Research Article **AJAR (2020), 5:99**

American Journal of Agricultural Research
(ISSN:2475-2002)

Comparative analyses of plantain vivoplants responses to different clam shells and *Tithonia diversifolia* treatments in terms of growth promotion and induced resistance against *Mycosphaerella fijiensis*

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ABSTRACT

The seeds availability and quality are the main constraints for agricultural explosion of plantain productivity in sub-Saharan Africa countries. Plantain vivoplants were generated and submitted to different treatments in the nursery, the plant responses were analysed and compared in other to determine the best treatment influencing the growth promotion and induced resistance to *Mycosphaerella fijiensis*. Plantain explants and vivoplants were treated with five different treatments: clam shells powder (T1), clam shells and *Tithonia diversifolia* powder (T2), *Tithonia diversifolia* flakes (T3), *Tithonia diversifolia* mulch (T4), Tithonia diversifolia liquid extract (T5). The treatments were applied by their incorporation in the substrate (T1, T2, T3 and T4) or by watering of the whole plant (T5). The germination rate was evaluated and recorded in the greenhouse at the germination and pre-emergence stage, followed by the agromorphological measurements on the vivoplants and their inoculation with *Mycosphaerella fijiensis* in the shade at the vegetative growth stage. Biochemical analysis was done on the vivoplants leaves tissues. The vivoplants respond positively to all the treatments by a quick germination and emergence, coupled with an important biomarker's accumulation (total proteins and phenolics). It turns out that the best treatment was T5 (*T. diversifolia* liquid extract), followed by T4 (*T. diversifolia* mulch). However, depending on the expected response in the vivoplants, all these treatments have proven to be impactful. Therefore, a combination of *Tithonia diversifolia* liquid extract (T5) with clams' shells (T1) could be useful to boost the production at low cost and without chemical inputs of large amount of improved vigorous (clean and less susceptible) planting material, impacting thus the food security and poverty alleviation.

Keywords: plantain (*Musa* spp.); vivoplants; *Tithonia diversifolia*; clam shells; *Mycosphaerella fijiensis*; growth promotion; biofungicide.

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How to cite this article:
C.A. Ewané and T. Boudjeko. Comparative analyses of plantain vivoplants responses to different clam shells and *Tithonia diversifolia* treatments in terms of growth promotion and induced resistance against *Mycosphaerella fijiensis*. American Journal of Agricultural Research, 2020,5:99.

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INTRODUCTION

Plantain is a staple food that plays a vital role in contributing to food security in Central and West Africa, as well as income generation for millions of people in these regions. Cameroon is ranked 3rd in the world (3.94 millions of tons per year) in terms of plantain production and the first in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) zone [1], where its consumption is very high. The per capita consumption of plantain resulting in high demand has largely outstrips supply provoking very high prices for this commodity on rural, urban and trans-border markets. To meet up with this demand, we need to create new plantations in other to improve the performance of this crop whereas, the creation of these new plantations is difficult because of the problem of unavailability of seedlings in quantity, but also seedlings of quality [2].

Vitroplants are considered as the best and safe seedlings but are not affordable for small poor farmers in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, farmers are used to planting one sucker to obtain one banana plant as a traditional way of creating banana plants in their plantation and this practice is usually subjected to many diseases and pests. Moreover, bananas field regeneration is a very slow process with low productivity of viable suckers. An alternative is the use of vivoplants that is the 'plantlet from stem bits' commonly called PIF (Plant Issus de Fragment de tiges in French), a horticultural propagation method that allows massive production of banana seedlings in just two to three months, in a sanitized environment.

The advent and popularization of vivoplants in the 2000s raised hopes for solving the seedlings availability problem [3]. However, after about ten years, the PIF seedlings has shown some problems limiting its adoption and is now rejected by some farmers. Indeed, many problems are responsible for plants mortality of about 60% during the establishment of new plantations such as contamination on farmlands and the position of the shoot on explants which influences the vigor of the generated plant [2, 4], pest and disease threats such as black Sigatoka disease (BSD), banana nematodes and weevil and declining soil fertility [5]. Indeed, the only control method for BSD in the nursery is leaf removal (deleafing) that seems to be ineffective as seedlings are transplanted to field with 2-4 leaves with high level of black Sigatoka infections, much lower than the recommended 5-6 leaves [6]. The poor smallholder farmers cannot buy chemical inputs which are expensive and are harmful to human and the environment, to improve the performance of the vivoplants in nursery and on the farm.

Recent researches have shown that soil amendment with *Tithonia diversifolia* alone or combine with clam shells, *Tithonia diversifolia* vertical layer, *Tithonia diversifolia* mulch and *Tithonia diversifolia* liquid extract improve the growth promotion of the vivoplants, and also protect them efficiently against BSD [2-4, 7-8]. Hence, these treatments seem to act in the improved vivoplants production as a vital stimulator (protection against biotic and abiotic stress, plant nutrition, soil nutrition and quality improvement). There is therefore a need to analyse and classify the response of vivoplants to these different treatments used in the improvement of the seedling's quality. The aim of this study is to analyse and compare the different responses of plantain vivoplants seedlings to different clam shells and *Tithonia diversifolia* treatments and to determine the best treatment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiments were conducted in Yaoundé (Cameroon) from September 2014 to August 2017 (September to March 2015 and 2016 for T1, September to March 2016 for T2, July 2016 to March 2017 for T3 and T4, September 2016 to August 2017 for T5). The experimental designs of this study and the method used are presented in Table 1.

