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**MANEJO DO CRESCIMENTO DAS PLANTAS
MATRIZES DE MORANGUEIRO NA PRODUÇÃO DE
PONTAS DE ESTOLÃO**

TESE DE DOUTORADO

Miriane Dal Picio

**Santa Maria, RS, Brasil
2013**

MANEJO DO CRESCIMENTO DAS PLANTAS MATRIZES DE MORANGUEIRO NA PRODUÇÃO DE PONTAS DE ESTOLÃO

Miriane Dal Picio

Tese apresentada ao Curso de Doutorado do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Agronomia, Área de Concentração em Produção Vegetal, da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM, RS), como requisito parcial para obtenção do grau de
Doutora em Agronomia

Orientador: Prof. Jerônimo Luiz Andriolo

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**Universidade Federal de Santa Maria
Centro de Ciências Rurais
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Agronomia**

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**MANEJO DO CRESCIMENTO DAS PLANTAS MATRIZES DE
MORANGUEIRO NA PRODUÇÃO DE PONTAS DE ESTOLÃO**

elaborada por
Miriane Dal Picio

como requisito parcial para obtenção do grau de
Doutora em Agronomia

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*"Ao Júlio, pelo amor, carinho e incentivo, por estar ao meu lado sempre... **dedico.**"*

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"Desejo que você

Não tenha medo da vida, tenha medo de não vivê-la.

Não há céu sem tempestades, nem caminhos sem acidentes.

Só é digno do pódio quem usa as derrotas para alcançá-lo.

Só é digno da sabedoria quem usa as lágrimas para irrigá-la.

Os frágeis usam a força; os fortes, a inteligência.

Seja um sonhador, mas una seus sonhos com disciplina,

Pois sonhos sem disciplina produzem pessoas frustradas.

Seja um debatedor de ideias. Lute pelo que você ama."

Augusto Cury

RESUMO

Tese de Doutorado
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Agronomia
Universidade Federal de Santa Maria

MANEJO DO CRESCIMENTO DAS PLANTAS MATRIZES DE MORANGUEIRO NA PRODUÇÃO DE PONTAS DE ESTOLÃO

AUTORA: MIRIANE DAL PICIO

ORIENTADOR: JERÔNIMO LUIZ ANDRIOLO

Data e Local da Defesa: Santa Maria, 22 de março de 2013

O objetivo da pesquisa foi gerar conhecimento sobre a partição de assimilados entre a planta matriz e os estolões e as plantas filhas do morangueiro, a fim de determinar critérios de manejo das plantas matrizes para maximizar a produção de pontas de forma concentrada nas épocas de maior demanda de mudas com torrão. Dois experimentos foram conduzidos em abrigo de polietileno do tipo guarda-chuva, no Departamento de Fitotecnia da UFSM, Santa Maria, RS, com a cultivar Camino Real. As plantas matrizes foram plantadas em vasos contendo substrato orgânico Mecplant® HF e fertirrigadas por gotejamento. O delineamento experimental, em ambos os experimentos, foi inteiramente casualizado em parcelas subdivididas com quatro repetições de três plantas. No primeiro experimento o plantio foi realizado em 14 de outubro de 2010 e a coleta final das plantas em 28 de março de 2011. Os tratamentos foram dois níveis de fonte (plantas mãe sombreadas e não sombreadas) e quatro níveis de drenos: corte semanal (1), e mensal dos estolões (2), enraizamento de quatro pontas de estolões originando plantas filhas (3) e quatro pontas de estolões crescendo livres sem enraizamento (4). O segundo experimento iniciou em 13 de outubro de 2011 e finalizado em 16 de abril de 2012. Os tratamentos consistiram de três níveis de fonte (planta mãe sem desfolha, com uma desfolha e com duas desfolhas) e os mesmos quatro níveis de drenos empregados no primeiro experimento. Em ambos os experimentos as pontas foram coletadas quando apresentavam uma folha expandida e/ou primórdios radiculares visíveis, foram contadas, o diâmetro da coroa medido e a massa seca foi determinada. Ao final de cada experimento as plantas mãe foram coletadas e o crescimento determinado através da massa seca de raízes, da parte aérea e da coroa. O sombreamento reduziu o número de pontas de estolão produzidas por planta mãe, a massa seca total e a massa média das pontas quando o corte foi feito semanalmente e mensalmente, porém não teve efeito naquelas plantas em que a conexão entre planta mãe e planta filha foi mantida. O diâmetro de coroa das pontas emitidas não foi afetado pelo sombreamento das plantas mãe. O crescimento das plantas mãe foi afetado pelo sombreamento e pela desfolha, porém a desfolha não afetou a emissão de pontas de estolões. Conclui-se que é possível reduzir o crescimento da planta matriz sem afetar a emissão de pontas de estolões e o número de pontas pode ser aumentado quando plantas mãe e plantas filhas são mantidas conectadas pelos estolões.

Palavras-chave: Fragaria x ananassa Duch. Propagação. Manejo.

ABSTRACT

Doctoral Thesis
Graduate Program in Agronomy
Universidade Federal de Santa Maria

MANAGEMENT OF THE GROWTH OF STRAWBERRY STOCK FOR PRODUCTION OF RUNNER TIPS

AUTHOR: MIRIANE DAL PICIO

ADVISOR: JERÔNIMO LUIZ ANDRIOLO

Location and date of presentation: Santa Maria, March 22th, 2013

The main objective of this thesis was to deep knowledge about dry matter partitioning among the strawberry stock plant and stolons and daughters plants in order to determine management criteria for maximizing the production of runner tips in the good time for saling plug plants. Two experiments were conducted inside a polyethylene umbrella greenhouse, at Departamento de Fitotecnia, UFSM, using the cultivar Camino Real. The stock plants were planted in pots filled with the organic substrate Mecplant® HF and fertigated by drippers. The experimental design in both experiments was a completely randomized split plot design with four replications of three plants. In the first experiment planting was done on October 14th, 2010 and final plant harvest was on March 28th, 2011. In this experiment treatments were two source levels, respectively unshaded and shaded mother plants, and four sinks levels: runner tips were collected weekly (1) and monthly (2), rooting runner tips to originate four daughter plants (3) and four unrooted runner tips growing freely (4). In the second experiment planting was done on October 13th, 2011 and final plant harvest was on April 16th, 2012. Treatments were three source levels, respectively mother plants without defoliation, with one defoliation and two defoliations the four sinks levels as done in the first experiment. In both experiments, tips were collected and counted at the stage of one expanded leaf and/or visible root nodules, the crown diameter measured and dry mass determined. At the end of each experiment, mother plants were collected dry mass of roots, shoots and crown was determined. Shading reduced the number of runner tips produced by mother plants, total plant dry mass and the mean dry mass of tips when they were collected weekly and monthly while any effect was recorded on mother and daughter plants connected by stolons. The crown diameter of tips was not affected by shading the mother plants. The growth of mother plants was affected by shading and defoliation, but defoliation did not affect the emission of runner tips. It can be concluded that growth of mother plants might be reduced without affecting the emission of runner tips and the number of tips can be increased by keeping mother and daughter plants connected by stolons.

Key words: *Fragaria x ananassa* Duch. Propagation. Management.

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1 INTRODUÇÃO

A produção mundial de morango alcançou 4,3 milhões de toneladas, com uma área cultivada de aproximadamente 230.000 ha em 2010 (FAO). A América do Sul produz em torno de 318.000 toneladas em uma área de 11.884 ha, sendo os três principais países produtores Brasil, Argentina e Chile. No Brasil, a área plantada alcançou 3.500 ha e uma produtividade de 30 t ha⁻¹ (AGRIANUAL, 2011; ANTUNES; PERES, 2013). Os principais estados produtores são Minas Gerais (MG), São Paulo (SP) e Rio Grande do Sul (RS). De acordo com Madail (2008), a produção do Rio Grande do Sul está em torno de 16.000 toneladas, concentrada nas regiões do Vale do Rio Caí, Serra Gaúcha e no extremo Sul.

O morangueiro (*Fragaria x ananassa* Duch.) pertence à família Rosaceae, gênero *Fragaria* L. Embora seja uma planta perene, é cultivada como cultura anual (CALVETE et al., 2002). É propagado vegetativamente para fins comerciais e apenas no melhoramento genético são utilizadas as sementes (DARROW, 1966). A qualidade genética e sanitária comprovada das mudas comerciais é um dos fatores determinantes para o sucesso de uma lavoura de morangueiro, além do solo ou substrato, radiação solar e temperatura (BUENO, 2006).

No Brasil, predomina a produção de mudas no solo, as quais são formadas por raízes nuas. Essas áreas muitas vezes são contaminadas com pragas e doenças. No Sul do Brasil, além das doenças de solo há a ocorrência pluviométrica elevada nos meses de produção de mudas, caracterizado no hemisfério Sul pela primavera-verão. Esses fatores têm contribuído para muitos produtores dessa região importar mudas de viveiros localizados na Patagônia, as quais chegam à eles com raízes nuas. Essas mudas são consideradas de qualidade superior àquelas produzidas no Brasil, porque são produzidas em latitude e altitude elevadas. Entretanto, a aquisição de mudas do exterior implica em mudanças na época de plantio, em decorrência do atraso na entrega das mesmas.

Por outro lado, na literatura não está evidenciado se a exposição à baixas temperaturas afeta a produtividade de frutos de mudas produzidas através de *plug plants*. No Rio Grande do Sul, os resultados de Schmitt et al. (2012) indicaram que a exposição de pontas de estolão à temperaturas próximas a 0,5°C estimulou o

estolonamento precoce das plantas na lavoura de produção de frutos e não aumentou a produção de frutos.

Uma das alternativas de produção de mudas de morangueiro, no Sul do Brasil, é o método de mudas com torrão em sistemas sem solo. De acordo com Durner et al. (2002), a produção de mudas pelo método de *plug plants* (com torrão) pode ser feito em regiões próximas àquelas produtoras de frutos. Essa produção ainda é incipiente no País, porém vários pesquisadores demonstraram que, através desse sistema de cultivo, é possível obter sucesso na produção de mudas (TESSARIOLI NETO et al., 2003; FERNANDES JÚNIOR et al., 2002; OLIVEIRA et al., 2007; GIMÉNEZ et al., 2008; DAL PICIO et al., 2012; JANISCH et al., 2012).

