

A CONTRIBUTION TO ALFALFA GENETIC IMPROVEMENT. TWO NEW CVS: KATANA (WITH WHITE FLOWERS) AND LUCREZIA (WITH YELLOW FLOWERS)

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Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa* L.) is a forage crop among the most cultivated in the world, for its high quality and productivity. In Italy is the most important forage crop, covering 66% of the seeded forage area. Its cultivation is particularly diffused in north Italy.

In 1996 the EUROGEN research team started a new breeding programme, obtaining finally two cultivars of alfalfa with peculiar flower colors: Katana, with white flowers and Lucrezia, with yellow flowers, both of particular interest regarding productivity, longevity, quality of forage and field resistance to *Fusarium*.

The basic material was provided by the Senior Author, who identified and produced the two basic populations: the first one coming from Sannio (Province of Benevento) and the second one derived from Latium's Maremma (Province of Viterbo).

In the paper are described the breeding methods utilized, the genetic basis of flower colors and the results of the agronomic evaluation of characters connected with green forage quantity and quality and the analysis of phenotypic correlations of characters related to seed production.