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Sunflower Conference**

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Instituto de Investigación y Formación Agraria y Pesquera
CONSEJERÍA DE AGRICULTURA Y PESCA



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Association

Proceedings of the 17th International Sunflower Conference
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Photography: Spanish landrace of confectionary sunflower collected by L. Velasco and B. Pérez-Vich in Villarta de San Juan, Ciudad Real, Spain, on October 10, 2007.

Foreword

The proceedings of the 17th *International Sunflower Conference* contain 142 contributions from scientists of 24 countries. They include plenary lectures in several disciplines and regular communications presented in posters during the conference and discussed in the corresponding workshops. The manuscripts are classified by disciplines. They offer a good picture of the current state of the art of sunflower research and cultivation around the world.

The manuscripts in the *Proceedings* have been reviewed by an editorial committee with the main objective of helping the authors to improve their manuscripts through a critical reading. The authors received the edited manuscripts together with the comments of the reviewers and then went on to draft their final version. All the manuscripts received have been published in the *Proceedings*. The contents of the manuscripts are the responsibility of the authors. They should be considered as being privileged communications that require the express consent of the authors to be reprinted in part or as a whole. We wish to thank both the members of the Editorial Committee for their dedication to the task of editing such a large number of manuscripts, as well as all the authors for their collaboration throughout the whole edition process.

The Organizing Committee would also like to thank Diana Badder and José A. Palacios for their excellent editorial assistance in the preparation of these *Proceedings*. We are indebted to the Spanish Association of Sunflower Breeders (Asociación Española de Mejoradores de Girasol), which collaborated actively in the organization of the conference, and, very especially, to Juan Parejo, who was in charge of the financial side.

Finally, we would like to thank all the participants in the conference, who have contributed to its success by a careful preparation and revision of manuscripts and posters, presentation of their research in the workshops, and stimulating discussions throughout the conference on the scientific and technical aspects of sunflower research and cultivation in the world.

The Organizing Committee
17th International Sunflower Conference
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Volume 1

Table of Contents

PLENARY

Research progress in sunflower diseases and their management Ferenc Virányi.....	1
Could a crop model be useful for improving sunflower crop management? Francis Flénet, Philippe Debaeke, Pierre Casadebaig.....	13
Phenotypic plasticities of yield, phenological development and seed traits Victor Sadras, Abelardo de la Vega.....	19
Sunflower germplasm development utilizing wild <i>Helianthus</i> species Chao-Chien Jan, Gerald J. Seiler, Thomas J. Gulya, Jiujuan Feng.....	29
Current advances in sunflower oil applications Rafael Garcés, Joaquín J. Salas-Liñan, Mónica Venegas-Calcrón, Enrique Martínez-Force.....	45
Sunflower in Spain: Past and present trends in an international context Luis Carlos Alonso.....	53

DISEASE RESISTANCE AND PATHOLOGY

Phomopsis control in sunflower using products of biogenic origin I.I. Begunov, V.T. Piven, A.T. Podvarko, V.Y. Ismailov, T. Gulya.....	69
Verticilosis en germoplasma de girasol Julio González, Nora Mancuso, Pedro Ludueña, Antonio Ivancovich.....	73
Towards <i>Sclerotinia</i> resistance – <i>In vitro</i> screening of wild sunflower species Ksenija T. Ajdukovic, Dragana Miladinovic, Nevena Nagl, Sreten Terzic, Sinisa Jocić, Vladimir Miklič	77
Correlation between macronutrient content and sunflower resistance to <i>Sclerotinia sclerotiorum</i> measured by sclerotia infection of stem Dragana Miladinovic, Slobodanka Pajevic, Ana Marjanovic-Jeromela, Petar Sekulic, Sinisa Jocić, Vladimir Miklič	81
Races of <i>Plasmopara halstedii</i> on sunflower in separate agroecosystems of Adigea Republic, Krasnodar and Rostov regions in Russia Tatiana Antonova, Maria Iwebor, Nina Araslanova.....	85
Differences in some DNA RAPD-loci of <i>Plasmopara halstedii</i> races affecting sunflower in Krasnodar region of Russia Tatiana Antonova, Saida Guchetl, Maria Iwebor, Tatiana Tchelustnikova.....	91
Relations between spring rainfall and infection of sunflower by <i>Plasmopara halstedii</i> (downy mildew) Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe, Pascal Walser, Frédéric Serre, Sylvie Roche, Félicity Vear.....	97
Structural aspects regarding formation and emission of <i>Diaporthe (Phomopsis) helianthi</i> ascospores Valentina Androsova, Irina Balakhnina, Thomas Gulya.....	103

