

Spain: Melon production increased by planting it next to green beans

Researchers from the Soil and Water Management, Use and Recovery Group of the Polytechnic University of Cartagena (UPCT) have managed to increase melon production by 30 to 50 percent by planting it next to green beans and thus reducing soil contamination, as reported by the educational institution in a statement. This is one of the first results of the AsociaHortus project, which is researching crop associations in horticulture and their capacity to improve agricultural productivity and ecosystem services.

This study, led by the UPCT, is evaluating the effect of combining typical horticultural crops of the Mediterranean basin, such as broccoli in winter and melon in summer, with simultaneous plantings of legume species. AsociaHortus aims to increase the amount of nutrients, improve the soil structure and retain carbon. Researchers will evaluate the effect of different crop combinations, according to head researcher Raúl Zornoza, from the area of Edaphology and Agricultural Chemistry of the UPCT and secretary of the Spanish Society of Soil Science.

According to Zornoza, "the association of intensive crops with legumes is an example of the policies aimed at preventing degradation and edaphic contamination. The Spanish Society of Soil Science wants to promote the use of such practices to help preserve the quality and health of the region's agricultural lands."

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