

## The European project “Virtigation”: an opportunity to learn more about whitefly pests of vegetable crops and to update on strategies for their



*Whiteflies, Vectors, Viruses, Tomato, Cucurbits*



Italy

The project VIRTIGATION, funded by the European Union under the Horizon 2020 programme, involves 25 partners from 12 different countries, and aims to develop solutions for the control of emerging viruses on cucurbits and tomatoes caused by begomoviruses and tobamoviruses (the first ones transmitted by insects). Main entomological objectives of the project are to:

- i) understand plant-virus-vector interactions;
- ii) identify ecological factors that favour outbreaks of infections;
- iii) investigate biology of vector insects and their virus transmission efficiency under climate change conditions;
- iv) enhance and optimize natural resistance, especially for lower attractiveness of plants to vector insects;
- v) develop solutions for the integrated control of the viruses and their vectors.

Within this project, the University of Catania (Department of Agriculture, Food and Environment - DiBA) will have to:

- a) contribute to a survey in various partner countries on methods used for whitefly control, especially *Bemisia tabaci*;
- b) coordinate field trials to evaluate the efficacy of new plant extracts with insecticidal action, also analysing their secondary effects on natural enemies and pollinators;
- c) carry out field trials with the most promising accessions for their resistance to *B. tabaci* MED;
- d) evaluate the combination of different approaches for whitefly control.

### »»» READ MORE

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