Preservation of conidia of *Sclerospora philippinensis* Weston on artificial medium for the use in inoculation tests

For breeding varieties resistant to any disease, it is necessary to develop screening techniques which can be used effectively in breeding works. Techniques of handling inoculum must be established in order to preserve conidia on artificial medium and to induce their sporulation at any time when needed. These techniques are required for conducting artificial inoculation under a definite condition.

With downy mildew of maize, however, no *in vitro* culture technique has been developed yet. Therefore, the screening of the resistance has been practiced so far only by field tests by natural infection or by inoculation of conidia directly collected from naturally occurring diseased plants. In the latter case, it is quite difficult to obtain conidia of an uniform stage, because immature conidia as well as germinated ones are collected together. Although *in vitro* culture of some *Sclerospora* spp. and *Sclerophthora* spp. was reported to have been achieved, the *in vitro* culture of *Sclerospora philippinensis* has not been successful (Dogma, Jr. 1975). Therefore, the authors attempted to find out the method to preserve the conidia of *S. philippinensis* on an artificial medium without germination, but without causing the loss of pathogenicity.

Kimigafukuro and Leu (1973) found out that agar media containing some neutral salts were effective in keeping mature conidia from germination without causing the loss of pathogenicity with *S. sacchari*. In the

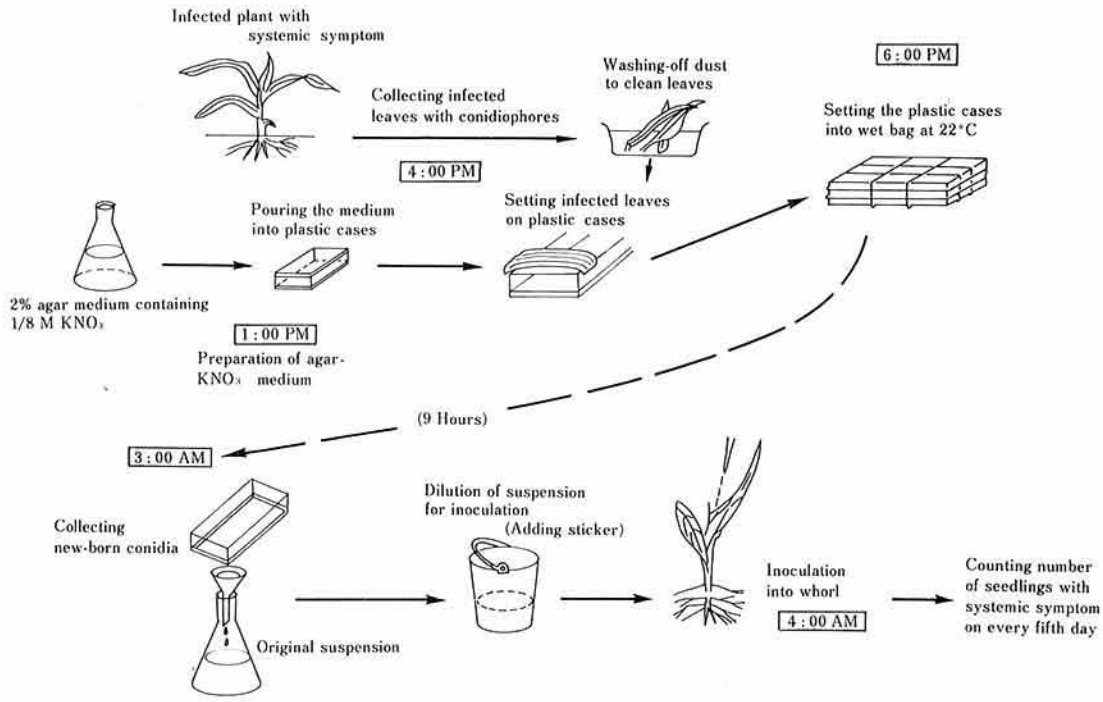

Fig. 1. Procedure of artificial inoculation of downy mildew, *Sclerospora philippinensis*, to maize for screening test at seedling stage.

present study, effect of KNO_3 contained in agar media was examined with *S. philippinensis*.

Procedure of the experiment: Infected leaves of UPCA VAR 3 (susceptible) were collected from the field in the evening, and washed in a water-bath by using a sponge to remove dusts and downy mildew conidiophores on the leaves. Leaf blades were cut into pieces, 10–11 cm long, and they were set on plastic cases containing agar media. Two levels of KNO_3 in the agar media (2% concentration), ie., 1/8 M and 1/4 M, were used with no-KNO_3 as a control. The plastic cases were then placed into vinyl-bags to keep the humidity for sporulation. They were kept in darkness at 22 or 23°C in a growth chamber for 10 hr (6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.). After taking them out from the chamber at 4:00 a.m. germination and inoculation tests were conducted with conidia collected from each medium.

