

1 Seedling competition between a native and an invasive woodland
2 herb is mediated by cold stratification

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Abstract

Invasive plant species are often characterized by rapid germination and precocious phenology. Theory suggests that early germination may provide invaders with a significant competitive advantage over slower germinating natives, but the relative contribution of rapid germination vs. other intrinsic competitive traits to the success of plant invaders is poorly understood. Depending on the relationship between germination timing and competition, shifts in germination phenology due to climate change may either increase the dominance of invaders or buffer native communities against their impacts.

We evaluated the link between temperature variation, germination phenology and competitive interactions with a sequence of controlled environment experiments. First, we evaluated how variation in cold stratification and growing temperatures impacted the relative germination phenology of two herbaceous woodland species, the invasive *Hesperis matronalis* and native *Cryptotaenia canadensis*. We then leveraged temperature-response differences to manipulate the relative germination phenology of these taxa and quantified the effects of their phenological differences on competitive outcomes.

We found that precocious germination phenology doubled the competitive impact of *H. matronalis* relative to its other intrinsic competitive traits, and that phenological advances of just two-three days relative to *C. canadensis* were enough to secure competitive dominance at the seedling stage. The strong temperature dependence of the competition dynamics we observed suggest that global warming will likely increase the phenological advantage of rapidly germinating invaders due to the stronger effects of temperature variation on the phenology of native plants compared with their invasive competitors.

Through leveraging unique species-level responses to environmental change, our experiments constrained the magnitude of variation in phenological differences among competitors to biological realistic scenarios and allowed us to robustly estimate seasonal priority effects on plant competition in a way that is readily translatable to climate change forecasting. Through linking environmental variation to patterns of germination phenology and seasonal priority effects, our study has important implications for how climate change will re-organize community patterns of germination phenology and plant community interactions in the decades to come.

Keywords: competition, climate change, germination, invasion, phenology, priority effects, stratification

Introduction

A central tenet of community assembly theory is that the order of arrival of species mediates inter-specific interactions and can dictate the trajectory of community structure (Fukami, 2015). These historical contingencies, known as priority effects, alter the structure and function of communities, driving communities to long-term alternate stable states (Fukami & Nakajima, 2011). Yet in many ecosystems, plant communities must re-assemble each year after a period of dormancy. In these communities, priority effects are the products of phenology, the timing of seasonal life cycle events, rather than the timing of the arrival of propagules, which in many cases occurs prior to the dormant season (Rudolf, 2019; Howe & Smallwood, 1982; Baskin & Baskin, 1988a).

Invasive plants are often characterized by rapid germination and precocious phenology under a wide variety of environmental conditions (Gioria *et al.*, 2018; Gioria & Pyšek, 2017; Wolkovich & Cleland, 2011; Smith, 2013). By contrast, native plants tend to exhibit more constrained germination cues (Marushia *et al.*, 2010; Wainwright & Cleland, 2013; Van Clef & Stiles, 2001). In many temperate systems, seeds of native plants are dispersed with deep physiological dormancy, requiring prolonged exposure to specific environmental conditions, such as cold stratification (cool temperatures of 0-10° C), to break dormancy and stimulate germination (ten Brink *et al.*, 2013; Cavieres & Sierra-Almeida, 2017; Bradford & Nonogaki, 2007).

These differences in germination physiology can yield strong differences in the relative germination phenology of invasive and native plants, with invaders germinating well before their native competitors (Gioria & Pyšek, 2017). This difference in relative germination timing among species, which we refer to as **phenological advantage**, can contribute significantly to the competitive abilities, and ultimately invasion success, of invasive plants. By allowing them to begin drawing down seasonal resources and modifying their environment before their native competitors emerge (Kardol *et al.*, 2013), invaders gain a competitive advantage through a **seasonal priority effect** (Wainwright *et al.*, 2011).

Despite the growing interest in seasonal priority effects, it has been difficult to quantify their overall contribution to the competitive success of invaders. Germination is notoriously difficult to monitor in the field, and rapid phenology often co-varies with other competitive traits (Dickson *et al.*, 2012; Milbau *et al.*, 2003; Hao *et al.*, 2009). Because of these difficulties, many experiments vary phenological advantage by sowing competing seeds at different time intervals (Young *et al.*, 2017). While these experiments have provided strong evidence that phenological advantage—on the order of just days to weeks—can yield substantial priority effects (Weidlich *et al.*, 2020), their experimental set-up is difficult to translate into natural communities in which priority effects are mediated by climate, and difficult to use for forecasting. Understanding the role that phenological advantage plays in mediating the dynamics of interspecific competition is critical for predicting

and managing the structure and function of plant communities in the face of anthropogenic climate change.

