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Entomopathogenic fungi, *Beauveria bassiana* (Bals.) and *Metarhizium anisopliae* (Metsch.) As biological control agents on some stored product insects

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Abstract

The present work was evaluation of the efficacy of the entomopathogenic fungi, *Beauveria bassiana* and *Metarhizium anisopliae* on *Rhyzopertha dominica*, *Sitophilus oryzae* and *Oryzaephilus surinamensis*. Each insect species was treated with formulated fungi *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* at the concentrations of 0.12×10^6 conidia /g, 0.22×10^6 conidia /g, 0.32×10^6 conidia / g, and 0.42×10^6 conidia /g. *M. anisopliae* was more effective against tested insects than *B. bassiana*. Four concentrations of *B. bassiana* were tested against *R. dominica*, *S. oryzae* and *O. surinamensis*. LC₅₀ were 1.2×10^5 conidia / g, 1.6×10^5 conidia / g and 1.4×10^5 conidia / g, respectively. The same concentrations *M. anisopliae* were tested against *R. dominica*, *S. oryzae* and *O. surinamensis*. LC₅₀ were 2.7×10^5 conidia / g, 1.3×10^5 conidia / g, and 3.5×10^5 conidia / g, respectively.

Keywords: *Beauveria bassiana*, *Metarhizium anisopliae*, Stored Product, Control.

1. Introduction

Almost, all stored grains are subjected to be attacked by pests causing damage to stored [1]. It has been estimated that during storage 10 – 25 % of the worldwide grain crops are lost yearly mostly because of pests infestation. Losses caused by insects include not only the direct feeding damage resulting in loss of weight, but they also severely reduce nutrients, lowering percentage of seeds germination, reducing grade and lowering their marketing value due to accumulation of waste, webbing and insect cadavers. The favorable climatic conditions and relatively poor storage system in Egypt are in favor of increase and development of these pests, resulting in considerable crop losses. The rice weevil, *Sitophilus oryzae* (L.) (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), the lesser grain borer *Rhyzopertha dominica* (F.) (Coleoptera: Bostrichidae) the sawtoothed grain beetle, *Oryzaephilus surinamensis* (L.) (Coleoptera: Silvanidae), and cowpea weevil, *Callosobruchus maculatus* F. (Coleoptera: Bruchidae) are among the most destructive pests of stored grain and seeds in the tropics [2]. Use of pesticides is one of the means for preventing some loss during storage. It causes problem such as; insecticide resistance, chemical residues in food stuffs, increasing cost, and environmental pollution [3].

Therefore, it is necessary to find out safer alternative control strategies such as use of microbial control agents against stored –product insect pests. Using fungi and selected insecticides can potentially reduce the use of chemical insecticides and subsequently their residues and side effects in agriculture. *Beauveria bassiana* and *Metarhizium anisopliae* are naturally occurring entomopathogenic fungi with a wide host range [4]. Several studies have shown the effectiveness of *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* for controlling the stored products pests such as; *S. oryzae*, *R. dominica*, *A. desobtectus*, *C. maculatus* and *T. castaneum* [5-21]. *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* were isolated from different insect hosts in Egypt [22, 23]. However, a variety of factors may determine or influence the host range and specificity of fungal pathogens. These include fungal strain, hosts physiological state, nutrition, defense mechanism, cuticle and epicuticular microorganisms [24]. Used entomopathogenic fungi to control *Tuta absoluta* and *Cassida vittata* Vill. The pathogen *B. bassiana* gave the highest effect on larval phase of *T. absoluta* during the evaluation time and similar to the effect of *M. anisopliae* followed by the effect of *Verticillium lecanii* [24, 25].

The aim of the present work was evaluation of the efficacy of the entomopathogenic fungi, *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* on *Rhyzopertha dominica*, *Sitophilus oryzae* and *Oryzaephilus surinamensis*.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study site

This study was carried out at Laboratory, National Research Centre, Dokki, Giza, Egypt.

2.2 Insect Rearing

Tested stored product insects species viz; *R. dominica* (F.), *S. oryzae* (L.) and *O. surinamensis* (L.) were obtained from laboratory cultures reared for several generations. The insects were reared on whole wheat grains. Insect cultures were maintained in plastic jars (1 liter) covered with muslin cloth. All insects were reared under laboratory conditions of 24±2 °C and 75±2% R.H.

