

Elizamar Ciríaco da Silva

Respostas fisiológicas do umbuzeiro (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda) aos estresses hídrico e salino

Recife, Pernambuco

2008

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Tese apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Botânica da Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, como requisito para obtenção do título de Doutor em Botânica, área de concentração em Fisiologia e linha de pesquisa Fisiologia e Biotecnologia.

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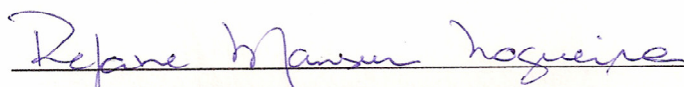
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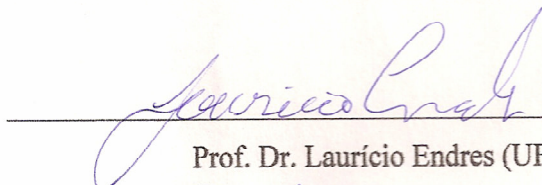
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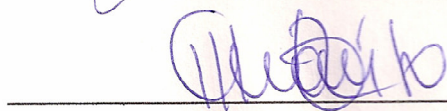


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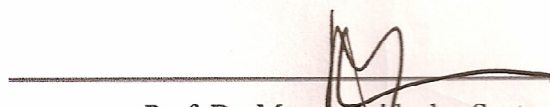
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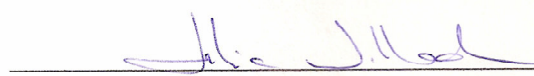
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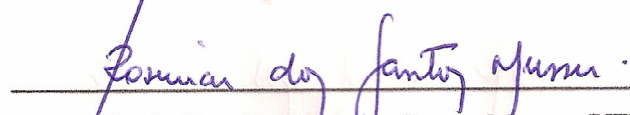
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“A maior recompensa não é o que recebemos de nosso trabalho, mas o que nos tornamos devido a ele”.

John Ruskin

“O único meio de realizar alguma coisa é ajoelhar-se e pedir ajuda ao Senhor, e então, colocar-se de pé e enfrentar o trabalho”.

Gordon B. Hinckley

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LISTA DE ABREVIATURAS

AA	Aminoácidos
AO (SA)	Abertura do ostíolo (stomatal aperture)
AP	Altura das plantas
BGU (GBU)	Banco de germoplasma de umbuzeiro (Germplasm bank of umbu tree)
CHS	Carboidratos solúveis
Cl	Cloreto
DC	Diâmetro do caule
DE (SD)	Densidade estomática (stomatal density)
DPV (VPD)	Déficit de pressão de vapor (vapor pressure déficit)
E	Transpiração
IE (SI)	Índice estomático (stomatal index)
K⁺	Potássio
MSF (LDM)	Matéria seca da folha (leaves dry matter)
MST (TDM)	Matéria seca total (total dry matter)
Na⁺	Sódio
NaCl	Cloreto de sódio
NF	Número de folhas
PAR	Radiação fotossinteticamente ativa (photosynthetically active radiation)
PRO	Prolina
PROT	Proteínas
R/Pa (R/Sh)	Razão raiz / parte aérea (root to shoot ratio)
SLA	Specific leaf área (área foliar específica)
r_s	Resistência difusiva
T_{ar} (T_{air})	Temperatura do ar
UR (RH)	Umidade relativa do ar (relative humidity)
Ψ_{pd}	Potencial hídrico foliar pre-dawn
Ψ_w	Potencial hídrico foliar

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RESUMO GERAL

Dentre as principais fruteiras nativas do Nordeste, especialmente aquelas encontradas no semi-árido, o umbuzeiro (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda) desponta com uma alternativa importante, por ser uma fruta bem aceita pelo consumidor e por ter uma boa produção em ambientes secos. Dessa forma, o comércio dos frutos em feiras livres ou através de cooperativas proporciona uma fonte de renda complementar para os pequenos agricultores. No entanto, essa renda pode ser comprometida pelo extrativismo e o desmatamento excessivos, que tem se intensificado a cada ano. Preocupada com a redução populacional desta espécie pela ação antrópica, a Embrapa Semi-Árido vem desenvolvendo estudos sobre produção de mudas, cultivo e preservação da herança genética, através da recuperação de acessos com características morfológicas distintas e a implantação de um banco ativo de germoplasma, para disponibilizar os mais promissores para os pequenos agricultores, além de contribuir com o reflorestamento da Caatinga com uma espécie nativa. Dos fatores climáticos limitantes na produção de espécies frutíferas no semi-árido nordestino, a seca é o principal fator, aliado também ao problema crescente de salinização dos solos, que tem se agravado a cada ano. Os mecanismos utilizados pelo umbuzeiro para tolerar a seca ainda não estão completamente esclarecidos e não se conhece ainda as respostas fisiológicas frente a salinidade do solo. Desta forma, o presente trabalho objetivou avaliar as respostas fisiológicas do umbuzeiro quando submetido às condições de seca e salinidade. Para avaliar as respostas à seca, desenvolveu-se um experimento em casa de vegetação utilizando mudas enxertadas de quatro acessos de umbuzeiro (acessos BGU 44, BGU 48, BGU 50 e BGU 68) classificados como umbu-gigante, com o objetivo de avaliar as alterações no comportamento estomático, parâmetros anatômicos, relações hídricas e alguns parâmetros bioquímicos induzidos pela seca intermitente, além das possíveis variações genotípicas. Foram efetuadas mensurações da transpiração (E) e da resistência difusiva (r_s) diariamente após a suspensão da rega até ocorrer o fechamento estomático, momento em que as plantas foram re-irrigadas. A rega foi suspensa novamente até ocorrer novo fechamento estomático e este ciclo foi repetido por um período de 31 dias. O potencial hídrico foliar (Ψ_w) foi determinado em dois cursos nictimerais (no momento do primeiro fechamento estomático e ao final do período experimental). Também foram avaliados os teores de carboidratos solúveis totais (CHS), aminoácidos livres (AA), proteína (PROT) e prolina (PRO) nas folhas e nas raízes, assim como alterações anatômicas. Os acessos apresentaram regularidade no período de fechamento estomático entre as regas, demonstrando diferenças intra-específicas. Houve correlação com as variáveis ambientais sugerindo que, além da água, o comportamento estomático dos acessos BGU 44 e BGU 68 sofreram influência da Tar, UR e DPV, enquanto que o acesso BGU 50 sofreu influência do PAR e o BGU 48 não se correlacionou com os outros fatores, indicando que a água foi o fator que exerceu maior influência neste acesso. Alterações anatômicas em resposta à seca foram

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observadas na densidade de estômatos (DE), reduções no índice estomático (IE) e na abertura do ostíolo (AO). O acesso BGU 48 manteve as características anatômicas inalteradas. Houve uma inversão na proporção dos tecidos do acesso BGU 44 quando sob estresse, diminuindo a espessura do parênquima lacunoso e aumentando o parênquima paliçádico. O inverso ocorreu com o BGU 68 e os demais acessos permaneceram inalterados. O horário de menor Ψ_w para a maioria dos acessos foi entre 8h e 12h. O Ψ_w das plantas estressadas do BGU 44 e BGU 50 foi reduzido significativamente às 8h. O BGU 68 apresentou os valores mais elevados de Ψ_w . O prolongamento do estresse provocou reduções nos teores de CHS nas folhas de todos os acessos. Houve aumento no teor de AA nas folhas dos BGU's 44 e 48, enquanto que os BGU's 50 e 68 reduziram 40% e 43%, respectivamente. Ao final do período experimental esse comportamento se manteve para o BGU 44 e o BGU 50. Não houve diferença significativa para os teores de PROT nas folhas, mas houve aumento de 50% nos teores de PRO, exceto para o BGU 50. Foram verificadas alterações na concentração de CHS, AA e PRO nas raízes, com diferença entre os acessos. Os acessos BGU 68 e BGU 50 foram os mais contrastantes em condições de seca. Para avaliar as respostas do umbuzeiro ao estresse salino, foi desenvolvido um experimento utilizando-se plantas propagadas por sementes. As plantas foram cultivadas em areia lavada, regadas com solução nutritiva de Hoagland & Arnon, sem e com adição de NaCl (25, 50, 75 e 100 mM). Avaliou-se o crescimento, o Ψ_w , E e r_s . O teor de Na^+ , K^+ , Cl^- , carboidratos solúveis e aminoácidos livres foram dosados nos diversos órgãos da planta. A maioria das variáveis estudadas foi afetada em níveis de NaCl de 50 mM, reduzindo o número de folhas, a altura das plantas, o diâmetro do caule e a massa seca e aumentando a relação raiz/parte aérea (R/Pa). O potencial hídrico foliar antes do amanhecer (Ψ_{pd}) foi reduzido nas plantas dos tratamentos 75 e 100 mM de NaCl. A concentração de Na^+ e Cl^- nas folhas aumentou em função dos níveis de NaCl aplicados, mas, o teor de K^+ não foi afetado. Nos caules e raízes, houve uma saturação na retenção de Na^+ e Cl^- nos tratamentos acima de 50 mM. Os resultados desta pesquisa permite inferir que existem diferenças fisiológicas e anatômicas entre os acessos de umbuzeiro estudados; que eles respondem de forma diferente à seca intermitente; que a manutenção da turgescência foliar está relacionada à reserva de água nos xilopódios associado ao mecanismo de fechamento estomático eficiente e não ao acúmulo de solutos osmoticamente ativos, tanto em situação de seca como de salinidade no meio; devido à grande variação encontrada, o acúmulo de solutos orgânicos não demonstrou ser um mecanismo fisiológico indicador de tolerância à seca e a salinidade nesta espécie; o umbuzeiro tolera níveis de salinidade de até 50 mM de NaCl sem apresentar alterações fisiomorfológicas significativas na fase inicial do desenvolvimento.

Palavras-chave: transpiração, resistência estomática, potencial hídrico foliar, solutos compatíveis, seca, salinidade.