Para o sucesso dessa técnica, é necessário atender o período de maior demanda de mudas na região, nos meses de março a maio para as cultivares de dia curto. Como o período de estolonamento das plantas matrizes inicia com o incremento da temperatura e fotoperíodo evidenciado na primavera, as pontas de estolão produzidas até o início do verão não são utilizadas para produção de mudas comerciais, sendo retiradas e descartadas. Por isso, para utilização de pontas de estolões na produção de mudas é necessário adequado planejamento do plantio e do manejo das plantas matrizes, a fim de maximizar a produção nas épocas mais propícias, reduzindo os custos de mão-de-obra e de insumos.

Este trabalho teve como objetivo gerar conhecimentos sobre a partição de assimilados entre a planta matriz e as pontas de estolões, ou plantas filhas do morangueiro, a fim de determinar critérios de manejo das plantas matrizes, de forma a reduzir o crescimento das plantas e maximizar a produção de pontas de forma concentrada nas épocas de maior demanda de mudas com torrão.

Para tanto a pesquisa foi dividida em dois experimentos. No primeiro foi testada a hipótese de que o crescimento das plantas mãe de morangueiro pode ser reduzido sem afetar a emissão de pontas de estolões; a emissão de pontas de estolões, para a produção de mudas com torrão, pode ser aumentada, mantendo as plantas filhas conectadas à planta mãe através dos estolões. Visou também aprofundar o conhecimento das relações fonte e dreno entre a planta mãe e os estolões de morangueiro.

O segundo experimento buscou determinar se a emissão de pontas de estolões é reduzida em plantas mãe desfolhadas, e se a conexão com os estolões

pode compensar o crescimento da planta mãe e a emissão dos estolões, bem como determinar as relações entre o crescimento da planta mãe e a emissão de estolões.

2 REVISÃO DE LITERATURA

2.1 Cenário da produção de morango

A produção mundial de morango alcançou 4,3 milhões de toneladas, com uma área cultivada de aproximadamente 230.000 ha em 2010 (FAO), e está assim distribuída: a América é responsável por 39%, seguida da Europa com 32,8%, Ásia com 18,3%, África com 8,9% e Oceania com 8,1% (PEANO; BOUNOUS, 2012). A América do Sul produz em torno de 318.000 toneladas, em uma área de 11.884 ha, sendo o Brasil, a Argentina e o Chile os três principais países produtores, com produtividade média em torno de 27,3 t ha⁻¹. Dentre os países da América Latina, dois se destacam pela alta produtividade: Colômbia e Uruguai, com 40 e 33,4 t ha⁻¹, respectivamente (ANTUNES; PERES, 2013). No Brasil, de 2006 a 2010, a área cultivada cresceu 6,2%, enquanto a produção aumentou 33,4% (CARVALHO, 2011). A área plantada no país na safra de 2010 alcançou 3.500 ha, com produtividade de 30 t ha⁻¹ e produção de 105.000 t. (AGRIANUAL, 2011; ANTUNES; PERES, 2013). Produzido em oito estados brasileiros, sendo os três principais produtores Minas Gerais (MG), São Paulo (SP) e Rio Grande do Sul (RS). De acordo com Madail (2008), a produção do RS está em torno de 16.000 toneladas, distribuída na região do Vale do Rio Caí, principal produtora, com média de 7.000 t., seguida pela região da Serra Gaúcha, com 6.000 t., e pela região Sul do RS, com 3.000 t.

Atualmente, o principal entrave da cultura do morangueiro no RS é a falta de disponibilidade de mudas de boa qualidade na época adequada de plantio. A importação não atende a demanda dos pequenos produtores, com entrega fora de época e a mortalidade é elevada, devido às condições de estocagem durante o transporte.

2.2 Cultivares

Além da baixa qualidade sanitária das mudas produzidas no Sul do Brasil, outro fator limitante é a falta de cultivares adaptadas às condições de clima e solo (GIMÉNEZ, 2008). O melhoramento genético do morangueiro iniciou no Brasil em 1941, no Instituto Agronômico Campinas (IAC), e em 1950 na Estação Experimental da Cascata, hoje Embrapa Clima Temperado. Foram lançadas várias cultivares até a década de 1980, quando esses programas de melhoramento encerraram suas atividades. A maioria das cultivares utilizadas no Brasil é originária de outros países, como Estados Unidos (Flórida e Califórnia) e Espanha, e antes de serem introduzidas precisam ser avaliadas, pois podem não ser adaptadas as condições brasileiras de clima e solo (ANTUNES; PERES, 2013). As cultivares de dias curtos disponíveis pelos importadores para a safra 2013 na região Sul são Camarosa e Camino Real e as de dias neutros Aromas, Albion, Monterrey San Andreas e Portola. Outras cultivares como: Earlibrite, Florida Festivale e Sabrosa também são cultivadas na região Sul (OLIVEIRA et al., 2011).

A cultivar Camino Real, cultivar de dias curtos, foi desenvolvida pela Universidade da Califórnia e introduzida no Brasil no ano de 2001. No Sul do Brasil o seu cultivo vem crescendo significativamente. As plantas apresentam formato compacto, de porte ereto e menos vigorosas do que a cultivar Camarosa. As folhas são côncavas, curtas e amplas e ocasionalmente podem apresentar de 4 a 5 folíolos. O formato do fruto pode variar, mas geralmente é arredondado, ou cônico. Os frutos apresentam boa qualidade e bom rendimento, são utilizados tanto na indústria quanto para o consumo *in natura*.

2.3 Situação da produção de mudas no Brasil

No Brasil, a produção e a comercialização de mudas estão regulamentadas pela Lei de nº 10.711/2003, Decreto nº5.153/2004, Instrução Normativa nº 24/2005 Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento (MAPA), e pela Instrução

Normativa nº28/2012, onde são estabelecidas as normas para produção e comercialização de material de propagação de morangueiro e os seus padrões, com validade em todo território nacional, visando à garantia de sua identidade e qualidade. A Instrução Normativa nº 28/2012 estabelece que a área reservada para a instalação do viveiro não poderá ser utilizada simultaneamente para qualquer outra finalidade diferente da produção de mudas de morangueiro. O viveirista poderá produzir mudas certificadas ou não certificadas, sendo consideradas mudas certificadas aquelas obtidas a partir de plantas básicas, plantas matrizes, jardim clonal ou borbulheira. Mudas não certificadas são aquelas obtidas de plantas básicas, plantas matrizes, jardim clonal, borbulheira, muda certificada, borbulheira ou jardim clonal não submetidos ao processo de certificação. ou plantas ou campo de plantas fornecedoras de material de propagação sem origem genética comprovada (BRASIL, 2005).

A utilização de mudas com qualidade fisiológica e sanitária é fator importante para o sucesso de uma lavoura de morangueiro. A produtividade e a qualidade do fruto produzido estão diretamente relacionadas à qualidade das mudas utilizadas, sendo o ponto de partida para obtenção de respostas as tecnologias empregadas (OLIVEIRA; SCIVITTARO, 2006). Segundo Oliveira et al. (2004), no setor produtivo brasileiro há produtores que utilizam mudas importadas, que compram mudas de viveiristas registrados existentes no País, que compram matrizes de laboratórios e produzem suas próprias mudas, e que produzem suas próprias mudas a partir de material da lavoura. A demanda por mudas no Brasil está estimada em 175 milhões, sendo 125 milhões produzidas por viveiristas regionais ou pelos próprios produtores, sem registro no MAPA. As 50 milhões restantes são importadas da Argentina e do Chile, principalmente nos estados do Sul (ANTUNES; COCCO, 2012). Segundo Oliveira et al. (2005) 80% das mudas utilizadas no Sul são importadas.

Os produtores de morango que produzem as mudas adquirem as plantas matrizes da cultura de tecidos em laboratórios de micropropagação e plantam a campo, para a produção de suas próprias mudas, ou seja, o produtor de frutos também é produtor de mudas (ANTUNES; PERES, 2013). De acordo com Antunes; Cocco (2012), a maioria das mudas adquiridas por produtores e utilizadas no cultivo nos estados de Minas Gerais, São Paulo e no Distrito Federal são frescas de raízes nuas, compostas por folhas, coroa e raiz.

O custo de aquisição das mudas de morangueiro é bastante elevado. De acordo com Agrianual (2011), no ano de 2010 o gasto com mudas representou 32,7% do custo total de produção de uma lavoura comercial a campo. Para a safra 2013 as mudas importadas do Chile e da Argentina estão sendo comercializadas para o produtor de frutos a um custo de R\$ 0,45 a unidade, tanto para cultivares de dias neutros quanto para de dias curtos. Fica evidente que é preciso um sistema eficiente de produção de mudas certificadas que atenda a demanda interna e que os viveiristas se adequem às normas previstas na IN 28/2012.

A Embrapa Clima Temperado tem realizado estudos relativos ao zoneamento agroclimático para a produção de mudas de raízes nuas no Rio Grande do Sul, a fim de identificar locais com satisfatório acúmulo de horas de frio abaixo de 10°C no período de janeiro a abril (WEGRE et al., 2006), a qualidade das mudas e a produtividade de frutos são favorecidas pelo frio. (DURNER et al., 1987). Porém, esse zoneamento não considera a produção de mudas com torrão, que é uma alternativa para garantir melhor qualidade das mudas, produção precoce e alta produtividade. No Rio Grande do Sul, os resultados de Schmitt et al. (2012) indicaram que a exposição de pontas de estolão à temperaturas próximas a 0,5°C estimulou o estolonamento precoce das plantas na lavoura de produção de frutos, mas não aumentou a produção de frutos. De acordo com Durner et al. (2002), a produção de mudas pelo método de *plug plants* pode ser feito em regiões próximas àquelas produtoras de frutos.

A produção de mudas com torrão obtida no cultivo fora do solo é bastante recente em no Brasil, embora vários pesquisadores tenham comprovado a eficiência dos diferentes sistemas na produção de mudas com boa qualidade fisiológica e sanitária (TESSARIOLI NETO et al., 2003; FERNANDES JÚNIOR et al., 2002; OLIVEIRA et al., 2007; GIMÉNEZ et al., 2008; DAL PICIO et al., 2012; JANISCH et al., 2012).