Due to interspecific differences in responses to environmental variation, sustained alterations to environmental conditions are already shifting community-wide patterns of germination (Walck *et al.*, 2011). If patterns of germination are indeed tightly linked to the competitive dynamics of communities than phenological reorganization is likely to shift the strength of species' interactions, change patterns of invasion, and strongly influence biological filtering of plant communities.

In this study, we generate contrasting levels of phenological advantage among two woodland herbaceous species (the North American invasive *Hesperis matronalis* and native *Cryptotaenia canadensis*) by leveraging their differences in germination timing in response to environmental variation. First, we performed a series of germination assays in controlled environments under varying temperature regimes to estimate a realistic range of climate-driven variation in phenological advantage. We then used competition trials under contrasting environmental conditions to indirectly manipulate the phenological advantage between these two taxa and quantify the contribution of seasonal priority effects to their competitive dynamics. By linking climate variation, phenological advantage, and seasonal priority effects, our study has important implications for how anthropogenic climate change will alter phenological assembly and, in turn, plant community interactions in the decades to come.

Methods

Focal species

For this study, we focused on a pair of woodland herbaceous species. Dames Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) is a herbaceous biennial/perennial species in the *Brassicaceae* family, originally from Eurasia, and introduced to North America in the 19th century (Francis *et al.*, 2009). It can rapidly invade meadows, forest edges and woodlands, forming thick stands and excluding native vegetation (Francis *et al.*, 2009). It is currently listed as a noxious or invasive weed in several states and provinces in the United States and Canada (Susko & Hussein, 2008). Honewort (*Cryptotaenia canadensis*) is a herbaceous perennial in the *Apiaceae* family, native to forests and woodlands of eastern North America (Hawkins *et al.*, 2007). The habitat overlap of these two species suggests that they may compete in nature. While their habitat requirements may be similar, the two species display a substantially different germination niche, making them a suitable model for our study. *C. canadensis* seeds are classified with deep physiological dormancy and require a substantial period of cold moist stratification to release dormancy and initiate germination (Baskin & Baskin, 1988b). While some reports suggest that cold stratification enhances germination in *H. matronalis* at low incubation temperatures,

several studies have demonstrated that fresh and after-ripened (dry-stored) seeds of *H. matronalis* are capable of rapid and complete germination at a wide range of temperatures (Susko & Hussein, 2008).

Experiment I: Germination Assays

To investigate the relationship between environmental variation and relative germination timing among species, we obtained seeds of *C. canadensis* from Prairie Moon Nursery (Winona, MN) and seeds of *H. matronalis* from American Meadows (Shelburne, VT). We performed germination assays in the growth facilities of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Massachusetts, USA (42.3074° N, 71.1208° W). We assigned seeds to a fully-crossed set of twenty experimental treatments; 10 levels of cold stratification duration (0,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,13 weeks at 4°C) and two levels of incubation temperature (warm— 25°C:15°C (day/night), cool— 20°C:10°C (day/night)).

Prior to applying experimental treatments we performed a “float test” in which all seeds were placed in distilled water, and unfilled seeds (floating) were removed from the experiment (Baskin & Baskin, 2014). We imbibed the remaining seeds in distilled water for 24 hours and then placed 20 seeds for each species/treatment combination in petri dishes on moist pool-filter sand, with three replicates per treatment. For the cold stratification treatments, we wrapped petri dishes in aluminum foil to prevent light exposure and placed them in a growth chamber at 4°C. After each stratification interval, we transferred the petri dishes to their assigned incubation chamber for 25 days, moistening the germination substrate as necessary to maintain maximum saturation of the medium without flooding the seeds. We checked for new germinates every two days, defining a seed as germinated when its radical or cotyledon tissue was visible (Baskin & Baskin, 2014). We assessed the viability of any seeds that did not germinate in the 25 day incubation period by performing a “crush test” in which we applied pressure to the intact seed to evaluate its condition (Baskin & Baskin, 2014). We excluded any seeds deemed unviable from all subsequent analyses. Due to the staggering of our stratification treatments the experiment took place between 27 August - 12 December 2018.

