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Tree Planters' Notes

Department of Agriculture—Forest Service



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Contents

Comments

Tree Planters' Notes

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Cover: Southern cone rust on slash pine (photograph courtesy of Florida Division of Forestry, Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Gainesville, Florida; submitted by E. L. Barnard).

Ten Years of *Tree Planters' Notes* Indexed in This Issue

It seems like just yesterday that I was arranging the 10-year index for volumes 27 to 38, but it was really 1988! In this issue we print another 10-year index, one for volumes 38 to 48. We hope that it will be useful to you, our readers and customers! This index was prepared by Donna Loucks, forestry information specialist at Centralia, Washington. If you cannot obtain copies of any articles listed from the library of your state's forestry school (usually at the land-grant university) or federal depository library, you can order copies (for a fee) from Ms Loucks, by mail at 174 Jones Road, Centralia, WA 98531, by e-mail at loucksd@localaccess.com, or by FAX at 360-736-5929.

Going Electronic: The SNTI Homepage Will Include *Tree Planters' Notes*

Those of you who use the World-Wide Web have probably visited the USDA Forest Service's Seedling, Nursery, and Tree Improvement Team's homepage at

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This issue of *Tree Planters' Notes*—Fall 1996, volume 47, number 4—will be published electronically at this site. In addition, we will be working to make back issues available as well. Please visit us and check out all the other features of the SNTI webpage. You can read *Tree Planters' Notes* and *Forest Nursery Notes*; order copies of articles mentioned in *FNN* and arrange to use the *FNN* Reference Database; locate nurseries and seed dealers in on-line directories; and read about SNTI programs and the National Tree Seed Laboratory. For you dedicated net surfers, there are links to related websites and to the Native Plant Network.

Rebecca G. Nisley
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Note: Our concept of this editorial space is that it should be a place to publish opinions and ideas relating to the nursery, reforestation, and restoration professions. We invite you to submit ideas for commentaries. The views expressed here are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the *Tree Planters' Notes* editorial staff, the Forest Service, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture. — RN and the editorial board.

Comments

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CONIFERS: A Computer Program for Liquid Fertilization in Container Nurseries

John T. Harrington and Patrick A. Glass

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Most nurseries that produce conifer species in controlled environments use liquid-based fertility programs. Many of these nurseries rely on commercially available fertilizer formulations. The microcomputer program CONIFERS calculates mixing rates and run times for liquid-based fertilizer incorporation into irrigation systems, using commercially available fertilizer formulations. The program, based on setting target nitrogen levels for a commercial fertilizer formulation, calculates the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium applied and provides mixing instructions for stock solutions. The CONIFERS software program provides a rapid and accurate means of adjusting fertilizer applications to the container nursery grower using liquid-based fertilizer solutions. *Tree Planters' Notes* 47(4):120-125; 1996.

Injecting liquid fertilizer solutions (solutions of granular fertilizers) into an irrigation system—often called "fertigation"—is the most common means of fertilizing conifer species grown in controlled environments in container nurseries (Landis and others 1989). Fertigation offers many advantages over other fertilization systems, including the ability to adjust nutrient levels and ratios to match the growth stages of a nursery crop. Many nurseries and greenhouses use commercial, premixed, water-soluble fertilizers for fertigation. Commercial fertilizers are available in a wide range of formulations and ratios of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K).

Several steps are required to determine mixing rates for these fertilizers. First, a target nitrogen level is set for the applied solution. The amount of fertilizer required to achieve the targeted nitrogen application rate is then calculated. This value is then adjusted for the injection ratio of the fertigation system. To determine phosphorus and potassium levels in the applied solution, a series of calculations are completed. CONIFERS, a microcomputer program requiring an IBM-compatible computer with DOS 2.1 or higher, simplifies this process and can reduce computational time associated with these steps to less than 1 minute. The program can also provide a rapid means of determining the duration of fertilizer application necessary to achieve target amounts of fertilizer on a per-seedling basis by using irrigation and container system characteristics. The application time feature assists nursery managers in reducing fertilizer costs and

runoff by reducing over- and under-fertilization. The application time portion of the program is adaptable to both fixed and traveling boom irrigation systems.

Running CONIFERS

Fertilizer mixing. The fertilizer mixing portion of the program, which the user needs to enter as prompted by the program, requires the following information:

- Target level of N in parts per million (ppm)
- Ratio of N, P, and K from the fertilizer label
- Injection ratio of the irrigation system

CONIFERS was written for commercial fertilizers with phosphoric oxide (P_2O_5) being the only source of P and potassium oxide (K_2O) the only source of K. CONIFERS automatically converts P_2O_5 to P and K_2O to K by using the following 2 equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{"A" ppm } P_2O_5 \times 0.4364 &= \text{"B" ppm P} \\ \text{"C" ppm } K_2O \times 0.8301 &= \text{"D" ppm K} \end{aligned}$$

If no injection system is used, the value 1 is entered as the injection ratio.

