THE EFFECT OF TEMPERATURE ON RESISTANCE IN AFRICAN RICE (ORYZA GLABERRIMA STEUD.) GENOTYPES TO THE RICE ROOT-KNOT NEMATODE MELOIDOGYNE GRAMINICOLA

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ABSTRACT


The rice root-knot nematode, Meloidogyne graminicola, has emerged as a serious soilborne pathogen of rice in most Asian countries. The host response of the M. graminicola-resistant African (Oryza glaberrima) rice genotypes TOG5674, TOG5675, and CG14 was examined at two day/night temperature regimes, 29/26°C and 34/31°C. At the 34/31°C regime, second-stage juvenile population densities in roots of the African rice genotypes increased significantly compared to those of plants grown at the 29/26°C regime, suggesting that the resistance to M. graminicola became ineffective at the latter temperature regime. An increase in temperature also resulted in a significant reduction in all yield-contributing traits and yield of the three African rice genotypes. High variability was recorded in terms of percentage reduction of all traits measured among the genotypes examined at the 34/31°C, compared to the 29/26°C regime. However, the highest reduction was for yield.

Key words: damage potential, Oryza, reproductive potential, susceptible, yield loss.

RESUMEN


El nematodo de las agallas en las raíces del arroz, Meloidogyne graminicola, se ha mostrado como un serio patógeno del suelo para el arroz en la mayoría de países asiáticos. La respuesta como hospedadores de los genotipos de arroz africano (Oryza glaberrima) TOG5674, TOG5675, y CG14, resistentes a M. graminicola se examinó en dos regímenes de temperatura día/noche, 29/26°C y 34/31°C. En el régimen 34/31°C, las densidades de juveniles de segundo estadio en raíces de los genotipos de arroz africano aumentaron significativamente en comparación con aquellas plantas cultivadas en el régimen 29/26°C, sugiriendo que la resistencia a M. graminicola perdió su efectividad en este último régimen de temperaturas. Un aumento en la temperatura también produjo una reducción significativa en todos los estimadores de producción en los tres genotipos de arroz africano. Se registró una alta variabilidad en términos de porcentaje de reducción de todas las características medidas entre los genotipos examinados a 34/31°C, comparados con el régimen a 29/26°C. No obstante, la mayor reducción fue para la cosecha.

Palavras chave: Potencial de daño, Oryza, potencial reproductor, susceptible, perdidas de cosecha.
INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, the rice root-knot nematode, Meloidogyne graminicola Golden and Birchfield, has emerged as one of the most common and important soilborne pathogens of Asian rice (Oryza sativa L.) in South and Southeast Asia (De Waele and Elsen, 2007; Jain et al., 2012). This sedentary endoparasite can occur in all rice-based production systems, lowland as well as upland, irrigated as well as rainfed, and deepwater rice (Bridge et al., 1982; Prot et al., 1994; Padgham et al., 2004; Bridge et al., 2005; Win et al., 2011). In lowland rainfed rice fields infested with M. graminicola, nematicide application resulted in a yield increase of 16 to 20% or about 1 t/ha in Bangladesh (Padgham et al., 2004) whereas in upland rice fields, nematicide application resulted in a yield increase of 12 to 33% in Thailand (Arayarungsarit, 1987) and 28 to 87% in Indonesia (Netscher and Erlen, 1993). Resistance to M. graminicola has been identified in some African rice (Oryza glaberrima Steud.) and Asian rice genotypes (Jena and Rao, 1976; Yik and Birchfield, 1979; Plowright et al., 1999; Soriano et al., 1999; Sharma-Poudyal et al., 2004; Prasad et al., 2006; Cabasan et al., 2012; De Waele et al., 2013; Dimpka et al., 2015), and efforts are now underway to introgress this resistance in new Asian rice varieties (De Waele, pers. communication). Expression of resistance is not only influenced by inherent characteristics of the pathogen and the host plant (such as the gene-for-gene interaction) but also by the environment. Thus, one of the potential limitations of the use of nematode-resistant plant genotypes is the loss of efficacy of the resistance trait caused by environmental factors such as high temperatures (Devran et al., 2010; Newton et al., 2012). Therefore, to optimise the use of these natural resistance sources in a management strategy, the stability of resistance to M. graminicola should be tested under different environmental conditions.

