

Abstract

The Altauera e Monte Ceva Organic Farms try to contribute to the preservation and the improvement of biodiversity by offering an array of "tasty and savory" emotional knowledge. Biodiversity is a characteristic of each place, and is therefore intimately linked to the Genius Loci.

Objectives:

We aim to recreate the spirit of the Mediterranean diet in the Mediterranean basin territories, with the twofold objective of fostering the respect of biodiversity and harmonic and sustainable cooperation.

Methods: our methods involve creating a knowledge-based interchange network between people living in surrounding rural areas and in neighboring cities.

Main activities:

- *meetings with citizens and with local institutions;*
- *release of a web site, including an intranet reserved to involved project partners;*
- *setup of the vegetable garden and preparation of gathering places where guests may meet;*
- *checking the vegetable garden contributions.*

Results: the main results we aim to achieve are:

- *linking local communities' socio-cultural and economic needs to longterm sustainability;*
- *creating wild herbs biodiversity maps;*
- *educating young people on environmental issues, helping the creation of new specialized jobs;*
- *attracting attention from local and international institutions on original methods of territory management.*

Conclusion: We hope that citizens, and in particular young people be educated and put in contact with a culture and resources supporting sustainability.

Keywords: *Biodiversity, Environment, Genius Loci, Mediterranean Diet, Sustainability, Nutrition*

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■ Introduction

Proposing, offering, and sharing food are ways, usually very effective, to engage in communication with other people, and to invoke feelings through taste and desire. If “eating biodiversity” became preferred to conventional food, it would arouse interest for Nature in those who are not spontaneously attracted by it. Food is often the only way to stimulate them to create deep bonds with the environment and to become its active protectors, for personal experience and for interest to continue to savor tastes that would otherwise be lost. Food is also one of the most ancient means of socialization and therefore of building and expanding a network of collective knowledge, useful to disseminate concepts and practices to protect biodiversity.

Among all subjects related to the Mediterranean diet, the *Altaura e Monte Ceva Organic Farms* try to provide a small contribution to the preservation and improvement of Biodiversity. We neither wish nor are able to change people’s minds; there are university professors for this. In our Farm we employ many means to build strong emotional bonds between Nature and people, hoping to reduce the distance between them. Perhaps the most universal method is “at the table”, and with this intent, for many years, we have committed ourselves to experiment using both cultivated and spontaneous vegetables in cooking. Our goal is to offer, to the guests of our farm, an array of “tasty and savory” emotional knowledge. If we are able to create a passion for “biodiverse nutrition”, we will have created the desire for constant interaction with Nature and persuaded people to adopt more respectful and eco-friendly, spontaneous behaviors. All falling in love is preceded and kept alive by courtship; we achieve this by conversing with guests, explaining, proposing quotes, songs, etymologies, comparisons, anecdotes, picture reproductions, subject experiences, and recipe illustrations. A suitable welcoming is an essential ingredient for the success of the Mediterranean diet. Starting from my experience in Veneto, North-Eastern Italy, I propose some seasonal vegetarian dishes, whose ingredients, easily available and/or cultivable in our territory, are hardly known for their use in cooking. I hope, in this way, to enrich tables with many typical ingredients of the Mediterranean diet. Increasing their utilization fosters their survival and therefore their preservation and the improvement of biodiversity. The misuse of a species causes the loss of all knowledge related to it. We try to interest our restaurant’s guests in food’s culture, allowing them to take part in the choices of the main components used in the dish preparation, offering them theme evenings in which we serve various types of tomatoes, or of *Brassicaceae* or of beans, or of apples, etc. Together we taste and discuss them. The conversation with the guests serves to guide our next year’s sowing choices and to put in contact cities with the countryside. Before eating, when it is possible, we visit the vegetable garden with our guests.

The Mediterranean diet, which in November 2012 was declared a world heritage, is one of the most significant examples of a lifestyle respectful of personal well-being and of Nature. The motivations for this recognition underline the importance of such a link, characteristic of the Mediterranean diet, between nutrition and the sharing of feelings and cultural and economic interchanges as the foundation of reciprocal knowledge. This is a necessary condition to promote the respect of diversity in culture, in the environment, and of biodiversity itself; see Gepts (2012) and Shiva (2000).

The spirit of the Mediterranean diet is a model to be practiced and spread beyond the boundaries of the Mediterranean: it creates bonds between people, forms a connection between people and their environment, and is a great incentive to artistic creativity in all its expressions.