2.4 Sistema de produção de mudas fora do solo

No sistema de cultivo fora do solo as plantas matrizes são plantadas em substratos inertes ou orgânicos livres de patógenos, acondicionados em recipientes individualizados ou em leito de cultivo, sendo os nutrientes fornecidos por meio de solução nutritiva. As plantas matrizes obtidas da micropropagação são livres de doenças causadas por vírus, fungos e bactérias, e normalmente plantadas sobre estruturas elevadas, cultivadas em ambientes protegidos, estufas ou túneis altos (LIETEN, 2000). Quando acondicionadas em recipientes individualizados, geralmente são utilizados sacos ou sacolas de polietileno, preenchidos com substrato. As plantas matrizes emitem os estolões, que são retirados e colocados para enraizar em bandejas de poliestireno contendo substrato sob microaspersão até o enraizamento. Mudas assim produzidas são denominadas de *plug plants/tray plants* ou mudas com torrão (DURNER et al., 2002).

A produção de mudas fora do solo surgiu com a restrição do uso de brometo de metila. Nos Estados Unidos utilizava-se brometo de metila associado à cloropicrina para fumigação do solo em pré-plantio, eliminando doenças de solo, nematóides e plantas daninhas (DURNER et al., 2002). As principais doenças de solo que atacam a cultura do morangueiro são *Verticillium* spp. e *Phytophthora* spp., para as quais os métodos químicos de controle têm efeitos limitados (WILSON, 1997; DURNER et al., 2002).

As pontas dos estolões ainda não enraizadas são propágulos ideais para evitar a transmissão de doenças radiculares. Além da sanidade, as mudas com torrão apresentam outras vantagens em relação às mudas de raízes nuas, tais como: possibilidade de transplante mecânico, redução do número de trabalhadores por área e do tempo desta atividade; menor volume de água de irrigação no estabelecimento da lavoura; redução de danos no sistema radicular durante o transplante; rápido estabelecimento do sistema radicular; taxa de sobrevivência próxima a 100%; sistema radicular das mudas mais uniforme, permitindo rápido crescimento após o transplante; estande uniforme e maior potencial de produção; as mudas podem ser produzidas em regiões mais quentes e levam de 3,5 a 5 semanas para estarem prontas para o transplante, ficando menos tempo expostas ao ataque de insetos vetores de doenças; (BISH; CANTLIFFE, 1996; POLING, 2000; LIETEN, 2000; DURNER et al., 2002).

De acordo com Durner et al. (2002), praticamente todas as pontas de estolão emitidas podem ser aproveitadas para a produção de mudas com torrão. Para obter mudas uniformes, as pontas de estolão devem ser coletadas em intervalos curtos, duas a três vezes por semana. No entanto, a frequência de coleta vai depender da temperatura (POLING, 2000). Quando colhidas semanalmente, proporcionam maior uniformidade no tamanho das mudas produzidas. As pontas devem ser coletadas com primórdios radiculares visíveis entre 0,5 a 1 cm de comprimento (LIETEN, 2000). Para que sejam capazes de enraizar é desejável que os primórdios radiculares estejam esbranquiçados, não sendo desejados primórdios escuros e maiores que um centímetro (LIETEN, 2000; POLING, 2000). Normalmente as pontas são colocadas para enraizar em estufas ou túneis plásticos sob nebulização, mantendo a umidade relativa em torno de 90 a 100% por 10 a 14 dias. O enraizamento é acelerado com temperaturas elevadas, é necessária uma temperatura mínima de 20°C para o rápido desenvolvimento do sistema radicular (LIETEN, 2000).

O número de pontas produzidas por planta matriz é variável conforme a cultivar, as condições ambientais (GALLETA; BRINGHURTS, 1990) e o sistema de cultivo (PASSOS; PIRES 1999). Em cultivo fora do solo encontra-se na literatura rendimento em torno de 400 plantas filhas m⁻² (ARMEFHLO, 2006). Nesse sistema, a densidade de plantas varia de 6 a 12 plantas por m², enquanto no solo é utilizada uma matriz por m². Segundo Treder et al. (2007), em um sistema de cultivo fora do solo, duplicando a densidade de plantas por área o número de pontas de estolão por planta é reduzido, porém, tem-se um aumento no número produzido por área.

2.5 Fisiologia da planta do morangueiro

O morangueiro (*Fragaria x ananassa* Duch.), pertence à família Rosaceae, gênero *Fragaria* Linnaeus. A principal espécie cultivada é a *Fragaria x ananassa* Duch., originada do cruzamento de *Fragaria chiloensis* L., de origem chilena, e *Fragaria virginiana* Duch. encontrada nos Estados Unidos e Canadá (DARROW, 1966; HANCOCK, 1992). É uma planta de hábito de crescimento rasteiro

e características de planta herbácea. Embora seja uma cultura perene, é cultivada como cultura anual, devido principalmente, ao risco de acúmulo de doenças de um ciclo para o outro. Por ser um octaplóide ($2n = 8x = 56$) o morangueiro apresenta elevada variabilidade genética. Devido a isto é propagado vegetativamente para fins comerciais e apenas no melhoramento genético são utilizadas as sementes (DARROW,1966).

O crescimento e o desenvolvimento das plantas de morango são altamente sensíveis às variações de temperatura do ar e do solo, além de serem dependentes da cultivar (LARSON, 1994). A emissão de estolões é favorecida por temperaturas do ar entre 20 e 26°C, associadas aos dias longos (SMEETS, 1980; SONSTEBY, 1997; GALETTA; BRINGHURTS 1990). Os estolões são as estruturas de propagação vegetativa da planta, formados a partir de gemas axilares das folhas, constituídos por nós e entrenós. As plantas filhas são formadas em séries nos nós, a partir de pontas de estolões, que em contato com o solo enraízam. O desenvolvimento do sistema radicular dessas plantas ocorre de 10 a 15 dias após a emissão das primeiras folhas (GIMÉNEZ, 2008).

A função do estolão não é apenas formar uma nova planta, mas dar suporte até esta nova planta se tornar independente por suas próprias raízes. Os estolões desempenham a função de comunicação planta a planta, ocorrendo através deles o transporte de água e nutrientes. A estrutura anatômica dos estolões está descrita na literatura desde 1927, confirmando a capacidade transportadora dos mesmos (SAVINI et al., 2008). O conjunto formado pela planta mãe, os estolões em crescimento e as plantas filhas enraizadas forma um único conjunto funcional, podendo compartilhar água, nutrientes e fotoassimilados. O transporte de água e nutrientes minerais pode aumentar a capacidade de adaptação das plantas a diferentes ambientes, tornando-as mais competitivas e tolerantes à condições de déficit de água e nutrientes (ALPERT,1991).

2.6 Relações fonte e dreno

A eficiência da fotossíntese, translocação de assimilados e formação de drenos ativos são fatores determinantes da produtividade vegetal (IQBAL et al., 2012). O índice de colheita depende da relação fonte e dreno, a qual é afetada pela eficiência de conversão da luz absorvida em biomassa e pela disponibilidade de nutrientes. A atividade da fonte impulsiona o metabolismo do dreno e está relacionada com a ótima utilização dos recursos de C e N (PAUL; FOYER 2001). O dreno geralmente é abastecido com fotoassimilados de órgãos fontes mais próximos, o que significa que as folhas do terço superior direcionam os assimilados para os ápices e folhas novas em desenvolvimento, enquanto folhas do terço inferior direcionam seus produtos de exportação para as raízes (MARENCO; LOPES 2011).

As folhas têm um papel importante na determinação do potencial das fontes e, portanto, sobre a produtividade. Folhas velhas têm suas funções fotossintéticas reduzidas e servem como fonte de N e outros nutrientes para a planta. Entretanto, ao atingirem o ponto de compensação da fotossíntese, as folhas velhas entram em senescência e morrem. A desfolha é uma prática antiga utilizada em várias partes do mundo para manejar as relações fonte e dreno em plantas cultivadas. A desfolha das folhas velhas em senescência aumenta a disponibilidade de assimilados de carbono para o crescimento das folhas novas, aumentando a eficiência da área foliar da planta (HORTENSTEINER; FELLER, 2002; KHAN et al., 2007). A eliminação de folhas velhas aumenta também a eficiência de uso da água e dos nutrientes (KHAN et al., 2007; IQBAL et al., 2012). A diminuição dos drenos secundários da planta, constituídos por outros órgãos que não aqueles de interesse agrônomo, aumenta o índice de colheita.

A relação fonte e dreno é afetada também, pela intensidade da radiação solar que chega até o dossel da cultura. A área foliar ótima é aquela que maximiza a absorção da radiação solar incidente. Em condições de baixa disponibilidade de radiação solar, a disponibilidade de assimilados é menor e os órgãos da parte aérea são os drenos preferenciais, devido à proximidade das fontes, enquanto que em condições ideais de radiação solar os assimilados podem ser transportados para os demais drenos da planta (MARENCO; LOPES, 2011).

A água, os nutrientes e os fotoassimilados podem ser transportados da planta mãe para as plantas filhas através do estolão (MAO et al., 2009). Plantas filhas em situação de estresse, ou ainda não enraizadas funcionam como drenos, importando assimilados da planta mãe. A taxa de importação depende do nível de estresse a que estas plantas estiverem submetidas e induz o aumento da taxa fotossintética da planta mãe, devido ao aumento da taxa de descarregamento das fontes (ZHANG et al., 2009). Tem sido relatado na literatura, que a translocação de fotoassimilados, água e nutrientes, através da conexão de caules ou raízes, é um mecanismo de adaptação útil para aumentar o desempenho das plantas clonais em ambientes heterogêneos (ALPERT, 1991; ALPERT, 1996; ALPERT, 1999; HOLZAPFEL; ALPERT, 2003; ROILOA; RETUERTO, 2007; ZHANG et al., 2008). O compartilhamento dos recursos depende do genótipo, do ambiente e da interação genótipo ambiente (ALPERT, 2003).

