Research Paper**

Foliar applications of a legume-derived protein hydrolysate elicit dose-dependent increases of growth, leaf mineral composition, yield and fruit quality in two greenhouse tomato cultivars

Youssef Rouphael<sup>a,\*</sup>, Giuseppe Colla<sup>b</sup>, Maria Giordano<sup>b</sup>, Christophe El-Nakheel<sup>b</sup>, Marios C. Kyriacou<sup>c</sup>, Stefania De Pascale<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Agricultural Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, 80134 Naples, Italy

<sup>b</sup> Department of Biological and Veterinary Sciences, University of Roma, 00130 Roma, Italy

<sup>c</sup> Department of Vegetables, Cyprus Agricultural Research Institute, 1516 Nicosia, Cyprus

**CrossMark**

**SIR ELYAN**

**Mean fruit weight**

Treatment	Mean fruit weight (g/fruit)	Significance
Akyna 0.0 mL/L	~30	d
Akyna 2.5 mL/L	~30	d
Akyna 5.0 mL/L	~30	d
Sir Elyan 0.0 mL/L	~75	c
Sir Elyan 2.5 mL/L	~85	b
Sir Elyan 5.0 mL/L	~95	a

**Number of fruits**

Treatment	Fruit number (n/m <sup>2</sup> )	Significance
Akyna 0.0 mL/L	~290	b
Akyna 2.5 mL/L	~340	a
Akyna 5.0 mL/L	~340	a
Sir Elyan 0.0 mL/L	~140	c
Sir Elyan 2.5 mL/L	~130	c
Sir Elyan 5.0 mL/L	~140	c

# Vegetable crops as functional food

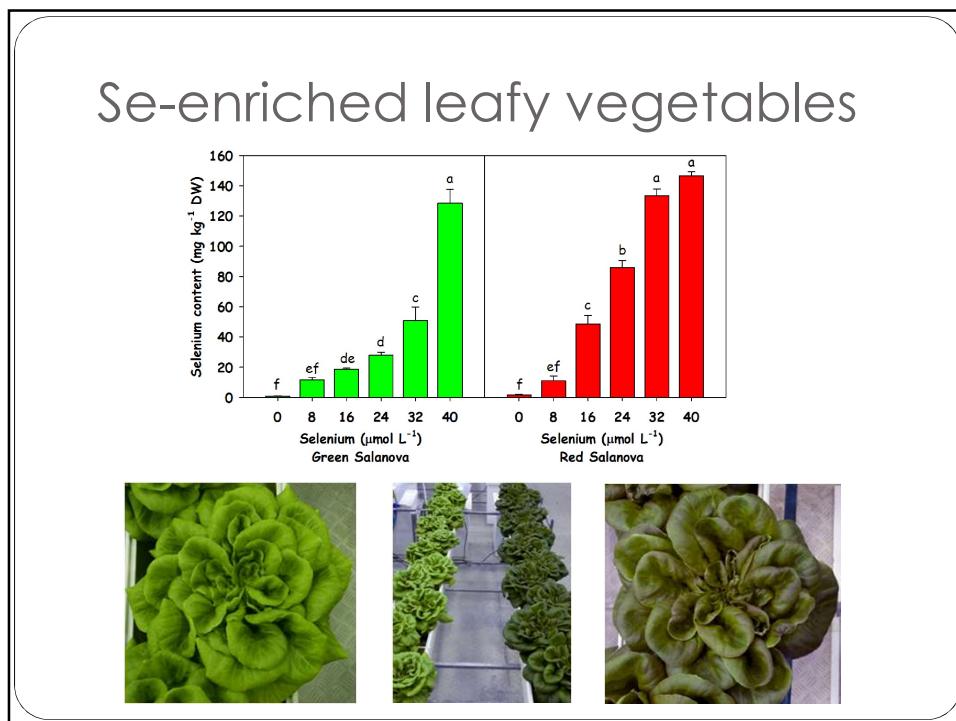
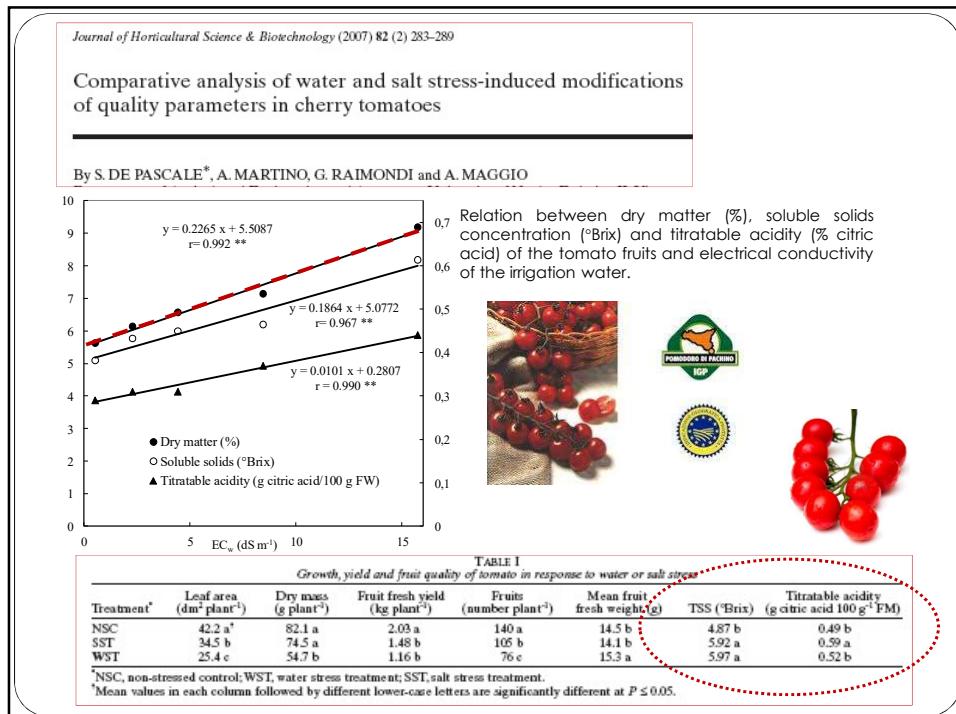