The feature in which we are mainly interested in this context is its link with the conservation and the improvement of biodiversity, which is a characteristic of the place, and is intimately related to the *Genius Loci*, the spirit of the place as it was called by the Latins, according to Servius Marius Honoratus, (a Latin writer who lived between IV and V century, A.D.), who wrote *Nullus Locus Sine Genio* (Thilo, 1881) meaning, “no place is without its Genius”. In fact, every place has its own supernatural entity, its own nature. Every place features its own specificity leading to its more concealed meaning and purpose, to its position in space and in the community, to its role, its usage. Specific is its color, its shape, its vibration, its speed, its density, its taste. Specific is the attitude with which this place is and was visited and inhabited by human beings, animals, and vegetables. Specific is its silent presence in the territory. The spirit of the place, *Genius Loci*, is that silent wonder, that deep emotion that puts in relationship and binds forever the people to that place after they have perceived its “spirit” that makes it unique and that makes it possible to enjoy images, colors, scents, tastes, a view, a village, a villa, a church, as a whole with the surrounding environment. It’s the *Genius Loci* that instills in people the love for a place, inspiring them to come back again and again to visit and protect it.

The protection of the *Genius Loci* is recently becoming a very important element in the field of territory protection by UNESCO, Council of Europe, and the European Institutions. In October 2008, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS, has organized an international scientific symposium entitled “Finding the Spirit of Place – Between the Tangible and the Intangible” and adopted the Declaration of Quebec known as The Preservation of the Spirit of Place (del Bianco, 2008). The spirit of the place is a very precious gift that comes to us from the past filtered by the time and by the life of many generations. For this it is necessary also for the very same life of the local communities.

Strictly related to the Mediterranean diet is the defense of food biodiversity, in contrast with today’s penchant to dictate all over the world a homogeneous lifestyle, devoid of links with the local day to day life. In the 1980s

in Italy, land in the middle of the Mediterranean, perhaps not by chance, was born the Slow Food movement thanks to Carlo Petrini (Petrini, 2001). It initially dealt with defending Italian regional foods and culinary traditions, and later on gave birth to a global food-defense movement, and therefore of local cultures. Agriculture has long been considered an activity oriented only toward profit, converting itself into an irresponsible, intensive agriculture, without taking into account ancient agricultural practices entailing a greater respect toward the environment and sustainable usage of environmental resources. Let us keep in mind the etymology of agriculture, deriving from Latin *ager*, “field” and *cultura*, “taking care of”. Now, more than ever, limitations and dangers related to today’s intensive farming are evident, and therefore we are observing, thanks also to popularization and information endeavors provided by Slow Food, a return to a sustainable, organic agriculture, attentive to the respect of the environment and the needs of local communities (Howard, 1940 and Fukunoka, 1975).

■ Objectives

When people feel intimately connected to the places they live, work, entertain themselves, from which they acquire nourishment, they certainly will invest and dedicate themselves to such places and will spontaneously protect them, will participate in the life of the place, and will feel responsible for its future life. The bond between people and the place they live, with its nature, artwork, work of culture, handed down by our ancestors, is a sort of social capital, perhaps the most meaningful and important so that a community may continue to live in a place.

I dream of realizing a project, “moving vegetable gardens-vegetable gardens of hope”, aimed at reviving the spirit of the Mediterranean in the territories of the Mediterranean basin, with the twofold goal to promote unifying to face common challenges, respecting biodiversity and pleasant and sustainable cooperation, helping to obtain in the process more secure southern maritime boundaries for the European Union. To achieve these goals it is of the utmost importance that populations and in particular the young, who are our future, be educated and exposed to a culture and a competence regarding sustainability by encouraging meetings and exchanges that foster mutual acquaintance, which is the basis to establish good relationships. The project, hopes that people, living in countries of the Mediterranean basin and united by the common interest in learning and practicing sustainable cultivation methods, both through self-commitment and mutual cooperation, will be able to win the battle against ignorance toward Nature. Mutual knowledge will be followed by relationships based upon trust and collaboration, prevailing over distrust or, worse, enmity between people, communities, nations,