3 ARTIGO I

Shading of mother plants and rooting stolons in the production of strawberry runner tips

Abstract

The aim of this work was (i) to test the hypothesis that growth of strawberry mother plants can be reduced without affecting the emission of runner tips, (ii) the emission of runner tips for producing plug plants can be increased by keeping “daughter plants” attached to the mother plant by stolons and (iii) deepening knowledge about source-sink relationship between among the mother strawberry plant and stolons. Micropropagated stock plants of the Camino Real cultivar were planted at October 14th, 2010 in a soilless system. Treatments consisted of two source levels: mother plants shaded and unshaded, respectively; and four sinks levels: runner tips collected weekly (i) and monthly (ii), four runner tips rooted in pots to originate four daughter plants which were kept connected to the mother plant by stolons (iii) and four stolons of the mother plant kept to grow freely (iv). In all treatments runner tips were cut at the stage of one expanded leaf and/or with visible root nodules. The crown diameter of collected runner tips was measured and dry mass determined. Shoot, root and crown dry mass of stock mother plants were determined at the end of the experiment. There were interactions among treatments for total number and dry mass of runner tips and mean dry mass of runner tips. Growth of mother plants was reduced by shading in a similar way in crown, shoot and roots. It can be concluded that growth of strawberry mother plants can be reduced without affecting the emission of runner tips.

Keywords: *Fragaria x ananassa* D., propagation, plug plants, source, sink

Introduction

Strawberry (*Fragaria x ananassa* Duch.) is a determinate growing perennial plant with herbaceous characteristics. Vegetative propagation by stolons is the worldwide method than has been used to produce bare or plug plant transplants of this crop for fruit production (DURNER et al., 2002). For producing plug transplants, stock plants from *in vitro* culture can be planted in hydroponical facilities to produce stolons and runner tips, which are collected and rooted in trays (DURNER et al., 2002; ARMEFHLOR, 2006). In Southern Brazil, the vegetative propagation phase of the strawberry plant is from October to March, but the best time for growers planting their crops is March and April. As a consequence, runner tip production has to be planned to produce plug plants for sale in this period and tips produced in spring and early summer are discarded (DAL PICIO et al., 2012). At the end of the propagation phase, the mother plants are also discarded.

The emission of stolons in strawberry plants is induced by air temperatures between 20-26°C and photoperiods longer than 14 h (SONSTEBY, 1997). Daughter plants grow after rooting stolon nodes, originating a stoloniferous runner chain. It has been demonstrated in the literature that initial growth of the daughter plant depends on water, carbon assimilates and nutrients supplied by the mother plant. Leaves are emitted firstly, followed by roots about 10-15 days later (SERÇE; HANCOCK, 2005). It can be assumed that the mother and the daughter plants and unrooted runner tips linked by stolons act as a unique functional plant regulated by sink-source relations. Indeed, it has been reported that carbon assimilates, water and nutrients can be transported in both directions (ROILOA; RETUERTO, 2007; ZHANG et al., 2009; MAO et al., 2009) as an adaptative ability of wild species growing in heterogeneous patches (ALPERT et al., 2003).

In the current practice of producing strawberry plug plants, runner tips are cut from the mother plant and the competition among stolons, runner tips and the mother plant is minimized (GIMÉNEZ et al., 2008). This practice can explain the vigorous growth of these plants at the end of the propagation phase, when they are discarded (DAL PICIO et al., 2013 in press). It is a disadvantage, because carbon assimilates, water and mineral nutrients were used for plant maintenance and growth. It is not

clear in the literature if the vegetative growth of the mother plant affects the emission and crown diameter of runner tips for plug plant production. Its reduction without affecting runner tip production would be a matter of interest for nurseries, for saving labor, water and fertilizers. Another possibility would be rooting the first runner tips emitted by the mother plant and keep them attached to the mother plant by stolons to grow as “daughter plants”. In this case, carbon assimilates of the mother plant could be transported to daughter plants and runner tips. In fact, DAL PICIO et al. (2012) reported that strawberry stock plants can be multiplied by replanting runner tips after cutting them and rooting them from the stock plant. Nevertheless, this practice was effective to increase runner tips production only at the first 75 days after planting the stock plants, because of the time that detached “daughter plants” take to growth and start the emission of runner tips.

The aim of this work was (i) to test the hypothesis that growth of strawberry mother plants may be reduced without affecting the emission of runner tips, (ii) the emission of runner tips for producing plug plants may be increased by keeping “daughter plants” attached to the mother plant by stolons and (iii) deeping knowledge about source-sink relationship between the mother strawberry plant and stolons.

Materials And Methods

The experiment was conducted inside a polyethylene umbrella greenhouse at 80% transmissibility to global solar radiation, with 200 m² at Departamento de Fitotecnia, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, from October 14th, 2010 to March 28th, 2011. Mean air temperature and accumulated daily global solar radiation measured by an automatic meteorological station placed 800 m away from the greenhouse were, respectively, 18.83°C and 360.06 MJ m⁻² in October; 20.35°C and 673.31 MJm⁻² in November; 23.34°C and 783,99 MJkJ m⁻² in December; 25.38°C and 717.77 MJkJ m⁻² in January; 24°C and 553.69 MJ m⁻² in February; 22.16°C and 495.10 MJ m⁻² in March.

Micropropagated stock plants of the Camino Real cultivar were acclimatized for 30 days inside the greenhouse and planted in 1.7 dm³ polyethylene pots filled with

the organic substrate Mecplant® HF, placed over 0.80 m height benches, in a density of 12 plants m⁻². The water retaining capacity of the substrate was 60% and density 375 g dm⁻³. Plants were daily fertigated by drippers using a standard nutrient solution at concentrations of, in mmol L⁻¹: 10.60 NO₃⁻; 0.43 NH₄⁺; 2.00 H₂PO₄⁻; 6.15 K⁺; 3.00 Ca²⁺; 1.00 Mg²⁺ and 1.00 SO₄²⁻, and in mg L⁻¹: 0.03 Mo; 0.42 B; 0.06 Cu; 0.50 Mn; 0.22 Zn and 1.00 Fe. Fertigation was done five times a day during five minutes. Supplied water volumes were estimated by daily evapotranspiration and Kc for drip irrigation of this crop (TIMM et al., 2009) with a drainage coefficient of about 30%.

Source levels were plants mother unshaded (A) and 50% shaded (B) by a screen (Figure 1 and 2). In T1, runner tips were weekly collected in a similar way as done when producing plug plants, and it was considered the control. In T2, runner tips were collected and counted at 30 days intervals. In T3, four runner tips were rooted in pots to originate four daughter plants which were kept connected to the mother plant by stolons. Both mother and daughter plants were grown in density of 12 plants m⁻². Runner tips emitted by the mother plant and its four daughter plants were collected and counted at weekly intervals. In T4, four stolons of the mother plant were kept to grow freely. Runner tips emitted by the mother plants and by the stolons were collected and counted at weekly intervals. Shading (B) was done only on mother plants. At 40 days after planting when four running tips were rooted on T3 plants, shading was done on plants of all treatments. Thereafter, mother plants were shaded and daughter plants and runner tips were grown unshaded till the end of the experiment. In all treatments runner tips were cut at the stage of one expanded leaf (Patent number PI1105802-1, deposited) and/or with visible root nodule.

The runner tips collected were counted and its crown diameter was measured by using a pachymeter and dry mass determined after drying at 65°C until constant mass was reached. At the ending date (March 28th, 2011), four mother plants of all treatments were collected to determine shoot, root and crown dry mass.

A split-plot randomized experimental design was used with four replications of three plants, source levels in plots and sink levels in sub-plots. Data were compared by ANOVA after transforming discrete data by the equation $(x+0.5)^{1/2}$ (Statistica®).

Results

There were interactions among treatments for total number and dry mass of runner tips and mean dry mass of runner tips. The total number of runner tips was reduced on shaded plants when runner tips were collected weekly (T1) and monthly (T2) (Table 1). Maximum numbers were recorded on T2 plants on both shaded and unshaded plants. By delaying the time interval among cuttings the maximum number of runner tips produced (T2) was increased 42.8% in unshaded plants. On shaded plants it was 41.6%. On plants with four rooted daughter plants connected (T3) and with four stolons grown freely (T4), no significant differences were recorded on total number of runner tips on shaded and unshaded. Similar results among treatments were observed in total dry mass of runner tips of unshaded plants. Nevertheless, shading reduced 67% the growth of runner tips on T1 plants and was of minor effect on plants with four stolons rooted (T3) and unrooted (T4). Mean dry mass of runner tips was recorded on those collected monthly (T2) on shaded and unshaded plants. Crown diameter of tips were also recorded on T2 of shaded and unshaded plants and these results highlight the importance of stolons and runner tips for source strength in the strawberry plant.

When data of daughter plants were added to that of stock plants, differences among treatments changed (Table 2). It is important to show the data in this way, because a high number of runner tips is essential for the commercial production of strawberry plug plants. The maximum number of tips was recorded on shaded plants with rooted tips (T3), not differing from unshaded ones. When compared to unrooted ones (T4), rooting increased 42.5% the emission of tips and increased also its mean dry mass and crown diameter. The reduction in source strength imposed by shading was compensating by daughter plants and it was enhanced by rooting. Similar trend was found in growth of tips and those collected on T3 plants have mean dry mass 7.7 times higher than those on T1 plants (Table 1).

January, February, March and April are the best months for producing strawberry plug transplants in Southern Brazil and Table 3 shows data of runner tip production that can be used for it. Maximum number of runner tips was reached on shaded plants with rooted daughter plants (T3), not differing from unshaded rooted

ones. Emission and growth of runner tips were not reduced by shading on T3 and T4 plants. Lower values of runner emission and growth were recorded on T1 shaded plants, indicating that it is not a good practice to be used in management for producing commercial plug transplants.

Growth of mother plants was reduced by shading in a similar way in crown, shoot and roots (Table 4). While total number and total dry mass of runner tips were not reduced by shading (Table 2) on plants with rooted (T3) and unrooted runner tips (T4), total dry mass of the mother plants was in average 52% reduced on shaded plants. On T3 plants, rooted stolons were not able to sustain growth of the mother plant, but were to supply the assimilate demand for emission of tips. Perhaps, the transport resistance of water and nutrients across the stolon would be at the origin of this phenomenon. While on unshaded plants root dry mass did not differ on T2, T3 and T4, on shaded plants it was on average four times higher on T3 and T4 plants when compared with T1 and T2 plants, indicating that roots were sinks weaker than shoot organs. The growth of crown was not affected by sink levels but was by shading.

