

# Symbioses

April 16, 2019

# Ice-breaker questions

1. What is a **symbiosis**?
2. Why would a plant establish a symbiosis?
3. How would a scientist identify a symbiosis?
4. What are some examples of symbioses involving plants?

Today's symbioses

1. Mycorrhizae
2. N-fixing bacteria
3. Fungal endophytes

Today's symbioses

1. Mycorrhizae

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# Mycorrhizae Basics

- Associated with plant roots
  - 82% of plant species
- Increase root surface area
  - Similar to root hairs
  - Increase absorptive surface
- Increases nutrient uptake
  - Primarily N and P

TABLE 1. The length of mycorrhizal hyphae per unit colonized root length as measured for a number of plant species, infected with different arbuscular mycorrhiza-forming fungal species.

Fungus	Host	Hyphal length ( $\text{m cm}^{-1}$ root)
<i>Glomus mosseae</i>	<i>Allium cepa</i> (onion)	0.79–2.5
<i>Glomus mosseae</i>	<i>Allium cepa</i>	0.71
<i>Glomus macrocarpum</i>	<i>Allium cepa</i>	0.71
<i>Glomus microcarpum</i>	<i>Allium cepa</i>	0.71
<i>Glomus</i> sp.	<i>Trifolium</i> sp. (clover)	1.29
<i>Glomus</i> sp.	<i>Lolium</i> sp. (ryegrass)	1.36
<i>Glomus fasciculatum</i>	<i>Trifolium</i> sp.	2.50
<i>Glomus tenue</i>	<i>Trifolium</i> sp.	14.20
<i>Gigaspora calospora</i>	<i>Allium cepa</i>	0.71
<i>Gigaspora calospora</i>	<i>Trifolium</i> sp.	12.30
<i>Acaulospora laevis</i>	<i>Trifolium</i> sp.	10.55

Source: Various authors, as cited in Smith & Gianinazzi-Pearson (1988).

# Primary benefit is increased access to nutrients (not access to new nutrients)

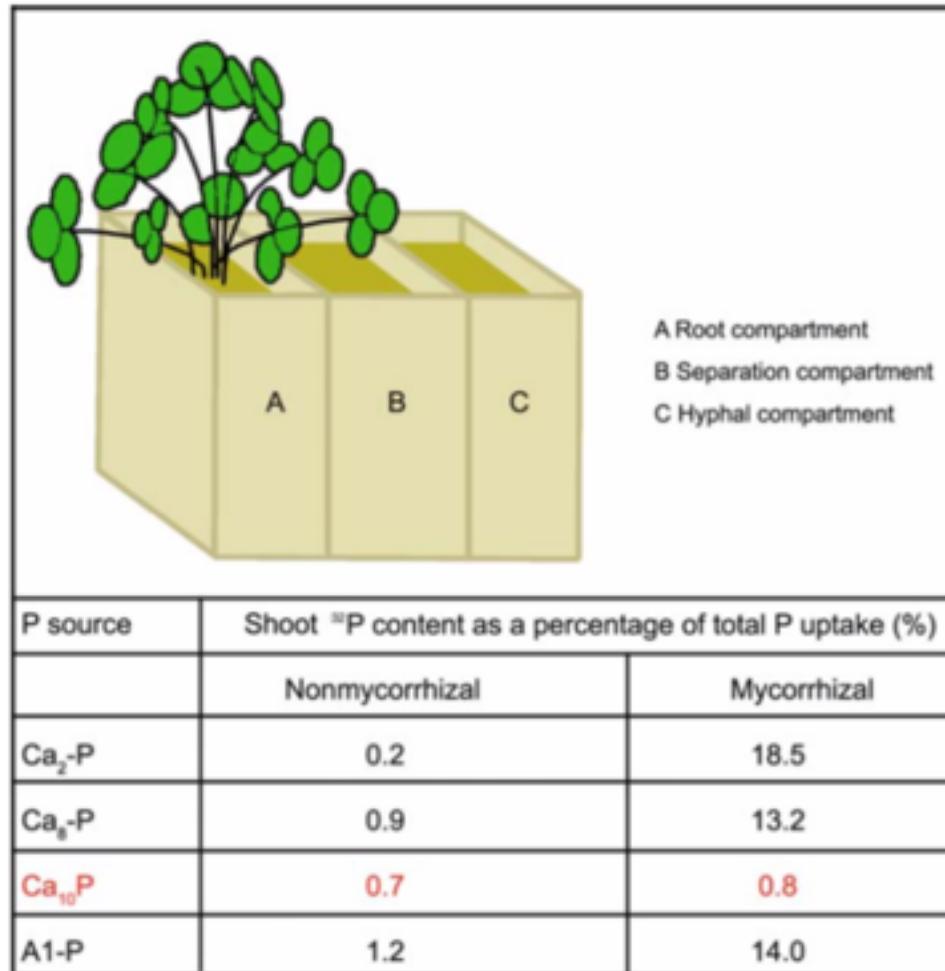


FIGURE 7. Diagram showing the design of the rhizoboxes used to assess which chemical forms of P can be accessed by arbuscular mycorrhizal hyphae. The  $^{32}\text{P}$ -labeled P source is added to the hyphal compartment only. The  $^{32}\text{P}$  content is expressed as a proportion of the total P content of the shoots of *Trifolium pratense* (red clover) (Yao et al. 2001).