2.3 Fungal Inoculation

The entomopathogenic fungi, *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae*, used in the experiments, were original isolated from the tortoise beetle, *Cassida vittata* (Vill.) and the sugar-beet moth, *Scrobipalpa ocellatella*. The fungi were grown on Potato dextrose agar (PDA) medium (1 Kg potatoes, 80 g Agar, 100 g Dextrose and 4 liter distilled water). The media was autoclaved at 120 °C for 20 minutes, and poured in Petri-dishes (9 cm diameter x 1.5 cm) and rice media. The fungi kept at 25 ±2 °C and 85± 5 % RH. The fungal isolates were sub-cultured every 14 – 30 days and kept at 4 °C.

2.4 Conidiospores Production

B. bassiana and *M. anisopliae* aerial conidia were produced using biphasic culture system [26]. Flasks (100 ml.) of liquid biomalt medium (25g biomalt and 2g yeast extract), were incubated for 3-4 days at 25 °C. The liquid cultures were then used to inoculate autoclaved white rice in sterilized plastic bags. The rice was first soaked in boiling water for 10 minutes and autoclaved for 30 min. in autoclavable plastic bags(30 x 50 cm) in the ratio of 1 kg rice/ bag. After cooling for one to three days, the old liquid culture of *B. bassiana* was mixed by hand with the substrate under aseptic condition, at the ratio of 25 ml/ bag. An absorbent cotton plug rolled around tube (10 cm long) had been used to plug each bag. The bags were connected with the source of filtered air through air valves. Solid substrate fermentation was kept for 11 days at 26 °C.

Culture was observed daily and crumbled by hand within bags to prevent binding of the Substrate. Whole culture was then transferred to wooden screen shelves where it was dried for 7 days at 28 °C. Conidia were harvested by mechanical sieving.

2.5 Bioassay Procedures

The three tested insects, at mixed stages, were treated by the fungi to estimate the susceptibility of each species. Harvested conidiospores were mixed with talc powder and counted in the suspension by using a haemocytometer (Hirschmann 0.1 mm x 0.0025 mm²) to prepare four concentrations. Each insect species was treated with formulated fungi *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* at the concentrations of 0.12 x 10⁶ conidia /g, 0.22 x 10⁶ conidia/g, 0.32 x 10⁶ conidia / g, and 0.42 x 10⁶ conidia /g. Insect diets were treated by different concentrations of entomopathogenic fungi, twenty five unsexed adult insects were introduced into the jars (the replicate was 25 insects /concentration / fungus /insect species). Non exposure and exposure of insects to contaminated diets with fungal spores were incubated at 26 °C and 70±5% R.H. [27]. Mortality rate was recorded at 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 days after treatment. The percentage mortality and LC₅₀, LC₉₀, and LT₅₀ were estimated.

2.6 Statistical Analysis

Mortality rates of the tested insects were analyzed using ANOVA test. Probit analysis was used to calculate values of the lethal concentration (LC₅₀ and LC₉₀) and the lethal time (LT₅₀) for each fungus [27].

2.7 Statistics

LC₅₀s were calculated through probit analysis.

3. Results

R. dominica LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ values confirmed that *R. dominica* was more susceptible to *M. anisopliae* than *B. bassiana*, where LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ were 1.2 x 10⁵, 2.3 x 10⁵ conidia /g and 2.7 x 10⁵, 0.01 x 10⁶ conidia /g, respectively. The LT₅₀s were calculated as 4.6 and 6.6 days for the two respective fungi, indicating the superiority of *B. bassiana* over *M. anisopliae* (table 1).

Table 1: LC₅₀, LC₉₀ and LT₅₀ (days)^a values of *R. dominica*, *S. oryzae* and *O. surinamensis* treated with *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae*.

Species	<i>B. bassiana</i>			<i>M. anisopliae</i>		
	LC ₅₀	LC ₉₀	LT ₅₀	LC ₅₀	LC ₉₀	LT ₅₀
<i>R. dominica</i>	2.7 x 10 ⁵	0.01 x 10 ⁶	6.6	1.2 x 10 ⁵	2.3 x 10 ⁵	4.6
<i>S. oryzae</i>	4.3 x 10 ⁵	0.08 x 10 ⁶	8.8	1.6 x 10 ⁵	7.1 x 10 ⁵	6.3
<i>O. surinamensis</i>	3.5 x 10 ⁵	0.04 x 10 ⁶	6.9	1.4 x 10 ⁵	4.1 x 10 ⁵	5.7

^a at concentration of 0.12 x 10⁶ and 0.22 x 10⁶ for *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae*.