Discussion

Results showed that emission of runner tips is affected by source strength. When mother plants were 50% shaded, number of tips decreased 42% on those with tips being collected weekly and monthly (T1 and T2, Table 1) and the effect was of minor importance on those having stolons rooted (T3) and unrooted (T4, Table 1). The reduction in runner tips growth in shaded mother plants having rooted stolons (T3) was low and not significant. It can be interpreted that the reduction in photosynthesis as a consequence of low solar radiation on shaded plants was compensate by unshaded rooted stolons. In fact, it has been reported in the literature that the strawberry mother and daughter plants and stolons can translocate water (MAO et.al, 2009), carbon assimilates (ZHANG et al., 2009) and nitrogen (ALPERT et al., 2003), which seems confirmed by present data. Nevertheless, rooted stolons were not able to compensate the reduction in emission of tips by the mother plant

when they were collected weekly (Table 1, T1, T3 and T4). These results show that on T1 unshaded plants, tips were collected weekly bearing only one leaf and they were sinks. On T2 unshaded plants, tips lasted four weeks and were collected bearing from one to five leaves, and they were sources in, although they were unrooted and depending on water and nutrients from the mother plant. However, it was not so for shaded plants, in which total dry mass did not differ among treatments. In shaded plants, number of runner tips was on average 43.3% lower and production of assimilates might not been enough to increase growth of the mother plant as recorded on unshaded plants. Nevertheless, when the mother plant and stolons were considered together as a unique functional plant, total emission of tips and growth of this functional plant were increased only on plants with attached rooted stolons (T3, Table 2). Source-sink relations of the strawberry plant during the propagation phase that have been previously reported in the literature were from short time experiments (SAVINI et al.,2008). Present data were recorded during all the plant propagation phase and were not yet reported in the literature.

Growth of tips was affected by shading the mother plant and also by rooting stolons. While the crown diameter was little affected, the dry mass was strongly affected. It was 30% reduced by shading plants with stolons collected monthly (T2, Table 1). In plants with four stolons, crown diameter was reduced 7.62% in rooted and 4.26% in unrooted stolons by effect of shading the mother plant (Table 2). By effect of rooting, it increased 19.2% on unshaded and 16.3% on shaded plants. These results highlight the benefits of rooted stolons on tip growth. The crown diameter has been the main variable used as a quality indicator of strawberry transplants for commercial purposes. It has been in the range of 8 mm for bare root transplants and 2-5 mm for plug plant transplants (DURNER, 2002; HOCHMUTH et al., 2006; COCCO et al., 2011).

It has been reported in the literature that strawberry stock plants grown for producing runner tips by the plug plant method reach vigorous growth at the end of the propagation phase (DAL PICIO, 2013 in press). In the present research, the stolons attached to the mother plant did not reduce significantly its final growth (TDM, Table 4), but shading 50% reduced it 52%. A strong reduction was also recorded on root growth of shaded (RDM, Table 4) plants, especially on those without stolons attached (Table 4, T1 and T2). Similar result was reported by Alpert et al. (2003) on

Fragaria chiloensis plants grown at different radiation levels. This suggests a priority for shoot growth in expense of root growth in the soilless production system in which water and nutrients were daily supplied by fertigation in order to satisfy the demand of plants. This priority was not reported on data of *Fragaria chiloensis* plants grown at low N availability (ALPERT et al., 2003) and *Fragaria orientalis* at low water supply (ZHANG et al., 2008). A root growth on shaded plants 4.3 times lower on T2 plants than in T3/T4 plants with minor effect on shoot growth suggests that for producing commercial runner tips roots might be confined in smaller containers than those used in the present research.

The number of runner tips that can be produced for commercial plug plant production depends on cultivar, environmental conditions and production system (Serçe; Hancock, 2005). The number reached in the present research on unshaded plants was in the range from 40.17 in T1 to 77.25 in T3, in average, higher than the 10 to 22 tips per soilless grown stock plant reported in the literature (Lieten, 2000; Hokanson et al., 2004; Treder et al., 2007). In similar experimental conditions in Santa Maria, Dal Picio et al.(2012) reported 25; 36 and 60 tips per stock plant of cultivars INIA Guenoa, Yvapitá and Arazá, while Janisch et al. (2012) reported 54 tips per stock plant of the cultivar Camino Real in the same place. Although the total number of tips produced by unshaded T2 plants was similar to that of T3 plants (Table 2), they were collected monthly on T2 plants and were of different physiological age. Older tips reached higher growth and number of leaves (Table 1), but root primordia were suberified. When such tips are rooted for plug plant production, mortality is high and the survivors produce heterogeneous transplants. Thus, tips collected weekly are better for this purpose. Nevertheless, the best time for producing tips for commercial plug plants in Southern Brazil is January until April. Shading reduced emission of tips in December and increased it in February, which is an advantageous characteristic for nurseries. Of the total number of tips, 85% in T3 and 86% in T4 were emitted from January to March. On unshaded plants, they were 76.5% and 74.09%, respectively.

It can be concluded that growth of strawberry mother plants may be reduced without affecting the emission of runner tips and for producing plug plants the number of tips may be increased by keeping daughter plants attached to the mother plant by stolons. Agronomical implications arise from present results. Reducing the crop leaf

area without affecting yield can lead to higher plant density and reduction in water and nutrient uptake by plants. Although shading mother plants is a managing practice that could hardly be adopted in commercial facilities, similar effects of reducing source strength might be obtained by other easily practices like defoliation. Although in the current commercial practice tips have been collected weekly, by reducing growth of mother plants and rooting four stolons, number of tips produced in the good time for sale might be 22% increased. In a surface basis, the number of *in vitro* stock plants could also be reduced and replaced by rooted stolons, without any reduction in emission and growth of tips.

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Figure 1- Runner tips collected weekly (T1), in mother plants unshaded (A) and shaded (B). Runner tips collected monthly (T2), in mother plants unshaded (C) and shaded (D).



Figure 2- Four stolons with tips rooted (T3), in mother plants unshaded (A) and shaded (B). Four stolons with tips unrooted (T4), in mother plants unshaded (C) and shaded (D).

Table 1- Total number of runner tips per strawberry mother plant, cv. Camino Real, total and mean dry mass (DM) and crown diameter of runner tips of mother plants unshaded (MPU) and mother plants shaded (MPS) and four sink levels (T1,T2,T3 e T4).

Sink levels	N° runner tips pl. ⁻¹		Total DM (g)		Mean DM (g tip ⁻¹)		Crown diameter (mm)	
	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS
T1	40.17Ba	23.50Bb	21.72Ba	7.15Cb	0.54Ba	0.31Cb	4.99Ba	4.48Bb
T2	70.22Aa	40.25Ab	59.26Aa	23.97Ab	0.84Aa	0.59Ab	5.74Aa	5.33Aa
T3	34.00Ba	34.17ABa	16.58Ba	14.94Ba	0.49Ba	0.44Ba	4.87Ba	4.55Ba
T4	30.00Ba	32.17ABa	15.69Ba	11.63BCa	0.52Ba	0.36Cb	4.46Ba	4.26Ba
CV(%)	14.42		18.05		7.44		7.17	

*Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$). T1 and T2 : tips collected weekly and monthly; T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

Table 2- Total number of runner tips, total and mean dry mass (DM) and crown diameter of runner tips of the strawberry mother plants, cv. Camino Real, unshaded (MPU) and shaded (MPS) plus daughter and two sink levels (T3 e T4).

Sink levels	N° runner tips pl. ⁻¹		Total DM (g)		Mean DM (g tip ⁻¹)		Crown diameter (mm)	
	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS
T3	77.25Aa	80.42Aa	55.85Aa	54.96Aa	0.72Aa	0.68Aa	5.51Aa	5.09Ab
T4	41.84Ba	48.84Ba	21.13Ba	18.69Ba	0.51Ba	0.38Ba	4.45Ba	4.26Ba
CV(%)	14.36		23.82		15.33		5.94	

* Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$). T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

Table 3- Total number of runner tips, total and mean dry mass (DM) and crown diameter of runner tips produced from January to March 2011 by strawberry mother plant, on unshaded (MPU) and shaded (MPS) plants plus daughter plants, cv. Camino Real, and four sink levels (T1,T2,T3 e T4).

Sink levels	Runner tips		DM		Mean DM (g ponta ⁻¹)		Crown diameter (mm)	
	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS
T1	26.50Ba	16.19Cb	16.31Ba	4.84Bb	0.60Ba	0.29Cb	4.78Ba	3.73Cb
T2	55.97Aa	30.67Bb	47.02Aa	15.83Bb	0.84Aa	0.51Bb	5.75Aa	5.42Aa
T3	59.17Aa	68.42Aa	49.14Aa	46.22Aa	0.81Aa	0.67Ab	5.52Aa	5.20Aa
T4	31.00Bb	42.00Ba	16.74Ba	15.65Ba	0.54Ba	0.37BCb	4.37Ba	4.34Ba
CV(%)	15.85		28.53		12.04		4.83	

* Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$). T1 and T2 : tips collected weekly and monthly; T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

Table 4- Total dry mass (TDM), dry mass of crown (CDM) shoot (SDM) and roots (RDM) of the strawberry mother plants, cv. Camino Real, at the end of the experimental period on unshaded (MPU) and shaded (MPS) mother plants, and four sink levels (T1,T2,T3 e T4).

Sink levels	TDM (g pl ⁻¹)		CDM(g pl ⁻¹)		SDM (g ⁻¹)		RDM (g ⁻¹)	
	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS	MPU	MPS
T1	99.10Ba	42.25Ab	7.36Aa	2.77Ab	74.76Ba	35.23Ab	16.97Ba	4.24Bb
T2	118.97ABa	41.67Ab	7.49Aa	2.84Ab	86.63ABa	35.32Ab	24.85ABa	3.51Bb
T3	140.57Aa	66.71Ab	8.66Aa	3.98Ab	102.71Aa	47.77Ab	29.19Aa	14.96Ab
T4	134.85Aa	64.85Ab	7.87Aa	3.81Ab	94.36ABa	45.68Ab	32.61Aa	15.36Ab
Means	123.37	53.87	7.84	3.35	89.91	41.00	25.90	9.51
CV(%)	17.19		18.25		18.01		22.57	

* Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$). T1 and T2 : tips collected weekly and monthly; T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

4 ARTIGO II

Defoliation of strawberry mother plants for producing runner tips

Abstract

The goal of this research was to determine if i) the emission of runner tips is reduced on defoliated mother plants, ii) the connection with stolons can compensate the growth of defoliated mother plants and iii) the relationship between growth of the mother plant and emission of runner tips. The experiment was conducted inside a polyethylene umbrella greenhouse, using micropropagated stock plants of the Camino Real cultivar planted in October 13th, 2011 in a soilless system. Treatments were three source and four sink levels. Source levels were mother plants without defoliation, one defoliation and two defoliations. Sink levels were runner tips being collected weekly (i) and monthly (ii), four runner tips rooted in pots to originate four daughter plants which were kept connected to the mother plant by stolons (iii) and four stolons of the mother plant kept to grow freely (iv). The crown diameter of collected runner tips was measured and its dry mass determined. The experiment was ended at April 16th, 2012 and four mother plants of each treatment were collected to determine shoot, root and crown dry mass. The source levels did not affect emission of the runner tips, but did the growth of the mother plant. Present results show that in the commercial production of runner tips defoliation of mother plants bearing rooting stolons can be used to reduce growth of the mother plants, without reduction in emission and growth of the runner tips.