# Plants regulate the symbiosis

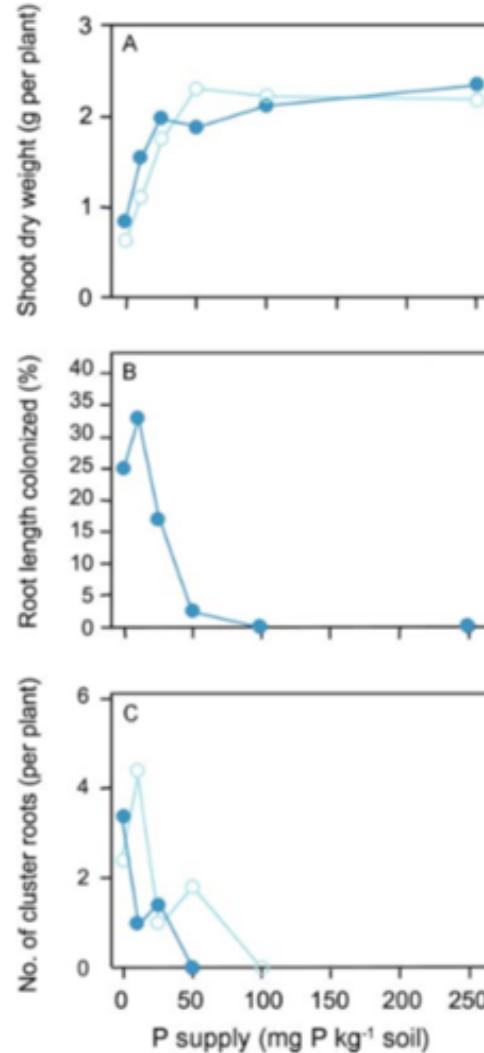


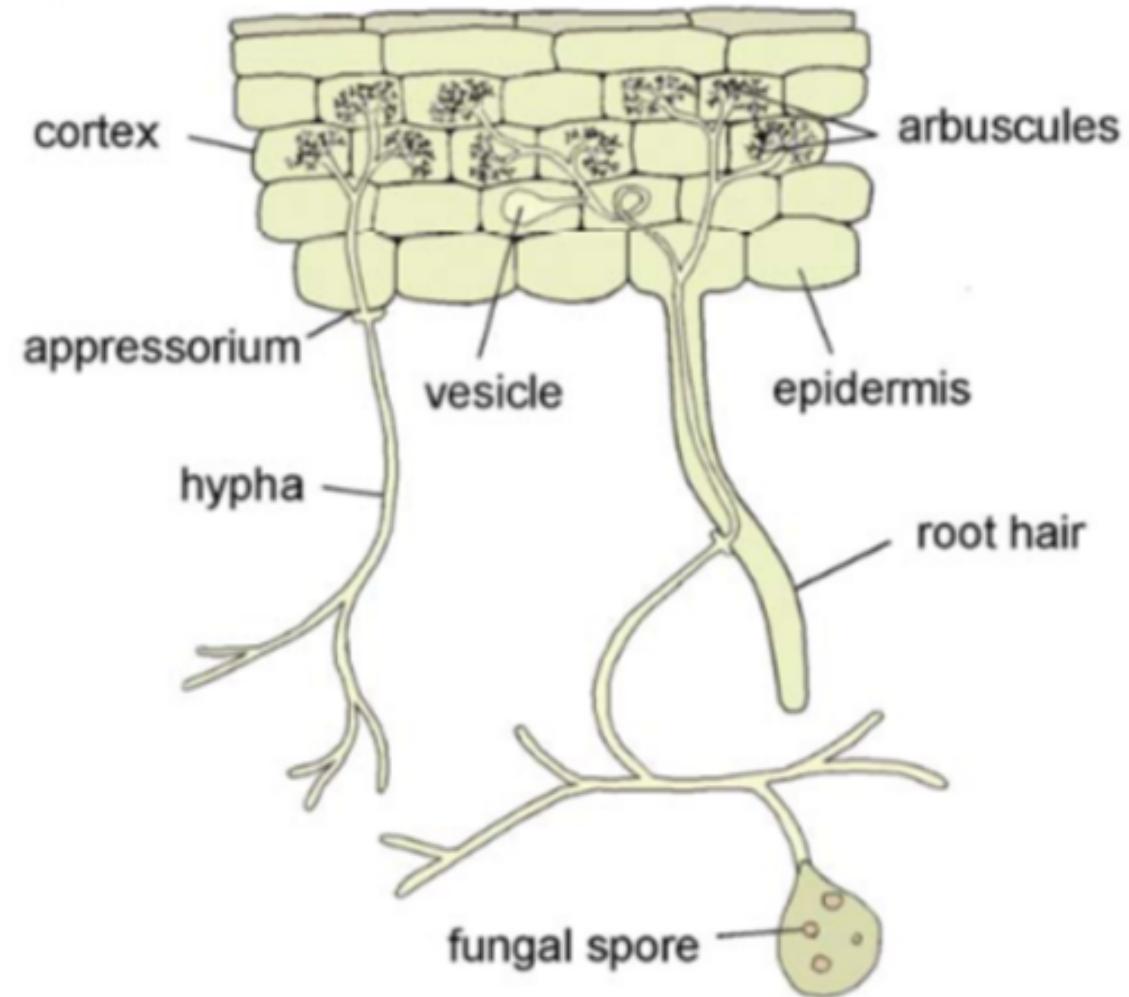
FIGURE 9. Response of *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (sheoak) seedlings to inoculation with an arbuscular mycorrhizal fungus (*Glomus* sp.) over a range of P supplies in sand culture. (A) Shoot dry weight; (B) mycorrhizal colonization of roots; (C) occurrence of cluster roots. Filled symbols: inoculated with *Glomus*; open symbols uninoculated (redrawn after Reddell et al. 1997, *Australian Journal of Botany* 45: 41–51, Copyright CSIRO, Australia).

# Types of Mycorrhizae

1. Arbuscular Mycorrhiza
2. Ectomycorrhiza
3. Ericoid Mycorrhiza
4. Orchid Mycorrhiza

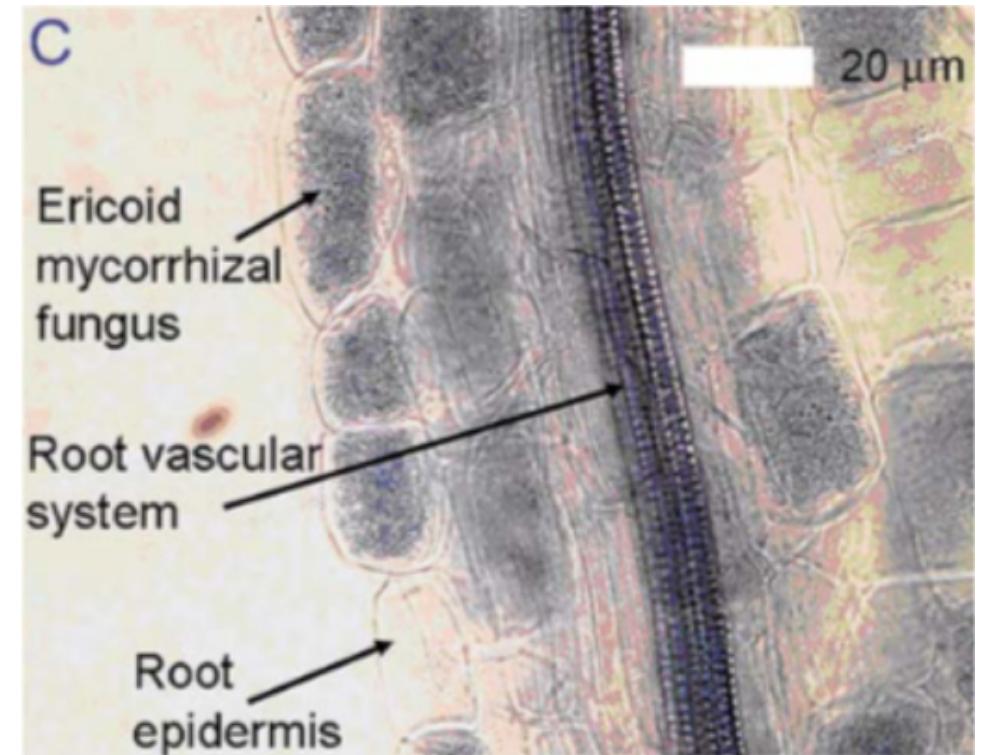
# Arbuscular Mycorrhiza

- Most widespread association
  - 92% of all plant families
- Trade nutrients for Carbon via **arbuscules**
- Use **vesicles** for storage
- Increase inorganic N and P acquisition