For example, a targeted applied solution with 150 ppm N, using a 20:20:20 (N-P₂O₅-K₂O) fertilizer with an injection ratio of 1:100 requires that 75.0 g (2.65 oz) of fertilizer be mixed in 1 L of water (0.6 lbs/gal). This solution will contain 150 ppm N, 65 ppm P, and 125 ppm K (figure 1). This output can be printed if necessary. At this point, CONIFERS offers the user the option to run a different fertilizer scenario, proceed with the application time calculation, or end the session.

Determining run time. The second portion of the CONIFERS program determines the run time required to saturate the water-holding capacity of the growing medium. This portion of CONIFERS was written using a combination of both English and SI units. This was done because measuring devices commonly used in container nurseries differ in their respective units of measure (that is, flow meters in gallons per minute and graduated cylinders in milliliters). The user will be prompted by the program to enter the following information:


```

What is the desired concentration level of Nitrogen (N) in ppm
for the applied solution? 150 <Enter>
What is the percentage of elemental Nitrogen (N)
in the fertilizer? 20 <Enter>
What is the percentage of elemental Phosphorous oxide (P2O5)
in the fertilizer? 20 <Enter>
What is the percentage of elemental Potassium (K2O)
in the fertilizer? 20 <Enter>
What is the injector ratio or siphon rate 1:###? 100 <Enter>

Mix 75.00 grams of fertilizer per liter, 283.90 grams of fertilizer per
gallon, or 0.63 pounds of fertilizer per gallon in the stock solution to
obtain 150 ppm of Nitrogen (N) in the applied solution.

There is 150 ppm of P2O5 and 65 ppm of P applied.
There is 150 ppm of K2O and 125 ppm of K applied.

Would you like a printed copy of this setup y/n?

Do you want to 1) Calculate a different scenario, 2) proceed with
application time calculations or 3) End this session 1/2/3? 2

```

Figure 1—An example of the fertilizer mixing instructions generated by CONIFERS.

- target amount of fertilizer solution (in milliliters) or N (in milligrams) to be applied to each container
- flow rate of the irrigation system in gallons per minute
- irrigation system efficiency
- container system efficiency
- area of crop to be irrigated

Determining the target amount of fertilizer to be applied to each container can be determined several ways. The upper limit of the target amount would be to saturate the entire water-holding porosity of the medium in the container. Landis and others (1990) provide detailed instructions for determining this value. An abbreviated version of this procedure is also described in the CONIFERS User's Manual. In most cases, however, the water-holding porosity is not allowed to be completely depleted between irrigations or fertigation. Therefore, only in a few instances, such as leaching salt build-ups in the medium, would the water-holding porosity amount be used. Currently, measuring container weight is the most common approach in container forest nurseries to determine irrigation rate—see Landis and others (1989) for a description of this technique.

Irrigation system efficiency (percentage of irrigation water landing on the crop) is never 100% because irrigation water lands on non-crop surfaces such as walkways and walls. Several detailed techniques exist to calculate irrigation system efficiency, but nursery managers familiar with their own systems can provide close approximations of this value. Container system efficiency (percentage of crop space occupied by container openings) is less than 100% because of gaps or voids on surface areas between container openings due to the arrangement of containers or their support structures. A simple method to determine container system efficiency is provided in table 1 and in the CONIFERS User's Manual.

For fixed irrigation systems, the program requires the surface area of 1 bench in square feet and the number of benches being irrigated or fertilized simultaneously. The program uses this information to calculate the total area being irrigated or fertilized. When using traveling boom systems, the width of seedling bed, that is, the boom width (in feet), the length of the boom run (in feet), and the boom speed (in feet/minute) are necessary. Many traveling boom irrigation systems are available today. CONIFERS was programmed to consider 1 pass in 1 direction as a single pass. If a traveling boom irrigation system irrigates in both directions, the length the boom travels must need to be adjusted accordingly. To achieve target fertilization

Fertilization in Container Nurseries

Table 1—Calculating container system efficiency

Step 1—Calculate the area of the container opening for 1 container. Most containers are either round or rectangular:

$$\text{area of a circle} = \pi r^2 = 3.14 \times (\text{radius})^2$$

$$\text{area of rectangle} = \text{length} \times \text{width}$$

Step 2—Count the number of containers per tray or flat.

Step 3—Calculate the total area of container opening per tray. Multiply the area of the container opening for 1 container (step 1) by the number of containers per tray (step 2).

Step 4—Calculate the total surface area of a tray or flat. Most trays or flats are rectangular.

Step 5—Calculate the container system efficiency. Divide the total area of container opening per tray [step 3] by the total surface area per tray [step 4] and multiply by 100.

levels when using a traveling boom irrigation system, adjustments to the irrigation system (travel speed or flow rate) may need to be made. CONIFERS automatically computes these adjustments if the actual application rates differ from target rates. To correct this discrepancy, other simple adjustments can be made, including changing fertilizer concentration in the applied solution, or changing the injection ratio. Running CONIFERS several times and adjusting these attributes usually achieves an acceptable solution.