Keywords: *Fragaria x ananassa* D., propagation, plug plants, source, sink

Introduction

The potential crop yield depends mainly on photosynthetic efficiency, transport of carbon assimilates and sink strength of plants. The efficiency of conversion of

solar radiation in biomass, nitrogen availability and the functional equilibrium between carbon and nitrogen are factors affecting source-sink relationships (IQBAL et al., 2012). They affect first the source strength, which in turn affects sink strength and the carbon and nitrogen economy of the plant. Leaf surface has an essential role for the potential plant photosynthetic capacity and crop yield (PAUL; FOYER, 2001).

Defoliation, defined as partial or whole removal of plant leaves, is a technique that has been used in several regions of the world for stimulating photosynthesis and growth of young leaves, better use of water and nutrients and also to modify the dry matter partitioning between source and sink compartments of the plant (KHAN et al., 2007; IQUBAL et al., 2012). Chanishvili et al. (2005) argued that defoliation is a useful tool for the management of the plant source-sink equilibrium and can also be used by researchers for simulating the dry matter partitioning among plant organs.

The effect of partial and whole defoliation on plant growth and crop yield has been determined mainly in Poaceae grasses and fruiting crops. In strawberry, it has been used after harvesting in two-year crops for reducing diseases and pests (CROP SPECIFIC PROTOCOL, 2011). Daugaard et al. (2003) reported that it reduced the incidence of *Botrytis cinerea* and increased slightly the fruit size in the following cropping periods. Albrechts et al. (1992) argued that it can also be used in the production of strawberry transplants for reducing pests and diseases and for lowering transpiration during transport and planting, provided that further plant growth and fruit yield will not be reduced.

It has been reported in the literature that strawberry stolons can act as individual plants. When connected to the mother plant, they can also exchange carbon, water, mineral nutrients and biochemical compounds by vascular transport (HOLZAPFEL; ALPERT, 2003). In heterogeneous environments, the stolon connections among plants clonally propagated can enhance adaptation and survivance (ALPERT, 2003). In *Fragaria chiloensis* plants connected by stolons, root growth was higher when plants were grown under low radiation and high N availability, while in plants without stolons attached the effect was inversed (ROILOA et al., 2007). In *Fragaria orientalis*, the growth of stressed mother plants was compensating by connected stolons (ZHANG et al., 2009). Results in the literature were from strawberry wild species, while similar data on the cultivated species *Fragaria x ananassa* was not found. During the propagation phase of this species for

producing runner tips it has been reported a vigorous growth of mother plants (DAL PICIO et al., 2013 in press), which represents a waste of carbon assimilates, water and mineral nutrients. It can be hypothesised that defoliation can be used as a management practice to reduce growth of the mother plant, without reducing emission and growth of runner tips for plug transplant production. Such results were not found in the literature.

The goal of this research was to determine if i) the emission of runner tips is reduced on defoliated mother plants, ii) the connection with stolons can compensate the growth of defoliated mother plants and iii) the relationship between growth of the mother plant and emission of runner tips.

Material and methods

The experiment was conducted inside a polyethylene umbrella greenhouse, at Departamento de Fitotecnia, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, from October 13th, 2011 to April 16th, 2012. Mean air temperature and accumulated daily global solar radiation measured by an automatic meteorological station placed 800 m away from the greenhouse were, respectively, 19.91°C and 382.63 MJ m⁻² in October; 22.11°C and 718.86 MJ m⁻² in November; 23.03°C and 754.49 MJ m⁻² in December; 25.28°C and 775.81 MJ m⁻² in January; 25.88°C and 564.81 MJ m⁻² in February; 22.59°C and 621.92 MJ m⁻² in March; 21.10°C and 245.83 MJ m⁻² in April.

Stock plants of the Camino Real cultivar from the micropropagation laboratory were planted in 1.7 dm³ polyethylene pots, placed over 0.80 m height benches, in a density of 9 plants m⁻². The organic substrate Mecplant® HF, 60% water retaining capacity and 375 g dm⁻³ bulk density was used. Daily water absorption was estimated based on solar radiation and the crop coefficient for drip irrigation (TIMM et al., 2009) with a drainage coefficient of about 30%. Plants were fertigated by drippers five times a day during five minutes using a standard nutrient solution at concentrations of, in mmol L⁻¹: 10.60 NO₃⁻; 0.43 NH₄⁺; 2.00 H₂PO₄⁻; 6.15 K⁺; 3.00 Ca²⁺; 1.00 Mg²⁺ and 1.00 SO₄²⁻, and in mg L⁻¹: 0.03 Mo; 0.42 B; 0.06 Cu; 0.50 Mn; 0.22 Zn and 1.00 Fe.

Treatments were three source and four sink levels. Source levels were modified by one defoliation of mother plants at 96 days after planting (DAP) (B), two defoliations at 50 and 96 DAP (C) and without defoliation (A, control plants) (Figure 1 and 2). Sink levels were, in T1, runner tips being collected weekly in a similar way as done when producing plug plants. In T2, runner tips were collected and counted at 30 day intervals. In T3, four runner tips were rooted in pots to originate four daughter plants which were kept connected to the mother plant by stolons. Both mother and daughter plants were grown in a density of 9 plants m⁻². Runner tips emitted by the mother plant and its four daughter plants were collected and counted at weekly intervals. In T4, four stolons of the mother plant were kept to grow freely. Runner tips emitted by the mother plants and by the stolons were collected and counted at weekly intervals. Defoliation of mother plants was done by picking up all leaves, when the petioles of the two older leaves stopped to grow, determined by weekly measurements of petiole length. The crown diameter of collected runner tips was measured by a pachymeter and dry mass determined after drying at 65°C until constant mass was reached. At the ending date (April 16th, 2012), four mother plants of all treatments were collected to determine shoot, root and crown dry mass. A split-pot randomized experimental design was used with four replications of three plants, source levels in plots and sink levels in sub-plots. Data were compared by ANOVA after transforming discrete data by the equation $(x+0.5)^{1/2}$ (Statistica®).

Results

Differences in the total number of runner tips among source levels were not significant, but were among sink levels, without interactions (Table 1). On mother plants without defoliation, number of tips was higher when tips were collected weekly (T1) or monthly (T2). Growth of runner tips was higher when they were collected monthly (T2) on plants without defoliation (A) and decreased 44.7% on two-defoliated mother plants (C). It was not significantly affected by defoliation on mother plants with four stolons attached, rooted (T3) and unrooted (T4). Mean dry mass of runner tips was affected by defoliation. It was higher on not defoliated plants (A) when tips

were collected weekly (T1) and lower on two-defoliated ones (C) bearing four unrooted stolons (T4). In the crown diameter of runner tips there were interactions among source and sink levels. Higher crown diameter of tips was recorded on not defoliated (A) plants with tips collected weekly (T1), and was lowered 24.3% on two-defoliated ones (C, T1). Nevertheless, the effect of two-defoliation in the crown diameter of tips was partially compensated by rooting stolons (T3), because it was 12.4% higher when compared to plants bearing unrooted stolons (T4).

Data of growth variables of the mother plant plus its stolons showed that the total number of runner tips was higher on plants with rooted stolons and was not significantly affected by defoliation (Table 2, T3 and T4). The total number of tips on T3 was higher 56.8% than on T4 plants without defoliation (A), 49.1% than on plants with one defoliation (B) and 67.3% than on those with two defoliations (C). Similar effects were recorded in total dry mass of runner tips (Table 2), the mean dry mass of tips also not was reduced on two-defoliated plants (C) and the lowest value was recorded on plants bearing unrooted stolons (C, T4). Defoliation did not affect the crown diameter of tips, but rooting did (T3, T4).

Number of runner tips produced from January to April, the best period for plug plant production to be sale by nurseries, was not significantly affected by defoliation, but were affected by sink levels (Table 3). Although defoliation did not affect significantly the number of tips, it was 15.4% and 20% higher on one (B) and two-defoliated plants (C), respectively. The effect on total dry mass was similar to than on runner tips, higher on plants one (B) and two-defoliated plants (C) with rooted stolons (T3). Two-defoliation did not reduce mean dry mass of runner tips only on plants with rooted stolons (T3), and it was on average 50% higher on these plants. Rooting stolons enhanced also crown diameter of tips. On two-defoliated plants emission of runner tips was delayed. Of the whole experimental period from November to April, 65.6% of tips were emitted from January to April on T1 plants and 73.2% on T3 plants. On not defoliated ones, fractions were 54.3% and 64.6%, respectively.

There were interactions among treatments for growth variables of mother plants at the end of the experiment (Table 4). Total dry mass was higher on not defoliated plants (A). Two-defoliated plants (C) differed from one defoliated ones (B) only when tips were collected weekly (T1). On the not defoliated plants (A), lower growth was recorded on plants bearing unrooted stolons (T4), differing from those

with rooted stolons (T3) and also from those without stolons and tips collected weekly (T1). On one defoliated plants (B), growth of plants with tips collected weekly (T1) was similar to that of rooted stolons (T3). On two-defoliated plants (C), rooting stolons (T3) was able to compensate the growth reduction by effect of defoliation. On plants with rooted stolons (T3), the growth of the crown on non defoliated plants (A) was 47.1% and 47.6 lower than on one (B) and two defoliated plants (C), respectively. Shoot dry mass was higher on not defoliated plants (A) and was reduced on plants bearing unrooted stolons (T4). On defoliated plants, shoot growth on those with rooted stolons (T3) was higher than in unrooted (T4) and in those with stolons being collected monthly (T2). Root growth was most reduced by defoliation on plants with tips collected monthly (T2) and not affected in plants with rooted stolons (T3).