The plant material of different varieties was plantain suckers (*Musa* spp., genome AAB) collected from farms in the centre region of Cameroon (Figure 1). It was the Big-Ebanga and Batard

varieties for T1, the French variety for T2 and the Big-Ebanga variety for T3, T4 and T5.

The different treatments were based on the clam shells and *T. diversifolia* tissues collected from the municipality of Mouanko and obtained from farmlands around Yaoundé (Cameroon) respectively. The clam shells were obtained from a successive process of washing, drying and grinding to a fine powder, used mixed with substrate. The *T. diversifolia* tissues collected were used in three forms (powder, flakes and liquid extract). The powder form used mixed with substrate was obtained by drying, grinding and by sieving the *T. diversifolia* tissues. The *T. diversifolia* flakes were obtained by drying the tissues and then reducing them in the flakes form with the fingers; these flakes were incorporated as a vertical layer in the substrate or position as mulch on the substrate. The *T. diversifolia* Liquid extract used to water the whole vivoplant was obtained by washing, cutting and mixing of the tissues with water in the ratio of 1:5 (w/v) before fermentation in recipients for 15 days at dry and cold conditions at room temperature.

Table 1: Experimental design for the study of the responses of plantain vivoplants for different *Tithonia diversifolia* and clam shells models.

Completely Randomized Block Device

	Greenhouse	**Shade**
Phase	Germination	Acclimatization
Purpose	Production of vivoplants	Survey of the seedling's growth
Experimental unit (EU)	Each treatment	Each treatment
Substrate to amend	Sawdust	Black soil and sand
Number of plants/EU	Three (03) Explants	At least three (3) plants
Container	Propagator	Plastic planter bags
Block	A sterilized substrate block (B1)	A non-sterilized substrate block (B2)
Treatment number	Five (05) in Controlled Condition	Five (05) in Uncontrolled Condition
Condition	Sterile Substrate (SS-Industrial)	unSterile Substrate (uSS-Farmer one)
Treatment	**1.** Clam shells 1% (T1)[2] **2.** Clam shells and *T. diversifolia* (T2)[7] **3.** One vertical layer *T. diversifolia* flakes (T3)[4] **4.** 4 cm Mulch layer of *T. diversifolia* (T4)[3] **5.** *T. diversifolia* Liquid extract of 15 days (T5)[8]	
Variable	Conditions Treatments Stages	
Response	Number of shoots Height of shoots Diameter of shoots Area of leaves BSD severity Total proteins Total polyphenols	
Stage	Initial End	

The substrate used for the explant's germination phase in the greenhouse was sawdust, collected and sterilized at 121° C during 04 hours for 3 kg. The substrate used in the shade for vivoplants acclimatization phase was a combination of sand and black soil (1/3 and 2/3) collected and sterilized at 121° C during 05 hours for 10 kg and 09 hours for 25 kg respectively.

The responses of vivoplants (number of shoots, height of shoots, diameter of shoots, area of leaves, BSD severity, total proteins and total polyphenols) to the different treatments were evaluated at the initial stage and at the end stage as shown in Table 2.

The vivoplants germination and pre-emergence stages were done in the greenhouse at constant temperature of 28° C in a propagator of 16.53 L (22 cm height and 31cm diameter). The number of shoots was counted on the explants (Figure 1) 35 days after the start of germination. After eight weeks, the vivoplants were weaned in plastic planter bags at the state of two to three small open leaves per seedling and from three to four radicles, then transferred in the shade for acclimatization following the same experimental disposal as in the greenhouse.

Table 2: Presentation of the definition of the initial stage and end stage of the different responses of plantain vivoplants and the reference of assessment method.

Response	Initial Stage	End Stage	Assessment method
Number of shoots	The day the germination started in the greenhouse	35 days after the start of germination in the greenhouse	[2]
Height of shoots	The day the seedlings were weaned and put in the shade	42 days after weaning in the shade	[2]
Diameter of shoots	The day the seedlings were weaned and put in the shade	42 days after weaning in the shade	[2]
Area of leaves	The day the seedlings were weaned and put in the shade	42 days after weaning in the shade	[2, 9]
BSD severity	The day the leaves were inoculated with *M. fijiensis*	12 days after the inoculation of leaves with *M. fijiensis*	[2, 10] [11]
Total proteins	The before inoculation stage	The post-inoculation stage	[12]
Total polyphenols	The before inoculation stage	The post-inoculation stage	[13]

The vegetative growth stage was the period of the evaluation of vivoplants agromorphological parameters in an environment of 28-30° C under the shade and with 28-80 mm/month of rainfall. For each experimental unit, three vivoplants were selected and labelled in the shade. The effect of different treatments on the growth and development of the seedlings was evaluated by measuring the day the seedlings entered the shade (Initial stage) and 42 days after weaning in the shade (End stage):

- the height of shoots;
- the diameter of shoots;
- the total area of the shoots' leaves.