- 109 **sunflower downy mildew**
Frédéric Serre, Pascal Walsler, Sylvie Roche, Felicity Vear, Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe.....
- 115 **Can management of *Pl genes influence aggressiveness in *Plasmopara halstedii* (sunflower downy mildew)?***
Nachaat Sakt, Jeanne Tourvieille, Pascal Walsler, Felicity Vear, Mireille Ducher, Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe.....
- 121 **Morphological and molecular identification of *Diaporthe helianthi* from *Xanthium italicum***
Karolina Vrandečić, Drazenka Jurković, Jasenka Cosić, Luca Riccioni, Tomislav Duvnjak Felicity Vear, Hervé Serreys, Aurélie Petit, Frédéric Serre, Jean-Pierre Boudon, Sylvie Roche, Pascal Walsler, Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe.....
- 125 **Origins of major genes for downy mildew resistance in sunflower**
Roche, Pascal Walsler, Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe.....
- 131 **Caracterización de la resistencia genética a podredumbre basal en girasol causada por *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* en Argentina**
Daniel Alvarez, Francisco Marraro.....
- 137 **Molecular characterization of a novel *Sunflower chlorotic mottle virus* (SuCMoV) strain**
Nicolas Bejerman, Fabián Giolitti, Sergio Lenardon.....
- 143 **Estimation of sunflower breeding material tolerance to *Diaporthe/Phomopsis helianthi***
Tomislav Duvnjak, Anto Mijić, Ivica Lović, Marija Vratarić, Aleksandra Sudarić, Miroslav Krizmanić, Karolina Vrandečić, Jasenka Cosić.....
- 149 **Study of the expression of shikimate dehydrogenase activity in sunflower genotypes treated with *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum***
Sattar Tahmasebi Entefadi, Gian Paolo Vannozzi, Zohreh Rabei, Ghaseem Abbas Akbari.....
- 157 **Molecular changes in downy mildew-infected sunflower triggered by resistance inducers**
Katalin Korösi, Ferenc Virányi.....
- 163 **Effectiveness of the genetic resistance to *Plasmopara halstedii* under natural conditions and diversity of the pathogen within sunflower fields**
Javier Garcia-López, Rafael Garcia-Ruiz, José Martínez-Aguilar, M. Leire Molinero-Ruiz Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe, Annette Penaud, Pascal Walsler, Emmanuelle Mestries, Jacques Moïnard, Frédéric Serre, Claire Thiery, Bernard Garric, François Delmotte, Xavier Pimochet.....
- 169 **Determining the sunflower downy mildew risk by soil analysis**
Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe, Annette Penaud, Pascal Walsler, Emmanuelle Mestries, Jacques Moïnard, Frédéric Serre, Claire Thiery, Bernard Garric, François Delmotte, Xavier Pimochet.....
- 175 **Large scale field evaluations for *Sclerotinia stalk rot* resistance in cultivated sunflower**
Thomas Guily, Scott Radt, Nikolay Babyshev.....
- 181 **Study on an *in vitro* screening test for resistance to *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* in sunflower**
Miglena Drumeva, Nina Nemova, Ivan Kiryakov.....
- 187 **EST-derived markers highlight genetic relationships among *Plasmopara halstedii* French races**
François Delmotte, Xavier Giresse, Sylvie Richard-Cervera, Felicity Vear, Jeanne Tourvieille, Pascal Walsler, Denis Tourvieille de Labrouhe.....