 Food Chemistry 277 (2019) 107–118  
 Contents lists available at ScienceDirect  
**Food Chemistry**  
 journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/foodchem](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/foodchem)


Functional quality in novel food sources: Genotypic variation in the nutritive and phytochemical composition of thirteen microgreens species

Marios C. Kyriacou<sup>a</sup>, Christophe El-Nakheel<sup>b</sup>, Giulia Graziani<sup>c</sup>, Antonio Pannico<sup>b</sup>, Georgios A. Soteriou<sup>a</sup>, Maria Giordano<sup>b</sup>, Alberto Ritiemi<sup>c</sup>, Stefania De Pascale<sup>b</sup>, Youssef Rouphael<sup>a,\*</sup>

- I micro-ortaggi (o microgreen) sono giovani e tenere piantine di specie orticolte, erbacee o aromatiche raccolte generalmente da una a tre settimane dopo la semina
- Sono apprezzati per il loro colore e la capacità di esaltare il sapore delle pietanze, ma soprattutto per il loro valore nutraceutico (functional foods)





## Nitrati negli ortaggi da foglia

**Nitrate ( $\text{NO}_3^-$ )**

**Nitrite ( $\text{NO}_2^-$ )**

**N-nitroso compounds**

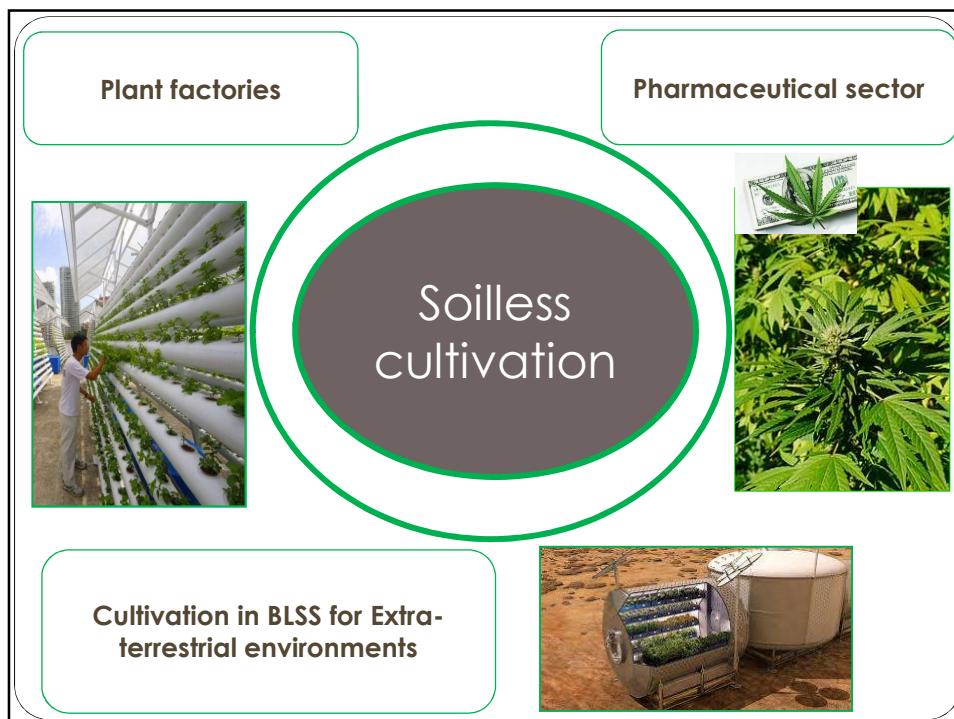
**Effects on human health**

- Methaemoglobinemia
- Fertility problems (?)
- Cancer (?)
- Hypertrophy of the thyroid (?)
- Hypertension (?)
- Diabetes (?)

Nutrient Code	Nitrate (mg $\text{NO}_3^- \text{ kg}^{-1}$ FW)	Nitrite (mg $\text{NO}_2^- \text{ kg}^{-1}$ FW)
$\text{N}_{20}\text{S}_2$	3,128 a <sup>†</sup>	3.6 a
$\text{N}_{20}\text{S}_1$	2,625 b	2.8 a
$\text{N}_{20}\text{S}_3$	2,367 b	2.4 a
Ecotype		
LC	3,034 <sup>‡</sup>	2.4
Sn	2,380	3.5
Significance	*	n.s.

<sup>†</sup>Mean values (n = 40) in each column followed by a different lower-case letter indicate significant difference by the LSD test at  $P \leq 0.05$ .  
<sup>‡</sup>Mean values (n = 120). LC = 'Lingua di Cane'; Sn = 'Sessantino'; ns, not significant; \*significant at  $P \leq 0.05$ .

De Pascale et al., 2008



# Hydroponic systems for urban areas

**PRIN 2017**

**GRIN-REVOLUTION**

I giardini pensili di Babilonia?

Ameliorating a complex urban ecosystem through instrumental use of softscape buffers: proposal for a green infrastructure network in the metropolitan area of Naples

Coppola E., Roushael Y., De Pascale S., Moccia F.D., Cirillo C.

**frontiers**  
in Plant Science

Research topic: Innovative Growing Solutions for Plant Cultivation  
in the Urban Environment

## Integrated systems: hydroponic with aquaculture

FOOD systems in European Cities (FoodE)