Temperature is not only a critical abiotic factor for the growth and yield of rice plants, it can also have an impact on nematode-host plant interactions by influencing the rate of hatching, development, and reproduction of nematode pests (Jatala and Russell, 1972; Noe, 1991; Sydenham et al., 1997). Temperature has also been identified as an abiotic factor that may affect the expression of resistance to plant-parasitic nematodes in plants. In root-knot nematode-resistant tomato (Solanum lycopersicum L.) genotypes, a soil temperature higher than 28°C can alter the expression of the Mi-gene resistance to many populations of various Meloidogyne species such as M. incognita, M. arenaria, and M. javanica (Williamson, 1998). However, in some genotypes of wild tomato (L. peruvianum (L.) Mill.), resistance to M. incognita race 2 was stable even at 32°C (Devran et al., 2010). The resistance of pepper plants infected with M. incognita was compromised at 28 to 32°C, indicating a partial loss of resistance conditioned by the N gene (Thies and Fery, 2000), while the expression of resistance to M. incognita in cotton became ineffective at 35°C (Carter, 1982). An increase in severity of root galling was also observed in resistant alfalfa (Medicago sativa L.) cultivars infected with M. hapla grown at 32°C compared to those cultivated at 28°C (Griffin and Elgin, 1977). In contrast, resistance of some common bean genotypes to M. incognita and M. arenaria was not reduced or lost at 32°C (Sydenham et al., 1997). Nonetheless, one bean genotype was resistant to M. incognita at 16 to 22°C but susceptible at 24°C and higher temperatures (Mullin et al., 1991). In cucumber, the resistance to M. hapla was effective at 30°C while it was partially compromised at 24°C (Cardin, 1979).

With the emergence of M. graminicola as a very important pathogen of rice in South and Southeast Asia (De Waele and Elsen, 2007), and the increased efforts to develop Asian rice varieties that are either resistant or tolerant to this nematode species (De Waele, pers. communication), it is essential to determine if the efficacy of the available natural M. graminicola resistant and tolerant sources can be influenced by temperature. The definitions for resistance and susceptibility, as well as tolerance and sensitivity as proposed by Bos and Parlevliet (1995), refers to a host plant which either suppresses (resistance) or allows nematode development and reproduction (susceptibility). The plant may suffer little injury even when heavily infected with nematodes (tolerance), or much injury even when relatively lightly infected with nematodes (sensitivity). Resistance and susceptibility can be determined by measuring the nematode population densities in and on the roots, whereas tolerance and sensitivity can be determined by measuring the effect of the nematode population on plant growth, yield-contributing traits and (or) yield (Cook and Evans, 1987).

The objective of our study was to examine the effect of temperature on the expression of resistance or susceptibility and tolerance or sensitivity to M. graminicola in selected M. graminicola-resistant African rice genotypes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Nematode inoculum

The M. graminicola population used in this study was isolated from naturally infected Asian rice plants collected in Batangas, Philippines. A
pure culture of the Batangas population originating from a single second-stage juvenile (J2) was maintained in the glasshouse on the susceptible and sensitive Asian upland rice genotype UPLRi-5. The population was maintained at about 28°C in a sandy loam soil (52% sand, 21% loam, 27% clay), that was typical of upland soils and subjected to moisture stress. Infected plants were irrigated with tap water only when needed, with no surface water accumulation (at field capacity = 50% of the soil volume filled with water).

The inoculum was prepared by extraction of J2 from galled roots using the mistifier technique (Seinhorst, 1950). Galled roots were carefully washed, cut into 0.5- to 1-cm-pieces and incubated in a mist chamber. The J2 extracted after 24 hr of incubation were used as inoculum.

Rice genotypes

Three African rice genotypes, TOG5674, TOG5675 and CG14, which are resistant to M. graminicola (Plowright et al., 1999; Soriano et al., 1999; Cabasan et al, 2012) were included. TOG5674 and TOG5675 are traditional varieties from Nigeria while CG14 is from Senegal. Two M. graminicola-susceptible Asian rice genotypes, IR64 and UPLRi-5, were also included. The rice seeds were obtained from the seed bank of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), based in the Philippines. Some characteristics of these genotypes have been described in Cabasan et al. (2012).