Data presented in table 2 show cumulative mortality percentage of *R. dominica* maximum mortality percentages adult were recorded 11 days after treatment with *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae*, where the mortality percentages were 25.2, 38.1, 45.2 and 50.3% for *B. bassiana* at the tested

concentrations of 0.12 x 10⁶conidia /g, 0.22 x 10⁶conidia /g, 0.32 x 10⁶conidia / g, and 0.42 x 10⁶conidia /g, respectively, and 63.0, 72.3, 75.3, and 79.3% for *M. anisopliae* at the tested concentrations of 0.12 x 10⁶conidia /g, 0.22 x 10⁶conidia /g, 0.32 x 10⁶conidia / g, and 0.42 x 10⁶ conidia / g, respectively.

Table 2: Cumulative mortality percentages of *R. dominica* treated with *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* at different concentrations.

Fungi	Conc. Conidia/g	Mortality percentages of <i>R. dominica</i> indicated days				
		3	5	7	9	11
<i>B. bassiana</i>	0.12 x 10 ⁶	4±1	17±3.1	19±1.2	21±1.9	25.2±2.1f
	0.22 x 10 ⁶	13±1.9	22±2.1	25±1.4	32±1.1	38.1±2.3ef
	0.32 x 10 ⁶	15±7.5	25±1.9	28±1.6	39±1.9	45.2±2.7e
	0.42 x 10 ⁶	22±3.8	27±4.1	32±1	47±1.9	50.3±2.2c
<i>M. anisopliae</i>	0.12 x 10 ⁶	8.7±2.1	25±2.1	35±2.1	45±2.1	63.0±1.9b
	0.22 x 10 ⁶	9.5±2.3	35±4	45±2.8	53±1.1	72.3±2.3 a
	0.32 x 10 ⁶	20±1	36±2.3	55±1	61±1.9	75.3±2.2a
	0.42 x 10 ⁶	33±2.3	41±1.2	60±1.3	70±1.2	79.3±1.2a

Means followed with the same letter are not significantly different

Sitophilus oryzae

Obtained result presented in table 3 indicated that the cumulative mortality percentages started with low levels on the 3rd day after treatment. Then the Percent mortality of *S. oryzae* was increased gradually, till the maximum was recorded on the 11th days of observation, where the mortality percentages were recorded 23, 32, 40 and 54% for *B. bassiana* respectively. The *S. oryzae* was more susceptible to infection with *B. bassiana* than *M. anisopliae*. LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ values

proved that *S. oryzae* was more susceptible to *M. anisopliae* than *B. bassiana*, where the LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ of, *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* were 4.3×10^5 and 0.08×10^6 conidia /g, and 1.6×10^5 and 7.1×10^5 conidia/g, respectively (Table 1). LT₅₀s were calculated as 8.8 and 6.3 days for the two respective fungi, indicating that the conidial spores of *B. bassiana* were less efficient on *S. oryzae* than those of *M. anisopliae*.

Table 3: Cumulative mortality percentages of *S. oryzae* treated with *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* at different concentrations.

Fungi	Conc. Conidia/g	Mortality percentages of <i>S. oryzae</i> indicated days				
		3	5	7	9	11
<i>B. bassiana</i>	0.12 x 10 ⁶	4.4±2.1	8±2.1	18±1.1	21±1	23.0±1.3f
	0.22 x 10 ⁶	8.2±2.3	18±3.2	25±2.1	30±1	32±7.1 c e
	0.32 x 10 ⁶	11±1	25±3.3	27±2.1	38±1	40±1bc
	0.42 x 10 ⁶	21±2.1	35±2.1	40±5.2	43±2	54±2.2ab
<i>M. anisopliae</i>	0.12 x 10 ⁶	5±1	9±3	21±2.2	25±2.2	27±1.3f
	0.22 x 10 ⁶	9±1.2	20±2.3	28±2	30±2.1	35±7.1e
	0.32 x 10 ⁶	12±7.1	27±6.3	30±2.1	40±1.1	47±3ab
	0.42 x 10 ⁶	23±3.2	37±9.1	45±1.0	47±1.3	54±1.1a

