



**Urbanistica n. 138**

January-April 2009

Distribution by [www.planum.net](http://www.planum.net)

*Pierluigi Properzi*

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By the way, what urbanism really is?

## Agricultural landscapes in the Naples province: a heritage to be protected

Massimo Fagnano

The Naples province has the highest population density in Europe (>2.600 inhabitant km<sup>2</sup>), therefore the equilibrium between urbanized areas and rural and natural ones is particularly fragile.

*Valuable agricultural areas.* Agriculture in the Naples province has very ancient roots: a lot of cultivars were here selected (67 for apricot, 21 for peach, 14 for cherry, 11 for plums, 6 for lemon, 5 for chestnuts, 3 for apples, 2 for hazelnuts and 1 for walnuts).

*Typical agricultural landscapes.*

- Centuriazione: still there are the traces of Roman field design (centuriazione), bordered by tree rows;
- vite maritata: grape 'married' to poplar was so typical that a special symbol was used in the Igm maps;
- citrus in Sorrento coast: a landscape reported in the European landscape convention;
- terraces: ancient and efficient system to reduce soil erosion, used for grape, orchards, olive;
- intercropping: in Naples province it is spread the use of 3 crops in one year (tomato in summer, cauliflower in winter and early potato in spring) or of 3 crops in the same field: high harvest (walnuts or cherry, together with short trees (orange or grape) and vegetables: cabbages or lettuces);
- orchards: peaches and apples in Phlegrean area (named mala orcula by the roman hystorian Plinio senior); apricots in the Vesuvius area (since from 4th century); hazelnuts in the Nola country (since from 3rd century).

*Agro-ecosystems biodiversity.* In the figure the levels of biodiversity in the Naples province are reported: very low:

greenhouses; low: vegetable, maize; medium: wheat, orchards, high: olive, citrus, grape, complex cropping systems; very high: chestnut tree, pastures, natural systems. The residual agricultural and natural areas of Naples province must be protected because they are functional to urbanization but also a testimony of the very precious heritage that we received by the population that in the last centuries made agricultural landscapes that are unique worldwide.