Experiment II: Competition Trials

To quantify the contribution of seasonal priority effects to interspecific competition dynamics we performed competition trials under controlled conditions in a research greenhouse at the Arnold Arboretum from October 2020 - February 2021. We planted seeds of *C. canadensis* and *H. matronalis* into 8.9 cm square pots, employing a response surface design where we varied both the overall density of seeds and proportion of each species in each pot (Inouye, 2001). High and low density treatments consisted of 14 and 8 seeds respectively. Proportion treatments were 100:0%, 25:75%, 50:50%, 75:25%, 0:100% (*C. canadensis*:*H. matronalis*). Each density by

proportion treatment was replicated six times.

We randomly assigned half of the pots to low (45 days) and high (72 days) cold stratification treatments in dark growth chambers at 4°C. We staggered the start of the treatments, so that at the conclusion of the cold stratification, all pots were transferred to a heated greenhouse maintained at 15-25°C with 14 hours of supplemental light. Germination was observed daily from 24 December 2020 - 13 January 2021 and every two days from 15 January 2021 - 01 February 2021. The locations of each pot in the greenhouse were randomly reassigned every three days to minimize any blocking effects on germination or growth.

After 35 days we added 1 tsp per gallon of water of Peters 20-10-20 liquid feed fertilizer to all pots. After 62 days, we harvested the above-ground biomass from all pots, dried it for 48 hours at 60°C, and recorded the dry weight of each species/pot.

Statistical analysis

Germination Assays

To assess interspecific differences in the relationship between germination rate and temperature variability, we fit a Bayesian mixed-effect accelerated failure time model (AFT, Onofri *et al.*, 2010) using a Weibull distribution for the likelihood function. We included weeks of stratification and incubation temperature and their interaction with species as fixed effects. The model written below is modified from Onofri *et al.* (2010).

$$t_{50} = t_0 \phi$$

where t_{50} is time to 50% germination and corresponds to the germination times of a references seed lot (t_0) multiplied by and “acceleration factor” (ϕ). The acceleration factor is a product of the experimental treatments of our study through the equation:

$$\phi = \exp(\beta_{sp}X_{sp} + \beta_{strat}X_{strat} + \beta_{inc}X_{inc} + \beta_{stratXspecies}X_{strat} * X_{sp} + \beta_{incXspecies}X_{inc} * X_{sp})$$

where X_{sp} , X_{strat} and X_{inc} are the species, stratification and incubation treatment levels in our experiment, and β_{sp} , β_{strat} , β_{inc} , $\beta_{stratXspecies}$ and $\beta_{incXspecies}$ are the estimated effects on ϕ for adding an additional week or stratification or degree of incubation for each species respectively.

The AFT modeling framework let us robustly compare germination timing (t_{50} , time to 50% germination) even among treatments with different final germination percentages by accounting for viable seeds that did not germinate during our incubation window (Soltani *et al.*, 2015; Onofri *et al.*, 2010). One drawback of this approach is that this class of models assumes that all viable seeds will eventually germinate, which we would not expect in nature. For this reason, we considered any estimated t_{50} values greater than 40 days to

indicate that seeds would not reach 50% germination under those conditions.

Competition trials

We quantified phenological advantage between species by subtracting the mean germination time of *H. matronalis* from that of *C. canadensis* in each pot. This allowed us to evaluate the effect phenological advantage with a regression design (Cottingham *et al.*, 2005), with advantage values ranging from -1.3 to 9.5 (*C. canadensis* mean germination time 1.3 days earlier to 9.5 days later than *H. matronalis*).

For each plot, we calculated the relative growth rate difference (RGRD) among species using the equation below, modified from Connolly & Wayne (2005).

$$\text{RGRD} = \ln\left(\frac{Y_{Cc}}{y_{Cc}}\right) - \ln\left(\frac{Y_{Hm}}{y_{Hm}}\right)$$

where Y_{Hm} and Y_{Cc} are the final biomass of the species at the end of the experiment and y_{Hm} and y_{Cc} are the initial biomass of the seeds planted at the outset of the experiment. For this calculation we obtained estimates of seed mass for our focal species from the Kew Gardens Seed Information Database (Kew, 2022).

We then modeled the effect of seedling density of *C. canadensis*, *H. matronalis* and phenological advantage using on RGRD. The model is written below:

$$\text{RGRD}_i = N(\alpha + \beta_{Hm}n_{Hm} + \beta_{Cc}n_{Cc} + \beta_{pri}MGT, \sigma_{RGRD}^2)$$

where β_{Hm} and β_{Cc} are known as the species influence parameters—representing the intrinsic competitive ability of each species—or the estimated effect of increasing the seedling density of each species by one individual on the RGRD (Connolly & Wayne, 2005), and β_{pri} is the priority effect, or the effect of increasing the difference in mean germination time between *H. matronalis* and *C. canadensis* by one day. n_{Hm} and n_{Cc} are the number of germinated individuals of *H. matronalis* and *C. canadensis* respectively. In this formulation, α is an un-interpretable intercept (Connolly & Wayne, 2005).