**FOOD•E**

**H2020**

## Hydroponic systems for Space Farming



## “Salad machine”



NASA's rack-sized "Salad Machine" system



Cosmonaut Gennady Padalka - Lada Chamber

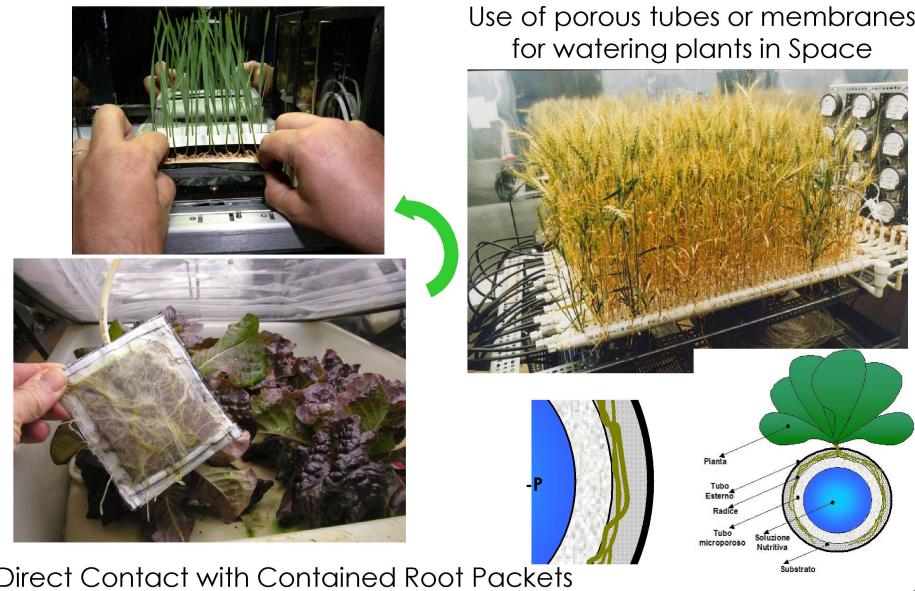


Prototype of NASA's Advanced Plant Habitat



BPSe or VEGGIE Chamber by Orbitec

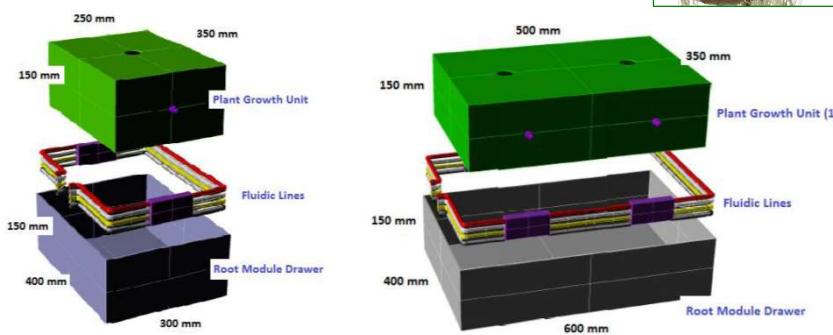
## Le sfide: irrigare in $\mu$ -gravità



## Precursor Food Production Unit – PFPU 2015-2017/2018-...

### Flight experiment preparation:

To design a prototype of a modular food production unit for cultivation of potato plants in micro-gravity



Thales Alenia Space



### Selezione e caratterizzazione dei substrati

**Synthetic Substrates**  
Capillary Mat (polyester)  
Oasis (Horticubes)

**Organic Substrates**  
Natural sponge (cellulose) + Cotton

Capillary Mat + Cotton      Oasis + Cotton      Natural sponge + Cotton

HYDRUS-1D model  
to evaluate water status in root environment even in  $\mu\text{g}$

Water retention curves  
Richard's pressure plate method

Hydraulic conductivity  
Falling-head permeability method

### Verso le colonie spaziali: Nutrient Film Technique (NFT)

Canaline in plastica (pendenza 1%, larghezza 15-30 cm, altezza 8-10 cm, lunghezza massima 20 m)  