For example, using the fertilizer formulation calculated above (150 ppm N, 65 ppm P, 125 ppm K), CONIFERS can calculate the volume of stock solution and application time necessary to apply 350 ml (0.09 gal) of applied fertilizer solution to a crop growing in 3.7-L (1-gal) pots using a fixed irrigation. The pots are 15.14 cm (6 in) in diameter arranged in a square grid (79% of the area is occupied by container openings) with 4 seedlings/ft². The fixed irrigation system has the following attributes: flow rate = 15 gal/min, and an over spray = 10% (a 90% efficiency for the irrigation system). Seven 128-ft² (11.9-m²) benches are to be fertilized. According to the program, this application would require 31.07 min to apply 350 ml (0.09 gal) of the applied fertilizer solution using a stock solution with 1,323.21 g (2.91 lbs) of fertilizer dissolved in 17.64 L of water (2.91 lbs/4.66 gal) (figure 2).

Using the same target application rate of 350 ml (0.09 gal) of fertilizer/seedling and the same container system (3.7-L pots) and a traveling boom irrigation system with the following characteristics bed width = 12 ft, travel length = 200 ft, flow rate = 15 gal/min; overspray = 10%, and boom speed = 6 ft/min CONIFERS generates the output in figure 3. Using the stated irrigation system

and fertilizer attributes would result in 140 ml (0.04 gal) of fertilizer applied per boom pass to each container. This quantity is close to 40% of the desired application rate of 350 ml/container. Three solutions to this discrepancy are provided. These include reducing boom speed to 2.4 ft/min, increasing flow rate to 37.5 gal/min, or changing flow rate to 18.2 gal/min and reducing boom speed to 2.8 ft/min (figure 3).

The application time portion of CONIFERS may become inaccurate over the production time of a crop, depending on container size and species. Two explanations exist for this reduction in accuracy. First, as a seedling matures, the water-holding porosity of the growing medium in the container is reduced due to compaction and to roots growing into portions of this space. This loss in water-holding porosity results in the CONIFERS program overestimating the volume required to saturate the water-holding porosity of the growing medium. Secondly, as crops mature, plant canopy over the containers increases, and the proportion of the irrigation water or fertilizer falling outside the container increases. Loss due to this runoff can be significant in long needled conifer species such as ponderosa pine or in broad leaved species. At the New Mexico State University—Mora Research Nursery, we found that CONIFERS underestimates fertigation time after 8 to 12 weeks following germination for long-needled pines and broad-leaved plants, depending on species and growth rate. For spruces, true firs, and Douglas-fir, fertigation time is underestimated later in the crop cycle. The decline of application time accuracy may be due to a trade-off in reduced water-holding porosity and reduced infiltration due to canopy runoff. When underestimation is suspected, we recommend using the container weighing system or by monitoring the leachate volume passing through the container to determine irrigation and fertigation duration.

Obtaining CONIFERS

CONIFERS is a public domain program available free of charge. The program can be downloaded from the New Mexico State University Mora Research Center's home page on the World Wide Web:

<http://taipan.nmsu.edu/aght/mora/mora.html>

At this site, go to the nursery research hyperlink. The nursery research page contains the information required to download the software and the corresponding manual. A second option for obtaining the CONIFERS program and manual is to send a stamped, self-addressed disk mailer and 3 ½-inch formatted (IBM) diskette to Mora Research Center, PO Box 359, Mora, NM 87732.

Is the application system a fixed spray or a traveling boom enter an F or a T? **F** <Enter> **A**
 Is the Nitrogen (N) application figured in milligrams/seedling or in milliliters/seedling enter a G or an L? **L** <Enter>
 How many milliliters of solution are applied to each seedling? **350** <Enter>
 What is the flow rate for the system in gallons/minute? **15** <Enter>
 What is the application area in square feet for one bench? **128** <Enter>
 How many benches are being fertilized simultaneously? **7** <Enter>
 Enter a number from 0 to 100 that indicates the percent of overspray that does not fall on the seedling bed? **10** <Enter>

There is an inherent inefficiency in most containerized production operations. This inefficiency is due to the arrangement of containers within their support structures. The following example is of a common container and expresses its efficiency in a ratio of container opening surface area to total surface area. **B**

Container	Diameter	Number of Containers/ Square Foot	Container Surface Area/ Square Foot	Efficiency
1 gallon	6.00 in.	4	113.10 sq. in.	79%

What is the efficiency of the container system being utilized? **79** <Enter>
 How many seedlings exist per square foot? **4** <Enter>

These application rates are on a per seedling basis. **C**

Time required to apply 350 milliliters of solution is 31.07 minutes.
 1,323.21 grams or 2.91 pounds of fertilizer and 4.66 gallons or 17.64 liters of water are required for the stock solution.

