Full Length Research Paper

The pattern of pathogen diversity and abundance in Lentil (Lens culinaris) fields in Constantine region, Algeria

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Lenses are a group of pulses having a socio-economic and nutritional significance. The study was conducted on two fields of Lens culinaris in Constantine region contaminated with molds, had the objective to put a relationship between pathogenic molds associated with these plants and their environment. This study revealed the presence of 20 genera in soils (Absidia, Acremonium, Alternaria, Aspergillus, Bysochlamysces, Chaetomium, Cladosporium, Emericella, Eurotium, Fusarium, Mucor, Paecilomyces, Penicillium, Peronospora, Phytophthora, Pseudalesheria, Scopulariopsis, Scytaldium, Trichoderma and Ulocladium) and 20 genera also in plants (Absidia, Acremonium, Alternaria, Aspergillus, Botrytis, Chaetomium, Cladosporium, Cylindrosporium, Curvularia, Eurotium, Fusarium, Myrothecium, Onychocoma, Phytophthora, Pseudalescheria, Penicillium, Peronospora, Rhizoctonia, Trichoderma and Ulocladium). They contribute approximately 54% of the total micropopulation enumerated in studied samples. The development of these pathogenic strains is governed by environmental conditions namely the chemical elements in soil, pH, electrical conductivity, Nitrogen, Carbon and saturation. The results we have obtained shows that the chemical variations ground contribute to the right development fungi and their transfer to plants.

Key words: Lens culinaris, soil, fungi.

INTRODUCTION

Lentil is a dicotyledonous legume plant and takes the fifth place in production of pulse crop in the world (Hymowitz, 1990). Lentil is still widely used today because of its high fiber, protein, vitamin and mineral content (Hnatowich, 2000) and considered as one of the best vegetable source of Iron especially important for adolescent and pregnant women. Furthermore, lentil is cultivated in sandy loam soil and can be grown in nutrient deficient soil (Summerfield, 1981). Lentils are drought resistant and can be grown in water logged and saline soils (Muehlbaur et al., 2002).

In Constantine, lentil production has tripled in the last six years from 37,120 kg in 2006 to 710,074 kg in 2013. A survey of literature showed that many fungal species
have been reported for lentil seeds including species of *Pythium* sp, *Rhizoctonia* sp, *Sclerotium* sp, *Fusarium* sp, (Muehlbaur et al., 2002), *Alternaria* sp, *Aspergillus* sp, *Mucor* sp, *Chaetomium* sp, *Penicillium* sp. *Nigrospora* sp (Hussain et al., 2007), *Uromycesfabae* and *Botrytis* sp. (Richardson, 1979). However, the presence of so much pathogenic fungi reduces the quality and quantity of crop which in turn lead to economic losses.

Soil is the most important resource of the nature (Sumithra et al., 2013), it is a thin layer of the earth’s crust which serves as a natural medium for the growth of plants because the components of soils are mineral material, organic matter, water and air. Soil has important ecological functions in recycling resources needed for plant growth and microorganisms’ development, the soil forms a large reservoir for many potential plant pathogens and especially plants with a decreased vitality (Katarzyna and Christel, 2011). An extremely simplified vegetation, such as a monoculture, selects a specific microbial community, including plant pathogenic microorganisms and sometimes also their parasites or antagonists (Bruggen et al., 2006).

This study aimed to reveal the complex interactions within the infected soil-lentil ecosystem and the aggressive behavior of molds.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Studied area**

The field experiments were conducted in 2011 and 2012 on two agricultural soils: AIN SEMARA and BARAOUIA situated in the North East of Algeria.

**Sampling procedures in the study area:**

**Soil sampling**

Soil samples taken at 5, 10 and 15 cm from the soil surface were collected from four locations in the vicinity of the two areas (AIN SEMARA and BARAOUIA), in sterile paper bags. The soils collected are ground and passed through 0.2 mm sieve and were used for the analysis.

**Plant sampling**

Lentil plants from Metropole variety (20 samples), were collected from different places in fields infected by many types of mold. These plants were collected in sterile paper bags.

**Physical and chemical properties analysis**

The physiochemical properties are executed in a laboratory of soil chemistry. The important parameters studied are: available Nitrogen, Organic Carbon, Electrical conductivity and pH value.

**Available Nitrogen**

The dosage of Nitrogen is effected using berthelot reaction (Krom, 1980; Searle, 1984, EN ISO 11732 (2013)) modified by Belahrrache (Benlahrrache, 2013).

**Organic Carbon**

The Walkey and Black (1934) method described by Nelson and Sommers in 1982 is used for assaying the organic carbon in simple soils.

**Electrical conductivity**

The assay method involves wet ground with 100 g of distilled water slurry. The paste obtained was centrifuged at 300 revolutions / min for 30 min. In the end, the temperature of the float is noted in the resistance, is measured after adjusting the temperature to 25°C, using a conductivity meter (Anonymous, 1954).