and ethnic groups, often caused only by lack of opportunities to know each other, motivated by common interests and goals. “Orti in movimento – Orti di speranza” could, therefore, be defined as a project against ignorance and in favor of knowledge. It is a widespread belief that today’s global crisis is not only economic but ethical and on account of ignorance. Nature is a part of us, not external but an exterior that puts all of us into a close relationship. Not respecting and improving the environment around us, it is not sufficient to conserve it! All of us become sick and all our actions towards Nature are reflected not only on us but on all earth’s creatures. Starting from this viewpoint we believe that understanding and defending Nature, to ensure a better life for all, are motivations common to ethnic groups, religions, nationalities, and age groups, and that loving Nature is a prayer to God for everyone, since all religions recognize their god as the creator of Nature. Many vegetable gardens compose the planetary garden! May it be a path toward global peace! (Clément, 1991). The project has as a faithful ally, to stimulate a common interest originating from the primary need of nutrition, Nature, in its characteristic function as a source of vegetable sustenance by means of the cultivation of species in the Vegetable garden via environmentally respectful methods and responsible utilization of spontaneous species growing outside the garden. Wild, edible herbs provide the majority of their produce and properties in spring when the vegetable garden is not yet productive, hence they complement each other perfectly. Essential for achieving our goal is the continuous exchange of information and experiences related to the sustainable solution of the problems that will be encountered during the project realization. This exchange will put in contact populations of different ethnic groups, deeply motivated to mutual knowledge by the interest for a common project, where they will be committed to cooperate to satisfy the primary need for nutrition in a sustainable way, promoting at the same time intercultural dialog. In this way a network of knowledge will connect not only the people involved in the project but also those living in neighboring rural areas with those living in cities. It is necessary that they begin to collaborate and do not remain separate entities, perhaps thinking that they have conflicting goals. Every one, with his own capabilities and willingness, will be able to contribute to the growth of the network and therefore to change. The adoption of these innovative ways will become the basis from which to found a sustainable local administration, promoting cultural dialog, strengthening the endogenous potential of the involved territories and making the southern maritime boundaries of the European Union safer. The local population will be encouraged to exchange plants and/or seeds believed to be endangered after having realized that the number of specimens has recently diminished and/or is grown only in their own vegetable garden because they have inherited them from their parents. This will be a motivation directly involving the local population with the project and a special contribution for the preservation of biodiversity and for the creation of a map of Mediterranean biodiversity. Within the vegetable garden there will

be a space where locals, who will cultivate in their own plots and by means of nature-respectful methods, plants typical of the area, will have the opportunity to sell their products. A friendship point will be recognized that will provide a space in which everyone will be free to pray in his/her own faith, whichever it be! Therefore, nothing static or predefined, but a path to be discovered with a precise goal in mind: recover a good relationship with the surrounding environment in order to interact with it synergistically and be able to involve local communities in collaboration for this project of common interest, regaining good practices of communal life. A "natural" evolution will be the opening of the botanical vegetable garden as an educational Vegetable Garden for schools. The project "Orti in movimento - Orti di speranza" will provide local administrators with an original method to improve territorial policies.

■ Methods

Our methodology has two aspects: one concerns the knowledge of the individual farmer and the other the distribution and exchange of it.

The wise gardener will become the guardian and guarantor of the harmony between all the natural components and, in doing so, he will ensure its contribution to a social agriculture, a responsible and sustainable practice.

The passage, from the exploitation of nature in a conventional-grow garden to the care of the garden in a sustainable way, necessarily happens through a thorough knowledge of Nature; a knowledge that overcomes the ignorance that doesn't measure the effects arising from the indissoluble relationship of cause and effect, binding all our actions to the consequences on ourselves, on others and on the world in which we live.

The intention is not to substantially modify the ground, but to intervene as little as possible in order to preserve those elements that make this piece of our planet unique.

It will be a continuous and endless collaboration between man and nature: a way of life.

A small portion of the land will be left completely free to evolve at its wishes, without any intervention of the gardener, and it will be an important workshop on the biodiversity and phytosociology of the area.

The aim is to restore a good relationship with the surrounding world, to interact in a synergistic way, and be able to involve the various local communities. Collaboration on this project of common interest will hopefully help recover good practices of living together.

The workers must respect all aspects of the environment. Time is needed to acquaint ourselves with that environment and to understand ourselves within it. This is accomplished through waiting and listening for the changes that are occurring around - and within - us. We cannot take the next step

without having fully comprehended the previous step, let alone comprehend any indications of what the future may bring.

The other aspect of our methods involves creating a knowledge-based interchange network aimed at interconnecting not only the people directly involved in the project, but also others, both living in surrounding rural areas and in neighboring cities, so that they shall not remain separate entities but will start communicating together. Each one, according to his/her own capabilities and resources, will be able to contribute to extending the network and therefore to a positive change.

