Management of diseases, pests and other problems in: GREECE

Greece has the capacity and can easily increase its annual chestnut production to 50,000 tons if poor cultivation techniques and national policies change. In recent years disease & pest management is effective, however, **the chestnut growers are worried as new problems appear on an endless scale**.

Chestnut blight

Chestnut blight has been successfully combated with artificial introduction of hypovirulent strains of *Cryphonectria parasitica* (1998-2009).

Compatible hypovirulent strains of *Cryphonectria parasitica* were introduced in all major chestnut producing counties with over 4 million inoculations. Hypovirulence has established, spread and it is now dominant all over the country.

Ink disease

Ink disease remains the major threat in most chestnut orchards in Greece. Chestnut cultivation in Greece needs irrigation because of long, dry summers. Ink disease is destructive because the growers irrigate heavily.

Injection of Potassium phosphite on sick trees started in 2018. It is now also applied in some regions on a preventative scale to all trees.

Chestnut wasp (*Dryokosmus kuriphilus*)
The wasp entered Greece in 2014 and is spreading fast. A national project was launched in 2018 for the release of *Torymus sinencis.* We hope that biological control will prevent the significant decline of the national chestnut production.

Brown rot *(Gnomoniopsis castaneae)*
As in other parts of Europe, brown rot has started to spread in the orchards of Greece over the last 5 years. We started spraying *Signum* in a combined effort to

protect the trees from anthracnose and brown rot. The results are encouraging, however, more research is needed to study the conditions that create the problem.

Nut eating insects

Cydia fagiglandana
Cydia splendana
Curculio elephas

Greece loses approx. 20% of its annual production because of the above insects. Chestnut growers spray insecticides, thus increasing the cost of production. A more friendly to the environment control method is desirable.

Over-aged chestnut trees

Another important point for the increase of the annual production is the replacement of old trees with young and of more productive varieties. About half of the population of orchard trees is over 100 yrs old. Funding for implementing a 20-yr project to renew the old orchards is necessary.