**pH**

The method relies on the preparation of a solution (diluted suspension) of ground 10 g and 25 mL of distilled water, after magnetic stirring, the pH is measured at room temperature using a pH meter (Boudoudou et al., 2009).

**Mycoflora isolation**

**From soil (Dilution plating method)**

To isolate the fungi from the soil sample, 1 g was diluted in 9 mL of saline solution. 1 mL of the diluted sample was poured and spread on Petri plates containing sterilized PDA medium. The inoculated plates were incubated at a temperature of 27°C for 3 days (Warcup, 1950). To prevent bacterial growth, one milligram of chloramphenicol was added to the medium.

**From plants**

Infected plants collected from the websites surveyed (AIN SEMARA and ABARAOUIA), was cut into small pieces of about 0.5 cm. The pieces are disinfected with sodium hypochlorite (2%) for 3 min, then rinsed several times with sterile distilled water and ethanol (70%) and dried between sterile filter paper, then placed in Petri dishes (5 piece / Petri plates) containing a culture medium PDA, MEA5 or MS. Finally, the Petri plates were incubated at 27°C for 4 days (Belabid et al., 2000).

**Mycoflora identification**

Colony colour, odor, morphology and growth rate were noted besides hyphal structure, spore size, shapes and spores bearing structures. They were compared with the standard works of Packer and Thomas (1990), Rinaldi et al. (1998), Gams et al. (1998), Botton et al. (1999), and Snavi (1999).

**Presentation of data**

The number of genera is referred to as genera diversity. Population density is expressed in terms of colony forming unit (CFU) per gram of soil with dilution factors. In order to assert the dominance of the genus in site, percentage contribution was worked out as follows:
RESULTS

Physical and chemical properties analysis

The results of the physical and chemical properties analysis of two soil samples (with different depth), have revealed that soils of AIN SEMARA and BARAOUIA are rich in organic matter (>1) and by consequence Carbon and Nitrogen. In addition, the organic matter is rich in carbon and poor in Nitrogen. Furthermore, results of pH analysis show that values are slightly alkaline (between 7.69 and 7.86). The measure of electrical conductivity (EC) and the salinity factor are indicated to lower than 1; which means that the soils were not salty (Table 1).

Mycflora isolation

From soil

Altogether, six soil samples from two different stations representing the entire Constantine district were examined for fungal diversity. The study resulted in the presence of 44 species of fungi belonging to 14 genera from BARAOUIA and 42 species of fungi belonging to 16 genera from AIN SEMARA (Figure 1).

Indeed, the soil sample of BARAOUIA is characterized by the presence of 68.21% Deutromycetes, 20.43% Ascomycetes, 6.82% Oomycetes and 2.27% of Phycomycetes and Zygomycetes. The soil samples of AIN SAMARA contain less Deutromycetes (50%), Ascomycetes (35.72%) and Zygomycetes (9.52%) but more Oomycetes (4.76%) (Figure 2).

The quantitative comparison of genera shows that high percentage belongs to the Fusarium, Penicilium and Aspergillus in two studied areas. By contrast, the other genera have variable percentages in both sites (Figure 3). The dominant genera from the field soils of BARAOUIA are Fusarium and Penicillium (9 species each), followed by Aspergillus (8 species), Phytophtora (3 species), Acremonium, Alternaria, Chaetomium, Cladosporium and Paecilomyces (2 species each) and finally Mucor, Peronospora, Scopulariopsis, Trichoderma and Ulocladium (1 species each); whereas in AIN SEMARA soils, the dominant species were Aspergillus (9 species), Penicilium (5 species) and Fusarium and Absidia (4 species each) followed by Eurotium and Scytalidium (3 species each), Alternaria, Paecilomyces, Phytophtora and Ulocladium (2 species each), and finally Acremonium, Bysochlamyces, Cladosporium, Emericella, Pseudallesheria and Trichoderma (1 species each).

From plants

A total number of 110 species belonging to 18 genera of fungi: Aabsidia, Acremonium, Alternaria, Aspergillus, Botrytis, Chaetomium, Cladosporium, Cylindrosporium, Curvularia, Eurotium, Fusarium, Myrothecium, Onychocola, Penicillium, Peronospora, Phytophtora, Pseudallescheria and Rhizoctonia (Figure 4), were isolated from lentil plants (root, stem and leaf) in two areas of BARAOUIA and AIN SEMARA. These genera are classified in six divisions for BARAOUIA (Ascomycetes 66.24%, Basidiomycetes 1.78%, Deutromycetes 12.52%, Oomycetes 1.78%, Phycomycetes 12.5% and Zygomycetes 3.57%) and four divisions for AIN SEMARA (Ascomycetes 79.63%, Basidiomycetes 1.85%, Deutromycetes 9.25%).