The total leaf surface ($_{T}$LS) of each vivoplant was determined using the length (L), the width (W) and the number of leaves and 0.8 and 0.662 being constants following the formula of [9]: $_{T}LS$ = *L* x *W* x *0.8* x *Number of leaves* x *0.662 (cm^2)*. Its average value was taken as a measure of total area of the seedlings' leaves.

The BSD severity was evaluated through artificial inoculation of the vivoplants leaves with a 10^6 zoospore's/mL solution of *M. fijiensis* provided by the African Centre for Research on Bananas and Plantains (CARBAP-Cameroon). The leaves samples were selected according to age period (12 weeks) with three replicates per treatment and inoculated with a 100 µL droplet of *M. fijiensis* suspension. The infected leaves were kept under controlled condition of relative humidity in the greenhouse and the measurement of the length (*L*) and the width (*W*) of the necrotic surface was done 12 days after the inoculation of vivoplants leaves with *M. fijiensis* by assuming

the formula of [2]: *NSA = L x W* in other to determine the BSD severity.

The biomarker's accumulation (total proteins and total polyphenols) in the vivoplants leaves was quantified as described by [2]. Before inoculation, a leaf of each plant was detached and conserved at - 45° C in a plastic sachet for biochemical analysis of the initial stage while the one of the end stages were collected post-inoculation by cutting at 1 cm beyond the necrosis point and each treatment was repeated trice. 1g of fresh leaf tissue was used for these biomarker's accumulation analysis.

Total proteins extraction was carried out according to the method of [12] with modification. Fresh leaf was placed in a mortar and pounded with a pestle in 5 mL Tris-Maleate buffer (0,1 mM, pH 7.2) at 4° C. The mixture was then vortexed for 10 min and centrifuged at 10 0000 g for 25 min at 4° C (Beckmann-Coulter microfuge 20 R centrifuge). The supernatant obtained was mixed, supplemented with 0.4 volume of n-butanol and 1/10 of 3 M sodium acetate buffer, pH 4.5 and kept on ice for 30 min with agitation every 10 min. A centrifugation was done at 10 000g for 15 min and the extracts stored at 4° C. The quantity of total proteins was determined by absorbance measurements at 595 nm and expressed in mg equivalent (Eq) of bovine serum albumin (BSA) per g of fresh weight (FW).

Total phenolics extraction was carried out according to the method of [13]. Fresh leaf was pounded at 4°C in 10 mL methanol 80% (V/V), followed by 10 min vortexing and centrifugation at 10 0000 g for 10 min (Beckmann-Coulter microfuge 20 R centrifuge). The supernatant collected was used to determined spectrophotometrically at 760 nm the concentration of total phenolics expressed in mg equivalent (Eq) of gallic acid per g of fresh weight (FW).

Statistical Analyses

The different treatments responses (number of shoots, height of shoots, diameter of shoots, area of leaves, BSD severity, total proteins and total polyphenols) were analysed by performing a two-way ANOVA with XLSTAT software [14]. Each plant being taken as experimental unit, and stage and treatment as factors. Principal components analysis (PCA) with Pearson correlation between the different variables was also performed with XLSTAT software.

RESULTS

The correlation analysis of the different factors with the plantain vivoplants responses to treatments showed that the variables (treatments and stages) were strongly and significantly correlated ($P > 0.05$) to all the responses (number of shoots, height of shoots, diameter of shoots, area of leaves, BSD severity, total proteins and total polyphenols) of the plantain vivoplants. As shown in Table 3, the height and diameter of shoots are positively correlated with treatment T4 and the end stage, and negatively correlated with the initial stage. The BSD severity, area of leaves and number of shoots are negatively correlated with the initial stage and positively correlated with the end stage. The BSD is positively correlated with treatment T3. The total proteins and total polyphenols are both negatively correlated with the treatment T2 and positively correlated with treatment T5, T4 and T5 respectively (Table 3).

The effect of tested variables on the number of shoots of the plantain vivoplants showed that regarding the variables tested, type of treatments (T1 to T5), stage of growth (initial at application or end during response evaluation), soil condition (sterile or unsterile), no one had a direct effect on the number of shoots. Concerning combined effects, no treatments when combined with the sterile condition (Condition-SS) and the unsterile condition (Condition-uSS) significantly affected and positively impacted the number of shoots. The sterile condition and the unsterile condition as well as treatment T4 combined with the duration of the trials (stage-end) significantly and positively impacted the number of shoots (Table 4). Treatments T1 and T2, affected negatively the number of shoots when combined with the duration of production.

The effect of tested variables on the height of shoots of the plantain vivoplants revealed that no variable had a direct effect on the height of shoots. Concerning combined effects, treatments T4 and T5 when combined with the sterile condition significantly and positively affected the height of shoots as well as treatment T4 combined with unsterile condition. On the other hand, treatments T1, T2, T3 and T5 combined with the unsterile condition did not significantly impact the height of shoots. All treatments (T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5) combined with the duration of the trials (stage-end) significantly and positively impacted the height of shoots (Table 5).

Table 3: Analysis of correlation between the variables (conditions, treatments and stages) and responses (total proteins, total polyphenols, BSD severity, height of shoots, diameter of shoots, area of leaves and number of shoots). The correlation matrix of Pearson (n) shows positive or negative correlation, but also the strength of the relationship (**bold**). Values in bold are different from 0 with a significance level alpha= 0,05.

