

A mystery kiwifruit vine disease has been spreading through Italy and is expected to result in national production declines.

Now this disease, which affects the root system, has hit the country's main production area, the Agro Pontino, which has around 10,000 planted hectares of kiwifruit. This is according to Confagricoltura, which is actively monitoring the situation throughout Italy.

In the area of Verona, the disease is believed to have affected more than half of the entire dedicated area (1,800 hectares on about 2,500). In Friuli Venezia Giulia, where the cultivated area in 2020 is just over 500 hectares (Istat), the disease could affect about 10% of the plants.

Crops were also affected in Lombardy, in the area of Mantua, and marginally in Emilia Romagna and Calabria. In Lazio the first cases were found three years ago, but now there is a recrudescence of the disease in the Agro Pontino that is estimated to affect on average 20% of the areas, almost 2000 hectares of lost orchards.

This represents a huge hit for a the world's second-largest kiwifruit grower after China. Inevitably the growing spread of the disease will have significant impacts on national production.

Various hypotheses have been formulated to explain the origin of the kiwifruit vine disease, but scientists have not yet reached a conclusion. However, a series of causes seem to contribute, presumably accentuated by the effects of climate change.

Photo: [confagricoltura.it](http://confagricoltura.it)