Rice seeds were pre-germinated in Petri dishes and two, 5-day-old seedlings were transplanted in 20-cm-diameter, 24-cm-high plastic pots. The pots were filled with 6 kg of a sterilised sandy loam soil (52% sand, 21% loam, 27% clay) with a pH of 6.3, containing 0.14% N and 1.06% organic C. Plants were grown in two phytotrons each with 8 blocks: one set at an optimal temperature for cultivation of rice crops using 12 hr day/night temperature regime (29/26°C) and the other at a high (34/31°C) regime. Relative humidity was maintained at 70% throughout the duration of the experiment. At planting the soil in the pots was saturated with tap water, while at nematode inoculation the soil-water levels in the pots was at field capacity. One week after transplanting, the seedling population was thinned to one plant per pot.

Roots of 2-week-old plants were inoculated with approximately 3,000 M. graminicola J2 by pipetting three aliquots, each containing 1,000 J2, in three 5-cm-deep holes around the base of the seedlings. Two days later, the nematode inoculation was repeated so that the initial population density (Pi) was about one J2/g soil (6,000 J2/plant). There were no uninoculated (control) plants.

The water levels in the soil in which the rice plants grew were maintained at field capacity up to plant maturity. The rice plants were fertilised 3 times (at transplanting, and at 30 and 60 days after transplanting) at a rate of 90-60-60 kg/ha (N-P-K). The experimental lay-out was a randomised complete block design (RCBD) with eight replications for each temperature regime.

At maturity, the plants were carefully uprooted, and the roots of each plant excised from its aerial parts. The African rice genotypes were harvested at 103 days after planting (DAP) while the Asian rice genotypes were harvested at 110 DAP. The roots were washed with tap water, and the severity of root galling was determined based on a rating scale of 0-5 (Hussey and Janssen, 2002). After the fresh root weight of each plant was recorded, the roots were cut into 1-cm-pieces and incubated for 2 wk in a mistifier for nematode extraction (Seinhorst, 1950). After 2 wk in the mistifier, the nematode suspension was collected and the number of J2 per root system (Pf) counted using a stereomicroscope (100× magnification). The nematode multiplication factor (Mf) was calculated as Pf/Pi (Greco and Di Vito, 2009) as a measure of the reproduction of M. graminicola.

At harvest, the following three plant growth and four yield-contributing traits were measured: fresh root and shoot weight, plant height (from the soil surface to the tip of the tallest panicle), number of panicles per plant (this number is equal to the number of productive tillers at maturity), number of spikelets per panicle, percent filled grains per panicle, weight of 100 grains per plant, and grain weight per plant (adjusted to 14% moisture content). The yield per plant was measured based on the weight of the filled grains produced per plant, not including the unfilled and partially filled grains. The number of tillers per plant was counted at 30 days after transplanting to examine the effect of temperature on tiller formation at a young plant-growth stage.

Data analysis

Analyses were performed using STATISTICA software. Prior to analysis, nematode counts were log10(x + 1)-transformed to reduce the variance in the data. Data were statistically analysed by analysis of variance (ANOVA) when the assumptions of normal distribution and homogeneity of variances were met. Factorial analysis of ANOVA was used to examine the effect of the treatments on plant growth, yield-contributing traits and yield. When an interaction was observed between two factors (temperature regime and rice genotype),
individual comparisons were made for each rice genotype separately. Tukey’s HSD test ($P < 0.05$) was applied for comparisons of factor level means for specific plant growth, yield-contributing traits, and yield. Dunnett’s test ($P < 0.05$) was applied to compare the means of nematode reproduction in the resistant African rice genotypes with the means in the susceptible Asian rice genotype UPLRi-5. Data from eight replicates were pooled and analysed.

**RESULTS**

Significant two-factor interactions, in terms of temperature regime and rice genotype, were observed for nematode reproduction, plant growth and yield parameters. Except for the number of J2/g roots observed at 34/31°C, the number of J2/g roots and J2/root system, as well as the Mf and the root gall index were lower ($P < 0.05$) in the resistant genotypes than in the susceptible reference genotypes IR64 and UPLRi-5 at both temperature regimes (Table 1).

An increase ($P < 0.05$) in number of J2/g roots and J2/root system, Mf, and root gall index was observed in TOG5674 and TOG5675 grown at 34/31°C compared with 29/26°C. In the case of TOG5674, the number of J2/g roots increased 23.3 times, the number of J2/root system 9.4 times and Mf 10 times while the root gall index increased by 1.8 times. In the case of TOG5675, the number of J2/g roots increased 14 times, the number of J2/root system 5.9 times and Mf 5.6 times while the root gall index increased by 1.5 times. In contrast, an increase in temperature did not have a significant effect on the number of J2 per g roots and per root system, and the root gall index of CG14. Only the Mf of this genotype increased ($P < 0.05$) by 2.8 times.