Variables	Number of shoots	Height (cm)	Diameter (mm)	Area of leaves (mm2)	BSD Severity (cm2)	Total proteins (mg Eq BSA/g FW)	Total polyphenols (mg Eq Cat/g FW)
Condition-SS	0,029	0,081	-0,061	0,091	-0,102	0,063	0,015
Condition-uSS	-0,029	-0,081	0,061	-0,091	0,102	-0,063	-0,015
Treatment-T3	0,101	-0,100	-0,408	-0,247	**0,465**	0,390	-0,244
Treatment-T1	-0,264	-0,499	-0,384	0,348	-0,286	-0,044	-0,273
Treatment-T2	-0,092	-0,268	0,017	0,060	-0,123	**-0,634**	**-0,515**
Treatment-T4	0,242	**0,597**	**0,577**	-0,068	0,182	-0,250	**0,535**
Treatment-T5	0,084	0,403	0,300	-0,185	-0,162	**0,550**	**0,570**
Stage-initial	**-0,871**	**-0,497**	**-0,476**	**-0,692**	**-0,588**	-0,329	-0,218
Stage-end	**0,871**	**0,497**	**0,476**	**0,692**	**0,588**	0,329	0,218

Table 4: Model parameters for the Number of shoots, obtained from an ANOVA two-ways analysis, showing significant impact of variables (Intercept, conditions, treatments and stages) on the response.

Source	Value	SE	t	*P*	LB (95%)	UB (95%)
Intercept	26,250	0,490	53,603	< 0.0001	25,270	27,230
Condition-SS*Stage-end	28,650	0,693	41,369	< 0.0001	27,265	30,035
Condition-uSS*Stage-end	27,150	0,693	39,203	< 0.0001	25,765	28,535
Treatment-T1*Stage-end	-15,250	0,555	-27,464	< 0.0001	-16,361	-14,139
Treatment-T2*Stage-end	-11,000	0,641	-17,156	< 0.0001	-12,283	-9,717
Treatment-T4*Stage-end	8,000	0,641	12,477	< 0.0001	6,717	9,283

SE = Standard Error; LB = Lower bound; t = t-test; P=Pr > |t|; UB= Upper bound.

Table 5: Model parameters for Height of shoots in cm, obtained from an ANOVA two-ways analysis, showing significant impact of variables (Intercept, conditions, treatments and stages) on the response.

Source	Value	SE	t	*P*	LB (95%)	UB (95%)
Intercept	27,125	0,848	31,983	< 0.0001	25,427	28,823
Condition-SS*Treatment-T1	-5,290	1,039	-5,093	< 0.0001	-7,370	-3,210
Condition-SS*Treatment-T2	-3,671	1,199	-3,061	0,003	-6,073	-1,269
Condition-SS*Treatment-T4	8,929	1,199	7,445	< 0.0001	6,527	11,331
Condition-SS*Treatment-T5	11,396	1,199	9,501	< 0.0001	8,994	13,798
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T1	-4,900	1,039	-4,718	< 0.0001	-6,980	-2,820
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T2	-4,054	1,199	-3,380	0,001	-6,456	-1,652
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T4	7,746	1,199	6,458	< 0.0001	5,344	10,148
Treatment-T3*Stage-end	5,708	0,979	5,829	< 0.0001	3,747	7,669
Treatment-T1*Stage-end	7,699	0,692	11,118	< 0.0001	6,313	9,086
Treatment-T2*Stage-end	6,885	0,979	7,031	< 0.0001	4,924	8,846
Treatment-T4*Stage-end	12,517	0,979	12,781	< 0.0001	10,556	14,478
Treatment-T5*Stage-end	5,750	0,979	5,872	< 0.0001	3,789	7,711

SE = Standard Error; LB = Lower bound; t = t-test; P=Pr > |t|; UB= Upper bound.

The effect of tested variables on the diameter of shoots of the plantain vivoplants showed that there was no direct effect of the variables observed on the diameter of shoots. Concerning combined effects, treatments T4 and T5 when combined with the sterile condition significantly and positively affected the diameter of shoots, whereas treatments T2, T4 and T5 in unsterile conditions did the same. On the other hand, only treatments T1 combined with the unsterile condition did not significantly impact the diameter of shoots. All treatments (T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5) combined with the duration of the trials (stage-end) significantly and positively impacted the diameter of shoots (Table 6).

The effect of tested variables on the area of leaves of the plantain vivoplants revealed that no variable had a direct effect on the area of leaves. Concerning the combined effects, treatments T1 and T2 when combined with the sterile condition significantly affected the area of leaves. On the other hand, only treatments T3, T4 and T5 combined with the unsterile condition did not significantly impact the area of leaves. To positively impact the area of leaves, there were treatments T1 and T2 in sterile condition and treatments T2, T4 and T5 in the unsterile condition. Treatments T1, T2, T3 and T5 combined with the duration of the trials (stage-end) significantly and positively impacted the area of leaves (Table 7).