To assess whether the rapid germination phenology of *H. matronalis* modified the germination niche of *C. canadensis* we performed two additional Bayesian regression analyses. We assessed the influence of planting type (single species vs. mixed competition) on the the likelihood of *C. canadensis* germination using a Bernoulli likelihood distribution and the mean germination time of *C. canadensis* using a Gaussian likelihood distribution. In both models we included stratification treatment as a fixed-effect co-variate.

Model Implementation

We fit all models using the R package “brms” (Bürkner, 2018). We ran the model on four chains with 4000 iterations and a 3000 iteration warm-up for a total of 4000 posterior draws for each parameter, using weakly informative priors. We validated model performance by obtaining \hat{R} values between 1 and 1.01, high effective sample sizes and no divergent transitions. For all models we report the mean posterior estimate along with 90% uncertainty intervals.

Results

Germination advantage

H. matronalis reached 50% germination in under ten days for all environmental treatments, always exceeding 75% germination regardless of environmental conditions (Fig. 1, Tab. S1). Increasing cold stratification duration and incubation temperature only marginally enhanced the germination rate of this species (Fig. 1). By contrast, increasing incubation temperature had a delaying effect on the germination rate of *C. canadensis*, suggesting that the mean 20°C temperature of our warm incubation treatment is supra-optimal for the species (Fig. 1). Without sufficient cold stratification (<7 weeks for low incubation and <10 weeks for high incubation temperatures), seeds of *C. canadensis* did not reach 50% germination during the duration of our experiment (Fig. 1, Tab. S1). However, under high levels of cold stratification germination rates of *C. canadensis* began to converge on those of *H. matronalis*, and at levels of stratification >10 weeks and low incubation, the germination rate and fraction of *C. canadensis* was well matched to that of *H. matronalis* (Fig. 1, Tab. S1).

Germination priority effects

In the absence of phenological advantage, the influence of adding one seedling of *H. matronalis* to a plot community was almost 4X less than adding one *C. canadensis* seedling on the plot-level RGRD (represented by the species’ influence parameters β_{Hm} , β_{Cc} —*H. matronalis* (β_{Hm}): 0.13, CI_{90} : 0.08, 0.17, *C. canadensis* (β_{Cc}): -0.40, CI_{90} : -0.46, -0.35). Each day increase in the phenological advantage of *H. matronalis* had approximately the same influence on shifting the community biomass composition towards *H. matronalis* as adding an individual of that species to the community (seasonal priority effect (β_{pri}): 0.146, CI_{90} : 0.09, 0.20, Fig. 2, Tab. S2). Together, these results suggest that *H. matronalis* will come to dominate the community biomass composition unless *C. canadensis* is at high relative abundance or the phenological advantage of *H.*

219 *matronalis* is small.

220 **Priority effects and germination niche modification**

221 We observed no evidence that the rapid germination of *H. matronalis* adversely modified the germination
222 niche of *C. canadensis*. Neither the likelihood of germination nor the mean germination time of *C. canadensis*
223 were suppressed when the species grew in mixed-species competition vs. single-species plots (Fig. 3). Rather,
224 at low stratification levels, the presence of rapidly germinating *H. matronalis* might have positively affected
225 the germination fraction of *C. canadensis*, (Fig. 3a), though there is high uncertainty in this comparison.

226 **Discussion**

227 **Environmental drivers of seasonal priority effects**

228 Our experimental results advance the understanding of the role of seasonal priority effects on competition
229 by identifying a natural mechanism, species' differential sensitivity to temperature, that can generate sea-
230 sonal priority effects. In the absence of phenological advantage, the intrinsic competitive abilities of each
231 species suggest that *C. canadensis* is the stronger competitor (Fig. 2). However, the influence of one day
232 of phenological advantage for *H. matronalis* virtually doubled its influence on the final community composi-
233 tion, suggesting that seasonal priority effects play a major role in the competitive success of *H. matronalis*
234 (Fig. 2). Our results indicate that *C. canadensis* can compete with the invasive *H. matronalis* at high
235 relative abundance levels and/or when phenological advantage is low. Our results join a growing body of
236 experiments demonstrating that relative germination phenology can function as a seasonal priority effect,
237 enhancing the performance of the earliest germinating species at the expense of later germinants (Koerner
238 *et al.*, 2008; Dickson *et al.*, 2012; Ross & Harper, 1972). While this effect has been primarily demonstrated
239 in experiments in which the planting of competing seeds is staggered at increasing intervals (Young *et al.*,
240 2017; Weidlich *et al.*, 2020), in our experiment, variation in phenological advantage was a product of inter-
241 specific differences in germination responses to cold stratification, suggesting that seasonal priority effects
242 can strongly influence seedling competition even in environments where germination phenology is under strong
243 temperature control. While it is possible that *H. matronalis* interacts differently with other species, the
244 results of our pair-wise competition trial suggest that seasonal priority effects, manifested through rapid
245 germination phenology and propagule pressure, are mechanistically related to the competitive dominance,
246 and—ultimately—invasion success of *H. matronalis*.