# Ericoid Mycorrhiza

- Restricted to bogs and heathlands in boreal areas
  - Heathers, bog berries, rhododendrons
- Invade cells, but do not form arbuscules
  - Form coils instead
- Infection is 100x greater than in AM
- Can access organic N and P



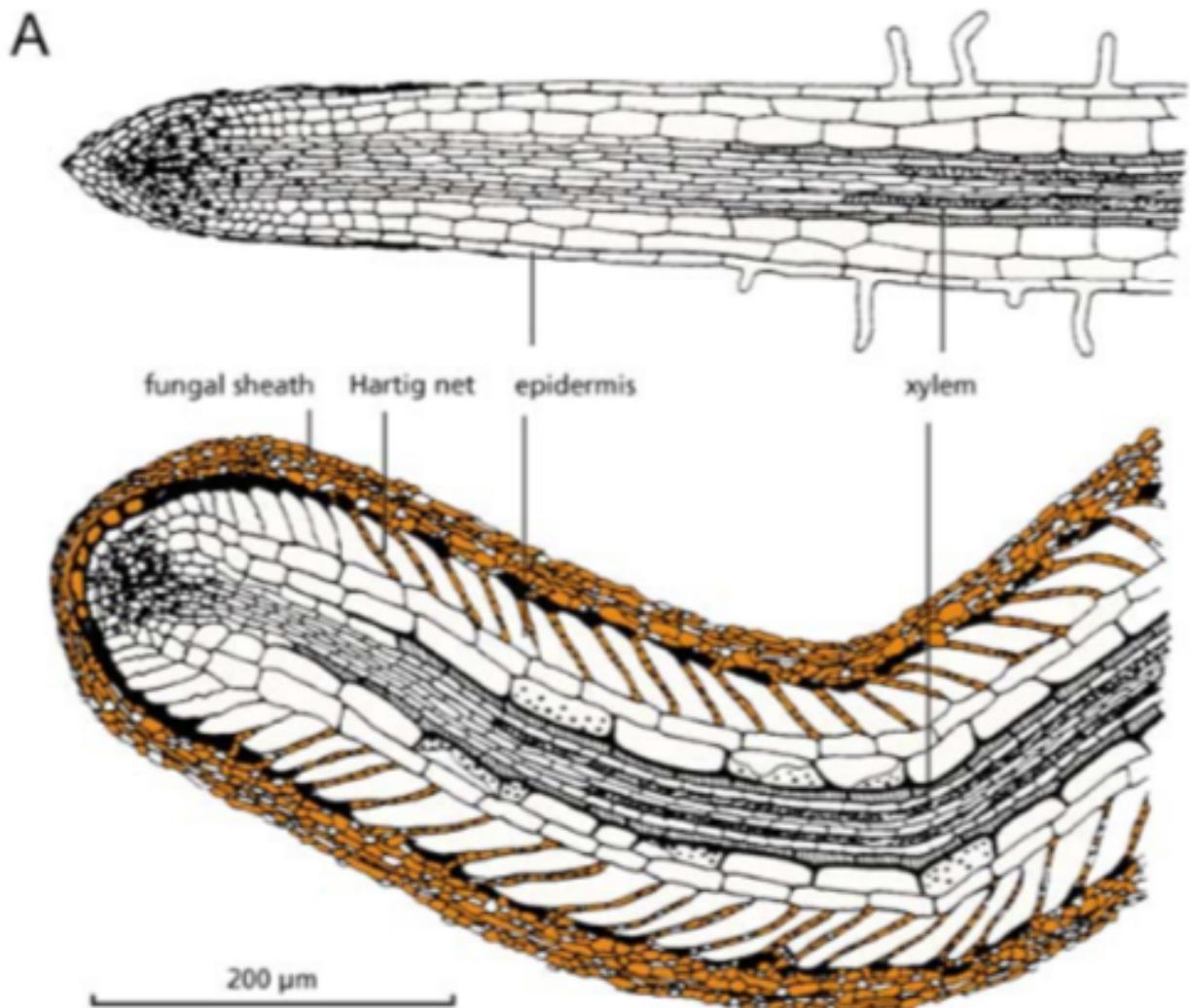
# Orchid mycorrhiza

- Specific to orchids
- Provide entire carbon source during orchid seed development
- Provide nutrients later in life
- Penetrate cells
- Orchid-relationship can be parasitic to fungi



# Ectomycorrhiza

- Associations are more limited
  - Mainly trees: e.g., *Pinus*, *Quercus*, *Salix*, *Fagus*, *Eucalyptus*, *Betula*, *Populus*, *Alnus*, *Fraxinus*, *Cupressus*
- Do not penetrate host cells
- Exchange occurs in the intercellular spaces



# Organic vs. Inorganic nutrient acquisition

TABLE 2.  $^{15}\text{N}$  abundance of leaf samples collected in different years in Tanzania.\*

Species	Symbiotic status	$\delta^{15}\text{N}$		
		1980	1981	1984
<i>Brachystegia boehmii</i>	EC	1.64	1.32	1.23
<i>B. microphylla</i>	EC	1.53	1.51	1.73
<i>Julbernardia globiflora</i>	EC	2.81	1.63	1.60
<i>Pterocarpus angolensis</i>	AM+NO	-0.81	-0.87	-0.93
<i>Diplorynchus condylocarpon</i>	AM	-	-0.36	-0.60
<i>Xeroderris stuhlmannii</i>	AM+NO	-	0.01	0.62
<i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i>	AM+NO	-	0.45	-0.38

Source: Höglberg (1990).

\* EC = ectomycorrhizal; AM = arbuscular mycorrhizal; NO = nodulated. The experiments summarized here were actually carried out with the aim to determine the extent of symbiotic  $\text{N}_2$  fixation of the nodulated plants. Since nodulated plants have access to dinitrogen from the atmosphere, they are expected to have  $\delta^{15}\text{N}\text{‰}$  values closer to atmospheric  $\text{N}_2$  than do plants that do not fix dinitrogen. The data presented here stress that control plants need to be sampled to allow a proper comparison. This table shows that the choice of the control plants is highly critical (see also Sect. 3 of this chapter).

