

Vineyard management is carried out following the guidelines of “integrated insect and disease control” (“*Lotta integrata*” in Italian) which are described as follows. We have taken part in the plans set down by the Veneto and Lombardia regions and these activities have been certified.

Integrated insect and disease control foresees a drastic reduction in the use of chemical plant protection products by following various practices. The main practices are:

- The use of chemical plant protection products that are not toxic for human beings nor for insects that are not harmful;
- The control of harmful insects through the “sexual confusion” technique (use of pheromon diffusors);
- Selective plant protection products (that eliminate only some insects);
- Plant protection products that can be easily eliminated by the biochemical action of the soil and of the air;
- Control of harmful insects through the technique of “self destruction”, such as the technique of the “sterile insect” (SIT);
- when favourable conditions for the development of pests can be foreseen, specific products are sprayed only when there is danger of an infection and not at fixed times as a preventive measure;
- the control of harmful insects by introducing other ones that are their natural predators;
- the use of plant varieties that are more resistant to pests and to diseases;
- the use of crop rotation;
- particular attention to and elimination of infected plants.
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The limits of integrated insect and disease control are the higher production costs, the need of qualified technical assistance and the difficulty in certifying the products.

Tuscany was the first Italian region that created a certification (“Agriqualità” certification created with the Tuscan region law no. 25 dated 1999). for products obtained with integrated insect and disease control procedures.

Integrated insect and disease control is based on the awareness that, when there are interventions to an ecosystem, also the food chain (of microorganisms, insects etcetera) is invariably altered. All biotic and abiotic factors that regulate the ecosystem are used and all possible means are used without being limited to chemicals (biological, agronomic and biotechnological techniques are used). This type of approach is mainly used for the control of insects, but it can be extended to the control of all pests (funguses, rodents etcetera). The aim of this type of control is to keep the pests within a certain limit after which the pest creates an economic damage (the pests are not totally eliminated, but contained).