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Root Knot Formation by *Meloidogyne incognita*: Chemosignals Alteration in Carrot Plants under Climate Change Conditions

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Abstract

Climate change is exerting significant impacts on various ecological processes, including plant-microbe interactions. One such interaction involves the parasitic nematode Meloidogyne incognita *and its interaction with carrot plants* (Daucus carota*). This chapter explores the influence of climate change on root knot formation affected by* M. incognita *and the role of chemo-signals in altering the responses of carrot plants. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing sustainable management strategies in the face of changing environmental conditions.*

Keywords: *Climate change*, Meloidogyne incognita*, carrot plants, root knot formation, plant-microbe interactions.*

1. Introduction

Meloidogyne incognita, a destructive root-knot nematode species, damages plants by forming specialized feeding sites within the roots, resulting in galls or knots. This disrupts plant physiology, leading to stunted growth and reduced productivity (Sehgal et al., 2021). Carrots (*Daucus carota*) are particularly vulnerable to *M. incognita* infestation, causing significant yield losses (Pinheiro et al., 2019; Tabassum et al., 2023a). Despite earlier research on plant-nematode interactions, the impact of climate change remains unclear (Tabassum et al., 2023a). Climate change affects the temperature and CO2 content of the surrounding air, which impacts the chemical signals that plants send to pests. Climate change could impact the significance of chemo-signals in the interactions between plants and nematodes, according to (Manosalva et al., 2015). For agriculture to be sustainable, it is imperative to comprehend this link. Climate change severely disrupts the interactions between plants and nematodes, notably affecting the root-knot nematode Meloidogyne incognita. Changes in rainfall patterns, elevated temperatures, and increased CO2 concentrations all have the potential to improve the nematode's life cycle, spread, and virulence. These changes may directly impact the health and yield of crops like carrots, potentially leading to an increase in root knot formation (Dutta, and Phani, 2023b). Nematode populations may spread into new regions as a result of their adaptation to warmer climates, making agricultural difficulties worse. The interaction of various meteorological variables affects nematode biology and weakens plant defences, ultimately leading to lower crop yields and higher agricultural losses (Somasekhar and Prasad, 2011).

Research aims to elucidate mechanisms governing plant-pest interactions under different climatic scenarios by examining the response of carrot plants to nematode infestation (Rosenzweig et al., 2007). By exploring changes in carrot chemo-signals under climate change and their impact on root-knot formation by *Meloidogyne incognita*, this study could inform pest management strategies and promote sustainable crop production amidst climate change (Skendžić et al., 2021; Tabassum et al., 2023a).

Climate change significantly impacts plant-microbe interactions, affecting plant health, development, and defense mechanisms. Temperature shifts and CO2 concentrations alter growth rates, phenology, and the timing of interactions. Changes in plant physiology and metabolism can disrupt chemo-signals, potentially causing root knot disease in agricultural crops (Jones et al., 2017; Skendžić et al., 2021).