The effect of tested variables on the BSD severity of the plantain vivoplants showed that BSD severity was not directly impacted by none of the variables studied. Concerning the combined effects, treatments T1, T2 and T5 when combined to the sterile condition significantly affected the BSD severity. On the other hand, treatment T5 combined to the unsterile condition did not significantly impact the BSD severity. To positively impact the BSD severity, there were treatments T1, T2 and T3 in the sterile conditions and treatments T1, T2, T3 and T4 in the unsterile condition. All the treatments (T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5) combined with the duration of the trials (stage-end) significantly and positively impacted the BSD severity (Table 8). Since our target is to

negatively impact BSD severity and that none of the combination did it, from Table 8, the following group of combination can be seen as having a less favourable impact on BSD severity (treatments T1, T2 and T5 combined to sterile conditions; treatments T1 and T2 combined to unsterile conditions) and treatments T1 and T5 combined with stage-end).

Table 6: Model parameters for Diameter of shoots in mm, obtained from an ANOVA two-ways analysis, showing significant impact of variables (Intercept, conditions, treatments and stages) on the response.

Source	Value	SE	t	*P*	LB (95%)	UB (95%)
Intercept	2,187	0,064	33,987	< 0.0001	2,058	2,316
Condition-SS*Treatment-T4	0,972	0,091	10,685	< 0.0001	0,790	1,154
Condition-SS*Treatment-T5	1,208	0,091	13,277	< 0.0001	1,026	1,390
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T3	-0,189	0,074	-2,551	0,013	-0,338	-0,041
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T2	0,861	0,091	9,467	< 0.0001	0,679	1,044
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T4	0,967	0,091	10,630	< 0.0001	0,785	1,149
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T5	0,918	0,091	10,090	< 0.0001	0,736	1,100
Treatment-T3*Stage-end	0,456	0,074	6,140	< 0.0001	0,307	0,605
Treatment-T1*Stage-end	0,503	0,053	9,575	< 0.0001	0,398	0,608
Treatment-T2*Stage-end	0,803	0,074	10,813	< 0.0001	0,655	0,952
Treatment-T4*Stage-end	1,325	0,074	17,835	< 0.0001	1,176	1,474
Treatment-T5*Stage-end	0,297	0,074	3,993	0,000	0,148	0,445

SE = Standard Error; LB = Lower bound; t = t-test; P=Pr > |t|; UB= Upper bound.

Table 7: Model parameters for Area of leaves in mm^2, obtained from an ANOVA two-ways analysis, showing significant impact of variables (Intercept, conditions, treatments and stages) on the response.

Source	Value	SE	t	*P*	LB (95%)	UB (95%)
Intercept	1342,467	216,792	6,192	< 0.0001	908,349	1776,585
Condition-SS*Treatment-T1	2558,021	265,514	9,634	< 0.0001	2026,337	3089,704
Condition-SS*Treatment-T2	1385,583	306,590	4,519	< 0.0001	771,648	1999,518
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T1	2134,296	265,514	8,038	< 0.0001	1602,612	2665,979
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T2	1669,716	306,590	5,446	< 0.0001	1055,781	2283,652
Treatment-T3*Stage-end	513,776	250,329	2,052	0,045	12,500	1015,052
Treatment-T1*Stage-end	2987,417	177,010	16,877	< 0.0001	2632,961	3341,872
Treatment-T2*Stage-end	2193,317	250,329	8,762	< 0.0001	1692,041	2694,593
Treatment-T5*Stage-end	715,843	250,329	2,860	0,006	214,567	1217,119

SE = Standard Error; LB = Lower bound; t = t-test; P=Pr > |t|; UB= Upper bound.

Table 8: Model parameters for BSD Severity in cm^2, obtained from an ANOVA two-ways analysis, showing significant impact of variables (Intercept, conditions, treatments and stages) on the response.

Source	Value	SE	t	*P*	LB (95%)	UB (95%)
Intercept	30,750	6,134	5,013	< 0.0001	18,468	43,032
Condition-SS*Treatment-T1	21,450	7,512	2,855	0,006	6,407	36,493
Condition-SS*Treatment-T2	26,890	8,674	3,100	0,003	9,520	44,260
Condition-SS*Treatment-T5	22,138	8,674	2,552	0,013	4,768	39,507
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T3	48,675	7,082	6,873	< 0.0001	34,493	62,857
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T1	27,325	7,512	3,637	0,001	12,282	42,368
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T2	21,885	8,674	2,523	0,014	4,515	39,255
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T4	33,113	8,674	3,817	0,000	15,743	50,482
Treatment-T3*Stage-end	205,325	7,082	28,991	< 0.0001	191,143	219,507
Treatment-T1*Stage-end	23,025	5,008	4,598	< 0.0001	12,997	33,053
Treatment-T2*Stage-end	39,385	7,082	5,561	< 0.0001	25,203	53,567
Treatment-T4*Stage-end	125,450	7,082	17,713	< 0.0001	111,268	139,632
Treatment-T5*Stage-end	28,400	7,082	4,010	0,000	14,218	42,582

SE = Standard Error; LB = Lower bound; t = t-test; P=Pr > |t|; UB= Upper bound.