247 Our competition trials did not suggest any evidence that the rapid germination phenology of *H. matronalis*

impacted the germination niche of *C. canadensis* (Fig. 3). This indicates that the mechanism underlying the seasonal priority effect of *H. matronalis* is likely niche preemption (Gioria *et al.*, 2018).

Seasonal priority effects and anthropogenic climate change

The implications of our study for the role of climate variability in mediating seasonal priority effects is two-fold. First, our results suggest that interannual climate variability should generate both among- and within-season variation in competition strength among species, potentially driving species coexistence via the storage effect (Chesson, 2003). Second, the key role we observed of climate in generating germination advantage and therefore seasonal priority effects suggests that sustained alteration to historic patterns of climate variability, like those driven by anthropogenic climate change, are likely to strongly alter the dynamics of competing seedlings. These changing patterns of phenological assembly will likely have downstream effects on the structure and function of plant communities.

In our study, the phenological advantage of *H. matronalis* was maximized under lower stratification treatments and warmer incubation temperatures. This suggests that the warming temperatures associated with anthropogenic climate change may increase the magnitude of seasonal priority effects, largely due to the delay of germination in more climate-sensitive native species like *C. canadensis*. Interestingly, the difference in phenological advantage among our focal species was much higher in our germination assays than in our competition trials even at comparable levels of stratification. There are likely several explanations for these differences.

First, we used different metrics of germination speed, time to 50% germination (t50) and mean germination time in each experiment. While the metrics are related and often confused, there are important differences between them that make one or the other more appropriate for the two types of experiments we ran (see Supporting Information: “Measures of germination speed”). Second, the incubation temperatures in our greenhouse competition trials were more variable than in our growth chamber germination assays. The lower germination fractions we observed in *C. canadensis* under greenhouse conditions suggest that the temperature range was likely supra-optimal for this species, and the lower germination fraction increased the difference between t50 estimates and mean germination time measurements. Finally, we conducted germination assays and competition trials in different growth media (filter sand vs. potting soil), which have different moisture retention and light transmissible capacities. Germination media can strongly affect germination rates (Baskin & Baskin, 2014), which may further explain differences among our two experiments.

Despite these differences, in both experiments increasing cold stratification strongly advanced the germination phenology of *C. canadensis* and weakly that of *H. matronalis*, resulting in weaker phenological advantage for

279 *H. matronalis* at higher stratification levels. (Fig. 1, Fig. S1) suggesting that the relationships between cold
280 stratification and germination phenology we observed were robust.

281 Climate change may also increase the risk of precocious phenology (Inouye, 2000). In our experiment, there
282 was no cost to germinating too early. It is generally accepted that optimum germination phenology is driven
283 by a trade-off between maximizing the length of the growing season and the risk of exposure to damaging
284 environmental episodes when germinating too early (Augspurger & Salk, 2017). In dry grassland ecosystems,
285 the precocious germination of invasives has a substantial cost if water availability is too low (Wainwright
286 *et al.*, 2011). In temperate forest ecosystems, the primary risk of early phenology is damage from late season
287 frost (Kollas *et al.*, 2014). Future work could further clarify the contribution of seasonal priority effects to
288 community interactions by experimentally manipulating this trade-off.

289 While we found that seasonal priority effects strongly impacted competition among seedlings, our experiment
290 was not able to quantify the role of seasonal priority effects in influencing the long-term, among-year dynam-
291 ics of these perennial species. Many studies suggest that these short term priority effects may be transient,
292 though several studies that used staggered planting methods at similar scale to the phenological advantage we
293 observed in our trials saw the influence of these initial priority effects on community composition maintained
294 several seasons later (Vaughn & Young, 2015; Young *et al.*, 2017; Torrez *et al.*, 2017). In perennial com-
295 munities, these long term dynamics are even more difficult to assess. Many perennial herbs, *C. canadensis*
296 included, rely heavily on vegetative reproduction (Hawkins *et al.*, 2005), and competition between ramets,
297 and between ramets and seedlings may also impact species interactions in the long-term. Understanding
298 how phenological differences across life stages of long-lived perennial plants affects competition is an impor-
299 tant next step for predicting how communities may be impacted by interannual environmental variation and
300 climate change.