GENERAL ABSTRACT

Among the principal native fruit trees in Northeastern Brazil, especially those found in the semi-arid areas, the umbu tree (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda) represents itself as an important alternative as it well accepted by consumers and is a good produce in dry environments. Thus, the fruit trade fair or through cooperatives provides a source of supplementary income for small farmers. However, this income can be compromised by harvesting and excessive deforestation, which has intensified each year. Concern with population reduction of this species and by anthropic, Brazilian Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropic has developed studies on seedlings production, cultivation, and genetic inheritance preservation recovering genotypes with distinct morphological characteristics and deployment of a germplasm active bank provide the most promising for small producers, in addition to contributing to the reforestation of the Caatinga with a native species. Of the climatic factors limiting fruit species production in the semi-arid northeast, drought is the main factor, also allied to the growing problem of soil salinization, which has worsened each year. The mechanisms used by umbu tree to tolerate drought is not well elucidated and the physiological response before soil salinity is not yet known. Thus, the present work aimed to evaluate the physiological responses of umbu tree to drought and salt stresses. To evaluate drought responses, a project was developed in green house conditions using four grafted genotypes classified as giant umbu (BGU 44, BGU 48, BGU 50 and BGU 68) in order to evaluate the alterations on stomatal behavior, anatomical parameters, water relations and some biochemical aspects induced by intermittent drought and the possible genotypical variations. Transpiration (E) and diffusive resistance (r_s) were measured daily after the beginning of the stress treatments by withholding water. When plants presented stomatal closure, the vases were re-watered and the water withhold again. This cycle was repeated for a 31 period days. The leaf water potential (Ψ_w) was measured in four-hour intervals during a 24-hour period at the moment of the first stomatal closure and at the end of the experimental period. Total soluble carbohydrates (CHS), free amino acids (AA), protein (PROT) and proline (PRO) in leaves and roots were also measured. Certain regularity in the stomatal closure was observed among the watering period, showing differences between the species. The correlation with environmental factors suggest that, besides the water, stomatal behavior of BGU 44 and BGU 68 were influenced by Tar, RH and VPD, while the access BGU 50 were influenced by PAR and BGU 48 had no correlation with these environmental factors, suggesting that the water exerted the major influence in this genotype. Anatomical alterations in response to drought on stomatal density (DE) and reductions on stomatal index (IE) and stomatal aperture size (AO) were observed. The access BGU 48 maintained its anatomical features unaltered. There was an inversion in tissue proportion in BGU 44 under stress conditions, reducing the thickness of the spongy parenchyma and increasing palisade parenchyma. The inverse occurred with BGU 68 and the

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remaining genotypes continued unchanged. The lower Ψ_w time of most of the genotypes was between 8h and 12h. The Ψ_w of the stressed plants of BGU 44 and BGU 50 reduced significantly at 8h. The highest Ψ_w was observed to BGU 68. The stress prolongation induced reductions in CHS content in the leaves of all genotypes. There were increases in the leaves to AA in BGUs 44 and 48, while BGUs 50 and 68 were reduced by about 40% and 43% respectively. BGU 44 and BGU 50 kept this behavior at the end of the experimental period. Significant differences in PROT content were not observed, but there were increases of 50% in PRO, except to BGU 50. Alterations on CHS, AA and PRO contents in the roots were verified and varied among the different genotypes. BGU 68 and BGU 50 were the most contrasting genotypes. In order to evaluate the salt stress responses in umbu plants a project was developed using seedlings propagated by seeds. Plants were grown in washed sand with Hoagland & Arnon nutrient solution without salt and with 25, 50, 75 and 100mM NaCl. Growth, Ψ_w , E and r_s were then evaluated. Na^+ , K^+ , Cl^- , soluble carbohydrates and free amino acid contents were measured in several plant organs. Most variables were affected with salinity above 50 mM NaCl showing decreases in: number of leaves, plant height, stems diameter and dry masses and increases in root to shoot ratio. Reductions in pre-dawn leaf water potential (Ψ_{pd}) were observed in plants submitted to 75 and 100 mM NaCl. Salt levels applied increased Na^+ and Cl^- contents in leaves. However, K^+ content was not affected. A saturation to retain Na^+ and Cl^- in stems and roots was verified in treatments above 50 mM NaCl. These results allow us to say that there are physiological and anatomical differences among umbu tree genotypes; genotypes respond differently to intermittent drought; the turgor maintenance in umbu tree is relative to water storage in the xylopodium associated with the efficient stomatal closure mechanism and not by osmotic active solutes accumulation in either drought or salt stress conditions; due to the great variation found, the organic solutes accumulations did not demonstrate to be a good physiological trait as indicator to drought- and salt-tolerance in umbu plants. This specie tolerates salt levels until 50 mM NaCl without showing significant physio-morphological alterations.

Key-words: transpiration, stomatal resistance, leaf water potential, compatible solutes, drought, salinity.

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1. INTRODUÇÃO

O Brasil é um dos maiores repositórios de espécies nativas do mundo, devido a sua localização geográfica e dimensão territorial, possuindo importantes centros de diversidade genética de plantas nativas. Apresenta condições edafoclimáticas favoráveis para a produção de frutas tropicais para o mercado mundial, e algumas fruteiras proporcionam mais de uma safra por ano (PLANETA ORGÂNICO, 2004).

Dentre as principais fruteiras nativas do Nordeste, com potencial econômico, o umbuzeiro (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda) desponta com uma alternativa importante, uma vez que o extrativismo dos frutos ajuda na complementação da renda familiar dos pequenos agricultores (LIMA FILHO et al., 2001; ARAÚJO e CASTRO NETO, 2002) além do seu aproveitamento na fabricação de polpas, doces e geléias.

O cultivo do umbuzeiro pode ser realizado sem a necessidade de desmatamento da caatinga, visto que ele se desenvolve bem junto a outras plantas como a catingueira e a faveleira. Estima-se que uma caatinga enriquecida com 100 plantas de umbuzeiro pode chegar a produzir 6,5 toneladas de frutos por ha/ano (ARAÚJO et al., 2004). Essa significativa produção de frutos do umbuzeiro pode contribuir muito para o desenvolvimento da região semi-árida com o aproveitamento racional dos frutos (CAVALCANTI et al., 1999).

Diversas pesquisas nas áreas de produção de mudas e indução floral, para enriquecimento da caatinga com esta espécie, vêm sendo realizadas (ARAÚJO e SANTOS, 2000). Tem-se observado uma redução na densidade populacional das espécies frutíferas das regiões semi-áridas devido, principalmente, ao extrativismo e desmatamento, comuns em áreas de caatinga. Grande parte da variabilidade dessas espécies tem sido perdida antes mesmo de serem conhecidas (SAMPAIO et al., 1998). Por este motivo, a Embrapa Semi-Árido implantou um Banco de Germoplasma de Umbuzeiro (BGU) com o objetivo de preservar a herança genética desta espécie. Contudo, os estudos sobre as relações hídricas e o comportamento estomático dos diferentes acessos existentes no BGU ainda são escassos e os poucos trabalhos encontrados referem-se a publicações em congressos científicos (SILVA et al. 2004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Entre os trabalhos realizados sobre a fisiologia do umbuzeiro destacam-se os estudos pioneiros realizados por Ferri (1953a, 1953b), que avaliou aspectos da transpiração de várias espécies da caatinga, entre elas o umbuzeiro, e mais recentemente os estudos sobre as relações hídricas (LIMA FILHO e SILVA, 1988; NOGUEIRA et al., 1999; LIMA FILHO, 2001, 2004) e as trocas gasosas (LIMA FILHO, 2001; ARAÚJO e CASTRO NETO, 2002; LIMA

FILHO, 2004) em condições de campo. Além destes, ainda podemos encontrar os trabalhos realizados por Cavalcanti et al. (2002) e Drumond et al. (2003) que avaliaram o desenvolvimento inicial do umbuzeiro. Recentemente, Neves et al. (2004) estudaram o crescimento e a nutrição mineral desta espécie sob condições salina.

Uma das maiores limitações verificadas nas regiões semi-áridas é o déficit hídrico, comum nessas áreas devido à baixa pluviosidade, má distribuição das chuvas, elevadas taxas de evapotranspiração e baixa capacidade de retenção de água dos solos, em geral rasos e pedregosos (ANDRADE LIMA, 1989).

A água participa como reagente em numerosas reações metabólicas e a sua falta afeta todos os aspectos do crescimento e desenvolvimento dos vegetais (KRIEG, 1993; LARCHER, 2000). Diversos processos fisiológicos e bioquímicos, tais como a troca de gases entre o interior da folha e a atmosfera, a fotossíntese (PAGTER et al., 2005) e o metabolismo dos carboidratos, proteínas, aminoácidos e outros compostos orgânicos, são alterados pela seca (SIRCELJ et al., 2005).

A regulação estomática para restringir a perda excessiva de água por transpiração é uma das primeiras linhas de defesa das plantas ao estresse hídrico, atuando como um recurso para prevenir a dessecação dos tecidos como resultado da desidratação e para manter a turgescência foliar por um período maior (MATOS, 1992; LARCHER, 2000; SILVA et al., 2003b). Contudo, o fechamento estomático afeta a difusão do CO₂ para o interior das células, refletindo em futura redução na taxa de fotossíntese, e conseqüentemente na produtividade (LARCHER, 2000).

A manutenção da turgescência celular também pode ocorrer pelo acúmulo de substâncias orgânicas e íons inorgânicos em resposta ao déficit hídrico (CHARTZOULAKIS et al., 1999; NOGUEIRA et al., 2002). Esse mecanismo, denominado de ajustamento osmótico, contribui para a redução do potencial hídrico celular e assim favorece o influxo de água para o interior do vegetal.

Além da seca, a salinidade nos solos vem crescendo a cada ano, tornando-se um grande problema em muitas áreas semi-áridas. Esse aumento deve-se a uma drenagem insuficiente, irrigação ineficiente, alta taxa de evaporação dos solos, em geral rasos e pedregosos e baixa precipitação pluviométrica, associada às características do material de origem e às condições geomorfológicas e hidrológicas (WHITEMORE, 1975; MENGEL e KIRKBY, 1987; MARSCHNER, 1990).

Segundo Souza (1994), os solos afetados por sais representam aproximadamente 33% da área mundial irrigada. No Brasil, aproximadamente nove milhões de hectares são afetados

pela presença de sais, que compreendem sete Estados brasileiros (GHEYI e FAGERIA, 1997).

O acúmulo de sais no solo provoca reduções na qualidade e produtividade das culturas (MENGEL e KIRKBY, 1987). Basicamente, as plantas que crescem em solos salinos enfrentam dois problemas: uma alta pressão osmótica provocada pela alta concentração de sais no solo (baixo potencial hídrico no solo) e uma alta concentração de íons potencialmente tóxicos, como Na^+ e Cl^- (MARSCHNER, 1990).