Discussion

One of the hypotheses of the experiment was that by defoliation source strength and partitioning of dry matter among plant organs were changed simultaneously and emission and growth of runner tips might be affected. It is a condition that differs from that of shading, in which only source strength was changed. When the production of assimilates was strongly reduced by two defoliations, the growth of the stock plant was also affected, but the effect was minimized on plants with rooted stolons. These results confirm that rooted stolons can act as source and carbon assimilates can be transported in both directions (MAO et al., 2009). On two defoliated plants with unrooted stolons, carbon assimilation by runner tip photosynthesis was reduced and growth of the mother plant was also reduced. It might be hypothesized that on two defoliated plants water absorption and nutrient uptake by the mother plant will be reduced and transported to the unrooted runner tips as a compensation mechanism to sustain plant growth as a whole. This hypothesis is supported by the lower root growth on defoliated plants, as a shoot:root mechanism regulating the partitioning of dry mass, as has been reported on grasses (DE VISSER, 1997; GOMIDE et al.,2002). Nevertheless, it was not the case on

defoliated plants with rooted stolons, in which root growth was not reduced. It may be possible that on plants with unrooted stolons both water and nutrients cannot be transported across the stolons in a rate enough to maximize photosynthesis of tips. It can be concluded that rooting stolons is essential for maximum growth of the mother plant and runner tips of defoliated strawberry plants.

Present results show that in the commercial production of runner tips, defoliation combined with rooting stolons could be used to reduce growth of the mother plants, without reduction in emission and growth of runner tips. In a previous research for multiplying strawberry stock plants, Dal Picio et al. (2012) reported that tips can be picked out from the mother plant and replanted to generate new mother plants for further emission of tips. Nevertheless, picked tips have to be rooted in trays, acclimatized for at least 15 days and planted in pots. As a consequence emission of new tips is delayed. Rooting stolons as done in the present research can save labour and new tips are emitted earlier.

The effect of defoliation of mother plants on emission of runner tips was similar to that of shading reported in chapter 1 of this thesis. Nevertheless, shading only mother plants on benches where mother plants and attached stolons are grown together is a technique that could hardly be done in commercial facilities. Defoliation is easier to be done and can lead to similar results in emission of tips at the best time for plug transplant production. Additional advantages are lower water and nutrient uptake and reduced plant leaf surface. By reducing leaf surface the risk of pests and diseases can also be lower and plant density might be increased. Further research is needed to test this hypothesis.

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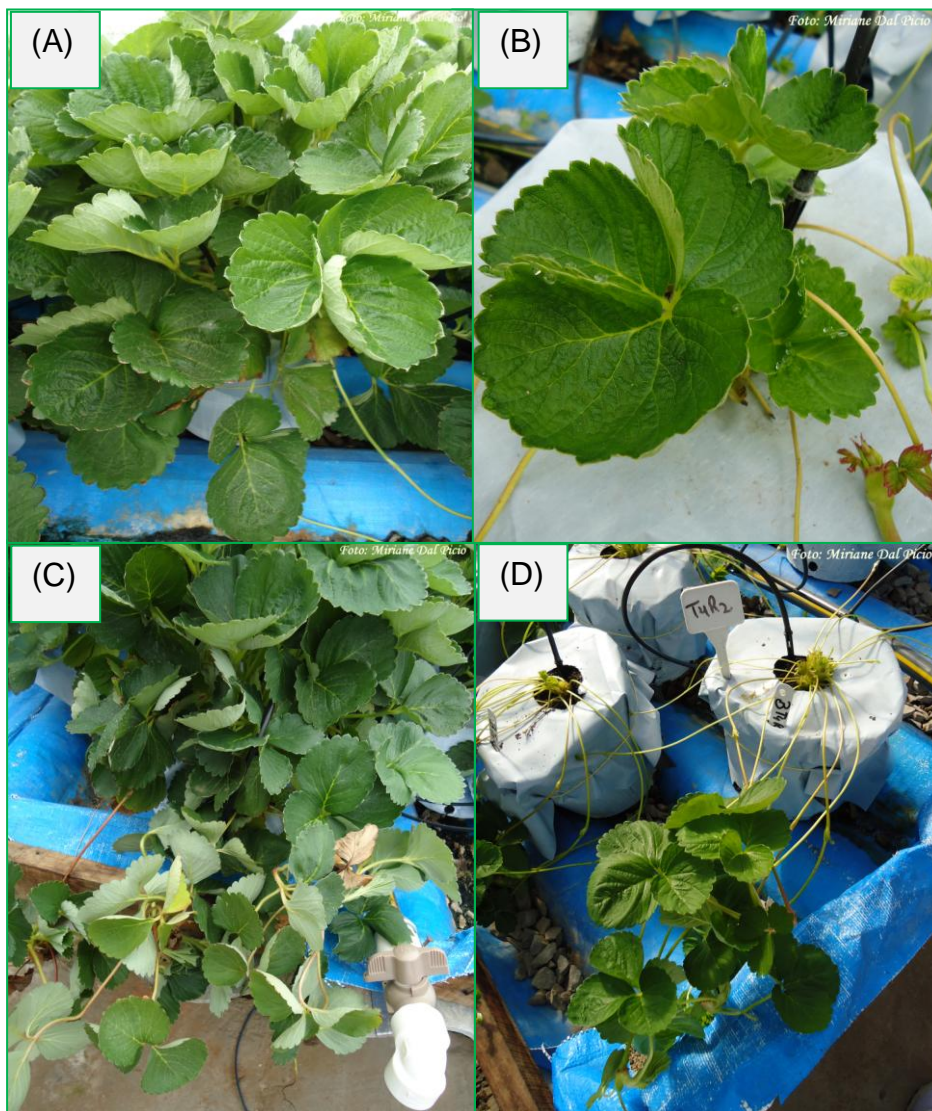


Figure 1- Runner tips collected weekly (T1) in mother plants without defoliation (A), mother plants with one defoliation and two defoliations (B). Runner tips collected monthly (T2) in mother plants without defoliation (C), mother plants with one defoliation and two defoliations (D).

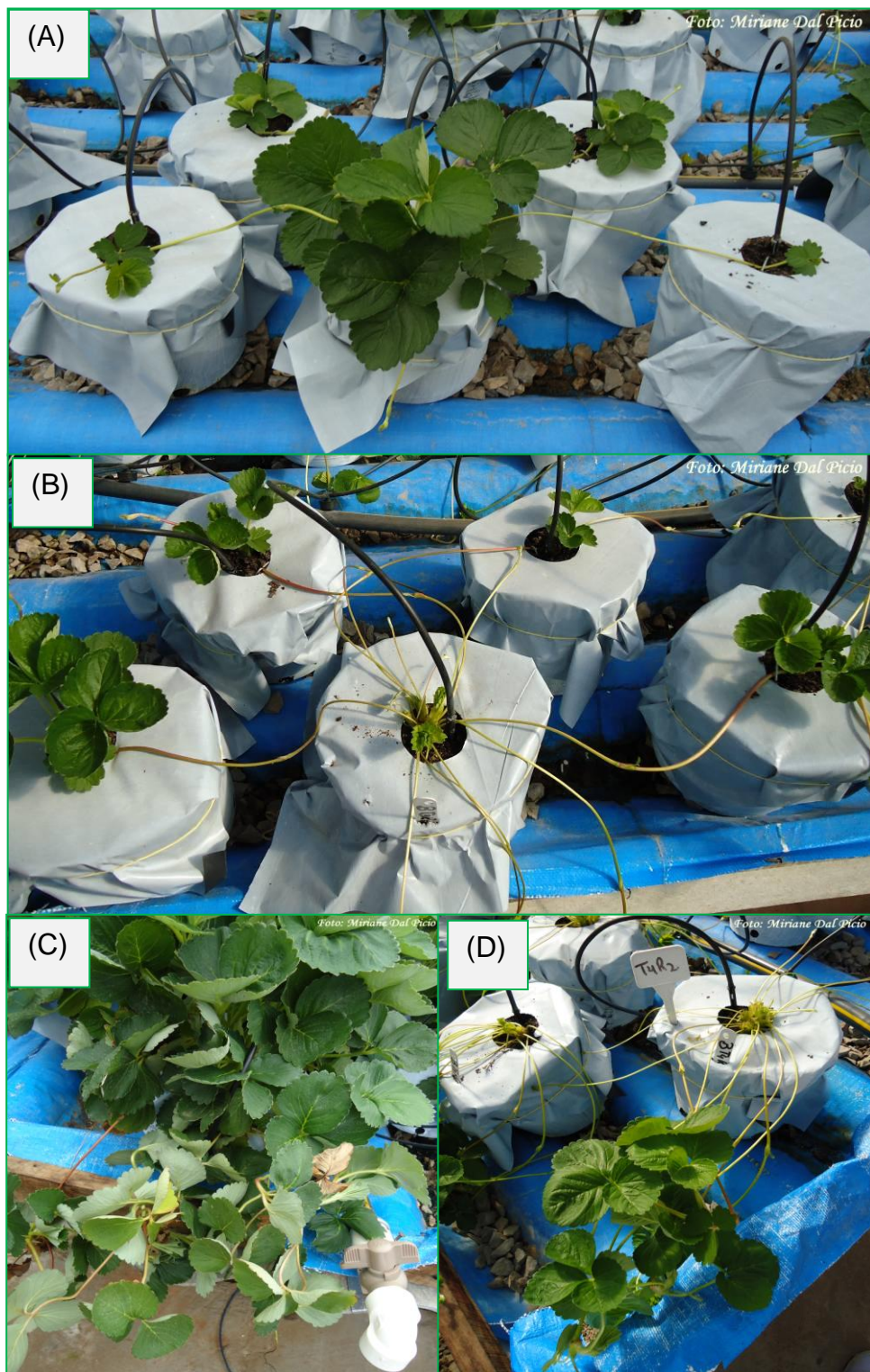


Figure 2- Four stolons with tips rooted (T3) in mother plants without defoliation (A), mother plants with one defoliation and two defoliations (B). Four stolons with tips unrooted (T4) in mother plants without defoliation (C), mother plants with one defoliation and two defoliations (D).