Soluzione nutritiva in film sottile (2-3 mm)

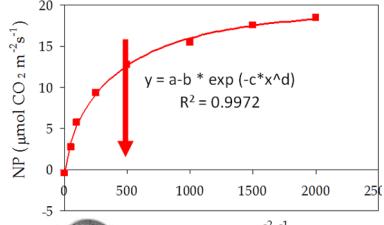
**MELISSA**

## La soia





*Camera di crescita walk-in del  
Dipartimento di Agraria dell'Università  
degli Studi di Napoli Federico II*



NP ( $\mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ )

PPFD ( $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ )

$y = a - b * \exp(-c*x^d)$   
 $R^2 = 0.9972$



**MELISSA**

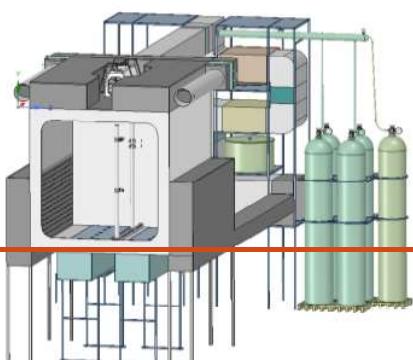
## Caratterizzazione delle colture

Bread wheat	Soybean	Potato
		 Bintje
Durum wheat		 Annabelle
		 Desiree
		 Innovator

**PaCMan**





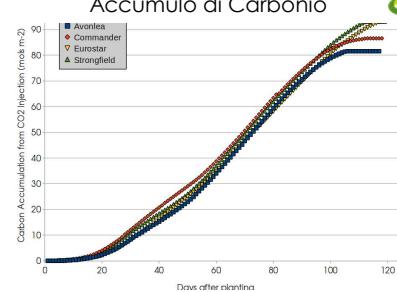

- PIAnt Characterization unit for closed life support system – engineering, MANufacturing & testing
  - Real-time monitoring and control of:
  - Atmospheric module (plant aerial part)
  - Hydroponic module (plant root zone)
- 

**INPUT:**  
energia, acqua, nutrienti, O<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>

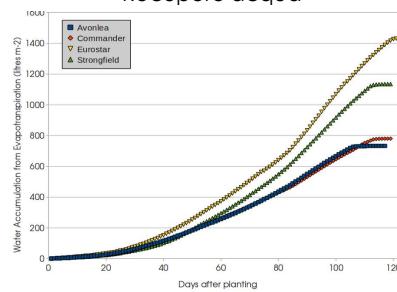


**OUTPUT:**  
acqua, nutrienti, O<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>

**Grano Duro**  
Accumulo di Carbonio



**Recupero acqua**



## In situ Resource Utilisation



Mojave Mars Simulant 1 (MMS-1, NASA®)