Para sobreviverem em ambientes hídricos deficitários, seja pela escassez hídrica no solo ou pela indisponibilidade de água em virtude da salinidade, as plantas desenvolveram, ao longo do tempo, modificações morfológicas e anatômicas, permitindo tolerar o ambiente adverso (CHARTZOULAKIS et al., 2002a). Em situação de estresse, tanto os aspectos morfoanatômicos com os fisiológicos e bioquímicos sofrem alterações. Contudo, essas alterações não representam um padrão entre as espécies que ali habitam. Em algumas plantas, as principais alterações são: o aumento da espessura da cutícula e da densidade de estômatos e escamas, assim como o aumento no número de células da epiderme e do mesofilo, porém com uma redução no tamanho das mesmas (BOTTI et al., 1998; BOSABADILIS e KOFIDIS, 2002). Observa-se que a redução da condutância estomática e da fotossíntese pode estar relacionada com a redução nos espaços intercelulares (CHARTZOULAKIS et al., 1999, 2002a).

Dessa forma, o estudo da fisiologia das plantas nativas pode ajudar na compreensão dos mecanismos de sobrevivência em ambientes adversos. Para tanto, parâmetros bioquímicos e morfo-anatômicos podem servir de ferramenta para uma melhor compreensão dos processos fisiológicos, principalmente no que diz respeito às relações hídricas e trocas gasosas, havendo a necessidade de se desenvolverem mais estudos a esse respeito.

Com a possibilidade da expansão de cultivo do umbuzeiro no Nordeste, surge a necessidade de implementação de novas ações de pesquisa que possam contribuir para o aprimoramento do manejo desta cultura em questão, que irão favorecer a geração de renda e a permanência do homem no campo.

2. REVISÃO DE LITERATURA

2.1 Panorama geral da fruticultura no Brasil

A fruticultura é destaque no Brasil, tanto econômica quanto socialmente, pelo valor comercial, alimentício e por constituir-se em importante fonte geradora de empregos, que favorece a permanência do homem no campo. O Brasil é, atualmente, o terceiro maior produtor de frutas do mundo, ficando atrás apenas da Índia e da China, com uma produção de 38.125.000 toneladas (FAO, 2006) e vem desenvolvendo essa atividade de modo acelerado, apresentando reflexos positivos e promissores na economia dos Estados (NATALE et al., 1995).

Entretanto, dos mais de 1.800.000 ha de área cultivada, 73% do total da produção correspondem às culturas de citrus e banana, e grande parte das espécies de fruteiras nativas ainda são pouco exploradas (ALVES et al., 2005).

Dos mais de 30 pólos de produção de frutas espalhados no país de Norte a Sul, o Nordeste é, por excelência, um grande centro para a fruticultura (ALVES et al., 2005), sendo uma das atividades do setor primário com maior perspectiva, devido às condições ecológicas favoráveis em termos climáticos, principalmente para as espécies tropicais, nativas e exóticas, onde o solo também satisfaz as mais variadas exigências.

Os vales de rios como o São Francisco e o Açu, entre outros, mostram a real vocação da mencionada região para a produção de frutas, visando não apenas ao mercado interno, mas também à exportação de frutas *in natura* e de seus subprodutos industrializados (EMBRAPA, 2004).

Visando a implantação de uma fruticultura voltada para áreas secas da região, a Embrapa Semi-Árido vem obtendo bons resultados no cultivo de fruteiras como ceriguela, cajá-manga, umbu-cajá, cajá e umbuguela enxertadas no umbuzeiro, visto que as mesmas fazem parte da mesma família, ou seja, Anacardeaceae, e apresentam bom desenvolvimento e sobrevivência em condições de sequeiro absolutas (EMBRAPA, 2003).

Além disso, tem-se buscado diminuir o enorme fosso existente entre as frutas nativas e aquelas que já têm espaço cativo no mercado, com investigações sobre o desenvolvimento de tecnologias que viabilizem o cultivo comercial dessas fruteiras nativas, em especial do umbuzeiro, através do uso da técnica de indução floral (LIMA FILHO, 2003).

2.2 Aspectos gerais e agronômicos do umbuzeiro

O umbuzeiro ou imbuzeiro (*Spondias tuberosa* Arr. Câm.), pertencente à Família Anacardiaceae, é uma espécie xerófila típica das caatingas do Nordeste Brasileiro, que ocorre em pomares naturais desde o Ceará até o norte de Minas Gerais (LORENZI, 1998). É uma árvore de vida longa, de pequeno porte, possuindo um tronco curto e copa em forma de guarda-chuva com diâmetro de 10 a 15 m (MAIA, 2004). É capaz de suportar longos períodos de seca e produzir em solos ruins (EPSTAIN, 1998).

Suas raízes superficiais exploram cerca de 1m de profundidade. Possui um órgão subterrâneo (túbera ou batata) conhecido como xilopódio, que é constituído de tecido lacunoso que armazena água, mucilagem, glicose, tanino, amido, ácidos e sais minerais essenciais para a sua sobrevivência durante a estação seca (MAIA, 2004).

O caule tem ramos novos lisos e ramos velhos com ritidomas; as folhas são verdes, alternas, compostas, imparipinadas e suas flores são brancas, perfumadas, melíferas, agrupadas em panícula de 10-15 cm de comprimento. O fruto é uma drupa de forma arredondada a ovalada, com diâmetro médio de 3,0 cm, pesando entre 10 e 20 g. É constituído em média por 22% de casca, 68% de polpa e 10% de caroço (EPSTEIN, 1998).

Os frutos são consumidos *in natura* ou preparados na forma de sorvetes, sucos e umbuzada. Frutifica no período chuvoso e cada planta chega a produzir 300 kg de frutos por safra. O período de frutificação é de aproximadamente dois meses e apresenta a peculiaridade de emitir as inflorescências antes das folhas, no período seco (EPSTAIN, 1998; FERREIRA, 2003).

Segundo Ferreira et al. (2005), o umbuzeiro se consagra por ser uma espécie frutífera de grande importância econômica, social e ecológica. O extrativismo do fruto é de grande importância para a economia regional, principalmente, entre os meses de novembro e abril, quando é responsável pela ocupação da mão de obra, gerando renda e sustentação para as famílias (LIMA FILHO et al., 2001). Segundo pesquisa realizada pelo Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE, em 2001, o Brasil produziu 9.919 toneladas de umbu, ocasionando uma renda de R\$ 3.498.000,00 (IBGE, 2007).

A área total plantada com umbuzeiro (excetuando as plantas nativas), segundo censo da CODEVASF (2001) é de 509,3 ha, sendo 0,5 ha em formação, 23,0 ha em produção crescente, 332,8 em produção plena e 153,1 ha em declínio de produção. Sabe-se, no entanto, que esta área já cresceu bastante nos últimos anos (FERREIRA et al., 2005).

Estudos realizados em oito comunidades rurais localizadas no semi-árido baiano revelaram que a renda média obtida por pessoa na coleta do umbu foi de R\$ 276,00 por safra.

A coleta dessa fruta foi responsável pela maior absorção de mão-de-obra e geração de renda das famílias de pequenos agricultores na área pesquisada (EMBRAPA, 2003).

O umbuzeiro apresenta uma grande variabilidade genética entre indivíduos encontrados nas várias regiões do nordeste brasileiro e norte de Minas Gerais, com marcadas diferenças desde a conformação da copa até o tamanho e peso dos frutos (SANTOS et al. 1999b).

Com o objetivo de preservar a variabilidade genética do umbuzeiro, a Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária (EMBRAPA Semi-Árido) implantou, em 1994, um Banco Ativo de Germoplasma de Umbuzeiro, que atualmente é formado por 78 acessos (Oliveira et al, 2004) oriundos de plantas coletadas de várias regiões agroecológicas do Nordeste, abrangendo os Estados de Alagoas, Bahia, Pernambuco, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte e Minas Gerais (SANTOS et al. 1999a, 1999b).

Dentre esses acessos, encontram-se os BGU's 44, 48, 50 e 68, caracterizados como umbu gigante em virtude de seus frutos pesarem em média 86,7g, 75,30g, 85,0g e 96,7g, respectivamente (SANTOS et al. 1999b). As principais características destes acessos encontram-se relacionadas na tabela 1:

Tabela 1. Procedência e valores de alguns caracteres observados nas árvores de umbuzeiro, identificadas como promissoras ou excêntricas para formação do banco de germoplasma do umbuzeiro (BGU). EMBRAPA-CPATSA, Petrolina-PE. 1997.

BGU ₁	Procedência	Caracteres ₂										
		PMF	LGR	PSC	PSS	PSP	BRI	ALP	CCS	MAC	MEC	NPR
44-96	Anagé-BA	86,7	53,3	18,7	10,0	58,0	12,1	8,50	1,90	13,8	12,8	04
48-96	A. Dourada-BA	85,0	52,0	22,5	9,8	52,7	12,7	4,0	1,10	8,8	8,2	12
50-96	Santana-BA	75,3	53,0	17,7	10,0	47,6	12,8	8,2	2,30	12,2	11,8	03
68-96	Lontra-MG	96,7	56,7	24,3	13,3	59,1	10,0	4,5	1,35	13,1	11,4	08

1/O primeiro número corresponde à ordem de caracterização "in situ" e o segundo número ao ano do transplântio para o campo. 2/ PMF= peso do fruto (g); LRG= diâmetro do fruto (mm); PSC= peso da casca (g); PSS= peso da semente (g); PSP= peso da polpa (g); BRI= sólidos solúveis totais da polpa (oB); ALP= altura da planta (m); CCS= circunferência do caule a 20 cm do solo (m); MAC= maior diâmetro da copa (m); MEC= menor diâmetro da copa (m); NPR= número de ramos primários. Fonte: SANTOS et al. 1999b.

Mudas do BGU 48 têm sido distribuídas entre pequenos produtores e em quatro Unidades de Observação, sendo duas em Floresta-PE e duas em Caicó-RN (Relatório Executivo de Acompanhamento, 2004).

2.3 Efeito do déficit hídrico sobre o crescimento, comportamento estomático, potencial hídrico foliar e ajustamento osmótico das plantas.

O desempenho e distribuição de uma espécie vegetal podem ser relacionados à sua capacidade de adquirir água, nutrientes, fixação de carbono e na maneira pelas quais esses fluxos são regulados (MATTOS, 1992).