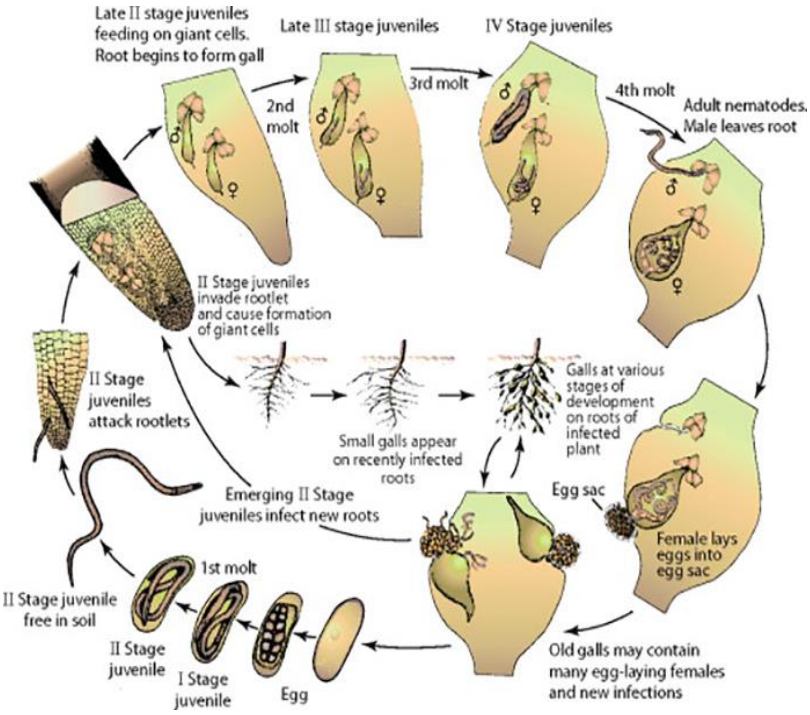

Fig 1: *Meloidogyne* nematodes are the source of the root knot disease cycle (Agrios, 2005).

2. *Meloidogyne incognita's* response to climate change

Climate change significantly affects ecological systems, including pest-host interactions. *Meloidogyne incognita*, or root-knot nematode, is a parasitic nematode that impacts various plants, including carrots **(Berliner et al., 2023).** Altered environmental conditions due to climate change can affect the life cycle, distribution, and virulence of *Meloidogyne incognita*, impacting both the nematode and host plants **(Dutta and Phani, 2023).** Elevated temperatures can accelerate nematode development and reproduction, leading to increased populations and root-knot formation in carrots. Longer growing seasons may promote higher infestation levels and damage **(Berliner et al., 2023).** Changes in rainfall patterns affect nematode survival and movement, with excessive rainfall promoting dispersal and drought reducing mobility**.** Elevated CO_2 levels stimulate plant growth, making carrots more susceptible to infestation **(Tileubayeva et al., 2021).** Climate change can accelerate nematode life cycles, affecting egg hatching rates and reproduction. Increased temperatures may alter the production and release of chemo-signals in infested carrot plants, influencing nematode behavior. Understanding these effects is crucial for developing effective management strategies to mitigate nematode damage and ensure agricultural sustainability in a changing climate **(Dutta and Phani, 2023; Tabassum et al., 2023a; Brosset and Blande, 2022).**

3. Climate Change Effects on Carrot Plants

Climate change is causing significant changes in the environment, making carrot plants more susceptible to nematode infestations such as *Meloidogyne incognita* **(Shakeel et al., 2023).** These nematodes infect carrot roots, causing damage, reduced nutrient uptake, and stunted growth. Climate change can also disrupt the balance of the soil microbiota, which is crucial for plant health and defense against pests and diseases. The geographical spread of nematode species can increase the prevalence of these pests, exposing carrot plants to infestations in previously unaffected regions **(Zhou et al., 2023).** The combined effects of nematode infestations and climate change may result in lower crop output and poorer-quality harvests. To mitigate these effects, farmers and researchers may need to explore adaptive measures such as nematode-resistant varieties, integrated pest management strategies, optimized irrigation techniques, improved soil health, and sustainable agricultural practices. Further research is needed to understand these complex interactions and develop effective strategies for managing these challenges **(Raza et al., 2019; Brosset and Blande, 2022).**