**28 m<sup>2</sup> walk-in plant growth chamber (7.0m x 2.1m x 4.0m, WxHxD)**

BANDO DI RICERCA PER MISSIONI FUTURE DI ESPLORAZIONE UMANA DELLO SPAZIO

Area tematica Sistemi Biorigenerativi

*In-situ REsource Bio-Utilization per il supporto alla vita nello Spazio (ReBUS)*

*In-situ REsource Bio-Utilization for life Support system (ReBUS)*



## Le colture fuori suolo per la ricerca

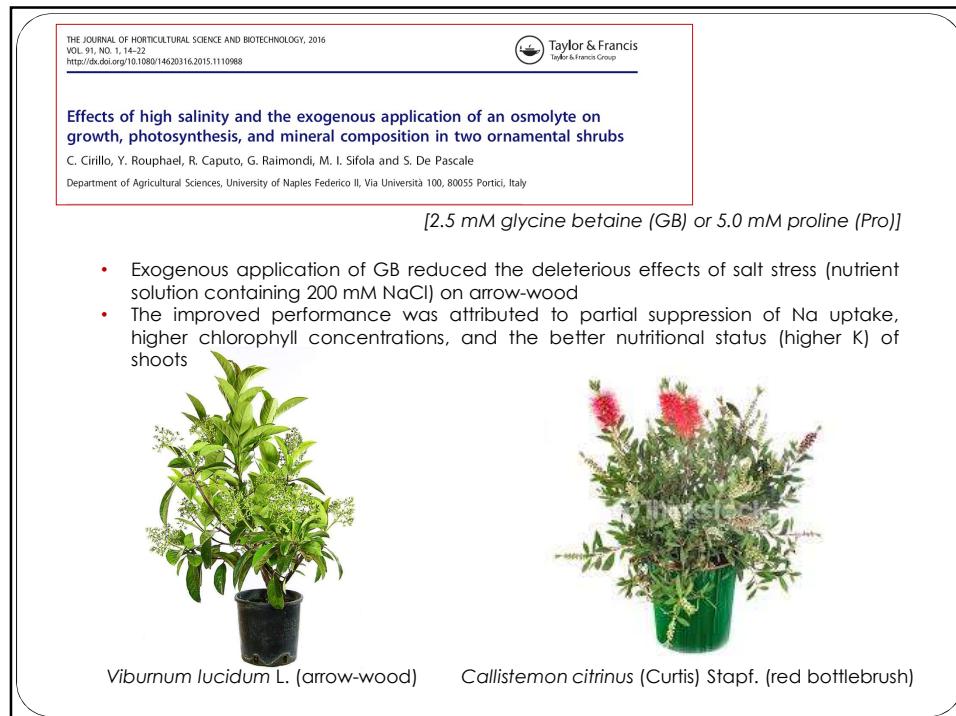
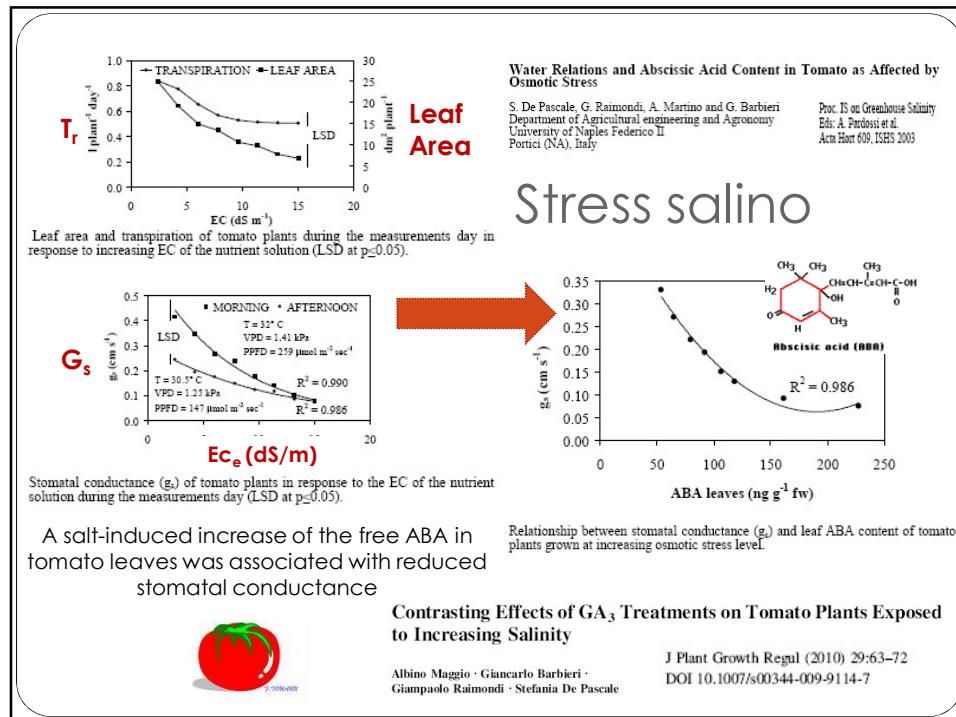
Biologia funzionale  
adattamento a stress abiotici