The effect of tested variables on the total proteins content of the plantain vivoplants revealed that no variable had a direct effect on the total proteins. Concerning the combined effects, treatments T1, T2, T4 and T5 when combined to the sterile condition significantly affected the total proteins. On the other hand, treatment T5 combined to the unsterile condition did not significantly impact the total proteins. To significantly and positively impact the total proteins, there were treatments T5 in the sterile condition, treatment T3 on the unsterile condition and treatments T1, T3, T4 and T5 combined to the duration of the trials (stage-end) (Table 9).

The effect of tested variables on the total polyphenols content of the plantain vivoplants revealed that only combined effects were observed. Treatments T2, T4 and T5 when combined to the sterile condition of growth (Condition-SS) significantly affected the total polyphenols. On the other hand, treatment T1 combined to the unsterile condition did not significantly impact the total polyphenols. To positively impact the total polyphenols, there were treatments T4 and T5 in the sterile conditions and on the unsterile condition. Only treatments T4 and T5 combined to the duration of the trials (stage-end) significantly and positively impacted the total polyphenols (Table 10).

Globally, taking into consideration the positive impacts of the different combined factors on studied responses, it can be observed that only treatment T5 combined to the duration of the trial (stage-end) enhanced 6 responses of the 7 measured, followed by treatment T1 combined to duration of trial and sterile condition combined to treatment T5 (5 over 7). Moreover, the factors combinations that less enhanced the BSD severity were sterile and unsterile conditions respectively combined to treatments T1 and T2.

From the two-dimensions Principal Components Analysis (PCA), Factor 1 which represented 50.63% of the variability was most influenced by height of shoots, diameter of shoots and number of shoots, while Factor 2, representing 16.78%, was mainly impacted by area of leaves and total

polyphenols. BSD severity mostly impacted Factor 3 (16.36%) and in a certain degree F1, F2 and F4. Total polyphenols mostly impacted F5 while total proteins mostly impacted F4 (Table 11). The PCA two-dimensions representation according to F1 and F2 of all the variables and observations, clearly showed the different groups and spatial distributions (Figure 2). The group consisted mostly of samples at the end stage which received T1 and T3 treatments in the upper right quarter, with positive F1 and F2 coordinates are influenced by the parameters: area of leaves, number of shoots and BSD severity. On the other hand, the second clear group consisted of samples that received treatments T4 and T5 combined to end stage was located in the down right quarter with positive F1 and negative F2. This group was influenced by parameters such as diameter of shoots, height of shoots, total protein and total polyphenol.

Table 9: Model parameters for Total Proteins in mg Eq BSA per g of FW, obtained from an ANOVA two-ways analysis, showing significant impact of variables (Intercept, conditions, treatments and stages) on the response.

Source	Value	SE	t	*P*	LB (95%)	UB (95%)
Intercept	6.227	0.367	16.987	< 0.0001	5.493	6.961
Condition-SS*Treatment-T1	-2.398	0.449	-5.341	< 0.0001	-3.297	-1.499
Condition-SS*Treatment-T2	-5.963	0.518	-11.503	< 0.0001	-7.002	-4.925
Condition-SS*Treatment-T4	-4.036	0.518	-7.786	< 0.0001	-5.074	-2.998
Condition-SS*Treatment-T5	3.658	0.518	7.056	< 0.0001	2.620	4.696
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T3	0.880	0.423	2.078	0.042	0.032	1.727
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T1	-2.246	0.449	-5.003	< 0.0001	-3.145	-1.347
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T2	-5.980	0.518	-11.535	< 0.0001	-7.018	-4.942
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T4	-3.582	0.518	-6.909	< 0.0001	-4.620	-2.544
Treatment-T3*Stage-end	3.269	0.423	7.722	< 0.0001	2.421	4.116
Treatment-T1*Stage-end	2.347	0.299	7.840	< 0.0001	1.747	2.946
Treatment-T4*Stage-end	1,886	0,423	4,455	< 0.0001	1,038	2,733
Treatment-T5*Stage-end	3,527	0,423	8,332	< 0.0001	2,679	4,374

SE = Standard Error; LB = Lower bound; t = t-test; P=Pr > |t|; UB= Upper bound.

Figure 1: Banana plant material: a) suckers b) explants; c) vivoplants shoots at the germination and pre-emergence stage.

Table 10: Model parameters for Total Polyphenols in mg Eq Cat per g of FW, obtained from an ANOVA two-ways analysis, showing significant impact of variables (Intercept, conditions, treatments and stages) on the response.

Source	Value	SE	t	*P*	LB (95%)	UB (95%)
Intercept	3.575	0.721	4.955	< 0.0001	2.130	5.020
Condition-SS*Treatment-T2	-3.537	1.020	-3.466	0.001	-5.580	-1.494
Condition-SS*Treatment-T4	5.647	1.020	5.535	< 0.0001	3.604	7.690
Condition-SS*Treatment-T5	5.214	1.020	5.110	< 0.0001	3.171	7.257
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T3	-2.237	0.833	-2.685	0.009	-3.905	-0.568
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T2	-3.532	1.020	-3.462	0.001	-5.575	-1.489
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T4	5.870	1.020	5.753	< 0.0001	3.826	7.913
Condition-uSS*Treatment-T5	5.376	1.020	5.269	< 0.0001	3.333	7.419
Treatment-T4*Stage-end	3.759	0.833	4.512	< 0.0001	2.091	5.427
Treatment-T5*Stage-end	5.425	0.833	6.512	< 0.0001	3.757	7.093

SE = Standard Error; LB = Lower bound; t = t-test; P=Pr > |t|; UB= Upper bound.

