



The **Research Unit for Floriculture and Ornamental Species** was established in 1925 under the name "Experimental Station for Floriculture "Orazio Raimondo" in order to enhance the development of floricultural crops in the Italian Riviera and to assist farmers. Professor Mario Calvino was the main supporter of the project and the first director. There was a strong motivation to have the Centre in Sanremo, at the time the only important area where flowers were grown for climatic and historical reason. In 1967 the Station

for Floriculture was elevated at the status Experimental Institute depending on Ministry for Agricultural Politics (MiPAAF), with national characters. Since 1999 the Institute belongs to CRA (Agricultural Research Council) and in 2007 it was renamed CRA-FSO Research Unit for Floriculture and Ornamental Species. The operating budget is guaranteed by CRA. Resources for research activity are derived from research contracts signed with others national and international partners, including regional governments or private companies.

The institutional role of the CRA-FSO is to study of different aspects of floricultural crops. It is organized in four research groups, each dealing with specific research topics.

The head office of the Unit, is located, in an historical building surrounded by a nice garden (*Villa Bel Respiro*) overlooking the downtown of Sanremo. Over the years, the number of staff members and the glass-house facilities had increased. At present, the Unit is equipped with research laboratories and has an area of more than 20.000 m² of which 8.500 under greenhouse, with advanced systems for the control of the main environmental and nutritional factors. About fifty persons are currently working in the Unit including scientist, graduate and Ph. D. students, technicians, administrative staff, field workers.

Research groups

Biology & Plant Protection studies phytopathological and entomological problems, with chemical and biological control measures, and plant/fungi physiology as correlated to the pathogenic interaction; biotechnology and biomolecules from ornamental plants.

Genetic Improvement deals with traditional breeding of ornamental crops and with laboratory techniques; genetic transformation, in vitro culture (embryo rescue, somaclonal variation), molecular markers (RAPD, AFLP, SSR).

Propagation is involved in: in vitro multiplication protocols (tissue and cell culture, artificial seeds, somatic embryos), structural and functional genomics, biotechnology applied to ornamental plants.

Cultural Techniques applies to the possibilities of increasing the economic results of the production process by new crops or by promoting automation and use of decisional support for nutrition and irrigation.