Modelling

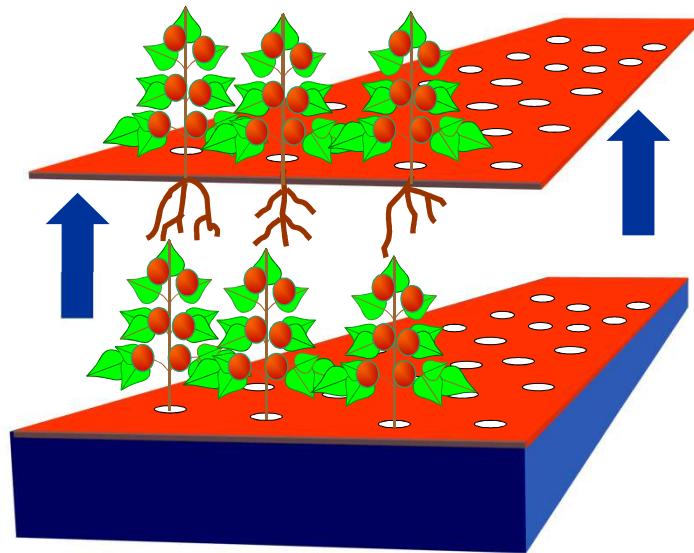
*Testing*

Plant

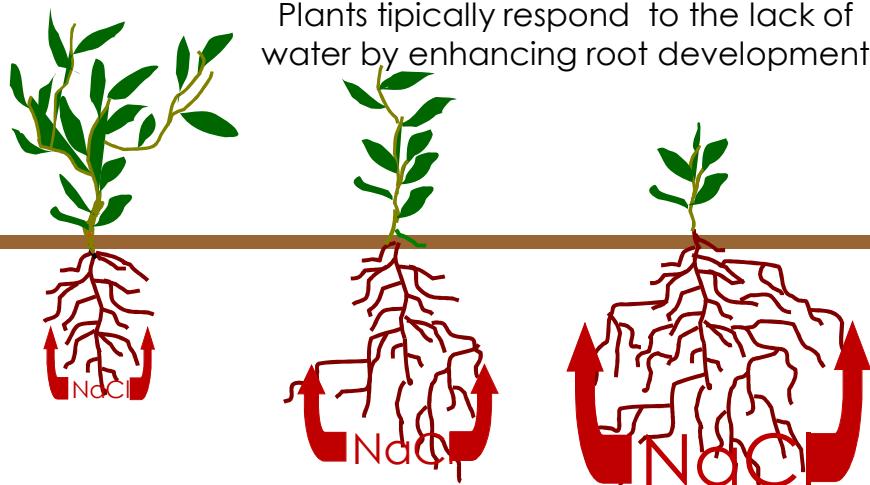