Effect of sowing date and initial inoculum of <i>Alternaria helianthi</i> on sunflower in the south region of Brazil	
Regina M.V.B.C. Leite, Lilian Amorim, A. Bergamin Filho, Maria Cristina N. de Oliveira, César de Castro.....	193
Effects of nitrogen and water on premature ripening caused by <i>Phoma macdonaldii</i>, a fungal pathogen of sunflower	
Célia Seassau, Emmanuelle Mestries, Philippe Debaeke, Grégory Dechamp-Guillaume....	199
Pathological and morphological evaluation of sunflower isohybrids carrying or not the <i>Rcm-1</i> gene for <i>Sunflower chlorotic mottle virus</i> resistance	
Maria Eugenia Bazzalo, Fabián Giolitti, María Teresa Galella, Alberto León, Sergio Lenardon.....	205
Study of resistance to <i>Sclerotinia</i> head disease in sunflower genotypes	
Sándor Páricsi, Melinda Tar, Rozália Nagyné-Kutni.....	211
<i>Puccinia helianthi</i> Schw., infecciones en híbridos comerciales en Argentina y su evolución durante dos décadas	
N. Huguet, J. Pérez Fernandez, F. Quiroz.....	215
Results regarding the influence of <i>in vitro</i> stress induced by the <i>Phomopsis helianthi</i> filtrate on some physiological indices and on sunflower oil quantity and quality	
Florentina Raducanu, Elena Petcu, Constantin Raducanu, Maria Stanciu, Danil Stanciu....	219
The impact of the new races of broomrape (<i>Orobanche cumana</i> Wallr.) parasite in sunflower crop in Romania	
Maria Pacureanu Joita, Steluta Raranciuc, Emilia Procopovici, Elisabeta Sava, Dumitru Nastase.....	225
Distribution and dissemination of sunflower broomrape (<i>Orobanche cumana</i> Wallr) race F in Southern Spain	
Juan Fernández-Escobar, M. Isabel Rodríguez-Ojeda, Luis Carlos Alonso.....	231
ENTOMOLOGY	
Development of resistance to insect pests attacking the stem and head of cultivated sunflower in the central and northern production areas of North America	
Laurence D. Charlet, Robert M. Aiken, Gerald J. Seiler, Jerry F. Miller, Kathleen A. Grady, Janet J. Knodel.....	237
Integrated pest management of the banded sunflower moth in cultivated sunflower in North Dakota	
Janet J. Knodel, Laurence D. Charlet.....	243
CROP PRODUCTION – MANAGEMENT	
Epicuticular wax content in the pericarp of sunflower fruits (<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.) grown under moderate water deficit	
María Clara Franchini, Lilia I. Lindström, Luis F. Hernández	249

- The pattern of foraging paths of the Honey bee (*Apis mellifera* L.) can also explain the appearance of located regions with incompletely developed fruits in the sunflower capitulum
Luis F. Hernández..... 255
- The influence of weather conditions on economic characteristics of sunflower hybrids in macro experiments from 1997 to 2007
Branimir Simić, Jasenka Cosić, Ivica Liović, Miroslav Krizmanić, Jelena Postić..... 261
- The appropriate technique for collecting and measuring the amount of floral nectar in sunflower (*Helianthus annuus* L.)
Zvonimir Sakac, Sreten Terzić, Vladimir Miklić 265
- Sunflower and peanut emergence: initial development under sugarcane mulch
Nilza Patricia Ramos, Maria do Carmo de Salvo Soares Novo, Maria Regina Gonçalves Ungaro, Antônio Augusto Lago..... 269
- La agricultura de conservación como sistema viable para combatir el jopo en el girasol
J. R. García-Ruiz, F. Perea-Torres, R. Ordóñez-Fernández, J. García-López..... 275
- Changes in seed oil content of sunflower (*Helianthus annuus* L.) as affected by harvesting date
Vladimir Miklić, Simiša Jocić, Dragana Vasić, Nenad Dušančić, Nada Hladni..... 281
- Sunflower yield and root system development under water stress in tropical conditions
Evandro M. Gomes, Maria Regina G. Ungaro, Dirceu B. Vieira..... 287
- Insecticide residues cross-contamination of oilseeds during storage
Sylvie Danguet, Jean-Philippe Loison..... 293
- Evaluating irrigation performance of sunflower in an irrigation scheme of Southern Spain
Franco Castillo-Llanque, Cristina Santos, Ignacio J. Lortie, Margarita García-Vila, Masahiro Tasumi, Javier Estévez, Pedro Gavilán..... 299
- Size reduction of ornamental sunflowers by the application of daminocide
Maria Carolina Sabagh, Francine Lorena Cuquel, Ana Claudia Barneche de Oliveira, Edson Perez Guerra..... 305
- Participatory on-farm sunflower variety evaluation in northern and eastern Uganda
Walter O. Anyanga, Moses Biruma..... 309
- Initial growth of sunflower in soils with high concentrations of boron and heavy metals
Adriana M. Moreno Pires, Cleide A. Abreu, Alaine Renée Coscione, Vinicius Alberti da Silva, Nilza Patricia Ramos..... 315
- Impact des facteurs limitants du rendement du tournesol (*Helianthus annuus* L.) en conditions réelles d'utilisation par les agriculteurs, en Midi-Pyrénées – Etude de cas
V. Thebaud, J.D. Scheiner, J. Dayde..... 319