Table 11: Dependent variables weight on the different factors obtained through Principal Component Analysis (PCA).

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Total proteins	6.933	4.559	33.168	37.725	12.097
Total polyphenols	16.254	22.193	2.536	4.327	52.142
BSD Severity	10.379	14.151	26.322	16.925	3.197
Height of shoots	24.270	3.422	1.972	0.761	15.304
Diameter of shoots	18.590	0.313	21.282	4.962	13.487
Area of leaves	1.601	44.286	13.025	34.247	0.460
Number of shoots	21.973	11.075	1.695	1.053	3.314

Factor 3 has quite the same percentage of explained data variability as factor 2. In this regard, the spatial representation of F1 vs F3 permit to observe different clusters. Hence, the PCA two-dimensions representation according to F1 and F3 of all the variables and observations, clearly showed the dissimilarity between the groups and their spatial distributions, but also revealed homogenous groups (Figure 3). The first cluster consisted mostly of samples at the end stage that received T3 and T5 treatments in the upper right quarter, with positive F1 and F2 coordinates are influenced by the parameters: total protein, number of shoots and BSD severity. The second cluster consisted of samples that received treatments T4 and T1 combined to end stage was located in the down right quarter with positive F1 and negative F2. This group was influenced by parameters diameter of shoots, height of shoots, area of leaves and total polyphenols.

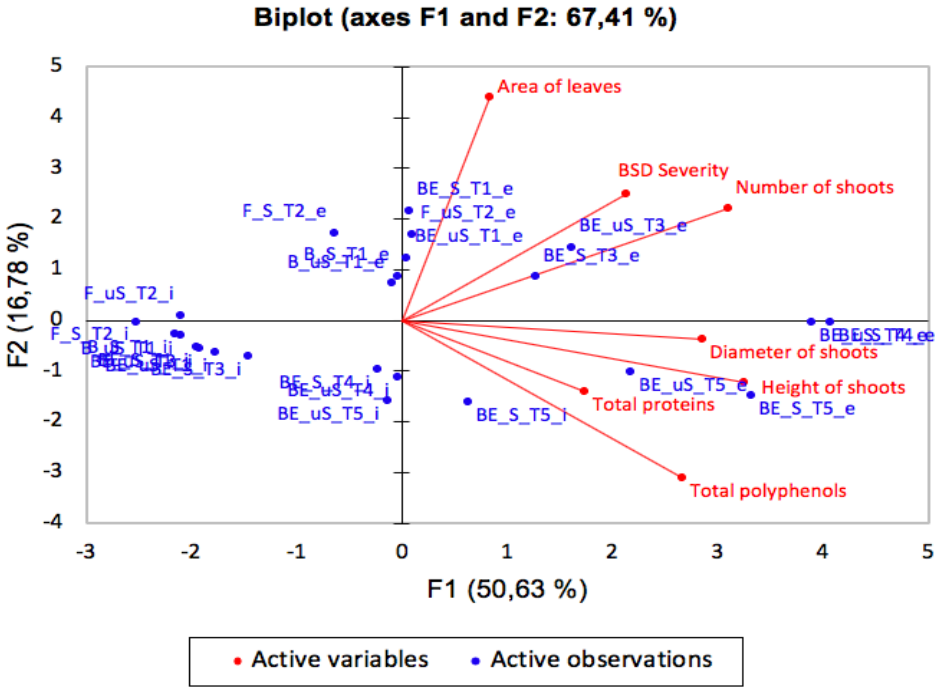

Figure 2: Principal components Analysis (PCA) two-dimensions representation according to F1 and F2 of all the variables and observations, showing different groups and spatial distributions.