Entre os vários estresses abióticos, a seca é o principal fator que limita a produtividade das culturas em todo o mundo (VALLIOYODAN e NGUYEN, 2006), principalmente em regiões semi-áridas e áridas (QUEZADA et al., 1999; CHARTZOULAKIS et al., 2002a; PATAKAS et al., 2005; SOUZA et al., 2005). No nordeste brasileiro, a média anual de precipitação, em algumas áreas, situa-se entre 250 e 500 mm (ANDRADE LIMA, 1989; MENDES, 1986), distribuídos de forma irregular, prejudicando assim o crescimento e a produtividade das plantas.

A planta que é capaz de obter mais água ou que tem maior eficiência no seu uso resistirá melhor à seca. Algumas plantas possuem adaptações como as plantas C₄ e CAM que as permitem explorar ambientes mais áridos, enquanto outras possuem mecanismos de aclimação que são ativados em resposta ao estresse (TAIZ e ZEIGER, 2002).

A exposição das plantas a um ambiente limitado de água durante vários estádios do desenvolvimento, parece ativar vários processos fisiológicos e provocar mudanças no desenvolvimento (VALLIYODAN e NGUYEN, 2006).

Um dos processos fisiológicos mais sensíveis à deficiência hídrica é o crescimento celular (QUEZADA et al., 1999). Como consequência da baixa disponibilidade de água no solo, a expansão e a área foliar são reduzidas (SADRAS e MILROY, 1996), são observadas modificações no padrão de distribuição radicular (FAGERIA et al., 1884), redução na produção de biomassa e na produtividade das plantas. Por este motivo a redução do crescimento das plantas é considerada a primeira e mais séria consequência fisiológica do déficit hídrico nas mesmas (CAIRO, 1995; QUEZADA et al., 1999; LARCHER, 2000).

As espécies decíduas apresentam um mecanismo eficiente para escapar à seca, incluindo o fechamento dos estômatos, a redução da área foliar e mudanças na orientação da folha (GINDABA et al., 2005). Durante a estação seca, as folhas que permanecem na planta podem influenciar fortemente no controle do equilíbrio da água, ajustando a transpiração como uma função da limitação hidráulica devido a uma elevação no déficit de pressão de vapor atmosférico e do dessecamento superficial do solo (PRADO et al., 2004).

Diversos fatores externos como temperatura, radiação, umidade relativa do ar e velocidade dos ventos interferem no processo de transpiração, a medida em que aumentam a

diferença no déficit de pressão de vapor entre a superfície da folha e o ar que a envolve (LARCHER, 2000; SILVA et al., 2004a). Quando a abertura estomática é reduzida, o fluxo de transpiração diminui em maior grau do que a diminuição do fluxo de absorção de CO₂. No entanto, o fechamento total dos estômatos impede a absorção de CO₂ essencial para a fotossíntese, podendo afetar de forma irreversível o crescimento ou a sobrevivência da planta. Dessa forma, o controle das trocas gasosas representa um dilema, pois elas devem regular fluxos opostos de forma que o balanço hídrico e o de carbono sejam mantidos em condições de permitir a máxima eficiência do uso dessas substâncias (ANGELOCCI, 2002).

Em plantas que habitam regiões semi-áridas, a resistência oferecida pelos estômatos à perda de vapor d'água constitui uma estratégia vital de sobrevivência, principalmente no horário de maior demanda evaporativa (SILVA et al., 2003b). Silva et al. (2004a), verificaram diferentes padrões de resposta do controle estomático ao longo do dia em dez espécies da Caatinga no início da estação seca. Espécies como *Croton campestris* e *Caesalpinia pyramidalis* aumentaram a resistência difusiva (r_s) nas horas mais quentes do dia e recuperaram o grau de abertura dos estômatos à tarde. Já as demais espécies, como *Capparis flexuosa*, *Ziziphys joazeiro*, *Bahunia cheilanta* e *Aspidosperma pyriformium* tenderam a aumentar a r_s no horário mais quente e mantiveram assim até o final do dia.

Na tentativa de se identificar parâmetros que sirvam de indicadores de tolerância ao estresse hídrico, alguns pesquisadores têm desenvolvido trabalhos com plantas de regiões semi-áridas (BARBOSA e PRADO, 1991; LIMA FILHO et al. 1992; NOGUEIRA et al., 1998a, 1999; CHARTZOULAKIS et al. 1999; BARBOSA et al. 2000; MANSUR e BARBOSA, 2000; NOGUEIRA e SILVA, 2002; SILVA et al., 2003a, 2003b) e com plantas cultivadas (NOGUEIRA et al., 2001; CHARTZOULAKIS et al., 2002a; GOMES et al., 2004; INMAN-BAMBER e SMITH, 2005; PATAKAS et al., 2005; NOGUEIRA et al., 2006).

Silva et al. (2003a) verificaram que um nível de irrigação de 50% da capacidade de campo (Cc) durante 45 dias, não comprometeu o crescimento das plantas de *Tabebuia aurea*, *Enterolobium contortisiliquum* e *Mimosa caesalpinifolia*, porém afetou as trocas gasosas reduzindo o grau de abertura dos estômatos e, conseqüentemente, a transpiração das plantas (SILVA et al., 2003b). Em baraúna (*Schinopsis brasiliensis* Engl.), Nogueira e Silva (2002) verificaram que esta espécie utilizou o fechamento dos estômatos como meio de sobrevivência a períodos prolongados de escassez hídrica na fase de planta jovem.

Com relação ao umbuzeiro, dentre os poucos trabalhos relacionados ao comportamento estomático e às relações hídricas destacam-se os estudos realizados por Ferri (1953a, 1953b) e recentemente os desenvolvidos por Lima Filho e Silva (1988) e Lima Filho (2004) abordando aspectos das trocas gasosas em campo; os realizados por Nogueira et al.

(1999) que avaliaram a variação diária do potencial hídrico foliar em cinco espécies da caatinga; os de Lima Filho (2001) que estudou as relações hídricas do umbuzeiro na estação seca e chuvosa; e o trabalho de Araújo e Castro Neto (2002) que utilizaram parâmetros fisiológicos como potencial hídrico, taxa fotossintético e condutância estomática para avaliar o pegamento de enxertos.

Lima Filho (2004) observou que o umbuzeiro exibe dois picos de transpiração durante o dia, às 10 e 16 horas. Isto significa que mesmo em boas condições de umidade do solo, o umbuzeiro exerce um rígido controle das perdas de água através dos estômatos, como observado por Lima Filho et al. (1988), assegurando uma significativa economia de água ao restringir a transpiração ao meio dia, horário de maior temperatura do ar e baixa umidade relativa.

Embora o umbuzeiro habite preferencialmente ambientes secos, sendo, portanto, adaptado a tais regiões, não se conhece exatamente os mecanismos fisiológicos utilizados por esta espécie que permitem tal adaptação. Sabe-se, porém, que as reservas encontradas nos xilopódios, órgãos subterrâneos capazes de armazenar água e solutos orgânicos, são responsáveis pela sobrevivência da espécie nos períodos de estiagem.

Contudo, a literatura disponível a respeito do comportamento fisiológico dos genótipos de umbuzeiro existentes no Banco Ativo de Germoplasma (BGU) ainda é bastante escassa, tendo sido encontrado apenas os trabalhos realizados por Silva et al. (2004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b), que se referem às comunicações em congressos científicos.

O potencial hídrico foliar, o conteúdo relativo de água e as trocas gasosas têm sido comumente utilizados para avaliar as respostas fisiológicas das plantas sob deficiência hídrica (QUEZADA et al., 1999; CHARTZOULAKIS et al., 2002a; DAMATTA et al., 2003; SILVA et al., 2003b; GOMES et al.; 2004; PATAKAS et al., 2005; SOUZA et al., 2005), e na maioria das plantas, esse estresse resulta na redução desses parâmetros, os quais induzem o fechamento estomático. Essas mudanças têm impacto no metabolismo celular, incluindo a fotossíntese. No entanto, não resta dúvida que os estômatos desempenham um papel importante controlando o balanço hídrico entre a perda de água e o ganho de carbono (GINDABA et al., 2005).

A redução do potencial da água da folha (Ψ_w) com o declínio da disponibilidade de água do solo, leva à perda de turgescência e ao fechamento estomático (MANSUR e BARBOSA, 2000). No entanto, existe diferença no padrão de comportamento do Ψ_w entre as espécies, sendo estas classificadas tipicamente como isoídricas, cujas plantas conseguem manter valores de Ψ_w quase constante ao longo do dia ou do ano, independente das mudanças nas condições hídricas do solo e da atmosfera, ou são classificadas como anisoídricas, cujos

valores no Ψ_w geralmente apresentam grandes flutuações em resposta ao secamento do solo (TARDIEU e SIMONNEAU, 1998).

Segundo Tardieu e Simonneau (1998), um típico comportamento isoídrico, por exemplo, é encontrado em milho, cujo Ψ_w antes do amanhecer (predawn) diferiu entre plantas de tratamentos hídricos distintos (déficit), mas ao longo do dia não houve grande variação, sugerindo que o Ψ_w não foi dependente do *status* hídrico do solo e as plantas com comportamento anisoídrico, como exemplo, o girassol, apresentaram variações do Ψ_w ao longo do dia, com diferenças aproximadamente constantes entre os tratamentos hídricos. O mesmo foi observado em plantas de alfafa arbórea em campo (GONZÁLES-RODRÍGUEZ et al., 2005) e em duas espécies de eucalipto (FRANK et al., 2007).

A diferença básica entre os dois comportamentos reside no fato das plantas anisoídricas manterem valores mais baixos de potencial hídrico foliar do que nas isoídricas, não apenas antes do amanhecer, mas principalmente ao meio-dia em condições de seca, quando comparados aos das plantas irrigadas, indicando uma moderada regulação da transpiração através dos estômatos (FRANK et al., 2007).

No entanto, Schultz (2003) verificou que diferentes genótipos de videira apresentaram tanto o comportamento isohídrico como o anisohídrico, afirmando que esta espécie pode apresentar os dois tipos de comportamento. Devido a essas diferenças, Frank et al. (2007) fizeram uma abordagem sobre um outro tipo de comportamento denominado de isohidrodinâmico, uma vez que os autores encontraram uma larga flutuação sazonal no Ψ_w do eucalipto (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*), confirmando o comportamento anisohídrico, mas exibiu um incomum gradiente de potencial hídrico hidrodinâmico (induzido pela transpiração), constante ao meio-dia.