4. Chemo-signals and Alteration of Carrot Responses

Meloidogyne incognita, a parasitic roundworm, affects carrot plants by releasing chemo-signals that initiate root knots. Climate change can alter these interactions, leading to alterations in carrot plant responses (**Pedroche et al., 2009; Tabassum et al., 2023a**). Furthermore, significant damage to agriculture is caused by the root-knot nematode Meloidogyne incognita, which uses chemical cues to find and infect carrot roots. The chemical cues play a vital role in the nematode's capacity to recognize appropriate hosts and begin the process of infection **(Ahamad et al., 2023).** Nonetheless, climate change presents a possible peril to the creation and emission of these chemical signals, which could modify the behavior of nematodes and the progression of root knot formation. Fluctuations in temperature and moisture can impact the metabolic processes responsible for signal synthesis, which may result in higher occurrences of nematode infestations or modified interactions with host plants (**Deshar et al., 2019**). Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the interaction between climate change and nematode chemo signaling in order to devise efficient management techniques for crops such as carrots that are susceptible to these pests **(Ahamad et al., 2023; Aparajita et al., 2024)** Further research is needed to understand these complex interactions and their implications for crop productivity and management strategies **(Deshar et al., 2019).**

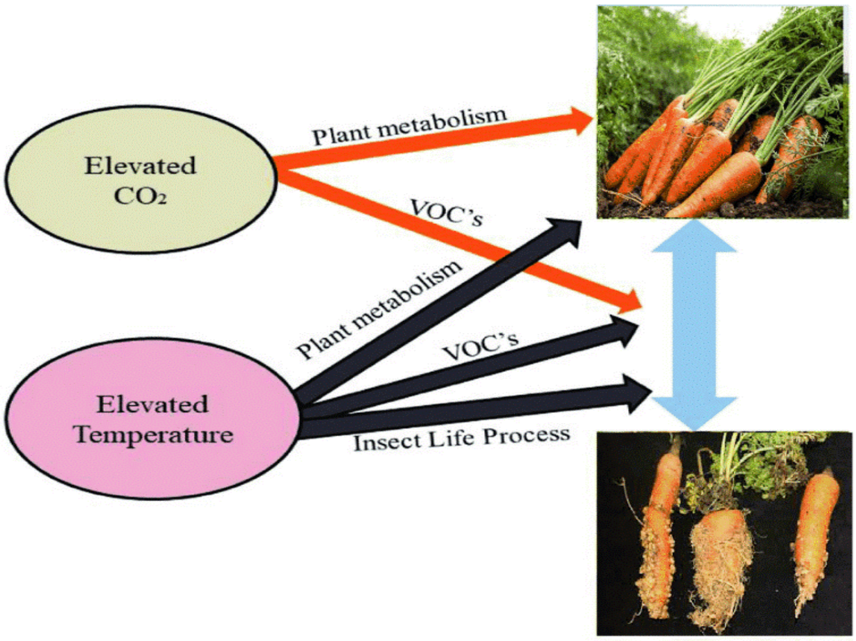

Figure 2: The effects of increased CO_2 and temperature on carrot, *Meloidogyne incognita*, and their interactions.

4.1. Chemical communication in plant-microbe interactions

Meloidogyne incognita releases chemical signals, known as chemo-signals, to locate suitable host plants, invade roots, and establish feeding sites **(Curtis, 2008).** These signals attract nematodes towards the roots of the host plant, guiding them with specific chemical cues. Once they reach the root system, they penetrate plant tissues using enzymatic secretions and mechanical force **(Tabassum et al., 2023a).** *Meloidogyne incognita* also secretes additional chemo-signals, causing the creation of giant cells, which serve as nutrient-rich feeding sites.

The nematodes use their stylets to extract nutrients from these cells, damaging the root system and affecting the overall growth and development of the carrot plant. Understanding the chemical communication between plants and nematodes is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate the damage caused by these parasitic pests **(Skendžić et al., 2021).**

4.2. Root exudates and their role in attracting nematodes

Meloidogyne incognita, a nematode, poses a significant threat to crops like carrots due to climate change. Changes in root exudates, organic compounds released by plant roots, can affect nematode behavior. In M. incognita, these exudates contain specific chemicals that attract nematodes. Climate change can also influence root exudation patterns and composition, affecting nematode behaviour **(Fatima and Senthil-Kumar, 2015).** Increased temperatures and precipitation patterns can affect plant physiology, root growth, and exudation rates, affecting the quantity and quality of root exudates available to nematodes. Understanding these interactions is crucial for developing sustainable nematode control strategies, such as breeding crop varieties with reduced susceptibility to infestations or optimizing agricultural practices **(Sehgal et al., 2021; Tabassum et al., 2023a).**