301 Because we found that seasonal priority effects strongly mediated competition for early ontological stages
302 (germination, seedling), our findings may be most relevant to global change biology in the context of native
303 plant establishment; whether colonizing new areas due to range shifts, recovering from novel disturbances or
304 ecological restoration. In fact, there has been a growing call to increase phenological diversity in restoration
305 planning (Hess *et al.*, 2019). Studies have found that including early active species in plantings can suppress
306 the abundance of invaders in both grassland (Cleland *et al.*, 2013) and forest ecosystems (Schuster *et al.*,
307 2020). At the same time, restoration mixes tend to lack species which fill the early season phenological
308 niche (Havens & Vitt, 2016). The results of our study suggest that minimizing the priority effect conferred
309 to invasive species due to rapid germination and early phenology by including species with similar, early
310 phenological traits could be a powerful tool for managing plant invasions and restoring native ecosystems in
311 a era of global change.

Conclusion

By leveraging the differential germination sensitivities to environmental cues of two competing species to manipulate phenological advantage between them, we were able to quantify the contribution of seasonal priority effects gained through rapid phenology on the competitive ability of the invasive species *H. matronalis*. We found that priority effects were approximately as strong as the intrinsic competitive traits of *H. matronalis* in influencing its competitive dominance over the native forest herb *Cryptotaenia canadensis*, suggesting seasonal priority effects mechanistically increase the invasion success of *H. matronalis*. Variation in germination phenology was strongly mediated by differences in how species respond to temperature cues, suggesting that sustained climate change will alter patterns of phenological advantage, potentially strengthening the seasonal priority effects of invaders as climate warms. Our findings highlight the important role of phenological diversity in the invasion resistance of native plant communities, implying that measures of phenological diversity should be incorporated into plant community assessments and ecological restoration.

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Data & Code Availability

Data from the germination assays and competition trials, and associated modeling code will be made available at the time of publication.