It will be required of the local population to bring plants and / or seeds which they consider endangered, having recognized that the number of individual plants (for the land knowledge that they only have) is decreasing and / or that they grow only in their garden, received as inheritance from their fathers. This will cause direct involvement of the local population in the project and a valuable contribution to the preservation of biodiversity.

Inside the garden there will be a place where the locals will cultivate parcels of property, with friendly methods of Nature, seeding plants that may only grow in the domestic gardens of the area, and will have the opportunity to sell their products.

It will also be recognizable that those who enter the Friendship Garden are free to pray to their own beliefs, whatever those beliefs may be!

Examples

Cheese with fig leaf syrup. *Ficus carica* L. Fig. Our own dishes are not for the rich. One among all is liked, and I too like it very much for its flavor: fig leaf syrup. Another reason I like it very much is because in the Mediterranean basin everybody can prepare it, even the poorest. Characteristic syrup obtained only from the young leaves of the tree, in which we recognize the intense and Mediterranean taste of the fig, can be combined both with sweet and salty dishes, in particular fresh or seasoned cheese, whose taste it enhances. It is very effective against cough and throat ache. In the rainy summer of 2014 the fruits (which are really flowers) of fig trees were tasteless and when we tried cooking them with sugar to produce jam, it was impossible to obtain an acceptable result. We then looked at the plant with different eyes and "noticed" the leaves too, which are often an unexpected resource. So for the first time we have prepared fig leaf syrup that tastes more of fig than the figs themselves! Recipe for fig leaf syrup: Carefully wash the fig leaves, break them into small pieces, boil water, and pour it over the leaves with the juice of two organic lemons. Close the container and leave it to macerate for twenty-four hours. The day after, filter it, add one and a half kg of sugar, and simmer it for twenty minutes over a very mild flame. Sterilize the bottles and fill the bottles while still hot. Leave it resting for about twenty days, then use it for summer refreshments, some drops on fruit salads, ice cream, yogurt,

and seasoned cheese. I have made known to a few restaurants on the Greek island of Simi that have immediately included it in their menu paired with Greek cheese.

Syrup with elder flowers, water, some mint leaves, and prosecco wine. *Sambucus nigra* L. Elder tree. The elder tree is a plant present in all the Mediterranean, up to Iran and Northern Europe. It was well known in Syria and Palestine too. In Lebanon the elder tree is present in the flyers of El Chouf natural park of the Lebanon cedar trees, but not far away from there, in Sidon, it was unheard of and completely unused. When I go to the humanitarian mission in Lebanon I often bring some bottles of elder flower syrup as gifts. Last time I went there, we compared our products, because they had begun to make their own syrup.

Soft bread with ricotta cheese and coriander. *Coriandrum sativum* L., Coriander. Throughout the whole Mediterranean, the leaves are used for soups and for seasoning meats and salads but not in Veneto and, as far as I know, very little in Italy. Bringing home from Mediterranean countries coriander seeds I was curious to try sowing them, and with great surprise I realized that it grows and reproduces itself with great ease, as if it were in its original place. It is wonderful, and the bees like it very much. Not long ago, while tidying up some old books, I stumbled upon an old edition of the *Nuova Enciclopedia Agraria Italiana* New Agricultural Encyclopedia (Forti, 1929) where the coriander is included in the volume dedicated to vegetable cultivation. The coriander seed is indicated as a popular component of both culinary and liqueur preparations, and it was also the center of an important trade market! I went right away to interview the elderly to discover whether any of them remembered having cultivated or tasted it, but none of them had ever heard of it. The use of coriander has been completely lost. In the last few years it has become a stable guest of our vegetable garden.

Tasty salad

In spring we can prepare a rich and tasty salad with leaves of 1-lamb's lettuce, 2-garlic mustard, 3-common dandelion, 4-common mallow, 5-plantain, 6-flatweed, 7-wild lettuce, 8-beaked hawk's beard, 9-goat's beard, 10-borage, 11-shepherd's purse, 12-burdock, 13-rampion bellflower, 14-peppermint, and flowers of 15-daisy, 16-Judas's tree, 17-common sowthistle, 18-common chicory, and 19-some raw seed of pea. As a condiment we shall use oil, salt, and vinegar. The taste of vinegar, rather than deriving from the fermentation of grapes and thus being alcoholic, can be obtained by adding to the salad leaves of 20-garden sorrel and/or of 21-sorrel.

