

Dr. Francesca De Luca, PhD, (female) is a senior researcher at IPSP-CNR where she is group leader involved mainly in the characterization of alien, quarantine and new species of plant parasitic nematodes of agricultural interests from Italy and from foreign countries. She carried out study on the biodiversity of soil nematofauna, using metagenomics, in order to determine the health status of sampled areas from Apulia and Moldova. She is involved in the molecular and functional characterization of parasitism genes of plant parasitic nematodes aimed to develop new sustainable control strategies (Italian project CISIA-Metagerm). She is also involved in the transcriptome analyses of tomato-Meloidogyne incognita-mycorrhizae-water stress interaction in order to determine species specific transcripts. More recently, dr De Luca is also involved in the molecular elucidation of the thermotolerance of the entomopathogenic nematode Heterorhabditis bacteriophora from Apulia to be used as Biological Control Agent (BCA) in the control of insects in the North Italy. She is the author of several scientific publications in international journals (source: Scopus), h-index: 18. Since 2000 she has contributed to the training of several Italian and Foreign PhDs. Moreover, she has also contributed to the training of Master's Degree students for the University of Bari (Biology, Biotechnology and Agricultural Sciences). She has been also invited grant reviewer for European projects. She is a referee of international peer review journals (Frontiers, PLOSOne, Molecular Plant Pathology, European Plant Pathology, Nematology, Journal of Nematology, Scientific Reports, etc). She is a member of the scientific Italian Nematology Society (SIN), of the European ESN, European IOBC. Since 2019 is vice-president of the Italian SIN.