Significant ($P < 0.05$) increases in numbers of J2/g roots and per root system and Mf were not observed for the two susceptible genotypes IR64 and UPLRi-5 grown at either 29/26°C or 34/31°C. In fact, the Mf of UPLRi-5 decreased almost twofold with increasing temperature. An increase in temperature did not have a significant effect on the root gall index of UPLRi-5 but significantly ($P < 0.05$) increased the root gall index of IR64.

An increase in temperature decreased ($P < 0.05$) the fresh root weight of TOG5674 by 67% and TOG5675 by 58%. This was not the case for CG14 and the two susceptible Asian rice genotypes. An increase in temperature decreased the fresh shoot weight (ranging from 31 to 58%) and plant height (ranging from 30 to 43%) of all genotypes with the exception of the plant height of IR64 (Table 2).

An increase in temperature resulted in a reduction ($P < 0.05$) in all yield-contributing traits measured with the exception of the number of tillers per plant of TOG5674 and the number of panicles per plant of TOG5674, TOG5675, and IR64. Substantial differences in percent reduction were observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rice genotype*</th>
<th>Temperature regime</th>
<th>29/26°C</th>
<th>34/31°C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOG5674</td>
<td>50 ±81a*</td>
<td>1,166 ±710b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOG5675</td>
<td>111 ±101a*</td>
<td>1,559 ±25b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG14</td>
<td>476 ±469a*</td>
<td>952 ±558a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR64</td>
<td>3,392 ±1,618a</td>
<td>3,866 ±2,014a*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UPLRi-5</td>
<td>2,713 ±1,405</td>
<td>1,629 ±1,074</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of J2/root system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOG5674</td>
<td>1,943 ±3,042a*</td>
<td>18,249 ±13,185b*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOG5675</td>
<td>3,991 ±3,711a*</td>
<td>23,412 ±11,282b*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG14</td>
<td>11,098 ±7,195a*</td>
<td>23,256 ±14,094a*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR64</td>
<td>145,956 ±93,492a</td>
<td>120,352 ±47,774a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPLRi-5</td>
<td>157,931 ±76,616</td>
<td>82,511 ±53,989</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiplication factor (Mf)z</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOG5674</td>
<td>0.3 ±0.5a*</td>
<td>3.0 ±2.2b*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOG5675</td>
<td>0.7 ±0.6a*</td>
<td>3.9 ±1.9b*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG14</td>
<td>1.8 ±1.2a*</td>
<td>3.9 ±2.3b*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR64</td>
<td>24.3 ±15.6a</td>
<td>20.1 ±8.0a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPLRi-5</td>
<td>26.3 ±12.8</td>
<td>13.8 ±9.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Root galling index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOG5674</td>
<td>1.3 ±0.5a*</td>
<td>2.3 ±1.0b*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOG5675</td>
<td>1.3 ±0.5a*</td>
<td>2.0 ±0.8b*</td>
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<tr>
<td>CG14</td>
<td>1.9 ±1.1a*</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR64</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPLRi-5</td>
<td>4.8 ±0.7</td>
<td>4.6 ±0.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Data are means ± standard deviation (n = 8); means followed by the same letter in a row are not significantly different according to Tukey’s HSD test ($P < 0.05$). Means within columns followed by an * in a category are significantly different ($P < 0.05$) from the susceptible standard UPLRi-5 according to Dunnett’s test. 

African (Oryza glaberrima) genotypes - TOG5674, TOG5675, and CG14; Asian (Oryza sativa) genotypes - IR64 and UPLRi-5.

- Multiplication factor = number of J2 extracted per root system (Pf)/initial infestation rate (Pi) of 6,000 J2/plant.

- African (Oryza glaberrima) genotypes - TOG5674, TOG5675, and CG14; Asian (Oryza sativa) genotypes - IR64 and UPLRi-5.
among the genotypes. For instance, the number of spikelets per panicle was reduced by only 6% in UPLRi-5 but 65% in CG14. In contrast, the percent-filled grain per panicle was reduced 37% in CG14 and 67% in UPLRi-5. Sometimes the reduction was higher in the resistant genotypes compared with the susceptible genotypes. For instance, the reduction in percent-filled grains per panicle ranged from 25 to 37% in the resistant genotypes, but 60 to 67% in the susceptible genotypes. Similarly, the reduction in the number of spikelets per panicle ranged from 49 to 65% in the resistant genotypes, but was only 6 to 29% in the susceptible genotypes (Table 3). The highest reduction for all genotypes was observed for filled grain weight per plant and was always higher than 80% (Table 4). An increase in temperature increased the number of panicles per plant of CG14 (Table 3), the only positive effect observed.