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428 **Figures**

429 Estimated effects of weeks of cold stratification (a) and incubation temperature (b) on the

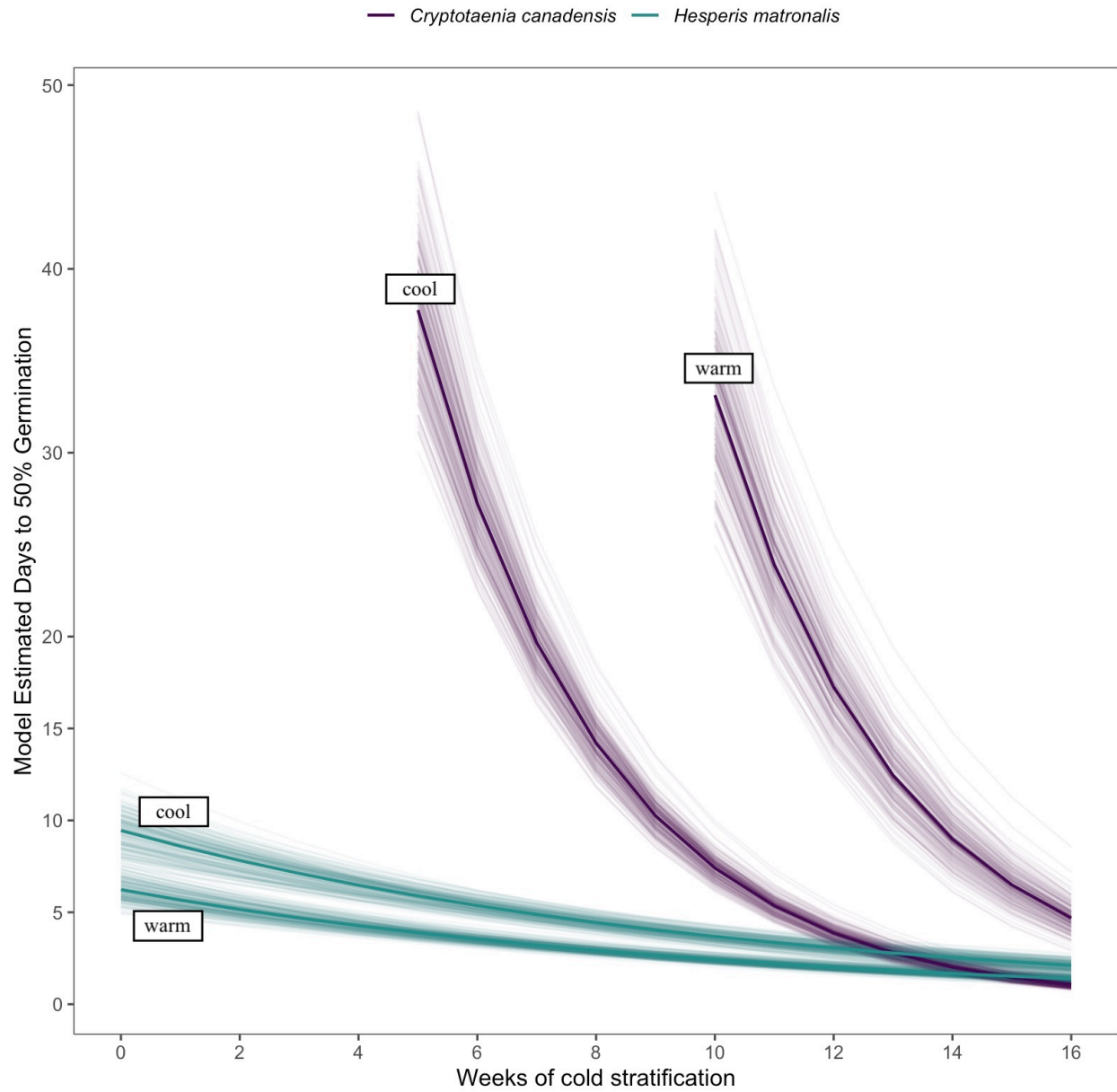


Figure 1: The effects of weeks of cold stratification at 4° C on the time to 50% germination of *Cryptotaenia canadensis* and *Hesperis matronalis* under warm (20/10° C day/night) and cool (25/15° C day/night) incubation conditions, estimated with accelerated failure time model. We show here only stratification treatment levels which allowed both species to reach 50% germination in less than 40 days. The solid lines depict the mean estimate, while lighter lines depict uncertainty.

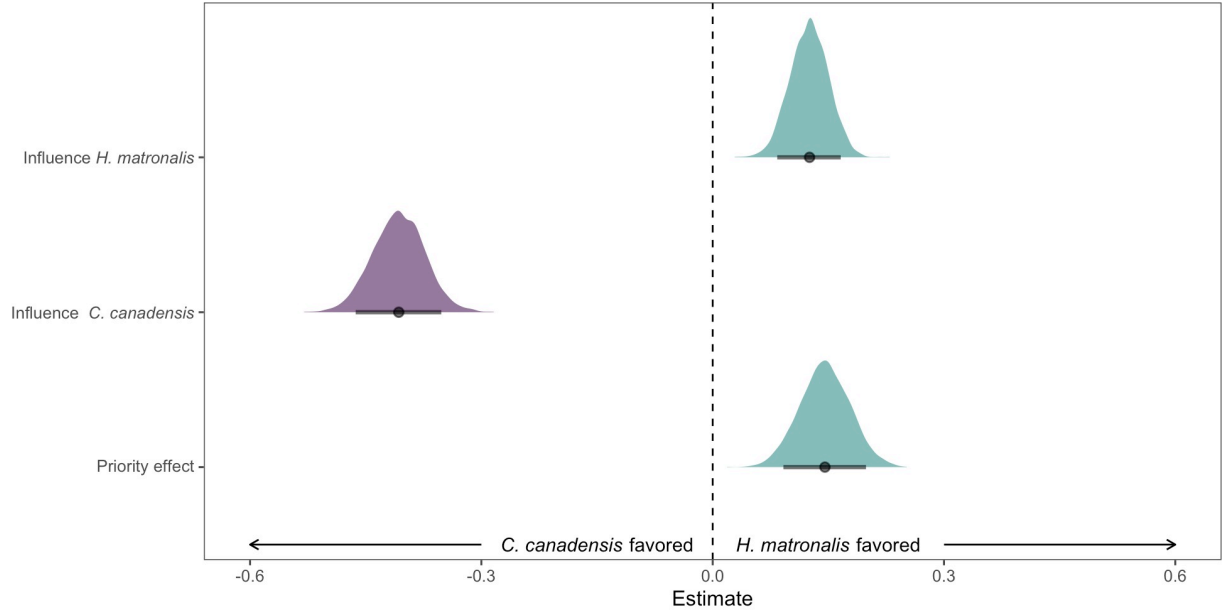


Figure 2: Estimated effects of species' abundance (intrinsic competitive ability parameters) and phenological advantage (seasonal priority effects) on the relative growth rate difference between *H. matronalis* and *C. canadensis*. Negative parameter estimates indicate the community biomass composition shifts to favor *C. canadensis* while positive estimate towards dominance by *H. matronalis*. The points indicate the mean estimated effect of each parameter and bars the 90% uncertainty intervals. The full posterior distribution for each parameter is also depicted as an additional measure of uncertainty.