EC have different signature, suggesting acquisition from different source (organic in this case)

# Carbon costs of mycorrhizal symbioses

- 4-20% of the carbon fixed by photosynthesis goes to symbioses
- Total benefit is higher when water is limiting. Why?

TABLE 3. Comparison of accumulated  $^{14}\text{C}$  and fresh mass in mycorrhizal and nonmycorrhizal halves of root system of two citrus cultivars.\*

Species	$^{14}\text{C}$ recovered from below-ground tissue dpm g $^{-1}$		Fresh mass mg plant $^{-1}$	
	+	-	+	-
<i>Sour orange</i>	66.4	33.6	1580	1240NS
<i>Carrizo citrange</i>	67.7	32.3	1990	1520NS

Source: Koch & Johnson (1984).

\* + and - denote mycorrhizal and nonmycorrhizal plants, respectively; NS indicates that there was no significant difference.

# Today's symbioses

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# Nodule Forming Rhizobia

- Convert  $\text{N}_2$  gas into ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ )
- Process plants can't perform on their own
- Form nodules on roots to exchange  $\text{NH}_3$  with carbon
- Only associate with *Fabaceae* family of plants (legumes)



FIGURE 13.  $\text{N}_2$ -fixing symbiotic systems. (Top, left) Legume-rhizobium symbiosis on the South African *Chamaecrista mimosoides* (fishbone dwarf cassia) (photo H. Lamberts). (Bottom, left) Symbiotic structure (rhizothamnia) between the Western Australian *Allocasuarina humilis* and an Actinobacteria (*Frankia*) (courtesy M.W. Shane, School of Plant Biology, The University of Western Australia, Australia). (Right) Symbiotic structure between *Macrozamia riedlii* and cyanobacteria (courtesy M.W. Shane, School of Plant Biology, The University of Western Australia, Crawley, Australia).

# Nodule Forming Rhizobia

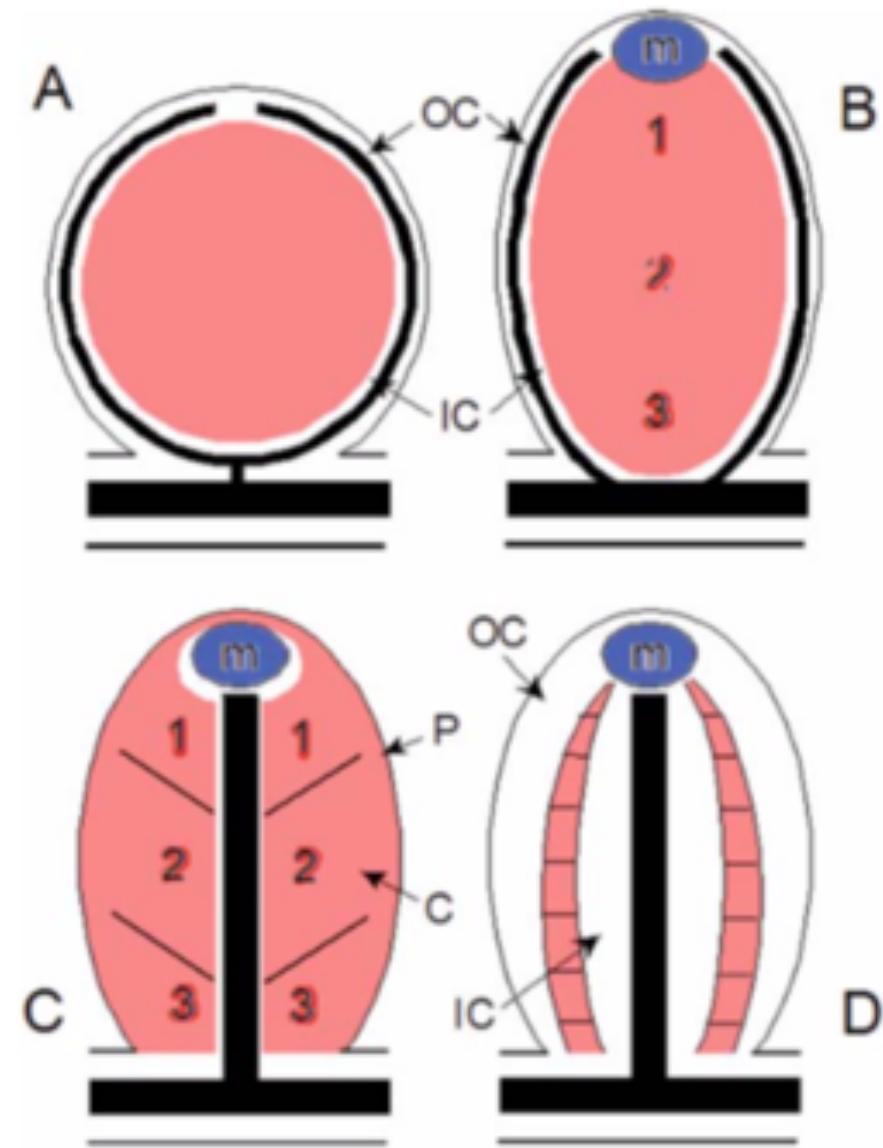


FIGURE 14. Diagrammatic representation of longitudinal sections through (A) an indeterminate legume nodule, (B) a determinate legume nodule, (C) an actinorhizal nodule, and (D) a lobe of a symbiotic coralloid root cluster. The red colored regions represent the infected zones. The dark, thick lines represent vascular tissues. Outer cortical (OC) tissue, inner cortical (IC) tissue, and meristems (m, blue) are indicated. In the indeterminate legume nodule (B) and the actinorhizal nodule (C), the zones of infection (1), N<sub>2</sub> fixation (2), and senescence (3) are indicated (Vessey et al. 2005).

# Fabaceae

- The legumes!
  - Soybean
  - Alfalfa
  - Clover
  - Peas
  - Lentils
  - Mesquite
  - Peanuts
  - Tamarind