Would you like a printed copy of the results y/n?

Figure 2—Examples of the irrigation system input screen for the application time portion of CONIFERS (A); container efficiency input screen (B); and output screen generated by CONIFERS using the fixed irrigation system described in the text (C).

The CONIFERS program's quick and accurate ability to calculate mixing rates removes many obstacles associated with using liquid-based fertilizer solutions in nurseries. The user-friendly design of CONIFERS and training on reading fertilizer labels allows all levels of nursery employees to mix fertilizer stock solutions correctly. Changes in fertility programs due to changes in the irrigation system, fertilizer supply, or crop needs can be readily assimilated without the need for tedious hand calculations.

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Locally applied insecticide would be effective in controlling southern cone rust in pine seed orchards. If effective, this approach could reduce the



Figure 1. Southern cone rust in pine seed orchards. The image shows a close-up of a pine needle with characteristic rust lesions, which are small, dark, elongated spots. The background is a lighter, textured surface, possibly another part of the needle or a leaf.

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Dr. David L. Wenny of the University of Idaho—Forest Research Nursery and Dr. David R. Dreesen of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, for their editorial efforts on CONIFERS software and its manual.

Aerial Application Trial for Control of Southern Cone Rust in a Slash Pine Seed Orchard Using Triadimefon

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A nonreplicated field trial was conducted in a slash pine seed orchard in north-central Florida to evaluate the efficacy of aerially applied triadimefon fungicide for control of southern cone rust caused by *Cronartium strobilinum*. A single, late January application of fungicide was apparently ineffective, but trees receiving an additional application 16 days later had significantly fewer rust-infected conelets. Clonal variation with respect to disease susceptibility and apparent genotype-treatment interactions were observed. The potential of triadimefon-based cone rust control is discussed. *Tree Planters' Notes* 47(4)126-131; 1996.

Southern cone rust—caused by the fungus *Cronartium strobilinum* (Arth.) Hedgc. & Hahn—sporadically causes serious losses of first-year female strobili on slash (*Pinus elliottii* Engelm. var. *elliottii*) and longleaf (*P. palustris* Mill.) pines in the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains of the deep southern United States. Infected conelets typically swell rapidly (figure 1a), abort, and drop from the tree by mid to late summer, but some hypertrophied red-brown to brown, somewhat shriveled "mummies" may cling to trees for longer periods (Goolsby and others 1972; Hedgcock and Hahn 1922; Hepting and Matthews 1970; Maloy and Matthews 1960; Matthews 1964; Miller 1987). In some years, cone (and subsequently seed) losses directly attributable to southern cone rust infections have ranged from 20 to nearly 100% in certain areas (Goolsby and others 1972; Hedgcock and Hahn 1922; Hepting and Matthews 1970; Maloy and Matthews 1960). Fatzinger and others (1992) reported losses of not less than 24% in a slash pine seed orchard in north Florida in 1980. Losses in another slash pine seed orchard in north central Florida were very high in 1993, 1994, and 1995 (estimated >75% in 1995 by Barnard and others, unpublished field observations). Responding to a survey questionnaire, 8 of 12 seed orchard managers in Florida, southern Georgia, and southern Alabama estimated their 1995 losses of first-year slash pine cones to be in excess of 50% (Barnard, unpublished data).



a



b

Figure 1—Symptoms and signs of southern cone rust on slash pine: Infected (lower left) and disease-free first-year conelets (a). Infected first-year cones displaying profuse powdery masses of yellow-orange aeciospores (b).

Control of southern cone rust has been reported with appropriately timed spray applications of ferbam fungicides (Hepting and Matthews 1970; Lightle 1959; Maloy and Matthews 1960; Matthews 1964). However, due to the non-systemic, prophylactic mode of action of ferbam, effective control requires repeated applications, perhaps at 5-day intervals for a period of some 25 to 30 days, commencing as soon as female strobili emerge from their bud scales and continuing until pollination has ended. Accordingly, the overall efficacy of ferbam-based control programs may be less than adequate due to weather conditions and costs of applications (especially if applications are aerial).

Since the early 1980's, triadimefon fungicide (Bayleton®, Bayer Corporation) has become the industry standard for controlling fusiform rust caused by *Cronartium quercuum* (Berk.) Miyabe ex Shirai f. sp. *fusiforme* (Hedgc. & N. Hunt) Burdsall & G. Snow, a close relative of *C. strobilinum*, in southern pine nurseries (Carey and Kelley 1993; Kelley 1985; Kelley and Runion 1991; Powers 1984; Rowan 1982; Snow and others 1979). Triadimefon's mode of action is systemic, and to some extent eradicant, as opposed to preventive only; triadimefon controls or eradicates some preexistent infections and prevents new infections. In addition, single low rate applications (for example, 280 g ai/hectare or 4 oz ai/ac) of triadimefon provide effective control of fusiform rust in pine seedlings for up to 3 to 4 weeks.