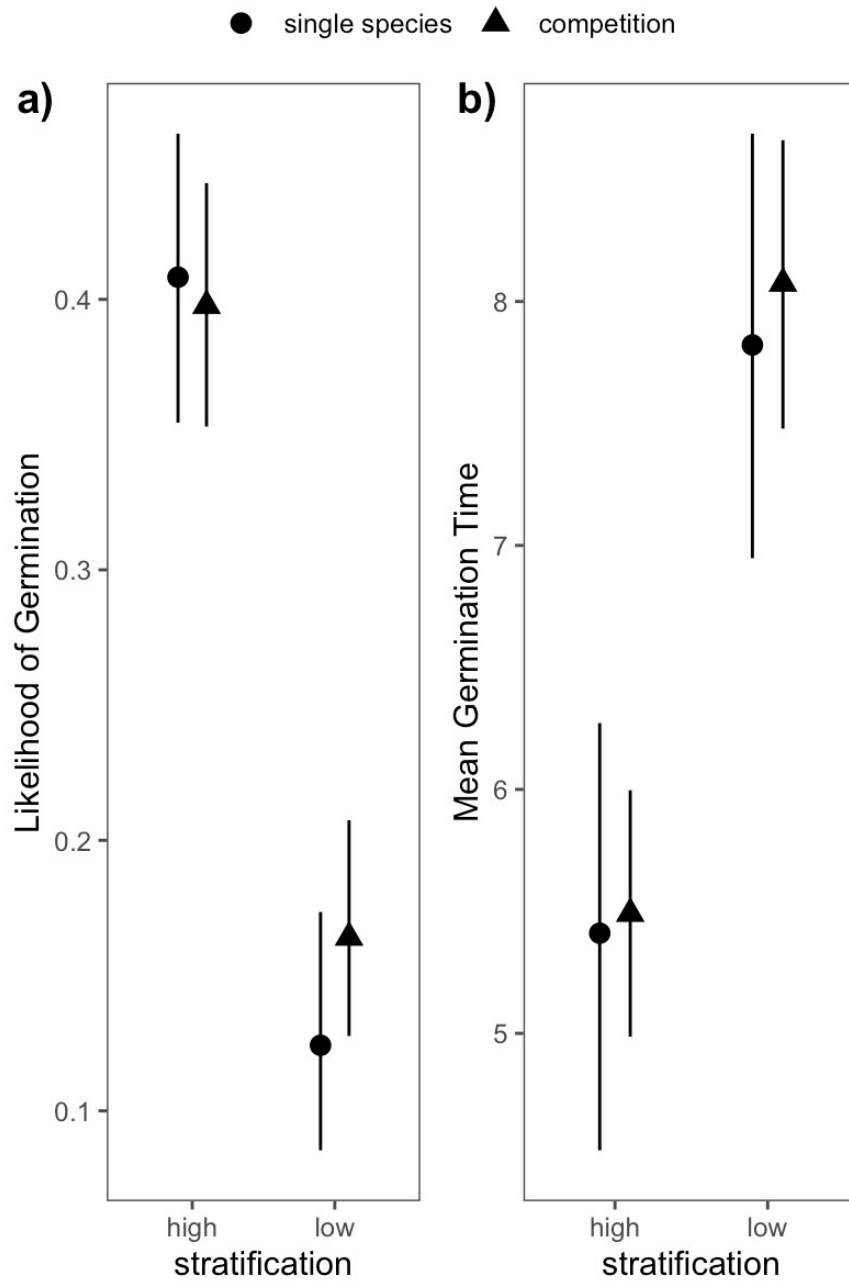


Figure 3: Estimated effects of single and mixed species competition on the germination dynamics of *Cryptotania canadensis* under 6 (low) and 10 weeks (high) of cold stratification at 4°C. Panel **a)** depicts differences germination likelihood and **b)** shows the estimated mean germination time in single species vs. competition plot. Points represent the mean estimates under each planting type and bars represent 90% uncertainty intervals.