# Fabaceae...and some other things

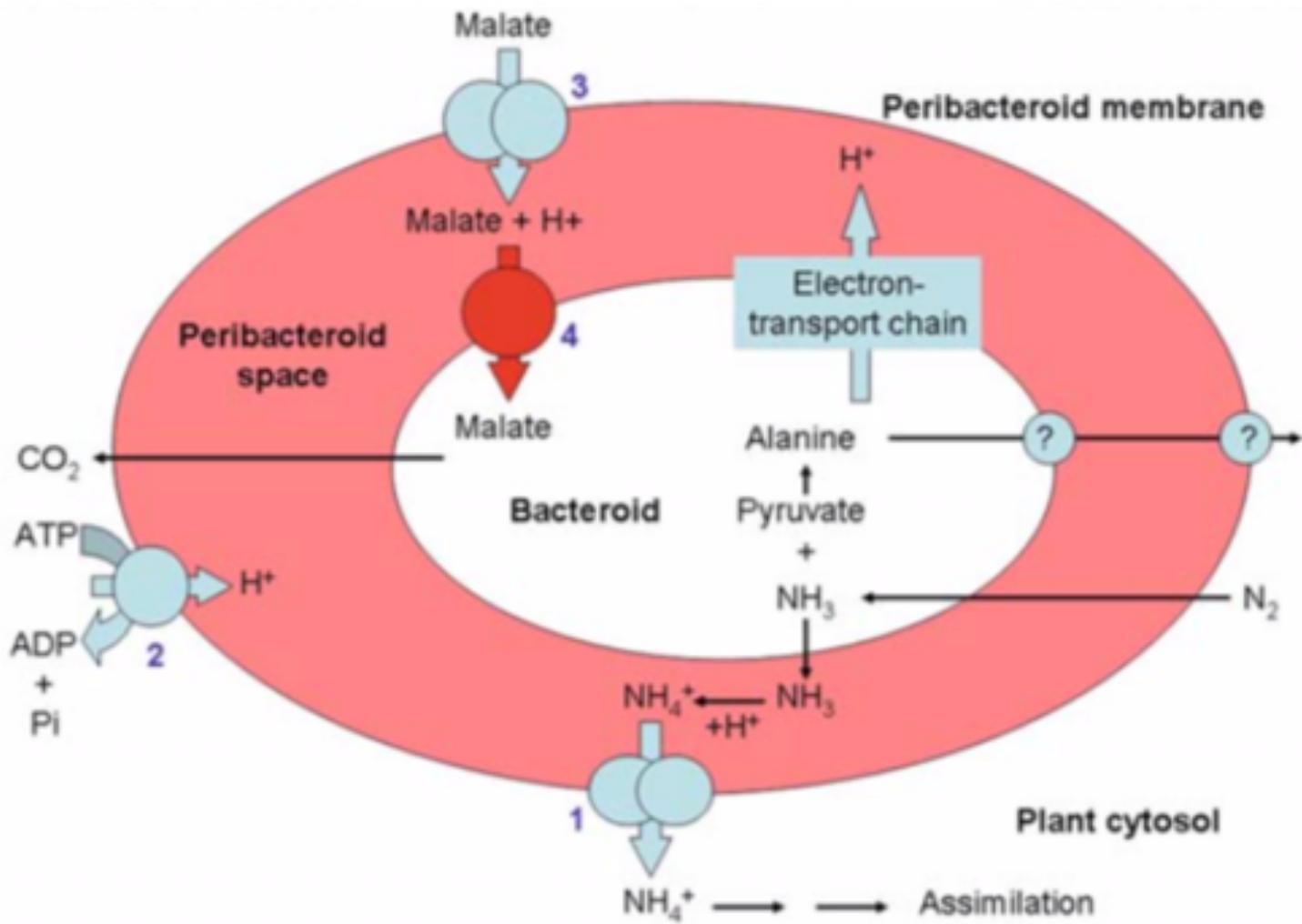
TABLE 4. Symbiotic associations between plants and microorganisms capable of fixing atmospheric N<sub>2</sub>.\*

Plant type	Genus	Microorganism	Location	Amount of N <sub>2</sub> fixed (kg N ha <sup>-1</sup> season <sup>-1</sup> )
Fabaceae	<i>Pisum</i>	<i>Rhizobium</i>	Root nodules	10–350
	<i>Glycine</i>	<i>Bradyrhizobium</i>	Root nodules	15–250
	<i>Medicago</i>	<i>Sinorhizobium</i>	Root nodules	440–790
	<i>Sesbania</i>	<i>Azorhizobium</i>	Stem nodules	7–324
		<i>Mesorhizobium</i>		
Ulmaceae	<i>Parasponia</i>	<i>Bradyrhizobium</i>	Root nodules	20–70
Betulaceae	<i>Alnus</i>	<i>Frankia</i>	Root nodules	15–300
Casuarinaceae	<i>Casuarina</i>	( <i>Actinobacteria</i> )	Root nodules	9–440
Eleagnaceae	<i>Eleagnus</i>	( <i>Actinobacteria</i> )	Root nodules	nd
Rosaceae	<i>Rubus</i>	( <i>Actinobacteria</i> )	Root nodules	nd
Pteridophytes	<i>Azolla</i>	<i>Anabaena</i>	Heterocysts in cavities of dorsal leaf lobes	40–120
Cycads	<i>Ceratozamia</i>	<i>Nostoc</i>	Coralloid roots	19–60
Lichens	<i>Collema</i>	<i>Nostoc</i>	Interspersed between fungal hyphae	nd

Source: Kwon & Beevers (1992), Gault et al. (1995), Peoples et al. (1995), Vance (2002).

\* Only a limited number of species are listed, just to provide an example; nd is not determined.

# Carbon cost of the rhizobia symbiosis



# Carbon cost of the rhizobia symbiosis

- 4-13% of photosynthate when soil N is high
- 25% or higher when soil N is low

# Suppression of rhizobia symbiosis

- Presence of N reduces plant-mediated bacterial activity

TABLE 9. Apparent nitrogenase activity and the O<sub>2</sub>-limitation coefficient, 2 days after addition of NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> to the root environment of nodulated 21-day-old plants of *Pisum sativum* (pea).\*

[NO <sub>3</sub> ] (mM)	Apparent nitrogenase activity [nmol H <sub>2</sub> g <sup>-1</sup> (nodule dry mass) s <sup>-1</sup> ]	O <sub>2</sub> limitation coefficient
0	45	0.89
5	38	0.64
10	22	0.45
15	24	0.49

Source: Kaiser et al. (1997).

\* The apparent nitrogenase activity was measured as the rate of H<sub>2</sub> evolution. As explained in Sect. 3.4, nitrogenase activity leads to the production of H<sub>2</sub>. There is normally no net evolution of H<sub>2</sub>, because rhizobia have a hydrogenase (i.e., an enzyme that uses H<sub>2</sub> as an electron donor). In the present experiment, a rhizobium strain was used that lacks hydrogenase so that the evolution of H<sub>2</sub> could be measured. The O<sub>2</sub> limitation coefficient is calculated as the ratio between total nitrogenase activity (H<sub>2</sub> evolution in the absence of N<sub>2</sub>) and potential nitrogenase activity (H<sub>2</sub> evolution in the absence of N<sub>2</sub> at an optimum concentration of O<sub>2</sub>).