## Hydroponics to study root development

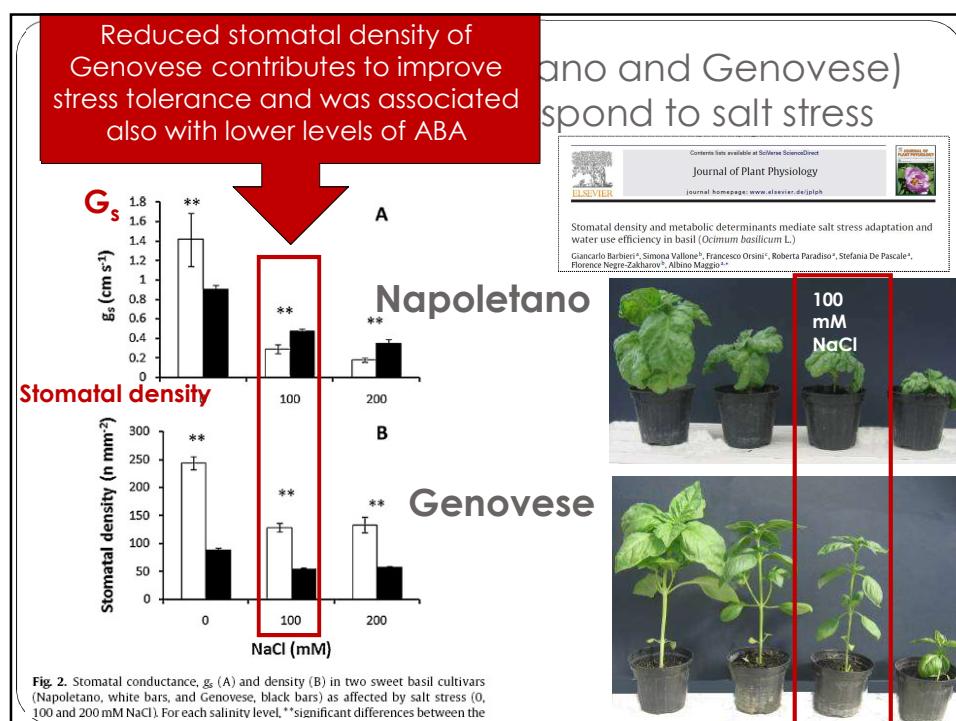
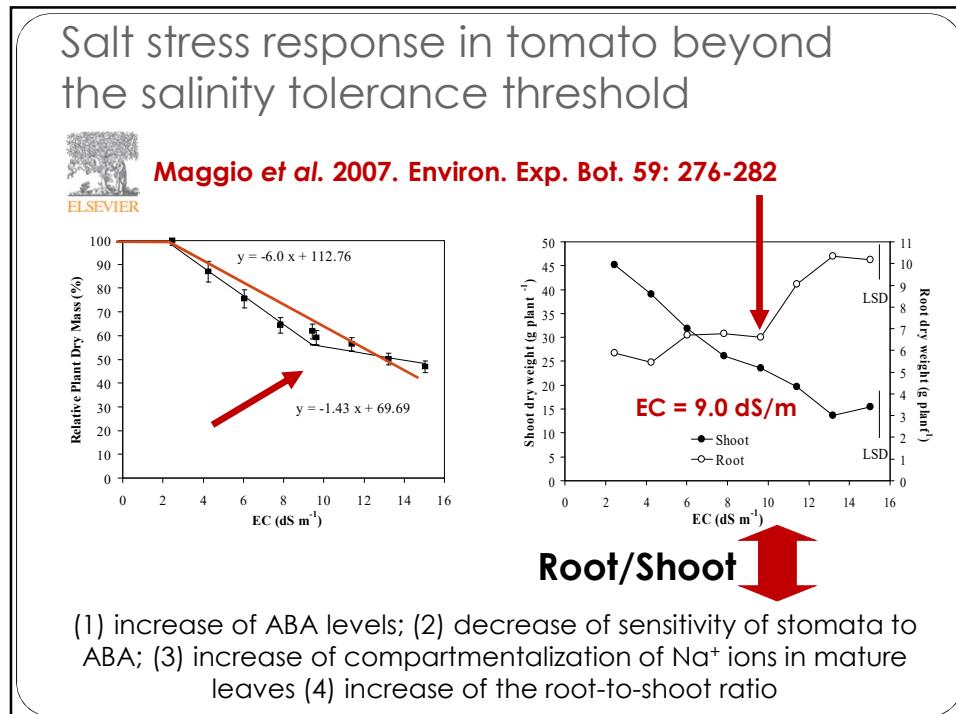


