



In Montefiore dell’Aso, Preserving the "Ascoli" silkworm strain

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Mattia Benedetti, Gianni Fila

In Montefiore dell’Aso, in the heart of the Marche region, a remarkable initiative is keeping alive one of the territory’s most unique traditional activities: the preservation of the "Ascoli" silkworm strain. From the recovery of rare local eggs to the study of natural dyes, this project, led by the La Campana community, preserves knowledge and practices that were once vital to the local rural economy.

The initiative focuses on maintaining the specific genetic heritage of the Ascoli strain, which is easily distinguished by its larvae with white stripes on a black background and its vibrant yellow cocoons. This work demonstrates how ancient agricultural skills can find new relevance today, particularly through "guardian farmers" who protect biodiversity against the pressures of industrial standardisation.

The rearing of these silkworms requires meticulous attention to environmental conditions and the careful cultivation of mulberry trees, whose leaves remain the essential food source for the larvae. Through this patient process, the community rediscovers the rhythms of a practice deeply connected to nature, seasonal cycles, and the historical legacy of the Piceno area.

Beyond its cultural and historical value, the project represents a significant opportunity for education and sustainable development. By sharing knowledge about sericulture and exploring innovative applications in the cosmetics sector—utilising the antioxidant properties of silk proteins—it helps safeguard a heritage that risks disappearing, while inspiring new interest in artisanal excellence and territorial identity.

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