A manutenção da turgescência celular pode ocorrer pelo acúmulo de substâncias orgânicas e íons inorgânicos, como uma resposta ao estresse, processo conhecido como ajustamento osmótico (BEGG e TURNER, 1976; HARE et al., 1998; HONG-BO et al., 2006a). Os solutos orgânicos, também chamados de solutos compatíveis, são compostos de baixo peso molecular, altamente solúveis, que não apresentam toxicidade em altas concentrações no interior das células (ASHRAF e FOOLAD, 2007). Quando as plantas são expostas ao déficit hídrico, algumas medidas osmoprotetoras são tomadas, como por exemplo, a conversão do amido em carboidratos solúveis (sacarose, glicose, frutose, etc.). O acúmulo de açúcares no citosol ajuda a promover o influxo de água (CAIRO, 1995; LARCHER, 2000). O aumento de açúcares nas folhas em resposta à baixa disponibilidade de água no solo tem sido observado por muitos pesquisadores (SÁNCHEZ et al., 1998; SIRCELJ et al., 2005; HONG-BO et al., 2006b).

Os compostos nitrogenados, como proteínas e aminoácidos (arginina, prolina, lisina, histidina, glicina, etc.) e poliaminas entre outros, constituem outro grupo de compostos que também são afetados pelo déficit hídrico e que participam do ajustamento osmótico (RABE, 1990). Observa-se um aumento nos teores de aminoácidos livres (SIRCELJ et al., 2005) e uma redução na taxa de síntese ou decréscimo nos teores de proteína nas plantas em resposta à seca (RABE, 1990).

O aumento nos teores de prolina é de grande importância para a adaptação das plantas durante o período de estresse (SARKER et al., 2005) e geralmente seu acúmulo ocorre em grandes quantidades nos vegetais superiores como resposta aos estresses ambientais (ASHRAF e FOOLAD, 2007). A prolina, um aminoácido resultante da hidrólise de proteínas, tem o papel de atuar como agente osmorregulador em muitas espécies cultivadas (MARUR et al., 1994; NOGUEIRA et al., 1998c; SÁNCHEZ et al., 1998, NOGUEIRA et al., 2001; HONG-BO et al., 2006a; KNIPP e HONERMEIER, 2006), e tem sido um indicador utilizado nos estudos de plantas tolerantes à seca (CAIRO, 1995). O incremento de prolina também tem sido relacionado com a diminuição do potencial da água nas folhas (MARTINEZ e MORENO, 1992; KNIPP e HONERMEIER, 2006). Além do seu papel como agente osmorregulador, a prolina contribui para a estabilização de membranas e proteínas e na remoção de radicais livres (ASHRAF e FOOLAD, 2007).

2.4 Modificações morfoanatômicas nas folhas em resposta ao déficit hídrico.

A adaptação das plantas ao seu ambiente depende, em grande parte, dos aspectos morfológicos das folhas, pois as características químicas e/ou morfológicas da superfície foliar condicionam à quantidade de luz que está sendo absorvida ou refletida, o grau de hidrofobia do órgão, a pressão de vapor do ar em contato com as folhas, a eficiência do órgão em defender-se de parasitas e patógenos e a magnitude da transpiração cuticular (SANTIAGO et al., 2001).

De todos os órgãos, a folha é o mais sensível na percepção dos estresses ambientais, razão pela qual ela exibe mais facilmente modificações morfológicas como consequência dos efeitos dos estresses abióticos (PARÉZ-MARTINÉZ et al., 2004). Essas modificações podem alterar a difusão de dióxido de carbono da cavidade sub-estomática para sítios de carboxilação, e assim contribuir para a manutenção das taxas fotossintéticas, apesar da baixa condutância estomática (EVANS et al. 1994, citado por CHARTZOULAKIS et al., 1999).

A capacidade de reduzir a transpiração permite que as plantas tenham uma melhor gestão da água disponível no solo. Quando as plantas fecham antecipadamente, mas

reversivelmente os estômatos, essa adaptação é modulativa. Uma adaptação modificativa ocorre quando folhas que se desenvolvem em períodos de seca apresentam estômatos menores, porém mais numerosos (LARCHER, 2000).

Segundo Larcher (2000), as folhas das plantas geneticamente adaptadas têm as paredes da epiderme mais fortemente cutinizadas e com maior espessura das camadas de cera. Os estômatos geralmente estão presentes apenas na face inferior das folhas, sendo menores e freqüentemente protegidos por pêlos ou no interior de criptas estomáticas. Deste modo, o ar à volta dos estômatos fica mais úmido e a resistência à movimentação do ar da camada imediatamente adjacente à epiderme (camada limite) aumenta.

As principais alterações morfoanatômicas encontradas em plantas submetidas à deficiência hídrica incluem a redução no tamanho das folhas, o enrolamento da folha, aumento na quantidade de pêlos, desenvolvimento de estômatos profundos, acúmulo de mucilagem e outros compostos secundários no mesofilo (SANTOS e GRISI, 1976; BOSABADILIS e KOFIDIS, 2002), aumento na densidade de estômatos, espessura da cutícula, número de células epidérmicas e células do mesofilo, porém com reduções em seus tamanhos (SANTOS e GRISI, 1976; BOTTI et al., 1998).

Essas modificações anatômicas, entretanto, apresentam variações tanto entre as espécies (SANTOS e GRISI, 1976) como dentro de uma mesma espécie (BOSABADILIS e KOFIDIS, 2002), evidenciando diferenças adaptativas inter e intra-específicas induzidas pelos fatores ambientais.

Santos e Grisi (1976) encontraram uma grande variação na anatomia de oito espécies da caatinga, o que os permitiu dizer que embora as espécies estudadas sejam típicas de região semi-árida, apresentaram estruturas xeromórficas pouco pronunciadas. Estudos realizados por Sayed (1996) em um arbusto do deserto (*Zygophyllum qatarense* Hadidi) demonstraram grande variação na morfologia das folhas em função da época do ano, com a formação de folhas bifoliadas durante a estação chuvosa, as quais apresentaram maior densidade de estômatos e maior área e espessura da folha do que as folhas simples formadas durante a estação seca.

Chartzloulakis et al. (1999) e Bosabalidis e Kofidis (2002) observaram diferenças entre dois cultivares de oliveira com relação à densidade e tamanho dos estômatos quando as plantas foram submetidas a estresse hídrico, utilizando esses parâmetros como ferramenta para indicar o cultivar Koroneiki como mais adaptado às condições de déficit hídrico do que o cultivar Mastoidis. A redução na densidade e tamanho dos estômatos aumenta a resistência estomática, a qual limita o excesso de perda de água por transpiração (PARES-MARTINÉZ et al., 2004).

Em adição, Chartzoulakis et al. (2002a) verificaram que o estresse hídrico provocou redução na espessura de quase todos componentes histológicos de dois cultivares de abacateiro. Como conseqüência, os espaços intercelulares nas folhas de plantas estressadas foram menores do que nas plantas controles, nos dois cultivares.

Com relação ao umbuzeiro, modificações morfoanatômicas em resposta ao estresse hídrico ainda são pouco estudadas, indicando assim a necessidade de mais investigação acerca destas alterações, uma vez que a anatomia pode servir de ferramenta para uma compreensão das relações hídricas e do comportamento estomático desta espécie.

2.5 Aspectos gerais da salinização dos solos

As terras afetadas por sais ocorrem em praticamente todas as regiões climáticas, desde os trópicos úmidos até as regiões polares. Os solos salinos podem ser encontrados nas diferentes altitudes, tanto em locais abaixo do nível do mar, como é o caso do Mar Morto, como em montanhas com altitudes acima de 5000 metros, como o Plateau Tibetano (SINGH e CHATRATH, 2001).

Os solos afetados por sais são aqueles que contêm excessivas concentrações de sais solúveis e/ou sódio trocável (SHAINBERG, 1975). Os sais solúveis do solo consistem, em grande parte e em proporções variadas, dos cátions Na^+ , Ca^{2+} e Mg^{2+} e dos ânions Cl^- e SO_4^{2-} , os demais geralmente são encontrados em baixas concentrações. O excesso desses sais reduz o potencial hídrico da solução do solo e aumenta a condutividade elétrica (CE), de forma que um solo é considerado salino quando a CE do seu extrato de saturação é superior a 4 dS.m^{-1} (MARSCHNER, 1990; AZEVEDO NETO, 2005).

Os solos salinos são abundantes em regiões áridas e semi-áridas, onde a quantidade de chuva é insuficiente para uma lixiviação substancial (MARSCHNER, 1990). Além desses fatores, a má qualidade da água de irrigação, altas taxas de evaporação e baixa precipitação pluviométrica, aliada ao material de origem contribuem para o processo de salinização (SOUZA, 1994).

A salinização dos solos é um sério problema no mundo inteiro e tem crescido substancialmente, causando perdas na produtividade das culturas. Estima-se que 20% das terras cultivadas do mundo e, aproximadamente 1/2 das terras irrigadas estejam afetadas por sais (SAIRAM e TYAGI, 2004).

Apesar das informações sobre as áreas salinizadas no Brasil não serem bem definidas, estima-se que 20% a 25% das áreas irrigadas próximas a rios e fluxos intermitentes apresentam problemas de salinidade e/ou drenagem (FAO, 2006). Aproximadamente 13% do

território brasileiro localiza-se em regiões semi-áridas, onde os solos têm sofrido crescentes aumentos nos processos de salinização (ARAÚJO FILHO et al., 1995).

Os perímetros irrigados do Nordeste têm aproximadamente 23.000 ha, incluindo sete Estados (Bahia, Sergipe, Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte e Ceará) dos quais 25% já se encontram salinizados (FAO, 2006).

Este problema tem crescido consideravelmente nessas regiões, onde a água que é perdida do solo pelo processo de evapotranspiração é maior do que a infiltração da água das chuvas, neste mesmo solo, durante o ano. O resultado é que os sais depositados com a irrigação ficam concentrados no solo, com sérias conseqüências nas terras agrícolas e prejuízo no custo da produção (MARSHNER, 1990; HOPKINS, 1995; LARCHER, 2000).

2.6 Efeito do estresse salino sobre o crescimento, trocas gasosas e ajustamento osmótico das plantas.

Segundo Prisco (1980), a alta concentração de sais causa uma redução no potencial osmótico do solo, gerando uma diminuição do gradiente de potencial hídrico do sistema solo-planta. Dessa forma, as plantas são submetidas a um estresse hídrico, processo esse referido como “seca fisiológica”.