Accordingly, we designed this study to determine if aerially applied triadimefon fungicide would be effective in controlling southern cone rust in pine seed orchards. If effective, this approach could reduce the number of fungicide applications required for adequate disease control and provide orchard managers flexibility with respect to timing of spray applications.

Materials and Methods

Trial layout and fungicide application. In 1996, we established fungicide trials in 4 seed orchards in Florida. Due to the erratic nature of the disease, southern cone rust did not occur in 3 orchards but did occur at the Florida Division of Forestry's Withlacoochee Seed Orchard near Brooksville, FL. Accordingly, we are able to report results from only of 1 of the 4 seed orchards.

In the Withlacoochee Seed Orchard, we selected a 20-ha (~ 50 ac) block of slash pine and identified 2 (5-row) zones for fungicide application (figure 2). Application zones were chosen to avoid orchard block edges, minimize disturbance(s) to a bordering landowner, and provide a reasonable buffer (9 rows = about 82 m, or 270 ft) between zones. The 4 corner trees in each of the 5-row zones were marked with flagging in

their crowns, and each spray zone corner was marked on the ground to facilitate pilot identification/location. The size of the orchard and limitations of flight patterns precluded replication (figure 2).

The first application of triadimefon (Bayer Corporation's Bayleton® 50% DF) was applied to both application zones on January 29. On February 14, a second application was applied to 1 zone only. The result was a 5-row zone of trees receiving a single application of triadimefon (1/29, 1×) and another 5-row zone receiving 2 applications (1/29 and 2/14, 2×). The 2 zones were separated by a 9-row (about 82 m, or 270 ft) unsprayed buffer zone (figure 2).

Both fungicide applications were delivered by fixed-wing aircraft calibrated to deliver 19 L of spray/ha (= 5 gal/ac) with a droplet size of volume median diameter (VMD) = 350 µm. On both application dates, the respective target zones were double flown, making the actual application 38 L of spray/ha (= 10 gal/ac). The spray mixture consisted of 227 g (½ lb) of Bayleton 50 DF and 0.24 L (½ pint) of Agri-Dex® nonionic spray adjuvant/38 L (10 gal) of total spray/ha. Thus, about 280 g (10 oz) ai of triadimefon fungicide was applied per hectare per application on the 2 test zones.

Data collection. Incidence of southern cone rust was assessed between April 29 and May 2. Total cone counts and the number of cones exhibiting symptoms and/or signs of cone rust infection (for example, distinctive hypertrophy of cone scales or conelets, orange discoloration, and/or the presence of aecial pustules or aeciospores of *C. strobilinum*; figure 1) were determined on the eastern half of the crown on each selected sample tree. Counts were made from a bucket truck, and as each cone was counted, it was sprayed with fluorescent paint to prevent inadvertent recounts.

Primary sample trees were selected in the 2 sprayed zones from trees within the interior 3 rows of each zone (figure 2). Control trees were selected in the largest unsprayed zone from among trees within 4 adjacent rows that were at least 9 rows (about 82 m, or 270 ft) distant from the nearest sprayed zone (triadimefon 1×). Sample trees were selected on the basis of ramet availability for individual clones within the designated sampling zones. Three ramets per clone per area were desired, but some clones only provided 2, or in some cases, 1. The total sample consisted of 57 trees (3 clones with at least 3 ramets/clone/zone, 3 clones with 2 ramets/clone/zone, and 3 clones with only 1 ramet/clone/zone). Two additional clones were sampled, but these clones (308 and 402) were represented in only single orchard zones (table 1). Additionally, and in a similar manner, we determined the proportions of cones with cone rust on a single clone (403) for which we could find at least 2 ramets in each of