4.3. Implications of altered chemo-signals on nematode behaviour and root knot formation

Climate change can impact plant physiology and interactions, including the emission of chemo-signals. These chemical compounds can attract or repel organisms, such as insects, pathogens, or beneficial ones. In carrot plants, climate change can alter the quantity, composition, and timing of these chemo-signals, potentially affecting their interactions with plant-parasitic nematodes like *Meloidogyne incognita* **(Meents et al., 2020; Mbaluto et al., 2021).** Climate change-induced alterations may attract or repel nematodes, affecting their behaviour and responses. Carrot plants can also respond to nematode infestations by modifying their chemo-signals as a defense mechanism. However, the specific effects of climate change on chemical signals and their interactions with *Meloidogyne incognita* are still under active research. Further studies are needed to understand the precise mechanisms and consequences of climate change on chemo-signals and their influence on root knot formation in carrot plants **(Tabassum et al., 2023a).**

5. Sustainable Management Strategies

Climate change can affect root knot formation by *Meloidogyne incognita*, a plant-parasitic nematode, by altering nematode physiology and behaviour, potentially influencing chemo signals and carrot plant responses **(Pinheiro et al., 2019; Tabassum et al., 2023a).**

5.1. Sustainable nematode control methods under climate change

Meloidogyne incognita and other plant-parasitic nematodes are affected by climate change, which alters their range, population dynamics, and behaviour **(Velásquez et al., 2018). Skendžić et al. (2021)** found that it affects plant responses to nematode infections, including susceptibility and defensive mechanisms. Consider these options for sustainable nematode control under climate change:

5.1.1. Crop Rotation: Rotating carrot crops with non-host plants disrupts nematode life cycles, lowering their population over time.

5.1.2. Resistant Varieties: Developing resistant carrot types reduces root knot development and crop loss.

5.1.3. Biological Control: Predatory nematodes, fungus, bacteria, and parasitic wasps all naturally regulate nematode populations.

5.1.4. Soil Management: Practices such as composting and tillage improve soil health and minimize nematode populations.

5.1.5 Integrated Pest Management (IPM): Using cultural, biological, and chemical control strategies decreases reliance on a single methodology.

5.1.6 Climate-Resilient Farming Practices: Improved irrigation, mulching, and nutrition increase plant resistance to worm attacks **(Karlik et al., 2003).**

The efficiency of these treatments varies depending on the climate, soil, and nematode populations; thus, it is best to contact local specialists for site-specific tactics.

5.2 Manipulating plant chemo-signals for nematode management

The root knot nematode is a major agricultural pest that disrupts nutrient and water uptake in crops like carrots. Climate change can alter plant behaviour and physiology, including the release of chemo-signals, which play a crucial role in interplant communication. Researchers are exploring manipulating plant chemo-signals for nematode management using synthetic compounds or natural substances **(Brosset and Blande, 2022).** One approach involves identifying specific volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted by plants, while another involves genetically modifying plants to enhance specific compounds **(Huang et al., 2020; Brosset and Blande, 2022).** However, this research is still ongoing, and practical applications may take time.

