

## ***Phytophthora* in Italy: the history of a still undiscovered and ever-changing world.**

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This joint review summarizes the history of research on *Phytophthora* in Italy starting from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present day. The aim is to pay tribute to researchers who, with a pioneering spirit, have made fundamental contributes to the knowledge of these plant pathogens and also to update the state of the research on this subject in Italy. The potato blight epidemics caused by *Phytophthora infestans*, which had such devastating effects in Ireland, affected only marginally Italy. Two epidemics, which occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century, the *Phytophthora* trunk gummosis of citrus caused by *P. citrophthora* and the ink disease of chestnut caused by *P. × cambivora*, had a greater social impact and attracted more scientific interest. The first one was dealt with large-scale use of resistant rootstocks and since then it has become endemic; the latter was almost forgotten after the first world war because chestnut fruit lost most of its economic importance as staple food following the exodus from mountain territories. Presently, the Italian research on *Phytophthora* is recognized internationally also thanks to the collaboration with eminent scientists from other countries. Advanced research lines include the study of *Phytophthora* communities in different ecosystems and the development of new molecular techniques to improve the diagnosis of these pathogens and analyze the genetic variability of their populations. Several new species have been discovered and described in ornamental, agricultural and forest plants, in different environments, including agricultural and natural ecosystems, gardens and amenity parks.