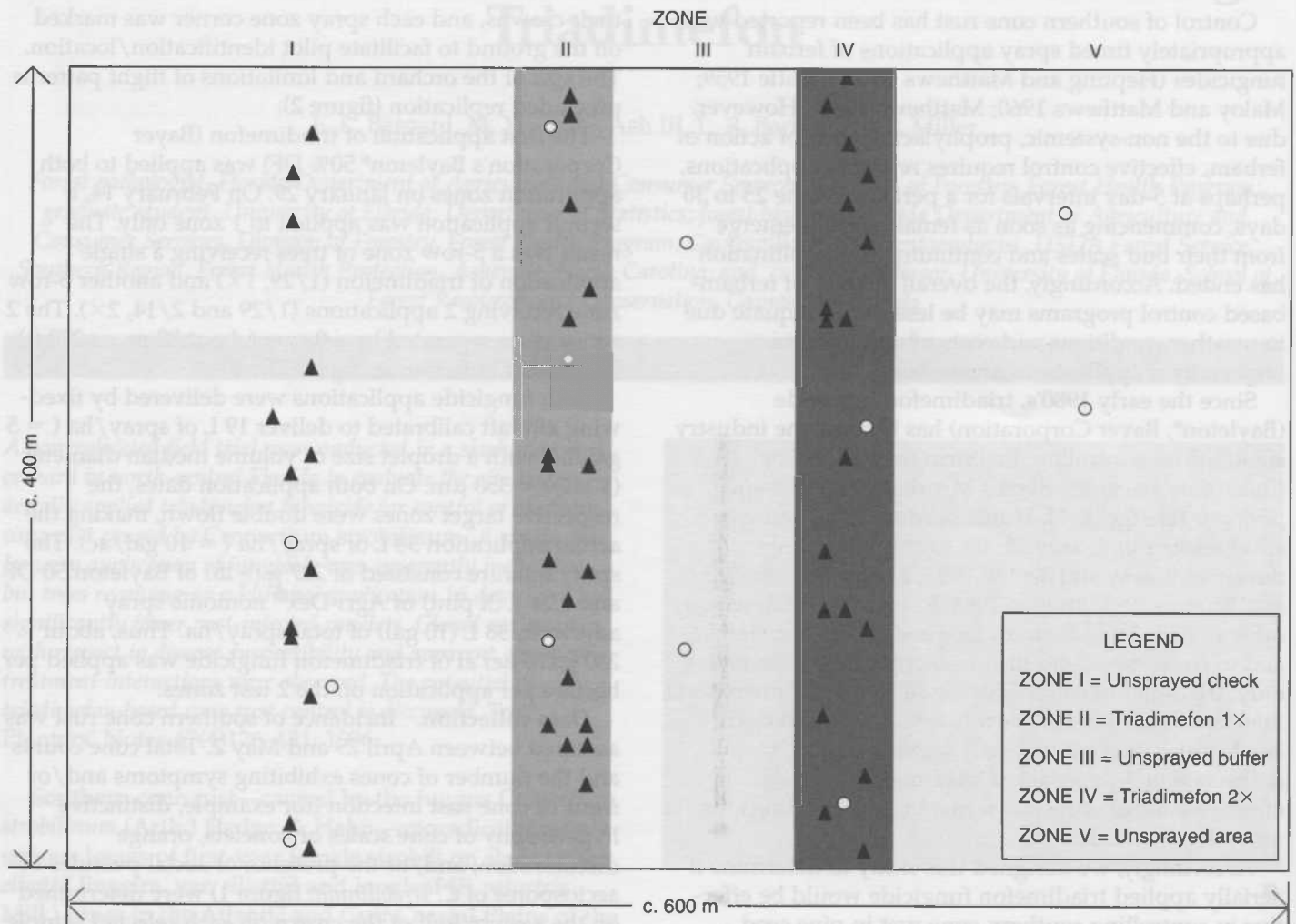


Figure 2—Layout of a field trial evaluating aerially applied triadimefon fungicide (Bayleton® 50% DF) for control of southern cone rust in a slash pine seed orchard; Florida Division of Forestry's Withlacoochee Seed Orchard, Brooksville, FL, 1996. Solid triangles and clear circles represent individual sample trees with the circles indicating individual ramets of clone 403 sampled across all 5 orchard zones.

the 5 zones across the orchard (figure 2). This supplemental sample was taken to evaluate the possibility of a disease gradient occurring across the orchard, possibly confounding analysis of treatment effects in zones I (control), II (triadimefon 1×), and IV (triadimefon 2×) (table 1 and figure 2).

Data analysis. Because this study involved unreplicated treatment plots, there are limitations to the inferences that can be drawn from the data collected. Nonetheless, statistical analyses were used as an aid in evaluating the validity of observed differences in cone rust levels between orchard zones and/or treatments. Data were subjected to logit regression analysis because the response variable was dichotomous, that is, the cones either had or did not have rust. The statistics package SPLUS® (Statistical Sciences, Inc.) was employed for data processing. In the first analysis, only

the data from zones I (control), II (triadimefon 1×), and IV (triadimefon 2×) were analyzed. Clones 308, 402, and 306 were not included in the analysis. Clones 308 and 402 clones could not be included because they were represented only in single orchard zones (table 1). Clone 306 was omitted as a probable anomaly (outlier) because it was the only clone of 9 represented that showed a dramatic "increase" in rust infection in zone II (triadimefon 1×) over zone I (control), a difference based on only single measurements (that is, single trees) in each of the 2 zones (table 1). Each of the other 8 remaining clones showed essentially no difference in rust infection levels between zones I (control) and II (triadimefon 1×) (table 1). A second analysis, of the supplemental sample, was performed using only the data from clone 403 across all 5 orchard zones (table 1 and figure 2).