• *Valerianella locusta* (L.) Laterr. Lamb's lettuce. It is possible to buy it at most supermarkets, cultivate it in the Farm according to the methods of organic farming and find it, spontaneously grown in the fields of the Farm. Together with the three kinds of *Valerianella* we have the opportunity to

point out the different sizes of the leaves: from the largest, those bought at the traditional supermarket, to the smallest, the ones which grow spontaneously. Inversely proportional to the leaf's size is the intensity of its color and taste. We envisage that the plant which grows with difficulties, having to fight to survive, would emphasize its own characteristics, which, for use in cooking, is tantamount to concentrating taste as well as nutritional powers. This plant is suitable to season omelettes and soups.

• *Alliaria petiolata* (M. Bieb.) Cavara & Grande. Garlic mustard. Its flowers and leaves have the flavor of garlic but not so strong, are great to use in salads and to season butter and soft cheeses. With its seeds it is possible to prepare a sauce resembling mustard.

• *Taraxacum officinale* (L.) Weber ex F.H. Wigg. Common dandelion. With the flower buds, put in brine, it would be possible to deceive a Sicilian, passing them as capers and, with the syrup made with its flowers, bewilder a beekeeper, making him believe that it is dandelion honey. Its raw leaves enrich salads and sautéed are a great cooked vegetable. A good coffee substitute can be obtained from its toasted roots

• *Malva sylvestris* L. Common mallow. Its leaves, flowers, and buds are great for salads, soups, omelettes, and risotto. Additionally, its buds are brine and its flowers battered and fried, are delicacies.

• *Plantago lanceolata* L. and *Plantago major* L. Ribwort plantain and Greater plantain. Raw leaves are excellent in salads while cooked ones have a taste resembling that of artichokes. The juice of the leaves soothes the ailment caused by insects' stings, and grated roots are a remedy against toothache. Like *Parietaria officinalis* L. it is used to make a green dye.

• *Hypochoeris radicata* L. Flatweed.

• *Lactuca scariola* L. Wild lettuce.

• *Crepis vesicaria* L. Beaked hawk's beard.

• *Tragopogon porrifolius* L. and *Tragopogon pratensis* L. Goat's beard. Young buds can be eaten with boiled eggs like asparagus, while dried roots, pulverized into flour are used to prepare bread and sweets.

• *Borago officinalis* L. Borage. We use only small leaves in salads due to the fuzz that, when the leaves grow bigger, becomes annoying. Leaves can also be dried to be used during the winter time and are excellent battered and fried, as a filling for ravioli, for risotto, and cooked like spinach. Its beautiful blue flowers, tasting like cucumbers, can season salads or can be used in a Greek tzatziki as a cucumber substitute, since they accurately reproduce its flavor and are more easily digestible.

• *Capsella bursa-pastoris* (L.) Medik. Shepherd's purse. Its leaves are great for omelettes. Unripe fruits are spicy and can be used as a substitute for pepper. The roots too are edible.

• *Arcium lappa* L. Burdock. Raw leaves are used in salads when they are small, while roots and stalks are consumed boiled.

• *Campanula rapunculus* L. Rampion bellflower. It is a precious species

protected in the Euganean Hills area. Its price is comparable with that of truffles.

- *Mentha x piperita* L. Peppermint. In the past the plant was used as a repellent against fleas and other insects. It was also used to disinfect water.
- *Bellis perennis* L. Flowers are used in salads and to add a special flavor to potato soups.
- *Cercis siliquastrum* L. Judas' tree.
- *Sonchus oleraceus* (L.) L. Common sow-thistle.
- *Cichorium intybus* L. Common chicory.
- *Pisum sativum* L. Pea. In Lebanon I learned to appreciate raw peas. In addition to its food utilization, in Ancient Egypt it was used to heal stomach ailments, mixing peas with beer. Peas are very frequently used in the Veneto regional cooking, under the name of bisì. A very well-known dish employing this vegetable is risi e bisì, rice with peas, prepared by cooking separately rice, then draining it, and adding a sauce of peas. Risi e bisì was the celebratory dish of spring.