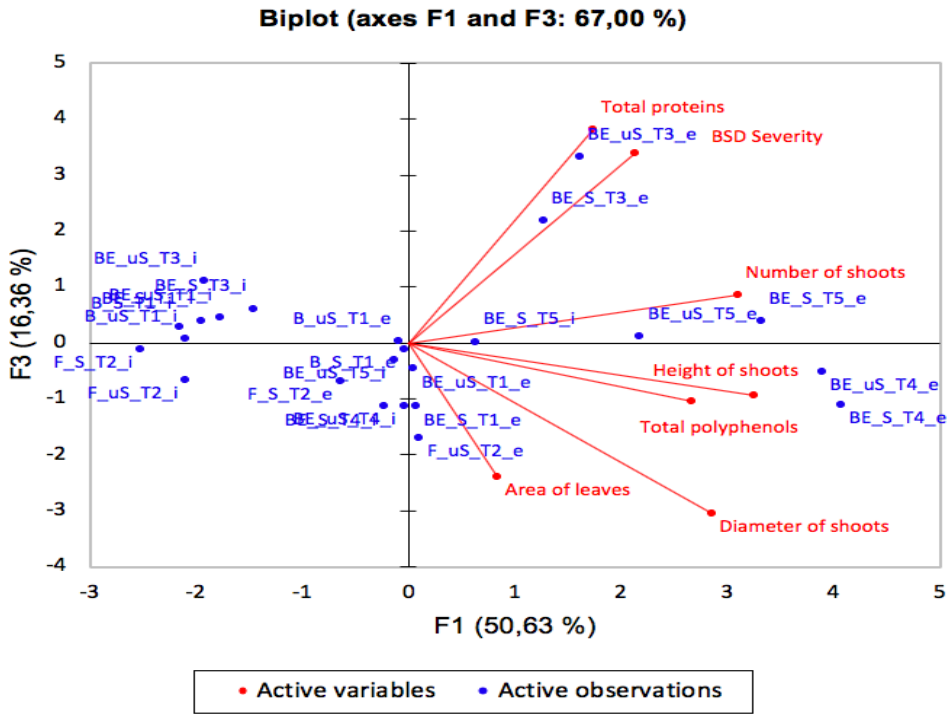

Figure 3: Principal components Analysis (PCA) two-dimensions representation according to F1 and F3 of all the variables and observations, showing different groups and spatial distributions.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was a comparative analyse of the different treatments that have enabled the production of improved vivoplants and to determine the best one. Two of these treatments T5 and T4 have been identified as overall impacting mostly the vivoplants responses in the greenhouse and the shade. Indeed, the *T. diversifolia* liquid extract (T5) and *T. diversifolia* mulch

(T4) have shown growth promotion and antifungal activities in the plantain vivoplants [3, 8] as well as the other treatments (T3, T4 and T5) despite the less global impact [2-4, 7]. The five treatments based on clam shells and *T. diversifolia* are organic matter that have been shown to activate the growth promotion and natural defense systems of plants through the increase synthesis of nutrients and defensive metabolites [15, 16]. The organic matter provides nutrients to plants which participate in osmotic regulation, cellular permeability, and may act as structural components and essential metabolites of growth and development [17]; but also, defensive metabolites acting in plant such as the biofungicide effect of organic matter highlighted on the susceptible *Musa* spp. against BSD [18].

Depending on the expected response in the vivoplants, the five treatments are impacting. The increase of the number of shoots is positively impacted by all the treatments combined with both conditions. Indeed, the abundant shoots' growth on the explants is related to the activity of the apical meristem generation favoured by the nitrogen contain in *T. diversifolia* which is involved in division and enlargement of cells [19]. The height and the diameter of shoots are positively impacted in both conditions by treatments T4 and T5 based on *T. diversifolia*, commonly known acting as plant organic fertilizer in many plants [20, 21, 22]. Furthermore, *T. diversifolia* tissues are mainly composed of 3-5% nitrogen, 0.5-2.5% phosphorus and 4-6% potassium [23, 24], mineral elements deeply involved in plant growth promotion. The area of leaves is impacted regardless of the condition by treatments T1 and T2 both containing clam shells. Indeed, clam shells are a rich source of chitin and derivatives that have been shown to influence on growth promoting components, precisely the chitin direct action as fertilizer due to his low carbon-nitrogen ratio (C/N) and high nitrogen content [15, 16].

The BSD severity is impacted by all the five treatments, with the less impacting being treatments T1, T2 and T5 combined to sterile conditions; treatments T1 and T2 combined to unsterile condition, and treatments T1 and T5 combined with stage-end. Indeed, *T. diversifolia* is acting as a fungicide in the control of many culture due to the pool of secondary metabolites it contains [25, 26], while clam shell provides an excellent protection against plant diseases [15]. The total proteins are impacted with treatments T5 and T3 in the sterile condition and the unsterile condition respectively, while the total polyphenols are impacted in both conditions by treatments T4 and T5. These treatments are based on *T. diversifolia* known as a promoter of natural defensive systems in plants such as synthesis of nutrients and defensive metabolites [15]. Two essential elements in *Tithonia diversifolia* could explain this impact on total proteins and total polyphenols. Nitrogen involved in the preparation of macromolecules and potassium known as an activator of different enzymes [17, 27] notably the phenylalanine ammonia lyase (PAL), involved in the biosynthesis of the polyphenol compounds in plants [28, 29].

Overall, treatment T5 is the most impacting one for the production of the improved plantain vivoplants in the nursery. It is based on *Tithonia diversifolia* liquid extract, and act as a fertilizer and fungicide in the control of disease as previously reported for another pathosystem [20, 26]. However, the impactful action of treatments T1 and T2 on the area of leaves and on the BSD severity in both conditions should be considered in a combined treatment of *Tithonia diversifolia* liquid extract and clam shells for more improvement of plantain vivoplants vigor. Indeed, the fermented chitin waste (FCW) have been recently shown to enhance the lettuce and rice performance by acting as a plant growth stimulator [30, 31]. Further studies are needed to (1) understand the molecular mechanisms underlying the relationship between the improved vivoplants and the *Tithonia diversifolia* liquid extract, (2) evaluate this liquid extract effect on other bananas diseases and pests, as well as on other plants, (3) to position the improved vivoplants vis-à-vis the vitroplants known as the best banana seeds

and (4) to access spatio-temporal and varietal variations of vivoplants responses.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank Sylvain SADO for his help in data analysis and stimulating discussions. Gratitude also goes to Oscar NGUIDJO for his permanent help and support.

This manuscript has been released as a pre-print at BioRxiv (Ewané et Boudjeko) [32].

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