

**Joint between ecologists, hydrologists and economists:
exploring the multiple effects of the invasive alien Robinia tree**

Simone Iacopino from the University of Padova, Italy, visited INRA University of Bordeaux, France, 28-31 October 2018 and 23 April - 31 May 2019.

Robinia pseudoacacia (black locust) is one of the most widespread invasive alien tree species in Europe. The spread of this species has been favoured by its ecological attitudes and economic importance, which had both positive and negative implications.

The aim of Simone's PhD project is to deepen the knowledge about the black locust's ecological and socio-economic drivers of its spread.

During his visit at INRA- University of Bordeaux, in collaboration with Annabel Porté and under the supervision of Tommaso Sitzia, Simone was focused on investigating black locust effects on understory plant biodiversity. The methodology involved the assessment of ecological impacts on plant community at the stand scale through a comparative approach, based on a sample of pairs of woodlands, invaded or uninvaded by black locust.

During the SSV, Simone and his research team visited, selected and surveyed 20 pairs (40 plots) from French forest in the Gironde department as an integration to the surveys carried out on Italian forests. Forest surveys included the collection of several forest structure variables, soil samples and floristic surveys in all sites. This to observe expected changes on plant biodiversity patterns among different human and environmental conditions.

The SSV was an enriching experience, an opportunity to enlarge his research dataset and a unique chance to consolidate the collaboration among the two institutions. Finally, the visit represented the base for a planned publication of a scientific manuscript.