Planting date effect on yield and yield components of sunflower in Miyaneh region Ali Faramarzi, Mohammad-Bagher Khorshidi.....	325
Some aspects of sunflower crop management in Romania Gheorghe Sin, Marius Botea, Lenuța Drăgan.....	329
Screening and drying conditions for early harvested sunflower Genta Kanai, Hitoshi Kato, Naonobu Umeda, Kensuke Okada, Morio Matsuzaki.....	333
CROP PRODUCTION – PHYSIOLOGY	
Physiological maturity in sunflower. Correspondence between the quantitative and the visual definition Luis F. Hernández, Adelina O. Larsen, Lilia I. Lindström, Liliana B. Iriarte.....	337
Influence of desiccation on germination and field emergence of sunflower Ivica Liović, Marijan Bilandžić, Miroslav Krizmanić, Anto Mijić, Ruža Popović, Ilonka Ivanišić, Tomislav Duvnjak, Branimir Šimić, Jasenka Čosić.....	341
Physiological traits for quantification of drought tolerance in sunflower Elena Petcu, Maria Stanciu, Danil Stanciu, Florentina Raducanu.....	345
El vuelco en el cultivo de girasol: características anatómicas y mecánicas del sistema radical Milena E. Manzur, Antonio J. Hall, Claudio A. Chimenti.....	351
Influence of drought stress on growth, protein expression and osmolyte accumulation in sunflower <i>Helianthus annuus</i> L. c.v. Peredovik Sabine Fulda, Hendrikje Stegmann, Renate Horn.....	357
Development and validation of a model of lodging for sunflower Mariano M. Sposaro, Pete M. Berry, Mark Sterling, Antonio J. Hall, Claudio A. Chimenti	363
Exploring genotypic strategies for sunflower drought resistance by means of a dynamic crop simulation model Pierre Casadebaig, Philippe Debaeke.....	369
Dynamics of dry matter accumulation in sunflower Nenad Dusanic, Vladimir Miklič, Igor Balalic, Velimir Radic, Jovan Crnobarac.....	375
IAA/GA3 quantitative ratio of some sunflower genotypes representing CMS-Rf system Maria Duca, Angela Port.....	381
Genetic-phytohormonal interactions in male fertility and male sterility phenotype expression in sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.) Maria Duca, Angela Port.....	387
Direct and indirect effects of morphophysiological traits on seed yield of sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.) Nada Hladni, Siniša Jocić, Vladimir Miklič, Anto Mijić, Dejana Saftić Panković.....	393
Determination of maximum achene size in sunflower A. Mantese, D. Rondanini, D. Medan, A.J. Hall.....	399
Abscisic acid content of a nondormant sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.) mutant Brady A. Vick, C.C. Jan.....	405
Producción de girasol (<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L.) en valles altos de México J. Alberto Escalante-Estrada, M ^a Teresa Rodríguez-González.....	411

