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I International
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in Mountain Regions

Book of Abstracts



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Sy06P15

An insight into the Portuguese sector of aromatic and medicinal plants

Manuel Ângelo Rodrigues, Sandra Afonso, Isabel Q. Ferreira, Margarida Arrobas
Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Bragança, Portugal

In recent years in Portugal, many new farmers began to settle in the medicinal and aromatic plants (MAP) sector. They are mostly young, highly educated, though not always in agronomy. Almost all adopted organic farming practices and put soil screen for protection against weeds. In this work, we provide a diagnosis of the situation of the new producers and give up a guideline to mitigate the situation that has arisen. Shortly after installation, virtually all producers are experiencing great difficulties, because they cannot fertilize their plants and the biomass they produce is very low. The application of solid fertilizer and organic amendments is not possible due to soil screen. They have appeared on the market liquid organic fertilizer which can be used in fertigation, but their costs are prohibitive. Studies for three years with verbena, lemon balm and peppermint have shown that these fertilization solutions give tenuous productivity increases, revealing the plants deep symptoms of nitrogen deficiency very quickly. In the future seems to be no alternative to the removal of the screen and to the introduction into the system of a livestock component or legumes with ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen. Some legumes can be grown during the winter in an asynchronous cycle with the main MAP grown in Portugal. However, these cropping technologies have not yet been tested in Portugal, which can leave the producers vulnerable to error.