Table 1—Total number of cones evaluated and percentage of cones infected (in parentheses) by *Cronartium strobilinum* by clone, ramet, and seed orchard zone (treatment)

Clone & ramet	Zone I (controls)	Zone II (triadimefon 1×)	Zone III (buffer, nonsprayed)	Zone IV (triadimefon 2×)	Zone V (buffer, nonsprayed)
2					
1	82 (4.9%)	205 (11.7%)	—	110 (4.6%)	—
2	130 (13.9%)	63 (14.3%)	—	75 (12.0%)	—
3	150 (15.3%)	133 (9.0%)	—	99 (6.1%)	—
7					
1	68 (7.3%)	42 (21.4%)	—	117 (11.1%)	—
2	179 (15.9%)	77 (7.8%)	—	79 (16.5%)	—
3	150 (11.3%)	99 (8.1%)	—	110 (16.4%)	—
4	75 (2.7%)	—	—	—	—
403*					
1	192 (12.0%)	225 (4.0%)	123 (11.4%)	55 (1.8%)	98 (30.6%)
2	109 (10.1%)	197 (13.2%)	148 (6.1%)	120 (1.7%)	206 (4.8%)
3	75 (17.3%)	189 (16.9%)	—	239 (8.4%)	—
19					
1	255 (23.5%)	176 (22.7%)	—	92 (15.2%)	—
2	63 (14.3%)	92 (16.3%)	—	76 (10.5%)	—
27					
1	37 (51.4%)	71 (43.7%)	—	175 (54.3%)	—
2	130 (40.0%)	134 (41.0%)	—	65 (56.9%)	—
304					
1	194 (28.9%)	150 (29.3%)	—	107 (16.8%)	—
2	89 (24.7%)	149 (18.8%)	—	62 (9.7%)	—
11					
1	42 (38.1%)	38 (31.6%)	—	33 (21.2%)	—
2	—	23 (34.8%)	—	—	—
3	—	32 (21.9%)	—	—	—
26					
1	108 (15.7%)	80 (17.5%)	—	91 (11.0)	—
306					
1	163 (4.9%)	168 (18.4%)	—	75 (5.3%)	—
308					
1	91 (18.7%)	—	—	—	—
402					
1	—	—	—	57 (7.0%)	—
2	—	—	—	44 (11.4%)	—
3	—	—	—	44 (9.1%)	—

* Clone 403 values were included in the analysis of zones I (control), II (triadimefon 1×), and IV (triadimefon 2×)(figure 3). In addition, values for this clone for all 5 zones (treatments) were analyzed alone (figure 4).

Results and Discussion

Our data document considerable clonal variation, not only with respect to the incidence of cone rust within specific clones (and therefore susceptibility/resistance to infection), but also with respect to clonal responses to our triadimefon applications as well (table 1). For example, average cone rust infection within individual clones represented by at least 2 ramets ranged from 9.2 (clone 7) to 45.7% (clone 27). Similar clonal variation has been observed previously by Fatzinger and others (personal communication). They observed average clonal infection ranging from 3.5 to 36.2% in a 1980 outbreak of cone rust in a slash pine seed orchard in north Florida. Our analyses suggest possible genotype

by treatment and/or zone interactions (not separable due to the unreplicated nature of the trial). For example, clones 2, 403, 19, 304, 11, and 26 exhibited significantly less ($P = 0.05$) rust infection in zone IV (triadimefon 2×) than in either zone I (control) or zone II (triadimefon 1×). In contrast, clones 7 and 27 exhibited more (NS) rust infection in zone IV than in zones I and 11. Average rust infection levels in zones I (control) and II (triadimefon 1×) did not differ significantly (figures 3 and 4). Also, our analysis of infection levels in clone 403 confirmed that only in zone IV (triadimefon 2×) did cone rust infection levels differ significantly from those of zone I (control) at $P = 0.05$ (figure 4). Indeed, rust levels for clone 403 in zone V (unsprayed area), not differing significantly from zones

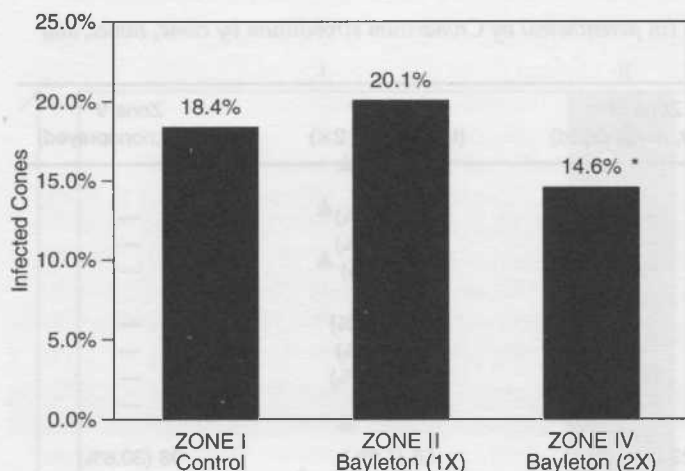


Figure 3—Mean incidence of southern cone rust infection (% cones infected) in a slash pine seed orchard treated with aerially applied triadimefon (Bayleton® 50% DF). Values/bars annotated with an asterisk differ significantly from those of zone I (control) at $P = 0.05$.