The major genus in the area of BARAOUIA is Fusarium (9 species) and Alternaria and Apergillus (8 species each). The other genera have a variable number of species: Phytophtora (7 species), Penicilium (4 species), Cladosporium, Curvularia and Ulocladium (3 species each), Absidia, Acremonium and Chaetomium (2 species each) and finally Botrytis, Cylindrosporium, Myrothecium, Peronospora and Rhizoctonia (1 species each). The Alternaria was the major genus with 11 species in the area of AIN SEMARA, followed by Fusarium (8 species), Aspergillus (6 species), Curvularia, Penicillium and Phytophtora (5 species each), Ulocladium (4 species).

Table 1. Results of physico-chemical analysis of soils in Constantine region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>BARAOUIA</th>
<th>AIN SEMARA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth (cm)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic matter (%)</td>
<td>1.720</td>
<td>1.978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon (%)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen (%)</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/N</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pH</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>7.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC (milliohm/cm)</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\text{% contribution} = \frac{\text{Number of colonies of the same genus in a sample}}{\text{Total number of all colonies of all the genera in a sample}}
\]
Figure 1. Examples of some species isolation from soils and plants.

Figure 2. Percentage of different branch of fungi in the soil of BARAOUIA and the soil of AIN SEMARA.

_Acremonium, Onychocola_ and _Trichoderma_ (2 species) and finally _Rhizoctonia_ (1 species) (Figure 5).

**DISCUSSION**

The samples of soil analysis were taken from the first horizon (0 to 20 cm) in which the essence of the biological activity is concentrated. This horizon is the most exposed one to the air and it contains mainly aerobic species.

The internal environmental conditions can assign the specific composition of the microbial communities and their chemical potential (Alexander, 1997). Additionally, with an organic-matter equal to 1.79% in (BARAOUIA) and 1.81% in (AIN SEMARA), the studied soils are included in the interval of normal rates (1.5 to 2.5%) which are described in the standards of Duthil (1970).

The comparison of the pH values of the soil studied with the data standards by Madagascar (quoted by the interprocessor of the agronomist (1974)), shows that our soils are slightly alkaline. According to Baise and Jabiol (1995), the alkali soils have a pH between 7.3 and 8.5. These pH values should be perfect for fungi development.

The values of the electrical conductivity (EC) measures
Figure 3. Percentage of contribution of different genera in the soil of BARAOUIA and the soil of AIN SEMARA.

Figure 4. Percentage of branch divisions of fungi in the plants of BARAOUIA and the soil of AIN SEMARA.

Figure 5. Percentage of contribution of different genera in the plants of BARAOUIA and the plants of AIN SEMARA.
Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Boudjoudou H, Hassibou R, Ouaziz T, Badoc A, Douira A (2009). Acremonium, Alternaria, Botrytis, Cylindrosporum, Fusarium, Phytophthora and Rhizoctonia and 90.73% of theAIN SEMARA site (genera: Acremonium, Alternaria, Aspergillus, Cladosporium, Fusarium, Penicillium, and Trichoderma) are isolated from the different parts of infected plants and also from the sampled soils. These results showed that the strains have been transmitted from the soil through the sap which can take for granted the soil as a middle of storage of fungal spores. These results are in relationship with those of Estelle Levetin and also of Abigail Jenkis (2005).
Furthermore, the remains of the soil isolates (15.91% of BARAOUIA and 9.27% of AIN SEMARA) are plants only. It means that these strains are transmitted through the seed or the air (Estelle Levetin).
Actually, the study of the different isolates shows that only 55.34% of the strains of the BARAOUIA site (genera: Alternaria, Botrytis, Cladosporium, Cylindrosporum, Fusarium, Penicillium, and Trichoderma) are isolated from the different parts of infected plants and also from the sampled soils. These results showed that the strains have been transmitted from the soil through the sap which can take for granted the soil as a middle of storage of fungal spores. These results are in relationship with those of Estelle Levetin and also of Abigail Jenkis (2005).

The great diversity of isolates obtained after identifications (soil and plants) is mainly due to the environmental conditions favouing the development of molds: rate of rainfall between 19 and 68 mm, 60 to 71 humidity and temperature between 19 and 26°C.
The majority of the identified isolates belong to large families of the Ascomycetes and Deuteromycetes. These strains are indigenous, usually isolated from the ground (Alvarez-Rodriguez et al., 2002).

The obtained varieties after isolation from the ground are: Absidia, Acremonium, Alternaria, Aspergillus, Byoschlamyces, Cladosporium, Eurotium suggests, Emericella, Fusarium, Muco species, Penicillium, Paecylomyces,Peronospora, Phytophthora, Pseudallesheria, Trichoderma, Ulocladium, Chaetomium and Scopulariopsis species are often dating in the soils, this is related with the results obtained by Prince et al. (2011).
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