Towards *Sclerotinia* resistance – *In vitro* screening of wild sunflower species

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the work on testing the possibility of the use of *in vitro* screening for determination of wild *Helianthus* species resistance to *Sclerotinia*. For this purpose, micropropagated plants of different accessions of *H. maximiliani*, *H. mollis*, *H. rigidus* and *H. tuberosus* were grown on MS medium supplemented with 0, 0.5, 1 and 2 mM of oxalic acid. Fresh and dry weight of above-ground part, and dry weight of root could be considered as the potential parameters of wild species resistance/susceptibility to *Sclerotinia* in *in vitro* tests, as they were not affected by treatment in resistant (100%) accessions and were significantly decreased in susceptible (25%) ones in the presence of 2 mM of oxalic acid.

Key words: oxalic acid – *in vitro* screening – resistance – *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* – wild sunflower.

INTRODUCTION

White rot caused by the fungus *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* Lib. (de Bary) is the major disease of sunflower (*Helianthus annuus* L.) in countries with a humid climate, while in countries with moderate climate, it causes yield losses in rainy years (Škorić and Rajcan, 1992). Wild sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.) constitute an important source of resistance against several major sunflower diseases including *Sclerotinia* (Georgieva-Todorova, 1993). Populations of several wild sunflower species were found to be tolerant to white rot (Škorić and Rajcan, 1992; Henn et al., 1997; Tavaljanski et al., 2002; Cerboncini et al., 2002; Vasic et al., 2004). Resistance screening was done either by observing naturally occurring infection (Tavaljanski et al., 2002) or by using different artificial inoculation methods (Henn et al., 1997; Cerboncini et al., 2002; Vasic et al., 2002; 2004).

De Bary was the first researcher to associate oxalic acid with *Sclerotinia* infection (Lumsden, 1979). Later, Noyes and Hancock (1981) demonstrated its importance as a factor in the pathogenicity of this fungus, while Hartman et al. (1988) found a correlation between oxalic acid production and virulence of different *Sclerotinia* isolates. There have been several attempts to create a bioassay in which resistance to oxalic acid would be used as an indicator of resistance to *Sclerotinia* (Hartman et al., 1988; Noyes and Hancock, 1981; Raducanu and Soare, 1992; Tu, 1985; Vasic et al., 1999; 2002). Whole plants or their parts were used, and correlation was found between field susceptibility/resistance of tested genotypes to *Sclerotinia* and reaction of the explants of the same genotypes when grown on a medium into which oxalic acid was added.

As maintenance of wild species collection and field screening are costly and labour-intensive, we have tested the possibility of the use of *in vitro* screening for determination of wild sunflower species resistance to *Sclerotinia*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Accessions of *H. maximiliani* Schrader (max), *Helianthus mollis* Lam. (mol), *H. rigidus* (Cass.) Desf. (rig) and *H. tuberosus* L. (tub) were obtained from wild *Helianthus* species collection of Institute of Fields and Vegetable Crops in Novi Sad, Serbia (Table 1). The accessions were pre-screened for *Sclerotinia* resistance by measuring sclerotia infection on stem (Vasic et al., 2004). Their resistance was determined as the percentage of healthy plants (Table 1).

The plants were propagated *in vitro* using culture of apical shoots (Vasic et al., 2001). Prior to transfer to a propagation medium, shoots were dipped into 0.1% indolebuteric acid (IBA) solution for 4 min. For the resistance screening, apical shoots of *in vitro* grown plants were placed in 250 ml Erlenmeyer flasks with 80 ml of MS medium (Murashige and Skoog, 1962), pH 5.7, supplemented with 5 g l⁻¹ of sucrose, 6 g l⁻¹ of agar, and different concentrations of oxalic acid (Table 1). Control plants were

grown on MS medium without oxalic acid. There were four Erlenmeyer flasks with four shoots per accession for each oxalic acid concentration. One Erlenmeyer flask was treated as one replication in the data analysis. The shoots were grown at 24°C with a photoperiod of 16 h (light)/8 h (dark).