**DISCUSSION**

Temperature affected the efficacy of resistance to *M. graminicola* in all three African rice genotypes included in our study, and overall resistance appeared to be more pronounced in TOG5674 and TOG5675 than in CG14. This was demonstrated by the significant increase in numbers of J2 per g roots and per root system, as well as the Mf and severity of root galling of the TOG5674 and TOG5675 plants grown at 34/31°C relative to those grown at 29/26°C. At 34/31°C, the number of J2/g roots of both TOG5674 and TOG5675 was also not significantly different from those in roots of the susceptible genotype UPLRi-5. The high temperature, however, had a direct effect on the root growth of the rice plants, which was significantly reduced in both TOG5674 and TOG5675, but not
in CG14, or in either susceptible genotype. This decrease in fresh root weight is likely not the only explanation for the increase of J2 numbers/g roots in TOG5674 and TOG5675. Higher J2 numbers/g roots were not recorded for either IR64 and UPLRi-5, and these genotypes showed a reduction of 22 and 13%, respectively, in fresh root weight at 34/31°C compared to 29/26°C. Furthermore, the number of J2/root system in TOG5674 and TOG5675 was significantly higher at 34/31°C than at 29/26°C despite the significant reduction in fresh root weight at 34/31°C.

Our observations suggest that the resistance to *M. graminicola* in the three African rice genotypes became ineffective at 34/31°C. Similar observations on the resistance to *Meloidogyne* species have been made for several other agricultural crops, although the mechanisms involved are not clear. Temperature may have a direct effect on the host plant by affecting the plant morphology or physiology. Temperature may also have a direct adverse effect on the nematodes themselves, although in our study an adverse effect on *M. graminicola* seems unlikely. Fernandez *et al.* (2013) observed little difference (dependent upon non-flooded or flooded soil) in the life cycle duration of *M. graminicola* in the roots of UPLRi-5 plants grown under either 29/26 or 36/32°C. Moreover, at 36/32°C, fewer nematodes developed into second-generation J2 than those at 29/26°C while less J2 were observed at 34/31°C than at 29/26°C. These observations on UPLRi-5 are confirmed by our observation that at 29/26°C the Mf on UPLRi-5 was about twice as high compared with the Mf at 34/31°C (26.3 vs 13.8, respectively).

Resistance genes in plants mediate the plant-pathogen interactions including those of plant-parasitic nematodes (Martin *et al.*, 2003; Belkhadir *et al.*, 2004). The tomato Mi-1 gene is currently the best characterised nematode resistance gene. There are limitations to the resistant effects of Mi-1 since the gene is ineffective at soil temperatures ≥ 28°C (Williamson, 1998). As proposed by Zhu *et al.* (2010), in general the receptor-like function of resistance genes might be the temperature-sensitive component of the plant defense responses.

In our study, both *M. graminicola*-infected African and Asian rice genotypes showed significant reduction in almost every plant growth and yield-contributing trait measured when they were grown at the higher temperature regime, and filled grain weight per plant was reduced by more than 80%. Plants weakened by abiotic stresses, are predisposed to infection by plant pathogens and likely to be more susceptible and sensitive to these pathogens (Boland *et al.*, 2004).

The number of panicles per plants increased with increasing temperatures in the African rice genotype CG14. However, it produced panicles with fewer and shorter branches (data not shown) containing less spikelets per panicle, which mostly were sterile and remained unfilled. This could indicate that, in this rice genotype at high temperatures, panicle production may either escape damage or produce more panicles as a mechanism to compensate for the high sterility.

In summary, a temperature regime of 29/26°C is within the range of the optimum temperature for the normal development of rice plants. Higher temperature can affect the resistance to *M. graminicola* in African rice genotypes. The resistance to *M. graminicola* in African rice genotypes included in our study became ineffective at a temperature regime
of 34/31°C. Sensitivity of the African rice genotypes to *M. graminicola* infection was similar to those for Asian rice genotypes at the higher temperature, and the role of temperature must be considered in the management of *M. graminicola*, especially in the major rice-growing regions in the Philippines and other tropical regions where temperatures often reach 34°C (Bebber et al., 2013).

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**LITERATURE CITED**