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# Fungal endophytes can harm herbivores

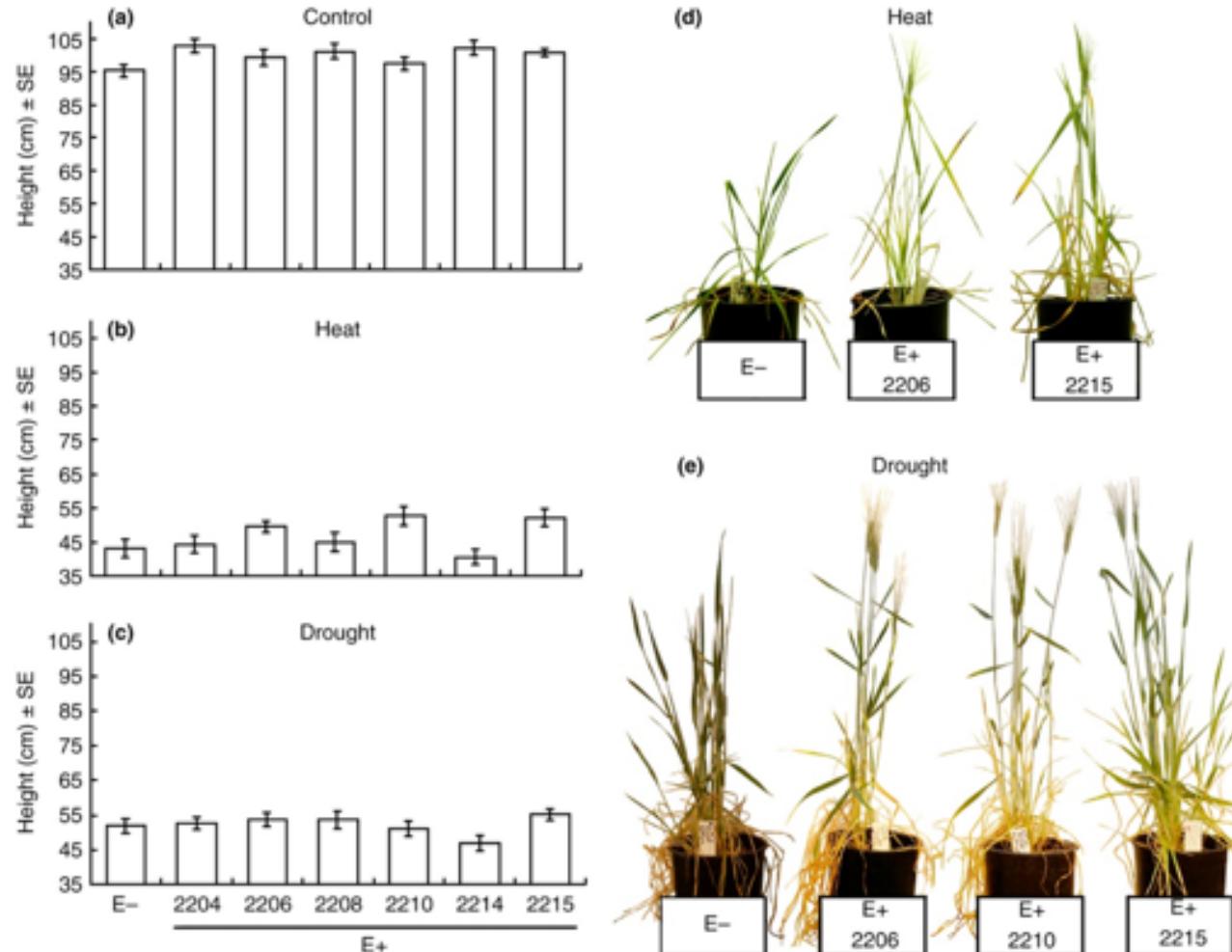
TABLE 10. Antiherbivore effects of fungal endophytes that infect grasses.

Animal	Host genus grass	Fungal endophyte genus	Comments
Mammals			
Cattle, horses	<i>Festuca</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Reduced mass gain, gangrene, spontaneous abortion
Cattle, sheep, deer	<i>Lolium</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Reduced mass gain, tremors, staggers, death
Cattle, goats	<i>Andropogon</i>	<i>Balansia</i>	Reduced milk production, death
Cattle	<i>Paspalum</i>	<i>Myriogenospora</i>	Reduced mass gain, tremors, gangrene
Insects			
Fall armyworm	<i>Cenchrus</i>	<i>Balansia</i>	Avoidance, reduced survival, reduced growth, increased development time
	<i>Cyperus</i>	<i>Balansia</i>	
	<i>Festuca</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	
	<i>Lolium</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	
	<i>Paspalum</i>	<i>Myriogenospora</i>	
	<i>Stipa</i>	<i>Atkinsonella</i>	
Aphids	<i>Festuca</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Avoidance
Billbugs	<i>Lolium</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Reduced feeding and oviposition
Crickets	<i>Lolium</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Complete mortality
Cutworms	<i>Dactylis</i>	<i>Epichloe</i>	Reduced survival and mass gain
Flour beetles	<i>Lolium</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Reduced population growth
Sod webworms	<i>Lolium</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Reduced feeding and oviposition
Stem weevils	<i>Lolium</i>	<i>Acremonium</i>	Reduced feeding and oviposition