Table 1- Total number of runner tips per mother plants, total and mean dry mass and crown diameter of runner tips of mother plants of strawberry, cv. Camino Real, without defoliation (A), mother plants with one defoliation (B) e mother plants with two defoliations (C) and four sink levels (T1,T2,T3 e T4).

Sink levels	N° runner tips pl. ⁻¹			Total dry mass (g)			Mean dry mass (g tip ⁻¹)			Crown diameter (mm)		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
T1	64.50ABa	69.50Aa	64.42Aa	45.14Ba	38.50Bab	23.60ABb	0.70ABa	0.55Bb	0.36Bc	5.30Aa	4.71ABb	4.01Bc
T2	91.33Aa	81.25Aa	70.33Aa	74.32Aa	62.84Aa	41.12Ab	0.82Aa	0.76Aa	0.58Ab	4.84ABa	5.06Aa	4.90Aa
T3	47.58Ba	54.25Aa	56.25Aa	28.02Ba	30.94Ba	25.22ABa	0.58BCa	0.56Bab	0.44ABb	5.19ABa	4.89ABa	4.75Aa
T4	48.08Ba	52.50Aa	45.92Aa	25.59Ba	25.88Ba	16.13Ba	0.51Ca	0.49Ba	0.33Bb	4.74Ba	4.52Bab	4.16Bc
CV(%)	24.27			29.82			12.85			9.43		

*Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$)

T1 and T2 : tips collected weekly and monthly; T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

Table 2- Total number of runner tips per mother plants, total and mean dry mass and crown diameter of runner tips of mother plants of strawberry, cv. Camino Real, without defoliation (A), mother plants with one defoliation (B) e mother plants with two defoliations (C) plus daughter plants and two sink levels (T3 e T4).

Sink levels	N° runner tips pl. ⁻¹			Total dry mass (g)			Mean dry mass (g tip ⁻¹)			Crown diameter (mm)		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
T3	119.17Aa	133.00Aa	131.92Aa	101.83Aa	114.06Aa	98.85Aa	0.85Aa	0.86Aa	0.74Aa	5.78Aa	5.63Aa	5.40Aa
T4	76.00Ba	89.17Ba	78.83Ba	37.20Ba	42.92Ba	29.68Ba	0.48Ba	0.48Ba	0.36Ba	4.61Ba	4.38Ba	4.23Ba
CV(%)	21.92			24.63			11.88			8.39		

*Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$)

T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

Table 3- Total number of runner tips produced from January and April 2012 by mother plants of strawberry, cv. Camino Real, without defoliation (A), mother plants with one defoliation (B) e mother plants with two defoliations (C) plus daughter plants and four sink levels (T1,T2,T3 e T4).

Sink levels	N° runner tips pl. ⁻¹			Total dry mass (g)			Mean dry mass (g tip ⁻¹)			Crown diameter (mm)		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
T1	35.08Ba	37.67Ba	42.25Ba	25.99Ba	20.61Ba	16.70Ba	0.74Ba	0.55Cb	0.40Bc	5.30Ba	4.67Bb	3.99Cc
T2	70.33Aa	61.92ABa	48.92Ba	55.08Aa	44.61Bab	24.01Bb	0.79Ba	0.70Ba	0.48Bb	4.86Ba	5.02Ba	4.89Ba
T3	76.92Aa	90.92Aa	96.58Aa	76.32Aa	88.20Aa	83.15Aa	0.99Aa	0.97Aa	0.85Aa	6.04Aa	5.73Aa	5.77Aa
T4	45.08ABa	54.50Ba	56.67Ba	24.44Ba	28.81Ba	23.02Ba	0.53Ca	0.53Ca	0.38Bb	4.77Ba	4.44Ba	4.33BCa
CV(%)	28.94			30.33			11.59			8.70		

*Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$)

T1 and T2 : tips collected weekly and monthly; T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

Table 4- Total dry mass, dry mass of crown, shoot and roots at the end of the experimental period on mother plants of strawberry cv. Camino Real, without defoliation (A), mother plants with one defoliation at 96 days after planting (B) and mother plants with two defoliations at 50 and 96 days after planting (C) and four sink levels (T1,T2,T3 e T4).

Sink levels	Total dry mass (g pl ⁻¹)			Crown dry mass (g pl ⁻¹)			Shoot dry mass (g pl ⁻¹)			Root dry mass (g pl ⁻¹)		
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
T1	200.60Aa	103.96Ab	67.14Bc	15.12Aab	23.08Aa	11.67Bb	151.65Aa	64.10ABb	44.94ABb	33.83Aa	16.77ABb	10.53Bb
T2	168.93ABa	61.79Bb	43.23Bb	11.60Aa	11.36Ba	8.30Ba	130.27Aa	38.15Bb	28.45Bb	27.06Aa	12.27Bb	6.48Bb
T3	174.72Aa	119.74Ab	113.25Ab	11.85Ab	22.42Aa	22.64Aa	137.69Aa	75.62Ab	70.37Ab	25.18Aa	21.70ABa	20.25Aa
T4	133.76Ba	86.40ABb	61.49Bb	9.95Aa	13.45Ba	9.72Ba	99.21Ba	48.72Bb	37.34Bb	24.61Aa	24.23Aa	14.42ABb
CV(%)	17.18			31.85			18.83			24.97		

*Means followed by the same lowercase in the row and uppercase in the column do not differ by (Tukey, $p < 0.05$)

T1 and T2 : tips collected weekly and monthly; T3 and T4 : four stolons with tips rooted and unrooted and collected weekly, respectively.

5 DISCUSSÃO

Para desenvolver a produção de mudas de morangueiro de alta qualidade na região Sul do Brasil é necessária a mudança de escala tecnológica do atual método de raízes nuas no solo para o método de mudas com torrão em bandejas. As principais dificuldades para essa mudança são o elevado número de plantas matrizes *in vitro* a serem adquiridas dos laboratórios, a mão-de-obra intensiva para coleta das pontas dos estolões e a necessidade de produção das mudas comerciais durante o curto período de tempo em que se concentra a demanda de mudas por parte dos produtores. Os resultados desse trabalho demonstram que é possível reduzir o número de plantas matrizes micropropagadas a serem adquiridas, agilizar o processo de produção e melhorar a qualidade das mudas. Atualmente, o número de laboratórios capacitados a produzir plantas matrizes de morangueiro é limitado, os quais estão localizados fora das regiões produtoras de mudas e de frutos de morangueiro no RS. Ao serem adquiridas pelos viveiristas, as plantas matrizes são retiradas do laboratório *in vitro*, aclimatizadas, embaladas e acondicionadas, muitas vezes, de forma precária para serem transportadas por via rodoviária por longas distâncias. Essas condições podem levar ao estresse, com posterior mortalidade e redução no crescimento das plantas matrizes e na produção de pontas de estolão.

Em trabalho anterior, Dal Picio et al. (2012) demonstram que é possível reduzir o número de plantas matrizes micropropagadas a serem adquiridas coletando as pontas emitidas por essas plantas matrizes nos meses de outubro a dezembro, e enraizando-as em bandejas contendo substrato para plantá-las em seguida como plantas matrizes multiplicadas. Porém, esse sistema requer local adequado para enraizamento com sistema de nebulização ou microaspersão, mão-de-obra para coleta, enraizamento e plantio. Essa mão-de-obra necessita ser treinada para a identificação do momento da coleta e o controle das condições do ambiente de enraizamento. Do enraizamento ao plantio para o viveiro de produção de mudas são necessários pelo menos 15 dias e mais um período variável de tempo para crescimento da planta matriz até o início do estolonamento.

O trabalho atual mostra que esses períodos podem ser reduzidos mantendo a conexão da ponta de estolão com a planta matriz através do estolão, originando assim plantas filhas (Figura 1). Nesse sistema o enraizamento ocorre em um menor período de tempo além de as plantas iniciarem a emissão de pontas mais precocemente. Do total de pontas produzidas, 73,2% ocorreu de janeiro a abril, em plantas matrizes desfolhadas, período de maior demanda por mudas por parte dos produtores do fruto.

Outra constatação observada por Dal Picio et al. (2013 in press) é o crescimento excessivo das plantas matrizes no final do verão, quando cessa a emissão de pontas de estolão e o período de produção de mudas comerciais, sugerindo que esse crescimento é desnecessário. Essa hipótese foi confirmada pelos resultados atuais. Com a redução no crescimento da planta matriz, tanto pelo sombreamento como pela desfolha, é possível reduzir os custos com a fertirrigação, o controle fitossanitário e a remoção de folhas velhas. A desfolha apresenta uma importante vantagem em relação ao sombreamento, pois reduz o crescimento da planta matriz sem afetar a emissão de pontas de estolões, além de ser mais fácil de manejar. A desfolha permite também aumentar a eficiência de uso da área através do aumento na densidade de plantas.

Embora os resultados desse trabalho apontem a possibilidade de reduzir o crescimento da planta matriz e aumentar a eficiência de produção do método de produção de mudas com torrão, outras pesquisas ainda se fazem necessárias para determinar o efeito do aumento da densidade de plantas e do número de plantas filhas enraizadas por plantas matriz, bem como a resposta de outras cultivares ao desfolhamento.



Figura 1. Fluxograma da produção de plantas matrizes e mudas comerciais de morangueiro.

6 CONCLUSÃO

O desfolhamento e o sombreamento reduzem o crescimento das plantas mãe de morangueiro. A desfolha não afeta a emissão e o crescimento das pontas de estolão. O sombreamento não reduz a emissão de pontas quando as plantas filhas permanecem conectadas a planta mãe através do estolão. Sendo assim, é possível reduzir o crescimento da planta matriz através do sombreamento sem afetar a emissão e o crescimento das pontas desde que as mesmas permaneçam conectadas as plantas filhas. É possível fazer uma ou duas desfolhas das plantas matrizes e reduzir o crescimento da planta matriz sem afetar a emissão e crescimento das pontas, além de melhorar a eficiência do sistema de produção de mudas com torrão.

A desfolha é a melhor forma de manejo das plantas matrizes para reduzir o crescimento das mesmas, reduzindo também o consumo de água e nutrientes e a incidência de pragas e doenças, além de ser mais fácil de realizar comparado ao sombreamento.

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