Means followed with the same letter are not significantly different

Oryzaephilus surinamensis

The same effective was found when the entomopathogenic fungi were used against *O. surinamensis* as shown in table 4. The concentrations 0.42 x 10⁶ conidia / g of fungi, induced increase the mortalities rates. The highest cumulative mortalities were recorded after 11 days of treatment when mortality percentages were recorded 25, 35, 43 and 51% for *B. bassiana* at the tested concentrations of (0.12 x 10⁶ conidia /g, 0.22 x 10⁶ conidia /g, 0.32 x 10⁶ conidia / g, and 0.42 x 10⁶ conidia / g, respectively). and 40, 45, 55 and 65 % for *M. anisopliae* at the tested concentrations of (0.12 x 10⁶ conidia /g, 0.22 x 10⁶ conidia /g, 0.32 x 10⁶ conidia / g, and 0.42 x 10⁶ conidia / g, respectively). The findings in the table showed

that the mortality percentage of *O. surinamensis* treated with *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* differed significantly among different concentrations. Also mortality percentage differed significantly between *O. surinamensis* treated with *B. bassiana* and with *M. anisopliae*.

LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ values confirmed that *O. surinamensis* was more susceptible to *M. anisopliae*, than *B. bassiana* where the LC₅₀ and LC₉₀ were (1.4×10^5 and 8.1×10^5 conidia /g) and (3.5×10^5 and 0.04×10^6 conidia /g), respectively. The LT₅₀'s were calculated as 5.7 and 6.9 days for the two respective fungi, indicating that *O. surinamensis* adults were more susceptible to *M. anisopliae*, than *B. bassiana* (Table 1).

Table 4: Cumulative mortality percentages of *O. surinamensis* treated with *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* at different concentrations.

Fungi	Conc. Conidia/g	Mortality percentages of <i>O. surinamensis</i> indicated days				
		3	5	7	9	11
<i>B. bassiana</i>	0.12 x 10 ⁶	4±1	10±1.1	17±1.1	20±1.7	25±1.3f
	0.22 x 10 ⁶	10±1.3	17±2.2	22±1.2	30±1.4	35±2.1fg
	0.32 x 10 ⁶	13±1.5	22±1.3	25±1.1	35±1.1	43±1.5b
	0.42 x 10 ⁶	20±3.1	25±1.1	28±1.1	38±1.4	51±2ab
<i>M. anisopliae</i>	0.12 x 10 ⁶	8.1±2.1	21±2	25±2.1	35±2.1	40.0±1.7g
	0.22 x 10 ⁶	9.1±2.1	30±1	35±2.2	43±1.1	45±2.3 g
	0.32 x 10 ⁶	18±1	32±2.2	45±3	51±1.4	55±2.3ac
	0.42 x 10 ⁶	30±2.1	37±1.1	50±1.6	60±1.5	65±1.3ac

Means followed with the same letter are not significantly different

The recent study revealed that *M. anisopliae* was more efficient against *R. dominica* and *O. surinamensis* than the fungus *B. bassiana* and proved that *M. anisopliae* had higher virulence than *B. bassiana*. *M. anisopliae* and *B. bassiana* were less efficient against *S. oryzae*.

The entomopathogenic fungi *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* have potential for effective and economically feasible control of stored product insects.

4. Discussions

We find in our study that *M. anisopliae* was more efficient against *R. dominica* and *O. surinamensis* than the fungus *B. bassiana* and proved that *M. anisopliae* had higher virulence than *B. bassiana*. *M. anisopliae* and *B. bassiana* were less efficient against *S. oryzae*.

The entomopathogenic fungi *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae*

have potential for effective and economically feasible control of stored product insects according (Salem & Abdel-Raheem; Magda Sabbour & Mohamed Abdel-Raheem and Silvia Mudrončeková, et al. [28-30].

(Hendrawan Samodra and Yusof Ibrahim) mentioned that the isolate of *Beauveria bassiana* (BbGc) was the most infectious against the rice weevil adults, *S. oryzae* than *Metarhizium anisopliae* (MaPs) [31]. According with Kassa, et al. mentioned that *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* were virulent against *S. zeamais* when used concentration 1×10^7 and 1×10^8 conidia ml⁻¹ (92-100% mortality) [32].

5. Conclusion

M. anisopliae was more efficient against *R. dominica* and *O. surinamensis* than the fungus *B. bassiana* and proved that *M. anisopliae* had higher virulence than *B. bassiana*. *M.*

anisopliae and *B. bassiana* were less efficient against *S. oryzae*. The entomopathogenic fungi *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* have potential for effective and economically feasible control of stored product insects.

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