A alta concentração de sais no solo, além de reduzir o potencial hídrico do solo, provoca a ação dos íons sobre o protoplasma, causando distúrbios funcionais e injúrias, uma vez que a taxa de crescimento celular é o produto da extensibilidade da parede celular (ASHRAF e HARRIS, 2004). A resposta imediata das plantas ao estresse salino é a redução e posterior paralisação na expansão da superfície foliar (PARIDA e DAS, 2005). Dessa forma, o balanço osmótico é essencial para o crescimento dos vegetais em meio salino e qualquer falha neste balanço resultará em injúrias semelhantes aos da seca, como a perda de turgescência e a redução no crescimento, resultando em plantas atrofiadas, desidratação e finalmente a morte das células (BLAYLOCK, 1994; ASHRAF, 2004).

Segundo Munns (2005) a inibição do crescimento das plantas sob salinidade ocorre por duas razões. A primeira é devido ao efeito osmótico ou déficit hídrico provocado pela salinidade, que reduz a habilidade de absorção de água. A segunda é devido ao efeito específico dos íons ou excesso de íons, que entra no fluxo de transpiração e eventualmente causa injúria nas folhas, reduzindo assim o crescimento.

A tolerância à salinidade geralmente é avaliada em termos de produção de biomassa em meio salino em comparação com a produção em condições não salinas, ou condições

ideais. Em plantas perenes, a tolerância também pode ser avaliada em termos de sobrevivência (MUNNS, 2002).

A redução no crescimento das plantas em resposta ao estresse salino tem sido observada por diversos autores (NOGUEIRA et al., 1998b; OLIVEIRA et al., 1998; MELONI e MARTINEZ, 1999; BEZERRA NETO e NOGUEIRA, 1999; TÁVORA et al., 2001; VIEGAS et al., 2001, VIÉGAS et al., 2003), permitindo-os classificar as espécies em tolerantes ou sensíveis, porém o nível de tolerância e as taxas de redução a um nível letal variam grandemente entre as diferentes espécies vegetais e dentro de uma mesma espécie (MUNNS, 1993; PARIDA e DAS, 2005).

Reduções de 60% no crescimento da parte aérea foram observadas em plantas de *Leucaena leucocephala* cultivadas em meio hidropônico com 100 mol.m^{-3} de NaCl. Nas mesmas condições, plantas de *Prosopis juliflora* reduziram apenas 15% (VIÉGAS et al., 2003). Em gravioleiras, além da redução na produção de massa seca, a área foliar foi severamente reduzida em plantas cultivadas em meio contendo NaCl na CE de 9 dS.m^{-1} (CAVALCANTE et al., 2001). Azevedo Neto et al. (2004) verificaram reduções na produção de massa seca para a parte aérea em oito genótipos de milho cultivados sob 100 mol.m^{-3} NaCl, no entanto um deles (BR5033) não teve a massa seca da raiz afetada pelo sal. De forma semelhante, Chartzoulakis et al. (2002b) verificaram reduções no crescimento e na partição de massa seca em seis cultivares de oliveira, porém os efeitos da salinidade diferiram entre os cultivares.

A regulação da transpiração tem um significado importante no controle do acúmulo de sal para a parte aérea, uma vez que o transporte de sal ocorre principalmente via fluxo transpiratório (ROBINSON et al., 1997; MUNNS, 2002). Os sais carregados pelo fluxo de transpiração são depositados nas folhas e com a evaporação da água, a concentração de sais gradualmente aumenta, por isso são maiores nas folhas mais velhas do que nas mais jovens (MUNNS, 2002).

As taxas de transpiração geralmente tendem a declinar com o aumento da salinidade na rizosfera (PRISCO et al., 1980; ROBINSON et al., 1997; SILVA, J. V. et al., 2003b). Essa tendência foi observada em goiabeira (TÁVORA et al., 2001), oliveira (LORETO et al., 2003), limoeiro (CRUZ et al., 2003), pinheira (NOGUEIRA et al., 2004) e pessegueiro (MASSAI et al., 2004).

A tolerância ao estresse salino é um fenômeno complexo que deve envolver mudanças tanto no desenvolvimento como nos processos fisiológicos e bioquímicos (DELAUNEY e VERMA, 1993; HARE e CRESS, 1997). Em halófitas terrestres, a alta tolerância ao sal é baseada principalmente na inclusão de sais e sua utilização para a manutenção da turgescência

foliar ou na substituição do K^+ pelo Na^+ em várias funções metabólicas (MARSCHNER, 1990). Em glicófitas, a principal determinante da tolerância é a exclusão do sal da parte aérea (BINZEL et al., 1988; ROBINSON et al. 1997; MUNNS, 2002), que pode ocorrer pela habilidade de limitar a absorção e/ou transportar os íons (principalmente Na^+ e Cl^-) da raiz para a parte aérea, como observado por Chartzoulakis et al. (2002b) em seis cultivares de oliva.

Em adição, a síntese de moléculas osmoprotetoras como sacarose, prolina, betaína e trealose permitem o ajustamento osmótico, favorecendo a absorção de água e a manutenção da turgescência foliar (SERRAJ e SINCLAIR, 2002). Os solutos orgânicos além de atuarem na homeostase iônica e na estabilização de algumas macromoléculas e organelas, favorecem a manutenção da integridade da membrana (BOHNERT e SHEN, 1999; BRAY et al., 2000). Contudo, os ajustes metabólicos dependerão do genótipo, da intensidade e duração do estresse e das etapas ontogenéticas em que essas alterações ocorrerão (SORIANO, 1980).

O acúmulo de solutos orgânicos em resposta à salinidade foi estudado em milho (AZEVEDO NETO et al., 2004), sorgo (SILVA, J. V. et al. 2003a; LACERDA et al., 2003, LACERDA et al., 2006), feijão (COSTA et al., 2003; SILVA, J. V. et al., 2003b), amora (AGASTIAN et al., 2000), cajueiro (VIÉGAS e SILVEIRA, 1999; SILVEIRA et al., 2003), algaroba, leucena, jurema preta e angico vermelho (VIÉGAS et al., 2003), entre outras espécies.

Existem poucos estudos com relação às respostas do umbuzeiro sob condições salinas. Neves et al. (2004) classificaram o umbuzeiro como moderadamente tolerante a salinidade quando esta espécie é cultivada em até 31 mM de NaCl em solução nutritiva, utilizando como base a redução na produção de matéria seca.

Como o umbuzeiro é uma espécie nativa do semi-árido brasileiro e devido ao grande problema de salinização das áreas de agricultura, nos perguntamos se o umbuzeiro pode ser cultivado em solos salinos nas regiões semi-áridas, e quais os níveis de NaCl que podem comprometer o crescimento inicial e as relações hídricas nesta espécie.

Os programas de melhoramento não podem ser bem sucedidos na ausência de dados sobre os mecanismos fisiológicos utilizados pelas plantas para enfrentar o estresse salino. Uma compreensão precisa dos mecanismos de tolerância pode ajudar a solucionar a base genética das características sobre a herança e padrões de dominância da tolerância ao sal (SINGH e CHATRATH, 2001).

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**Physio-anatomical changes induced by intermittent drought in
four umbu tree genotypes**

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Physio-anatomical changes induced by intermittent drought in four umbu tree genotypes*

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Abstract

Transpiration (E), diffusive resistance (r_s) and anatomical parameters were measured in plants of four grafted umbu tree genotypes (GBUs 44, 48, 50 and 68) in order to evaluate alterations induced by intermittent drought and possible genotypic variations. Transpiration measurements were taken daily until stomatal closure by withholding water as well as when the plants were re-watered and the watering interrupted again, repeating this cycle for a period of 31 days (stress period). The control plants were also irrigated daily. Regularity in the stomatal closure was observed throughout the watering period, exhibiting intra-specific differences. Stomatal behavior of GBU 44 and GBU 68 were influenced by air temperature (T_{air}) and vapor pressure deficit (VPD), whereas GBU 50 was influenced by photosynthetically active radiation (PAR). GBU 48 had no correlation with these environmental factors, suggesting the water exerted the major influence on this genotype.

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Anatomical alterations in response to drought were observed in stomatal density (SD), reductions in the stomatal index (SI) and stomatal aperture size (SA). The anatomical features of the GBU 48 genotype remained unaltered. There was an inversion in tissue proportion in GBU 44 under stress conditions, reducing the spongy parenchyma thickness and increasing palisade parenchyma. The inverse occurred with GBU 68, while the remaining genotypes were unaltered. These results suggest that there are physiological and anatomical differences between genotypes, as evident in the different responses to intermittent drought.

Key words: diffusive resistance; *Spondias tuberosa*, stomatal density; transpiration; water deficit

1. Introduction

Water deficit is known to alter physiological processes as well as induce morphological and anatomical changes in many plant species. These changes mainly occur in gas exchange, which influences the photosynthetic process and synthesis of organic solutes (Chartzoulakis et al., 2002). Changes also occur in all histological components of the leaf (Bosabalidis and Kofidis, 2002).

Plants grown in arid and semi-arid environments are exposed to long periods of water deficit and have developed adaptations in order to tolerate drought. The reduction in photosynthetic rate associated with stomatal closure due to changes in leaf water status is commonly observed in plants grown under water deficit conditions (Chartzoulakis et al., 1999; Nogueira et al., 2001; Silva et al., 2003). As water availability in the soil decreases, the transpiration rate also decreases as a result of stomatal closure. The instantaneous control of the transpiration stream by the stomata is an important defense mechanism used by many

species living in arid environments in order to avoid excessive water loss by transpiration (Gucci et al., 1996; Nogueira et al., 1998; Silva et al., 2004) and eventual death by desiccation (Silva et al., 2000).

Although water is the determinant factor in the stomatal aperture mechanism in plants under water deficit, several authors have demonstrated the influence of environmental factors on stomatal behavior in a number of species, such as air temperature (Silva et al., 2003), light and vapor pressure deficit (Gucci et al., 1996; Thomas and Eamus, 2002; Gomes et al., 2004).

Environmental stress can result in both physiological and anatomical changes in the leaf (Mott and Michaelson, 1991). Changes in the anatomical characteristics of the leaf are known to alter the diffusion of CO₂ conductance from the substomatal cavities to carboxylation sites and thus contribute toward the maintenance of photosynthetic rates despite the low stomatal conductance (Evans et al., 1994, cited by Chartzoulakis et al., 1999). Under water deficit conditions, an increase in stomata density and the number of smaller-sized mesophyll cells of all histological components of the leaf have been observed, which result in improved control of water loss (Bosabalidis and Kofidis, 2002; Chartzoulakis et al., 2002).