After six weeks of culture, the following parameters were measured: plant height, fresh and dry weight of above-ground part, root length, fresh and dry weight of root. The data were analysed using ANOVA and LSD test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of variance showed that both genotype and treatment had significant effect on the measured parameters.

Table 1. Reaction of tested wild sunflower accessions on treatment with different concentrations of oxalic acid^{1,2}.

Genotype	Resistance (%)	Concentration mM	h	rl	fm	dm	rfm	rdm
mol x	100	Control	10.875a	3.925a	0.476a	0.049a	0.478a	0.039a
		0.5	4.625b	5.225a	0.208b	0.0185b	0.132b	0.011c
		1	3.550b	3.650a	0.183b	0.019b	0.340ab	0.011c
		2	4.075b	5.075a	0.395a	0.040a	0.296ab	0.025b
		LSD _{0.05}	2.750	2.022	0.151	0.014	0.342	0.009
		LSD _{0.01}	3.855	2.835	0.212	0.020	0.479	0.014
mol 1298	100	control	15.200a	11.200a	0.293ab	0.030b	0.088ab	0.006b
		0.5	9.325c	2.750c	0.153c	0.022b	0.059b	0.004b
		1	13.675ab	7.525b	0.253bc	0.026b	0.117ab	0.007ab
		2	10.950bc	8.525ab	0.387a	0.042a	0.146a	0.010a
		LSD _{0.05}	3.328	2.732	0.113	0.011	0.062	0.003
		LSD _{0.01}	4.666	3.829	0.159	0.015	0.087	0.005
max 34	75	control	14.700a	11.875a	0.492a	0.048a	0.183a	0.013a
		0.5	12.425ab	3.550c	0.299b	0.025b	0.048b	0.004b
		1	11.775b	3.575c	0.277b	0.030b	0.074b	0.006b
		2	4.800c	6.550b	0.338b	0.048a	0.245a	0.017a
		LSD _{0.05}	2.862	2.812	0.139	0.016	0.067	0.004
		LSD _{0.01}	4.012	3.942	0.195	0.023	0.094	0.006
max 1631	50	control	15.400a	18.775ab	1.493a	0.105a	0.749a	0.048a
		0.5	16.225ab	14.650b	0.945a	0.066a	0.274b	0.016b
		1	14.100ab	22.325a	1.503a	0.104a	0.884a	0.051a
		2	11.825b	18.675ab	1.058a	0.077a	0.416ab	0.025ab
		LSD _{0.05}	3.836	4.436	0.737	0.047	0.473	0.028
		LSD _{0.01}	5.377	6.219	1.034	0.066	0.664	0.039
tub 675	50	control	12.600a	11.325a	0.690b	0.025c	0.257b	0.016a
		0.5	10.425a	11.175a	1.018a	0.054b	0.364a	0.021a
		1	8.600a	10.700a	0.512b	0.078a	0.201bc	0.029a
		2	2.600b	4.450b	0.134c	0.043bc	0.154c	0.048a
		LSD _{0.05}	4.535	4.291	0.259	0.021	0.101	0.048
		LSD _{0.01}	6.358	6.016	0.363	0.030	0.142	0.067
rig 1692	50	control	13.625a	12.850a	0.312b	0.030b	0.249b	0.020b
		0.5	14.750a	12.025a	0.486a	0.053a	0.380a	0.034a
		1	14.375a	10.700a	0.257b	0.025b	0.197b	0.014b
		2	11.500a	11.675a	0.259b	0.026b	0.173b	0.015b
		LSD _{0.05}	5.003	5.082	0.108	0.009	0.056	0.006
		LSD _{0.01}	6.697	5.880	0.159	0.015	0.085	0.008
mol 1530	25	control	12.175a	4.150a	0.678b	0.048b	0.215b	0.016b
		0.5	12.350a	3.475a	0.728b	0.070ab	0.497ab	0.042ab
		1	13.525a	4.050a	1.359a	0.115a	0.926a	0.067a
		2	5.350b	3.925a	0.626b	0.055b	0.314b	0.031ab
		LSD _{0.05}	2.239	1.290	0.623	0.050	0.483	0.038
		LSD _{0.01}	3.140	1.809	0.873	0.070	0.677	0.053
rig 1843	25	control	11.125a	6.575ab	0.529b	0.062b	0.473b	0.047b
		0.5	8.975a	6.350ab	0.448b	0.059b	0.372b	0.041b
		1	7.950ab	7.500a	0.781a	0.089a	0.835a	0.083a
		2	4.800b	4.825b	0.530b	0.063b	0.346b	0.038b
		LSD _{0.05}	3.466	LSD _{0.05}	0.180	0.022	0.258	0.025
		LSD _{0.01}	4.860	LSD _{0.01}	0.252	0.031	0.362	0.035