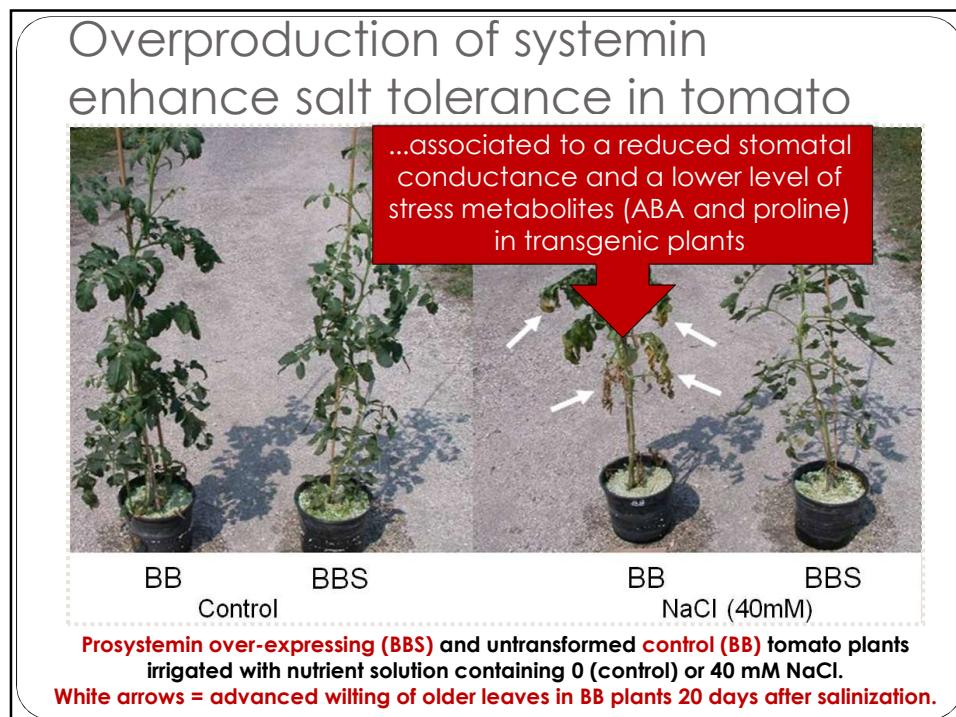
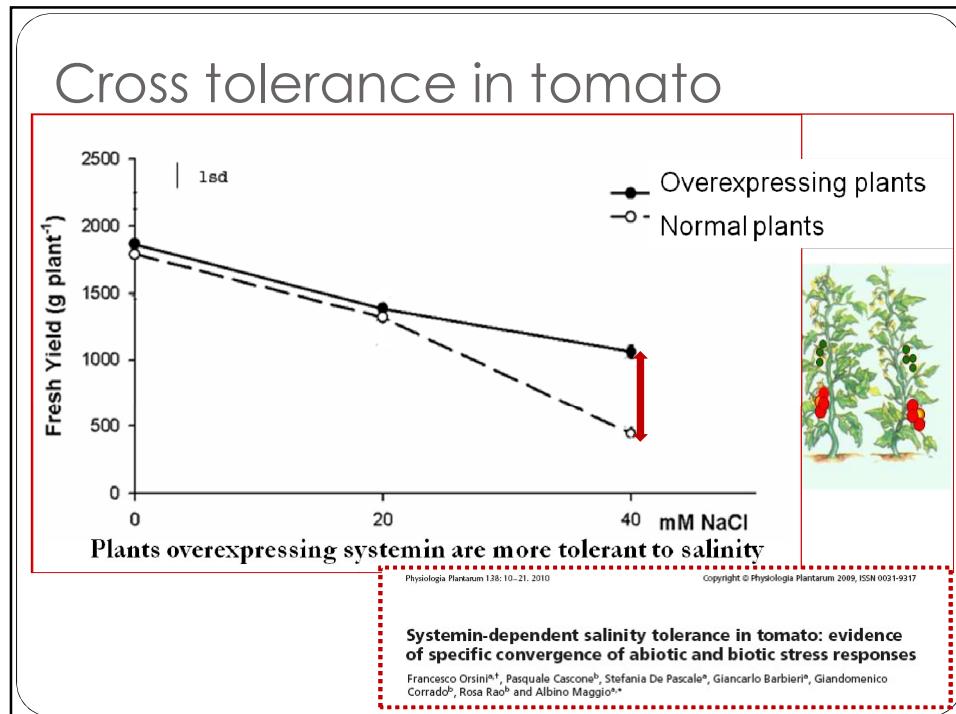
Plants typically respond to the lack of water by enhancing root development



$$\text{Salinity Stress Index} = \frac{\text{moles solute to shoot}}{\text{shoot biomass}}$$

Drought stress  
Salt stress





## Conclusioni

- Sono passati circa 50 anni dalle prime colture fuori suolo su scala commerciale che rappresentano una percentuale ridottissima della superficie destinata a colture ortoflorovivaistiche
- Dilemma: come trasformare un formidabile strumento per la ricerca nel campo della fisiologia vegetale in un sistema di coltivazione su scala commerciale tecnicamente affidabile ed economicamente conveniente?

TRADE-OFF SUOLO VS. FUORI SUOLO?

- CONTRO: piccole dimensioni aziendali, attuale scenario socio-economico internazionale (continui fenomeni di recessione e crescente competizione da paesi emergenti con conseguente diminuzione dei prezzi)  
→ ELEVATO RISCHIO DEGLI INVESTIMENTI IN KNOW-HOW E INNOVAZIONE
- PRO: limitazioni nella disinfezione dei suoli, diminuzione in quantità e qualità delle risorse idriche, politiche di stampo ambientalista dei governi centrali e locali



NUOVE OPPORTUNITÀ!!!

## Il team

- Giancarlo Barbieri
- Albino Maggio
- Youssef Rouphael
- Roberta Paradiso
- Giovanna Aronne
- Veronica De Micco
- Chiara Cirillo
- Rosanna Caputo
- Giampaolo Raimondi
- Antonio Pannico
- Dottorandi e tesisti
- Colleghi e amici