Germination and abortion of conidia were examined under the microscope at a magnification of ×100. For the pathogenicity test, 15 seedlings each of the two strains of maize were grown in a row 10 cm apart in nursery boxes (40 × 20 × 8 cm). Seedlings of (NE#1 × Ph 9 DMR) × MIT VAR 2 F_1 hybrid (resistant) and of La Granja Popcorn × UPCA VAR 3 F_1 hybrid (susceptible) were used. At the one-leaf-stage of the seedlings, conidial suspension (40×10^3 conidia/ml) was applied for inoculation. The inoculum density of conidial suspension from no-KNO_3 medium was not accurate, because only ungerminated conidia were counted. The experiment was carried out from February 25 to March 31, 1975 at UP Los Baños, College, Laguna.

1) Effect of KNO_3 concentration on conidia germination

Effect of KNO_3 concentration in the agar media on the germinability of conidia on the germination beds with different KNO_3 concentrations is shown in Table 1. Germination percentage was only 0.8 to 4.7% on the beds containing 1/4 M KNO_3, whereas it was 26.7 to 43.7% on the beds without KNO_3 or with 1/8 M KNO_3. Conidia preserved on the agar medium not containing KNO_3 showed 28.7% of germination on the bed with 1/8 M of KNO_3, although it gave 43.7% on the bed without KNO_3.

Germination and abortion of conidia that occurred in the course of the maintenance on the agar-KNO_3 media were examined at 12 hr and 24 hr (both including 10 hr for sporulation in a growth chamber at 22–23°C)

Table 1. Germination (%) of conidia of *S. philippinensis* collected and maintained on 2% agar media containing KNO_3 and their pathogenicity on maize seedlings

KNO_3 coucentration of germination bed	KNO_3 concentration of agar medium					
	OM (control)		1/8M		1/4M	
	Germination %	Infection %	Germination %	Infection %	Germination %	Infection %
OM (control)	43.7 (48)	R : 51 S : 100	37.5 (54)	R : 40 R : 90	27.1 (51)	R : 56 S : 100
1/8M	28.7 (43)	— —	35.2 (46)	R : 54 S : 100	26.7 (36)	— —
1/4M	4.7 (66)	— —	4.0 (40)	— —	0.8 (41)	— —

Note: Two diseased leaves trisected were set on different agar media with two replications. Conidia preserved on each of the agar media were transferred to a germination bed in three rows. Figures in perenthesis show average number of conidia examined in each row. Inoculation test was conducted with 4 repetitions and infection % was counted on 28th day after inoculation. R signifies resistant strain, and S susceptible one.

Table 2. Germination (%) and abortion (%) of conidia of *S. philippinensis* that occurred on agar-KNO_3 media

KNO_3 concentration of medium	Time after setting			
	12hr		24hr	
	Germinated	Aborted	Germinated	Aborted
OM (control)	19.3 (208)	1.8	60.5 (198)	10.6
1/8M	4.3 (198)	4.6	59.3 (162)	9.5
1/4M	0 (218)	6.8	23.7 (202)	16.0

Note: Trisected two diseased leaves were set on three plastic cases containing each of different agar media at 6 : 00 p.m. Germination was examined at three spots in each case. Figures in parenthesis shows average number of conidia examined at each spot.

after the setting of diseased leaves. As shown in Table 2, remarkable differences in germination and abortion of conidia were found among different media with different concentratoins of KNO_3 at 12 hr after setting. At 24 hr after setting, however, no difference was observed between the no-KNO_3 medium (60.5% of germination and 10.6% of abortion) and the 1/8 M KNO_3 media (59.3% and 9.5% respectively), but the medium with 1/4 M KNO_3 gave a germination percentage, 23.7%, less than half of other media, and the abortion percentage, 23.7%, higher than others.

2) Effect of KNO_3 on pathogenicity of conidia

Inoculation was carried out using water suspensions of conidia taken from agar and agar-KNO_3 media. In addition, conidial suspension in 1/8 M solution of KNO_3 was prepared using conidia collected from the medium containing 1/8 M KNO_3. On the 10th day after the inoculation, systemic symptoms of the disease appeared, and on the 28th day the percentage of infection reached its maximum in every case. As shown in Table 1, no significant difference in pathogenicity was found among different suspensions used.

Thus, it can be concluded that the agar medium containing 1/8 M KNO_3 is able to delay the germination of conidia without causing the loss of pathogenicity. Although the pathogenicity is maintained on the no-KNO_3 medium too, this medium is not useful because of difficulty in obtaining exact densities of conidial suspensions. As a result, the procedure shown in Fig. 1 is recommended. In fact, the authors could often collect 10^5 conidia per cm^2 on the medium by the procedure mentioned here.

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Minoru YAMADA, *Tropical Agriculture Research Center, Japan* (presently *National Institute of Agricultural Sciences*)
Takashi KIMIGAFUKURO, *Tropical Agriculture Research Center, Japan.*
Bliss A. ADAY, *Department of Agronomy, College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines at Los Baños, Philippines.*