The umbu tree (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda.) is a xerophytic tree belonging to the Anacardiaceae that produces edible fruit for humans and animals alike. It is native from the dry lands of northeastern Brazil known as the Caatinga and represents a source income for small farmers. The significant fruit production and use can contribute greatly to regional development in semi-arid areas (Cavalcanti et al., 1999). Due to the considerable variability in shape, canopy architecture, productivity, and physiochemical characteristics of the fruit, the Brazilian Institute of Agricultural Research for the Semi-arid Tropics (Embrapa-CPATSA) has implanted an active germplasm bank on umbu trees (GBU) formed by 78 genotypes (Oliveira et al., 2004). The GBU 44, 48, 50 and 68 genotypes are characterized as

giant umbu, as mean weights of their fruit are 86.7g, 75.30 g, 85.0 g and 96.7 g, respectively (Santos et al., 1999). More than 40,000 GBU 48 seedlings have been distributed to small farmers in the semi-arid region. Four Observation Units have been implanted using this genotype. Two are located in the city of Floresta, Pernambuco, Brazil and another two are located in Caicó, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil.

Only a few studies have addresses the physiological and anatomical alterations in the umbu genotypes in response to water deficit. According to Lima Filho (2004), field observations have demonstrated that umbu trees limit water loss by transpiration through strict stomatal control, thereby assuring adequate water economy. The present study was carried out to test the hypothesis that the ability to overcome drought differs between the genotypes and physiological alterations may be explained by anatomical changes. Thus, the objective was to assess alterations in water vapor gas exchange and anatomical changes induced by intermittent drought in four umbu tree genotypes.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Plant material, growth and experimental design:

Research was carried out in greenhouse conditions at the Laboratory of Plant Physiology of the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco (UFRPE), Brazil, from November to December 2005. Six-month-old grafted umbu tree seedlings (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda) were provided by Embrapa Semi-Árido (CPATSA), Petrolina, Pernambuco, Brazil. The plants were grown in containers with 8 kg of Argisoil provided by the same company, with loam-sandy texture, 71% sand, 17% clay, 12% silt and a global density of 1.51 g cm⁻³; 9.97% humidity in field capacity (-33 kPa) and 4.01% at the permanent wilting point (-1500 kPa). The soil chemical analysis was performed at the Laboratory of Soil Fertility (UFRPE). The soil contained 41 mg dm⁻³ of P, 0.20 cmol_c dm⁻³

of Na^+ , $0.33 \text{ cmol}_c \text{ dm}^{-3}$ of K^+ ; $7.15 \text{ cmol}_c \text{ dm}^{-3}$ of $\text{Ca}^{2+} + \text{Mg}^{2+}$; $5.15 \text{ cmol}_c \text{ dm}^{-3}$ of Ca^{2+} and $0.05 \text{ cmol}_c \text{ dm}^{-3}$ of Al^{3+} . In order to simulate the environmental conditions, soil correction was not performed. A randomized 4X2 factorial experimental design was used, corresponding to four umbu tree genotypes (GBU 44, GBU 48, GBU 50 and GBU 68) and two water treatments (control – with daily watering until lixiviation; and stressed – withholding water until plants exhibited stomatal closure, then watering again), with six replications.

2.2 Transpiration and diffusive resistance:

Transpiration (E) and diffusive resistance (r_s) were measured using a steady state porometer, model LI-1600 (LI-COR, Inc. Lincoln, NE, USA), which set the null point near humidity in the greenhouse. As the porometer gave us E values in $\mu\text{g}\cdot\text{cm}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$, the values were converted to $\text{mmol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$. Two mature and fully expanded leaves located in middle of each plant were sampled. Measurements were carried out daily between 9 and 10 am. Air temperature (T_{air}), photosynthetic active radiation (PAR) and air relative humidity (RH) measurements were also taken and the vapor pressure deficit was calculated (VPD). These variables exhibited variations from $30.24 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ to $34.14 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$; $179.7 \mu\text{mol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ to $470.8 \mu\text{mol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$, 28.7% to 43.3% and 2.46 kPa to 3.75 kPa, respectively. Figure 1 displays the means of the climatic parameters.

2.3 Soil moisture:

Soil humidity was determined from three soil samples of each treatment and each genotype, totaling 24 samples. Samples were taken when plants exhibited stomatal closure. The soil was collected after the assessment of stomatal behavior and before re-watering. Soil moisture was determined using the equation: $\theta = (\text{SWW} - \text{SDW})/\text{SDW} \times 100$, where θ = soil humidity in the mass base; SWW= soil wet weight; SDW= soil dry weight. The soil-water

characteristic curve (SWCC) was determined through a Richards's membrane pressure chamber. This curve was used to estimate the soil water potential when stomatal closure occurred.

2.4 Stomatal density, stomatal index, stomatal aperture size and proportions between tissues:

Twelve leaves per treatment from each genotype were collected at the end of the experimental period (after 31-stress days) for anatomical analysis. The leaves were rinsed in running water, dried on absorbent paper and fixed for 48 h in 37 to 40% formaldehyde, 50% glacial acetic acid and ethyl alcohol (1:1:18 v/v). The leaves were then transferred to 70% ethanol (Johansen, 1940) and sent to the Anatomy Laboratory of the Universidade Federal of Minas Gerais, where the anatomical analysis was performed. Cross and paradermal freehand sections were taken from the intermediate region of the leaves, stained with Astra Blue and safranin and placed on semi-permanent glass slides. Epidermal dissociation was performed using the Jeffrey method [10% chromic acid, 10% nitric acid (1:1v/v)], as described by Kraus and Arduin (1997). Permanent slides were mounted after dehydration of the leaves in a butanolic series (Johansen 1940), unfiltered in Paraplast® (Kraus and Arduin 1997), cut on a Jung Biocut® rotary microtome and submitted to Astra Blue and safranin staining (Kraus and Arduin 1997). The slices were performed in Entelan® following the usual plant anatomy method for light microscopy.

Leaf cell and tissue structures from each treatment and genotype were characterized. The comparison and identification of variations between treatments and genotypes were performed by measuring stomatal density (SD) and the number of cells (mm^2), using a lit chamber coupled to an Olympus CH30 microscope, in 20 areas of 0.01mm^2 (40x objective); area was gauged by an Olympus micrometric slide. Stomatal index (SI) was calculated according to Cutter (1986). Stomatal aperture size (SA) was calculated using the ellipse

formula ($A = a.b.\pi$, where a = half-axis of larger diameter and b = half-axis of smaller diameter) after digital imaging of the stomata using a Motic[®] camera and respective program. Leaf thickness and tissue proportions were determined by linear measurements of cross-sections using the digitalized images from the Motic[®] system. Photomicrography was performed using an Olympus BH2 microscope with the AD photographic system.

2.5 Statistical analysis:

Data were submitted to analysis of variance (ANOVA) and means compared by Tukey's multiple range test ($P < 0.05$), using a statistical program (Statistica version 6.0.).

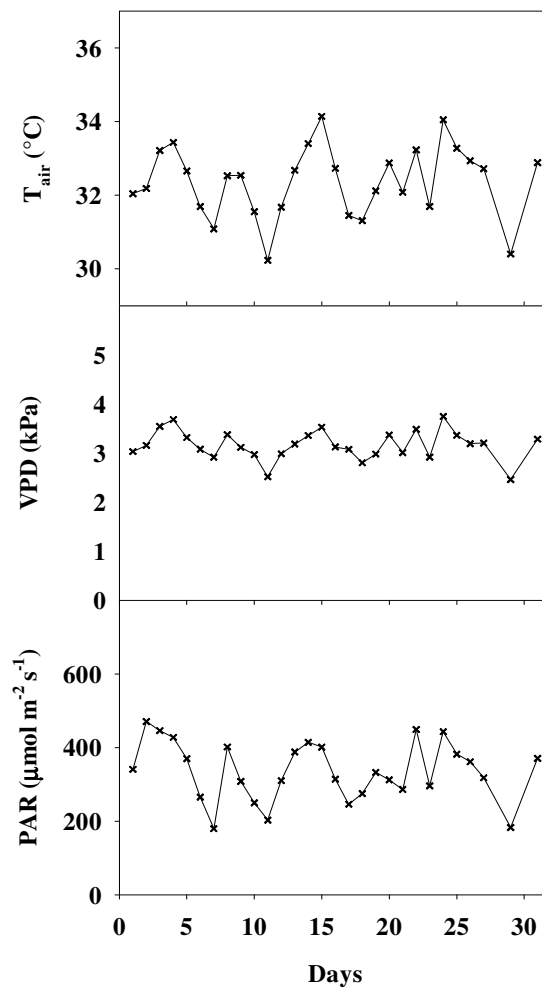


Figure 1. Air temperature (T_{air}), vapor pressure deficit (VPD), and photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) measured during the experimental period. Data were taken between 9-10h in green house conditions.

3. Results

The intermittent drought induced significant reductions in transpiration rates (E) in all genotypes studied (Tab. 1). Highest E was observed in GBU 48 irrespective of the treatments applied, while GBU 68 had the lowest E when cultivated under adequate water availability in the soil. However, latter genotype did not differ from the GBU 44 and GBU 50 genotypes when submitted to water deficit.

Table 1. Transpiration rates (E) of four grafted umbu trees genotypes grown in greenhouse conditions under intermittent drought. Means of 145 assessment made along the stress period (31 days) are shown.

Genotypes	E (mmol.m ⁻² .s ⁻¹)	
	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	4.86 aB	1.96 bB
GBU 48	6.52 aA	2.71 bA
GBU 50	4.75 aB	1.66 bB
GBU 68	3.60 aC	1.68 bB

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and capital letters among genotypes differ by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$).

The stomata of the GBU 68 genotype appeared more drought-sensitive, reducing its stomatal aperture faster than the other genotypes (Tab. 2). GBU 68 generally exhibited stomatal closure in five-day intervals, amounting to five re-watering sessions during the experimental stress period (31 days). GBU 44, GBU 48 and GBU 50 followed this sensitivity pattern, with GBU 50 maintaining the stomata open for a higher period of time than the others (about seven days) (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Re-watering intervals (days) of four grafted umbu trees genotypes relative to stomatal closure.

