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CAROB BEANS THE 24-CARAT FOOD

Works for UCY Carob Plantation in progress as scheduled: scientific research to determine today uses of Ceratonia silique & carob made alcoholic beverage to be presented soon



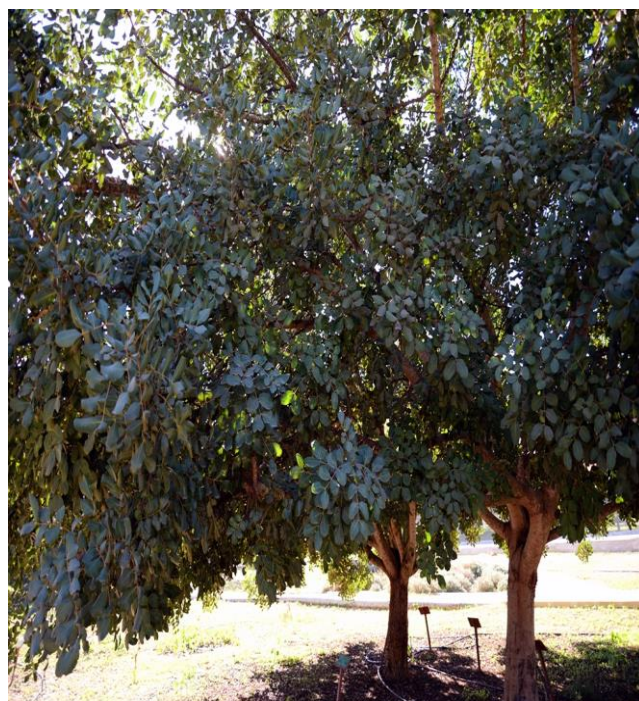
The largest carob plantation in Cyprus, a project titled “**Black gold**” and developed by University of Cyprus, appears to be one step closer to its realization as the scientific research that has been conducted to determine the today uses of carob beans is being in progress as planned, while a carob made spirit drink, similar to Zivania, is about to be presented soon.

According to the UCY Rector “*the Project constitutes a farming and agricultural model for Cyprus, since it aims to revitalize certain agricultural products and activities with added value. UCY continues to play its central role in knowledge and technology production and diffusion and their transfer to knowledge economy and society.*”



UCY is about to create the largest carob plantation in the island, proceeding with the initial cultivation of 40.000 carob trees that, in October 2018, will be planted on land leased from the government. A year has passed since the 40.000 seedlings were planted. Based on the cultivation procedure, they are about to be replanted in bigger plastic bags in November, and grafted in May 2017.

Seven research proposals have been prepared by the UCY Departments of Chemistry and Biological Sciences, in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Institute and the General Chemical State Laboratory. The research focuses on inventing new carob made products, carob uses and properties and of course identifying the Cypriot carob. The knowledge deriving from the scientific findings will eventually be transferred to the economy, contributing to the development of the food, pharmaceutical and agricultural industries. Moreover, the realization of the project will contribute substantially to promoting the conservation and use of underutilized corps.



At the same time, talks between the University and local and international companies are under way aiming to results in the conclusion of agreements for the production of innovative carob made products. Close collaboration is also being developed between the Project's Team and the stakeholders of the local agricultural industry. It is worth mentioning that the Team is composed of scientists and experts representing all the involved parties, that are, University of Cyprus, Agricultural Research Institute, General Chemical State Laboratory, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Department of Forests, with UCY being the coordinator of the Project. In addition, the innovative method for carob's organic farming that is being designed could be adopted by interested parties and future carob growers. The Project's website that is being designed will be soon activated to enhance communication and collaboration between interested parties.

Carob tree: Saint-John's bread

The term "Carat" comes from "keration", the Greek name for the fruit of the carob tree (from keras κέρασ 'horn'). Ancient Greeks had observed that all carob seeds weighed at 0.2 grams and that is why carob seed was used for centuries as the standard for weighing precious stones and gold.

"Ksilokeratia", also referred to as "Teratsia" by Greek-Cypriots, is the carob tree grown since antiquity in most countries of Mediterranean basin. Its fruit is a brown, leathery pod about 10 to 30 cm long and contains a syrupy to biscuity flesh of an agreeable sweet taste, in which lie a number of seeds.