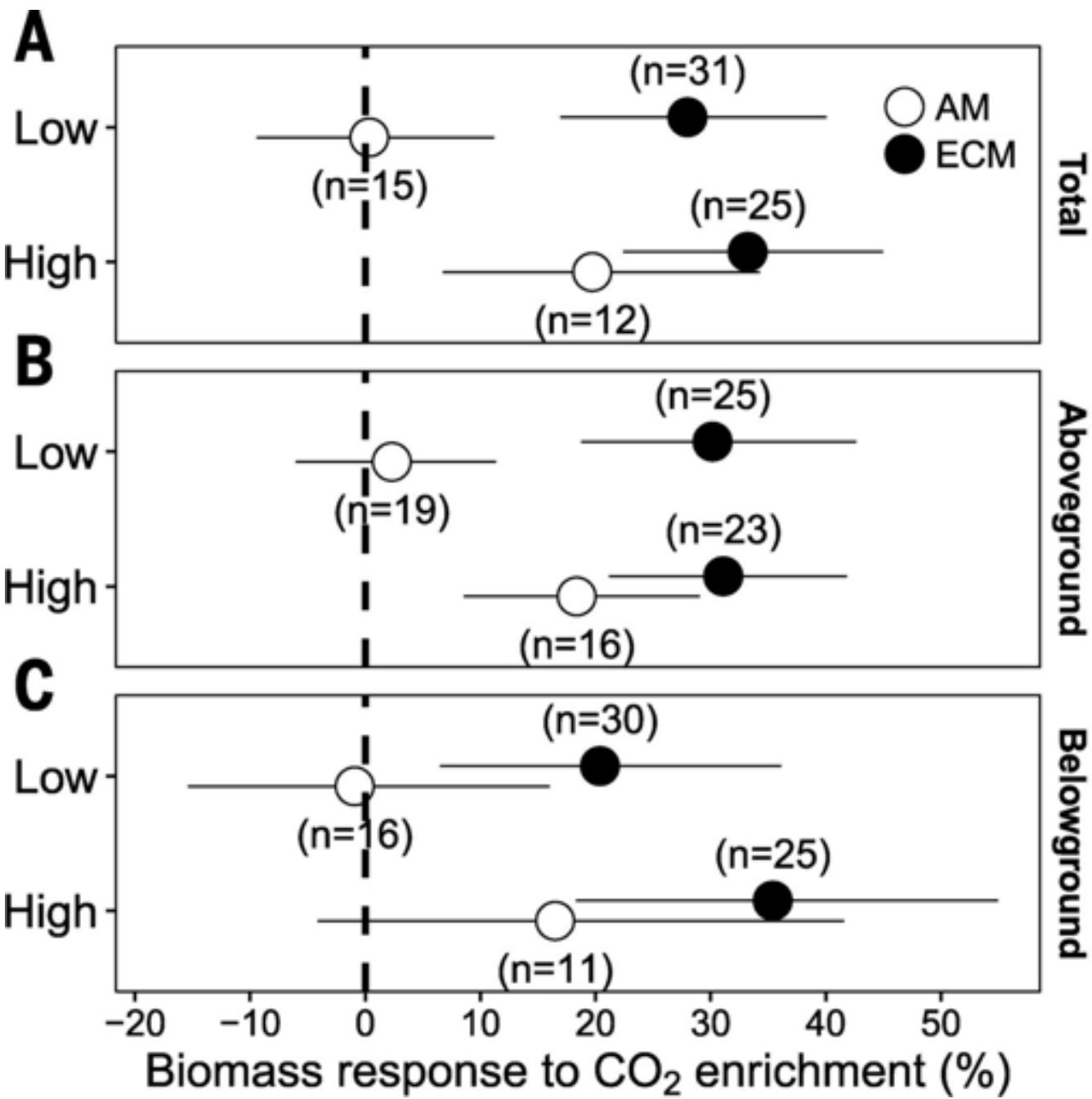
Source: Clay (1988).

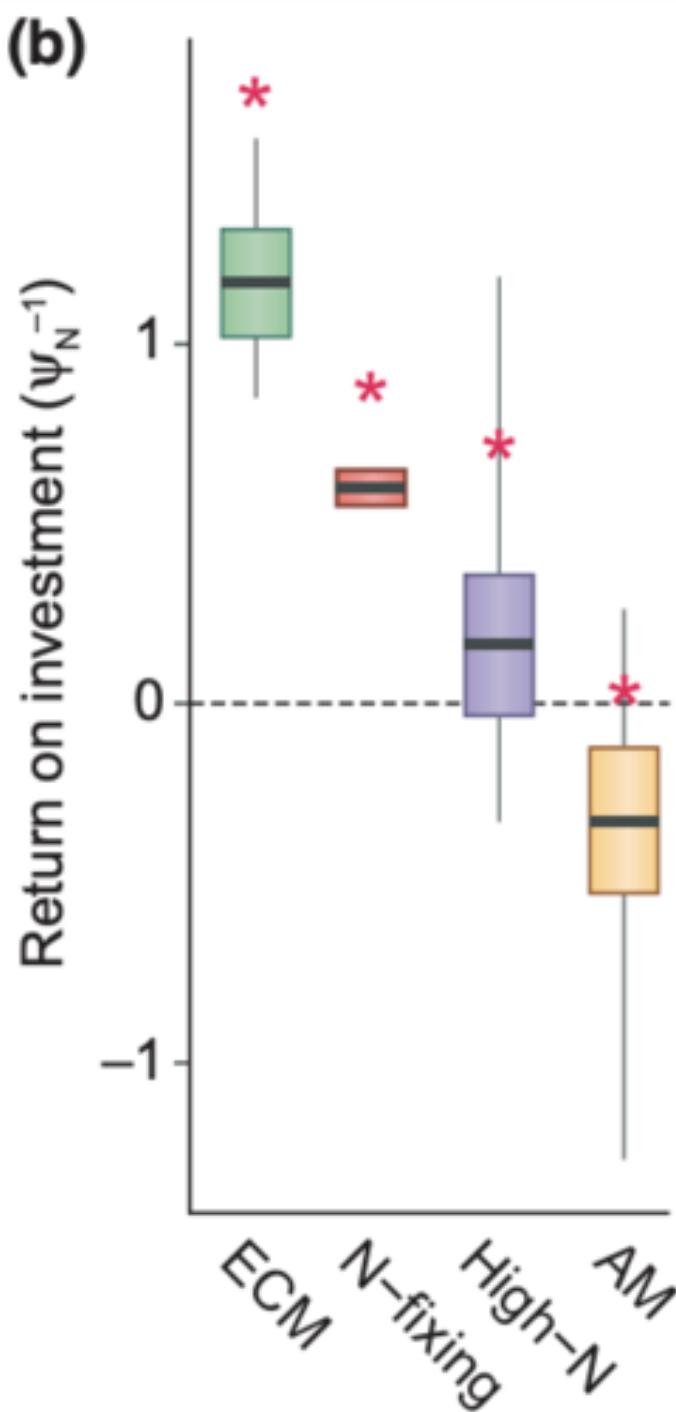
Note: The examples are representative but not exhaustive.