¹Within each column, genotype means followed by different letter differ significantly at the level $p=0.05$.

²Legends for traits: h - plant height, rl - root length, fm - fresh weight of above-ground part, dm - dry weight of above-ground part, rfm - fresh weight of root, rdm - dry weight of root.

The choice of oxalic acid concentrations was made based on the research done on cultivated sunflower protoplasts (Vasic et al., 1999) and intact plants grown *in vitro* (Vasic et al., 2002). Results obtained with 0.5 and 1 mM concentrations of oxalic acid were not conclusive as there was neither any difference between resistant and susceptible accessions nor a regular pattern in measured parameter variation (Table 1). This is in accordance with the results obtained on the sunflower plants grown in the presence of oxalic acid (Vasic et al., 2002). The same applies in the reaction of tolerant accessions (*H. maximiliani* 1631, *H. tuberosus* 675 and *H. rigidus* 1692) to oxalic acid treatment, and is probably the consequence of differences in morphology and biochemistry between wild sunflower species (Heiser et al., 1969).

Concentration of 1 mM of oxalic acid had a stimulant effect on the most susceptible accessions – *H. mollis* 1530 and *H. rigidus* 1843 (Table 1). Stimulant effect of non-selective concentrations of stress agents in *in vitro* culture was also observed in the experiments with herbicides, and is thought to be a consequence of the phenomenon that stress agents when present in small concentrations act as nutrients (Olofsson et al., 1994).

Similarly to the work of Vasic et al. (2002), concentration of 2 mM of oxalic acid discriminated between resistant and susceptible genotypes. This oxalic acid concentration only affected plant height in the resistant accessions (*H. mollis* x and 1298) and almost all the traits in susceptible ones, except for the root length in *H. mollis* 1530 (Table 1). This is in disagreement with the results of Mouly (1989) who found that concentrations of oxalic acid lower than 4.44 mM were not selective in a bioassay with sunflower leaves. The same author recommended a concentration of 8.88 mM as optimal.

Fresh and dry weight of above-ground parts and dry weight of root could be considered the potential parameters of wild sunflower resistance/susceptibility to *Sclerotinia* in *in vitro* tests, as they were not affected by treatment in resistant accessions and they were significantly decreased in susceptible ones in the presence of 2 mM of oxalic acid (Table 1). In contrast to the results obtained in cultivated sunflower (Vasic et al., 2002), plant height and root length were not good indicators of wild sunflower resistance/susceptibility to *Sclerotinia*. This may be due to structural differences between cultivated and wild sunflowers and their biochemical reaction to *Sclerotinia*, as previously observed in *H. resinosus* Small (Mondolot-Cosson and Andary, 1994).

The results obtained in our study showed that there is potential for the use of oxalic acid bioassays for screening wild sunflower species for resistance to *Sclerotinia*. Fresh and dry weight of above-ground parts and dry weight of root were found to be good morphological parameters for discrimination between resistant and susceptible accessions, in combination with an oxalic acid concentration of 2 mM. However, more work should be done in determining the optimal oxalic acid concentration. Also, the morphological and biochemical differences between different sunflower species should be taken into account in further studies.

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