



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

First Legume Society Conference
2013: A Legume Odyssey

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Book of Abstracts

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The effect of legume cover crops on soil phosphorus availability

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Legume can fix atmospheric N and sequester carbon. Some legumes are able to uptake sparingly soluble soil phosphorus. Additionally, all those effects may contribute to a beneficial increase in soil microbial activity. In this work three ground-cover treatments were imposed to an olive orchard located in NE Portugal: Natural vegetation (Nat veg); Natural vegetation fertilized with 60 kg N ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹ (Nat veg +N); and a mixture of self-reseeding annual legumes (Legumes). Three years after the establishment of the ground-cover treatments, soil samples were taken from the 0-10 and 10-20 cm depths. Extractable soil P was determined by the Olsen and Egner-Riehm methods, the acid phosphatase activity accordingly to Tabatabai and Bremner and soil organic carbon by the Walkley-Black method. In the 0-10 cm soil layer, the acid phosphatase activity was significantly higher in the treatments Legumes and Nat veg+N (7.81 and 7.30 µg p-Nitrophenol g⁻¹) than in the Nat veg (4.73 µg p-N g⁻¹). Considering both soil layers, there was observed a significant linear relationship between oxidizable organic C and the acid phosphatase activity ($R^2=0.69$). The P extracted by the Egner-Riehm method was better correlated with the acid phosphatase activity ($R^2=0.42$) than P extracted by the Olsen method ($R^2=0.31$) when all samples were taken into account. It seems that a similar effect of the legumes species on the acid phosphate activity may be achieved with the natural vegetation if fertilized with N.