Vinegar:

- *Rumex acetosa* L. Garden sorrel. The leaves are used raw in salads or cooked in soups and omelettes. Children suck its stalk to quench their thirst.
 - *Oxalis acetosella* L. Sorrel. Some tender leaves are used in place of vinegar in salads, making them refreshing. The leaves are also used in fruit salads and in sweets. It is even possible to prepare a drink that tastes like lemonade. The water in which the plant has been boiled is used to whiten fabric or rusted metal objects. It has depurative, diuretic, and refreshing properties. In the farm we have used it also for an experiment: we used it to calibrate an all-natural limus paper. We have used a white linen cloth and have colored it with the juice of a purple cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* L. cultivar capitata). We poured over it some lemon drops, obviously acid, and verified that the linen's color became pink, then we added some bicarbonate, a base, and the color turned green. The same purple cabbage-colored linen became pink when put in contact with the juice of oxalis and then green with the more common oat grass blades.
- Other information about these and other edible herbs can be found in Vaglio (2014), Luciano *et al.* (2008), and Massonio (1627).

■ Main Activities

Step 1

The definition of conceptual and methodological bases for an implementation of the concept of garden, for identification and use of edible wild herbs in the Mediterranean context.

- Meetings with citizens and with local institutions representatives;
- meetings with project's partner;
- writing and condensation of the garden's manual;
- release of a web site, including an intranet reserved to involved project partners;
- international workshop presentation of the model of garden;
- illustrative leaflets and brochures.

Step 2

Checking the vegetable garden contributions, in terms of knowledge and usage of edible wild herbs as a tool aiding local administrations to foster regional territorial policies.

- Works for ground preparation for the construction of the garden;
- setup of the vegetable garden and preparation of gathering places where guests may meet, according to cultural and spiritual diversities;
- construction and equipping of a building for hospitality and meetings, following environmentally friendly and self-sustainability criteria;
- final presentation of the project with the organization of a demonstrative event with visits to the realized actions.

■ Results

The project will have a positive impact on the socio-economic activities of the land.

The creation of an eco-tourism activity which is sustainable in the long term, is not only important for the local economy, but also for young native people that, trying to find job, leave the native place to work. The development of new environmental competences for the implementation of the proposed innovative nature conservation actions will produce further local job opportunities. Eco-tourism will also favor the conservation of the cultural heritage in the area. Actions will be explicitly discussed with institutions regarding the integration of project results with future management practices concerning the improvement of territory governance.

The project gives a chance to educate people and involve them in conservation of biodiversity. Participatory processes will aim to build in local communities the awareness that biodiversity is a resource to be protected. This will contribute to involving citizens and local institutions/bodies in routine surveillance and maintenance of the landscape.

The sustainable farming methods have also a positive impact on CO2 discharge in the atmosphere. We also aim to create wild herbs biodiversity maps.

We don't have available statistics on the appreciation of our dishes but we have been praised many times: our customers, prof M.G Paoletti with prof M. Altieri and prof. N. Turner, Lady V. Shiva, People to People American groups and children visiting our educational farm, awarded Tripadvisor recognition.

They appreciated our dishes and the meaning with which the food is "filled", as a means to contribute to biodiversity preservation, and our way to attract people closer to biodiversity by means of the food.

People to People American groups of students aged 14-18, that are our future, in their trip to Europe, they visited the farm and their teachers wrote:

L. Veen, 2015: «the kids and I learned so much from you. One of the boys wants to finish school and come back to work with you; he was so impressed by everything he saw, did, and ate! He was the one who said he doesn't like zucchini, yet he said yours was so delicious!»

M. Milkó, 2014: «this was one of the best days for me and a very interesting one from most of the delegates. They experienced the nature that one does not see in their area. That is why they were quite interested in the bees, animals and even innocent games like jump rope. Everyone loved the feast of fresh food/vegetables - I read that in some of their journals - as well. Thanks again!»

J. Filipski, New Jersey People to People leader, 2014: «visit to farm as a teacher of foods/cooking. I am always amazed at the lack of knowledge students have about food origins and production, so I found the day to be very educational for both myself and the students. But I really think that everyone took something new or thought provoking away with them after the day spent with you and your staff. I thought you would like to know some of the students' thoughts. I could tell by their writings that their visit to your farm had an impact on their thinking, which is exactly what I'm sure you hope to do.»

In the end, when children, coming to visit the farm, taste the honey directly from the comb and say that they like it more than candy you buy at the supermarket, we have achieved our goal.

Encouraged by these results on the farm we thought it might be useful to disseminate and exchange these practices in a broader context with similar characteristics as the Mediterranean basin.

■ Conclusion

We hope that citizens, and in particular young people, who are our future, will be educated and put in contact with culture and resources supporting sustainability, by promoting exchanges and meetings with the goal of increasing mutual awareness; that is the first on which to build upon good relationships.

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