# Fungal endophytes can increase stress tolerance

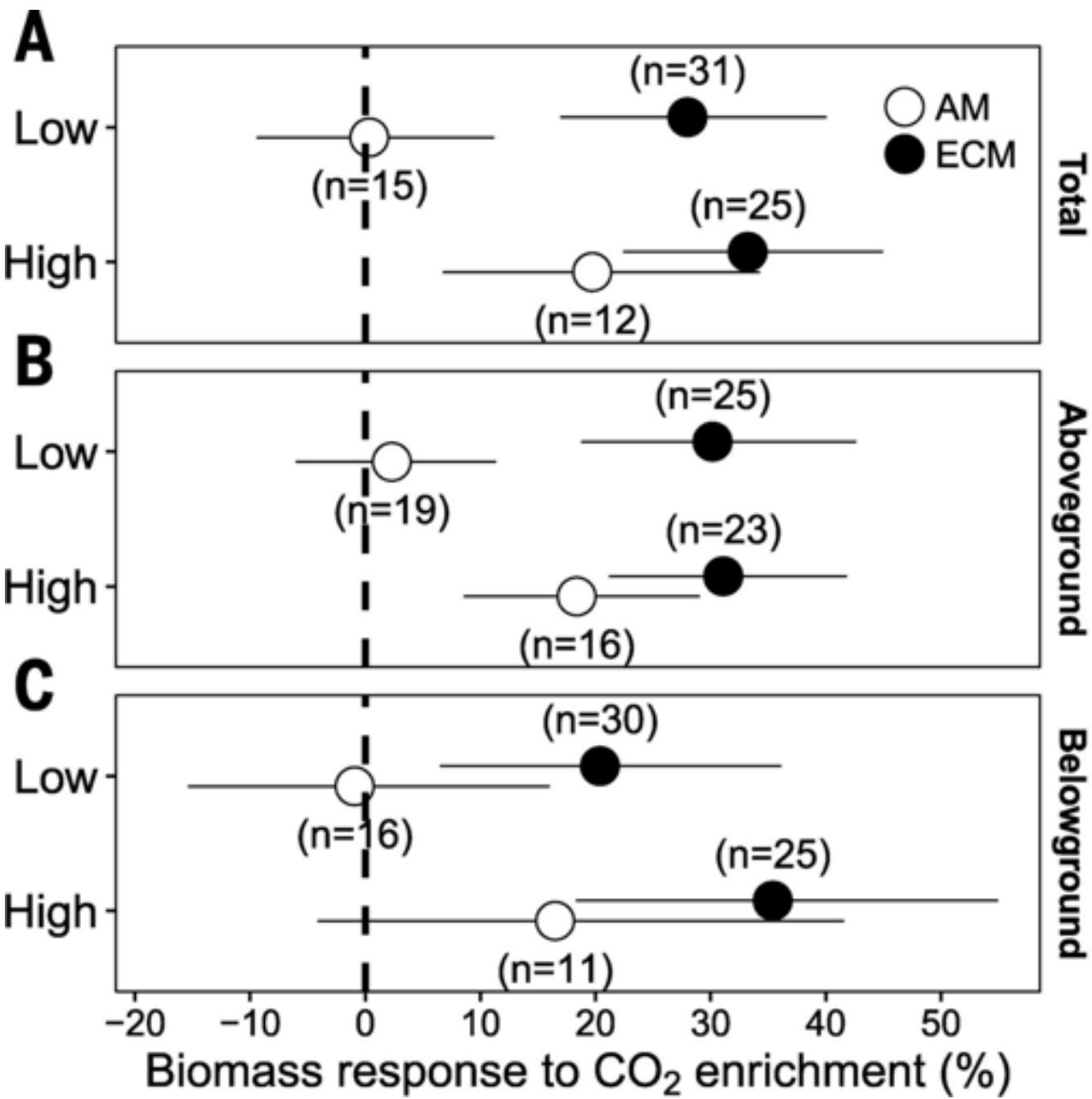


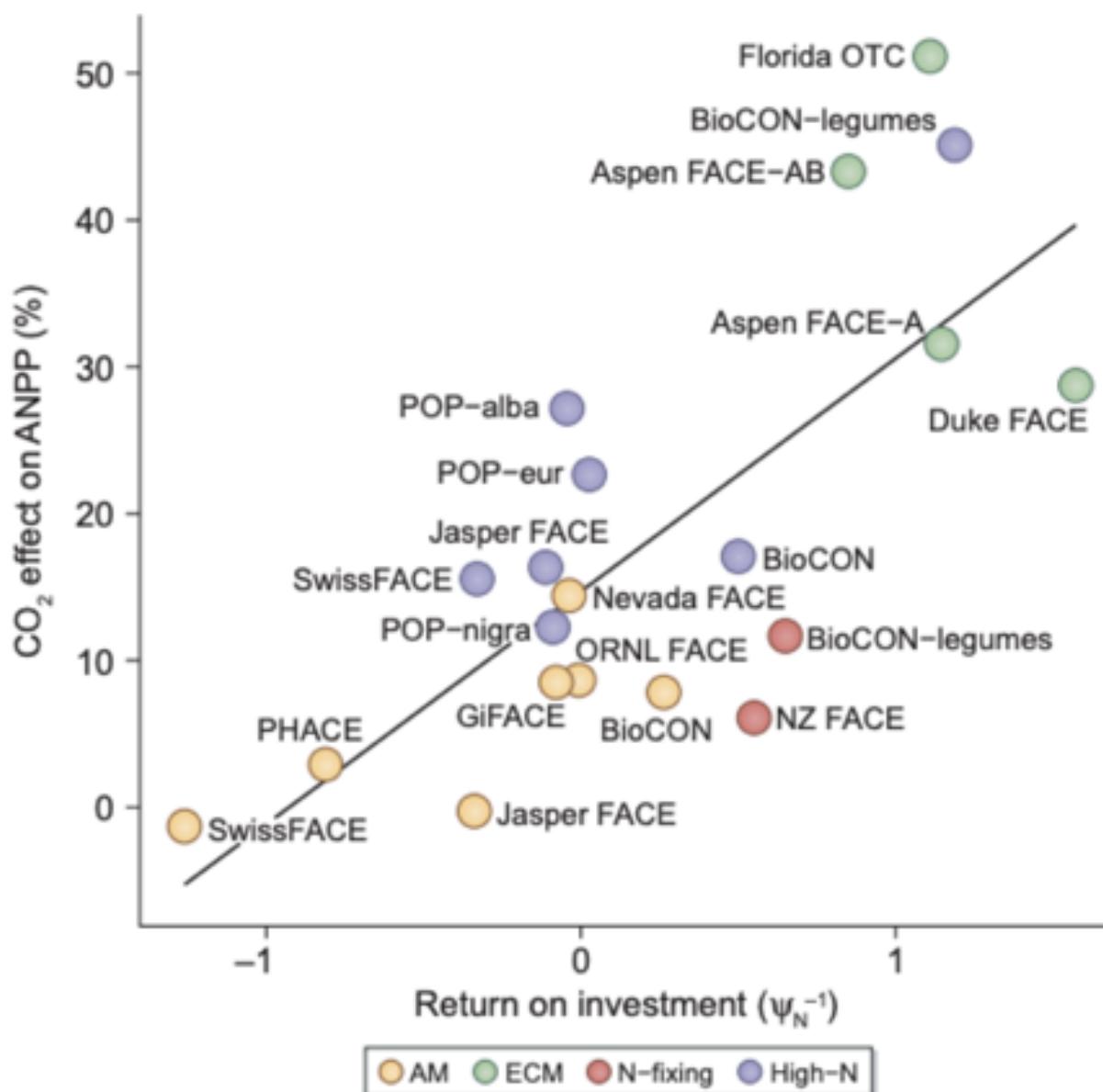
Consequences for global change





Higher N return per C  
invested in ECM than  
AM species





**Fig. 3** Relationship between the effect of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on aboveground biomass production (ANPP) and the nitrogen (N) return on investment ( $\psi_N^{-1}$ , Eqn 1). Sources of site-level data are given in Table 1.