5.3 Breeding resistant carrot cultivars using climate-influenced chemo-signals

Climate change could potentially enhance the development of resistant carrot cultivars by incorporating climate-influenced chemo-signals into breeding programs **(Sehgal et al., 2021).** This could help identify compounds that can act as repellents or disruptors to interfere with nematode-host interactions **(Tabassum et al., 2023a,b).** Understanding the complex interplay between climate change, chemo-signals, and host-pathogen interactions is crucial for developing effective and sustainable agricultural practices in the face of ongoing climate challenges. This approach holds promise for mitigating nematode-induced damage and ensuring sustainable carrot production **(Kim et al., 2017; Velásquez et al., 2018).**

6. Future Perspectives

The interaction between *Meloidogyne incognita* and carrot plants in the context of climate change and chemo-signals is an interesting topic that requires further research. Here are some potential research directions that could be explored:

6.1. Impact of climate change on nematode behaviour: Investigate how climate change affects *Meloidogyne incognita* behavior and life cycle, influencing its ability to infect carrot roots.

6.2. Chemo-signals and nematode perception: Explore the specific chemo-signals emitted by carrot plants in response to both climate change and nematode infestation. This research could involve analysing VOCs emitted by the plants and studying nematode behaviour in response to different concentrations of these compounds (**Huang et al., 2020; Brosset and Blande, 2022**).

6.3. Carrot plant defense mechanisms: Study the molecular and physiological mechanisms underlying the carrot plant's response to nematode infestation and climate change. This research could involve transcriptomic and proteomic analyses to identify genes and proteins involved in defense responses.

6.4. Ecological consequences of nematode infestation: Assess how *Meloidogyne incognita* infestations affect carrot plants, soil microbes, pests, and pollinators, and their broader ecological consequences.

6.5. Integrated pest management (IPM) strategies: Develop and optimize IPM strategies, including crop rotation, biocontrol agents, soil amendments, and resistant cultivars, considering climate change effects for sustainable carrot production (**Baidoo et al., 2017**).

6.6. Genetic adaptations: Carrot plants may undergo genetic adaptations as a result of extended exposure to climate change. These changes may affect how the plants interact with nematodes and may contribute to the emergence of resistant cultivars.

6.7. Modelling and forecasting nematode outbreaks: Develop predictive models using climate, nematode behaviour, and plant responses to predict *Meloidogyne incognita* outbreaks. These models could help farmers and policymakers choose crop management and resource allocation methods. These research directions are broad; therefore, specific methodologies and approaches would need to be tailored based on available resources, expertise, and research objectives **(Batra and Gandhi, 2021).** Interdisciplinary collaborations between plant scientists, nematologists, ecologists, and climate scientists may help address the complex interactions between nematodes, plants, and climate change.

6.8 Potential impacts on agricultural practices: *Meloidogyne incognita*, chemo-signals, and climate change pose challenges to agricultural practices, particularly carrot cultivation. Understanding chemo signals and developing nematode-resistant varieties can mitigate losses. Sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches to nematode management are needed. Monitoring and early detection are crucial due to climate change dynamics. Research and innovation are needed for effective strategies.

6.9. Importance of integrated approaches for climate-resilient agriculture: Climate-resilient agriculture strategies, such as crop rotation, nematode-resistant cultivars, biological control, soil management, and integrated pest management, can effectively manage nematode infestations and tackle climate change challenges. These methods protect crops from *M. incognita*, reduce pesticide use, and maintain sustainable agricultural production by considering climate change's effects.

7. Conclusion

The research article discusses the impact of climate change on root knot formation by *Meloidogyne incognita* in carrot plants. It emphasizes the role of chemo-signals as modulators of plant-nematode interactions under changing conditions. The study suggests that climate change can further exacerbate the damage caused by root knot formation. The chemo-signals released by *Meloidogyne incognita* mediate the parasitic relationship between nematodes and carrot plants, causing changes in gene expression, hormone levels, and defense mechanisms. Climate change factors like temperature, rainfall patterns, and CO2 levels can also affect the population dynamics and behaviour of *Meloidogyne incognita*. Higher temperatures and increased moisture can favour the survival and reproduction of nematodes, leading to higher infestation rates and more severe root knot formation. The findings underscore the need for sustainable management strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of root knot nematodes on carrot crops, especially in the context of a changing climate.

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