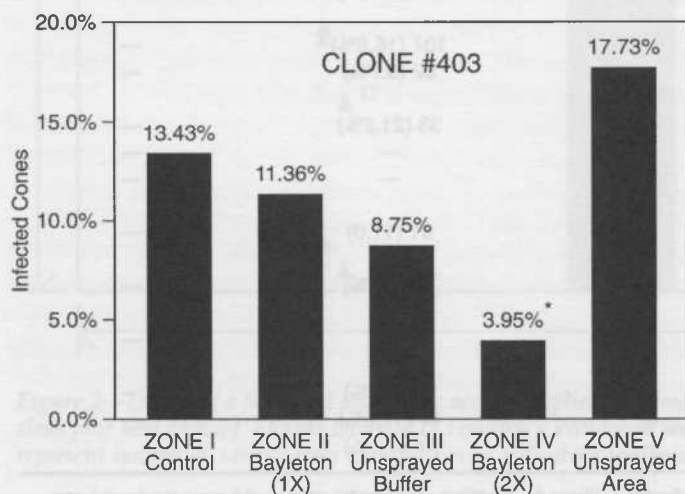


Figure 4—Mean incidence of southern cone rust infection (% cones infected) in a single clone of slash pine across 5 seed orchard zones treated or untreated with aerially applied triadimefon (Bayleton® 50% DF). Values/bars annotated with an asterisk differ significantly from those of zone I (control) at $P = 0.05$.

I (control), II (triadimefon 1×), and III (buffer), argue against there being a disease gradient across the seed orchard (figure 4).

Altogether, our data suggest that our double fungicide application (triadimefon 2×) may have reduced the level of cone rust infection in this trial. However, due to the unreplicated nature of our trial, and the consequent confounding of zone (orchard position) with treatment, unequivocal statements with respect to treatment efficacy are premature. Further, should the observed differences in cone rust levels in fact be a function of our

fungicide treatments, our data would not enable us to determine whether the effect of the triadimefon 2× treatment was due to the repeated application or simply better timing of the second application. In this respect, we are inclined to prefer the latter explanation as rust levels in our single application zone (triadimefon 1×) did not differ significantly from those in the control zone. Regardless, we are intrigued by our initial results and the possibilities. We believe further trials are in order.

Benefits and costs? Economic justification for aerial triadimefon applications for control of southern cone rust must be determined almost on a case-by-case basis. Cone/seed production per hectare of seed orchard, the value of seed, costs of chemicals (fungicide and adjuvants), costs of aerial application contracts, disease pressure, and level of disease reduction are all factors to be considered. Assuming that our trial results provide a reasonable basis for expected control of southern cone rust (that is, a direct 20% reduction in disease occurrence), calculating the cost effectiveness of an aerial triadimefon spray program will depend largely on the anticipated level of disease incidence, a factor for which we currently have no reliable predictor(s).

For example, assuming 22 kg of seed produced/ha (20 lb/ac), \$110/kg of seed (\$50/lb), \$136 for chemicals/ha (\$55/ac) [inclusive; based on 1,121 g (1 lb) of triadimefon plus adjuvant total for both applications], \$74/ha (\$30/ac) for total application costs (2 flights), and a disease incidence and control efficacy equivalent to those on our trial, control costs would be \$210/ha (\$85/ac) and the value of seed saved would be \$88/ha (\$37/ac); a net loss of \$122/ha (\$48/ac) for "control". If, however, a single application of triadimefon provided the same level of control, then control costs would still exceed the value of seed saved by \$17/ha (\$5.50/ac). For comparison, if disease pressure were greater (for example, 50% cone/seed losses without control) and all other factors remained the same, a double application would result in a net gain of \$32 worth of seed/ha (\$15/ac), whereas a single application would provide a net gain of \$137 worth of seed/ha (\$57.50/ac).

Notwithstanding the above, application costs for triadimefon may, in effect, be "reduced" due to the fact that application schedules are essentially coincident with those recommended (Dixon and others 1991) for insecticidal control of slash pine flower thrips—*Gnophothrips fuscus* (Morgan)—and tank mixes of fungicide and insecticide are feasible. In our trial, applications were scheduled to coincide with insecticide applications and laboratory tests for tank mix compatibility using Bayer's Bayleton 50 DF and Riverside/Terra Corporation's Malathion 5®, showed no evidence of

incompatibility (unpublished data). Further, the use of triadimefon for rust control in slash pine seed orchards may provide additional indirect benefits by reducing activity of the south coastal coneworm—*Dioryctria ebeli* Mutuura and Munroe—which preferentially attacks rust-infected conelets. If unchecked, populations of this insect build up in rust-infected conelets, with subsequent generations attacking second-year cones, thus causing even greater losses (Dixon and others 1991; Merkel 1958; Miller 1987).

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