Genotypes	Re-watering intervals (days)					Mean
	1 st	2 ^{sn}	3 rd	4 th	5 th	
	re-watering	re-watering	re-watering	re-watering	re-watering	
GBU 44	5	6	5	5	5	5.2
GBU 48	5	7	7	5	-	6
GBU 50	5	8	7	6	-	6.5
GBU 68	4	5	6	5	4	4.8

Figure 2 clearly shows that GBU 44 and GBU 68 recovered their transpiration rate more quickly than GBU 48 and GBU 50, reaching equal to or near control plant values after 24 h of re-watering. GBU 48 and GBU 50 generally maintained lower E values after re-watering in comparison to control plants. Recovery was observed in these genotypes only after 21 and 26 days, respectively, under intermittent drought conditions. When plants exhibited stomatal closure, soil moisture was near the permanent wilting point (-15 atm) (Fig. 2, Tab. 3).

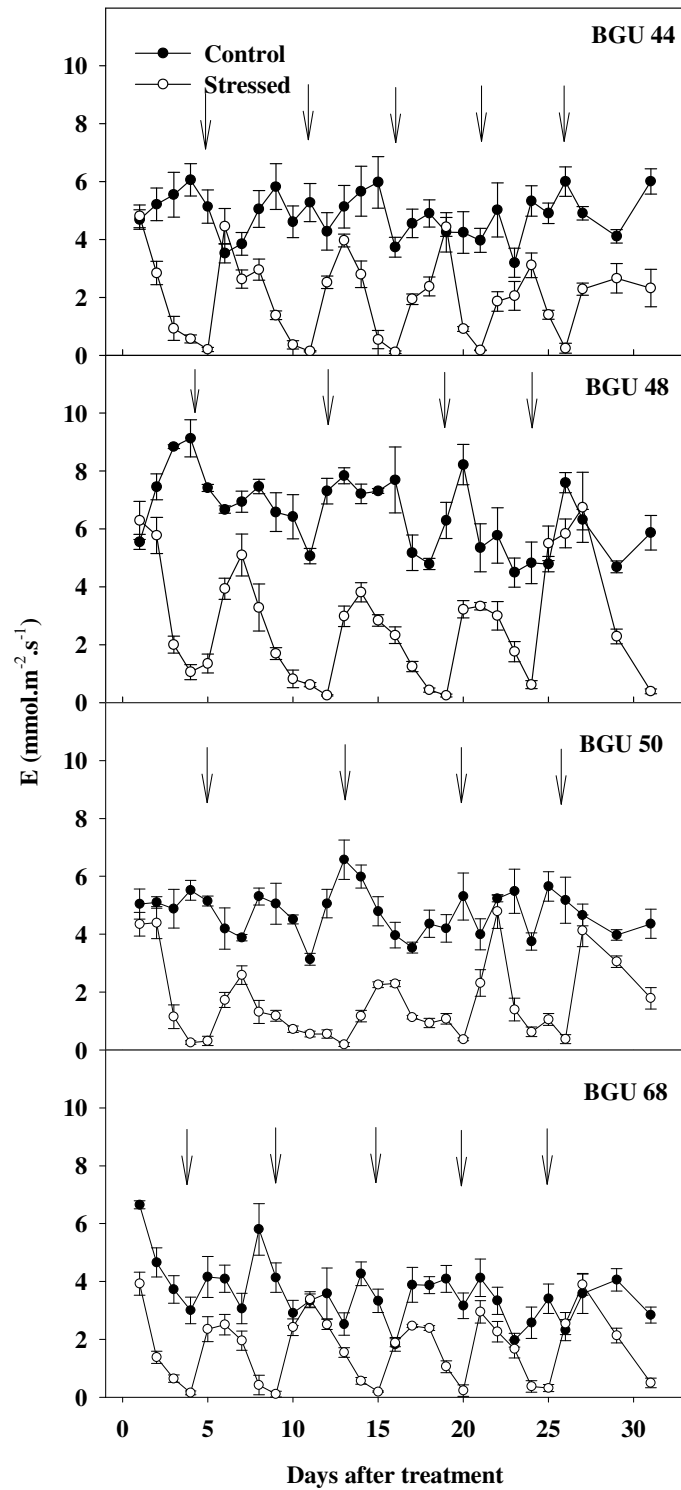


Figure 2. Transpiration (E) in four grafted umbu trees genotypes grown in greenhouse conditions under intermittent drought and re-watered when presented stomatal closure. Arrows indicate the re-watering days. Means \pm Stand-deviation of six replicates are shown.

Table 3. Percent soil moisture on weight basis of four grafted umbu genotypes before perform re-watering in stressed plants for occasion of stomatal closure. The sample were taken for occasion of stomatal closure (1st, 2^{sn}, 3rd, and 4th) and in the end of the experimental period (harvest).

Genotypes	Soil moisture (%)				
	1 st	2 ^{sn}	3 rd	4 th	Harvest
Control					
GBU 44	15.76	15.81	14.74	17.17	17.35
GBU 48	19.34	16.89	19.00	15.81	16.52
GBU 50	18.69	17.27	16.52	16.02	17.37
GBU 68	17.55	19.59	16.37	11.26	18.81
Stressed					
GBU 44	5.76	3.39	3.33	3.72	1.89
GBU 48	6.07	3.55	3.16	3.28	1.69
GBU 50	8.98	3.26	4.06	2.97	2.31
GBU 68	4.60	3.28	3.19	3.92	3.89

Although significant differences relative to transpiration were observed between genotypes ($P < 0.01$), diffusive resistance (r_s) did not differ significantly in control plants, suggesting that E can exhibit variations for the same r_s value (Tab. 4). However, intermittent drought induced increases in r_s for most of the genotypes studied, with a greater increase in GBU 68. This genotype exhibited the highest r_s recorded as well as the greatest variation in r_s values (Fig. 3). The GBUs 44 and 68 genotypes exhibited a similar pattern of behavior, with high r_s and great variation between values, whereas the GBU 48 and 50 genotypes exhibited lower r_s and little variation.

Table 4. Difusive resistance (r_s) of four grafted umbu trees genotypes grown in greenhouse conditions under intermittent drought. Means of 145 assessment made along the stress period are shown (31 days).

Genotypes	r_s (s.cm ⁻¹)	
	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	1.84 bA	19.30 aA
GBU 48	1.70 aA	10.69 aB
GBU 50	2.38 bA	15.38 aAB
GBU 68	3.37 bA	25.19 aA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and capital letters among genotypes, differ by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$).

Stomatal closure occurred with lower r_s values in GBU 48, whereas the GBU 68 and 44 genotypes considerably increased r_s values to close their stomata. For some genotypes, values of r_s around 20 s.cm⁻¹ has limited transpiration, as observed in GBU48 (Fig. 3 and 4), while other genotypes have considerably increased r_s values to close stomata (GBU 44 and 68). In general, E values less than 0.5 mmol.m⁻².s⁻¹ were associated to high r_s values (Fig. 4).

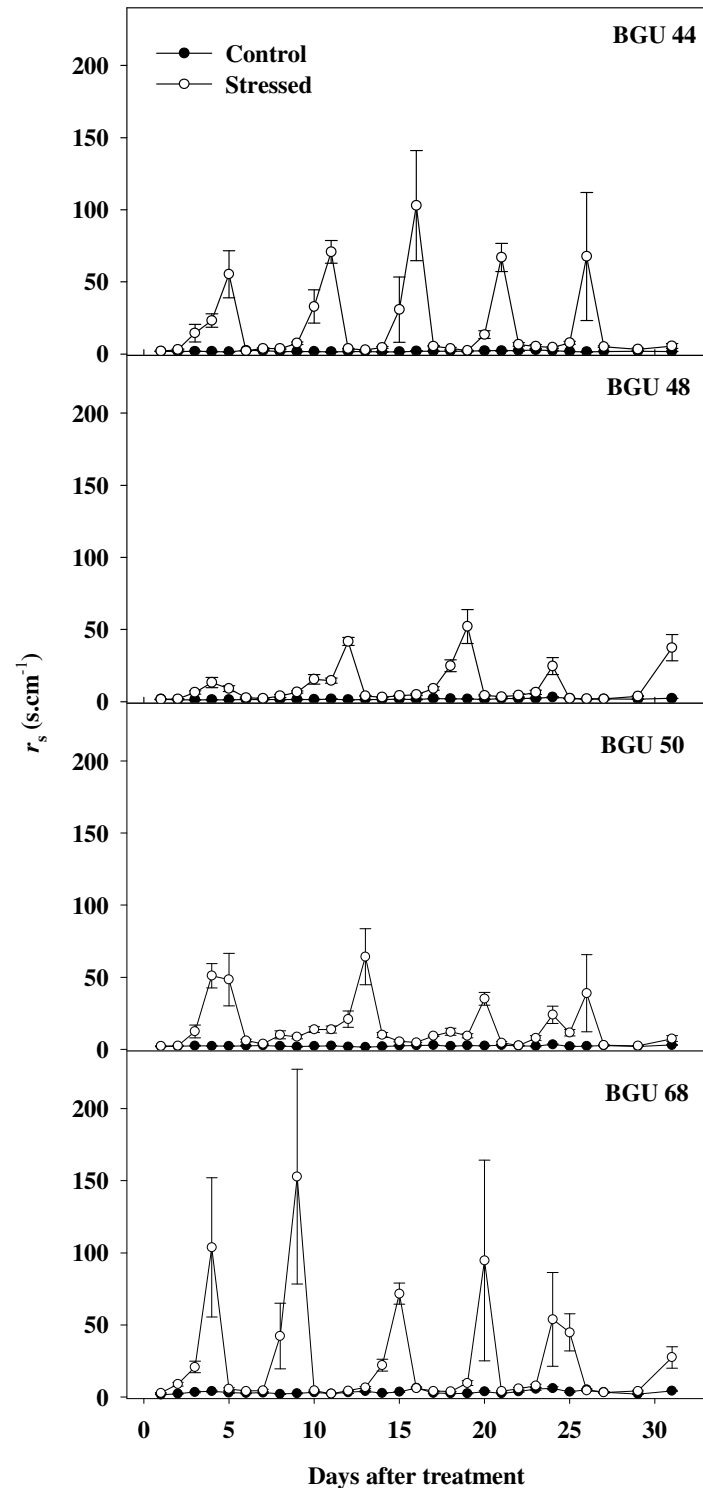


Figure 3. Diffusive resistance (r_s) in four grafted umbu trees genotypes grown in greenhouse conditions under intermittent drought and re-watered when presented stomatal closure. Arrows indicate the re-watering days. Means \pm Stand-deviation of six replicates are shown.

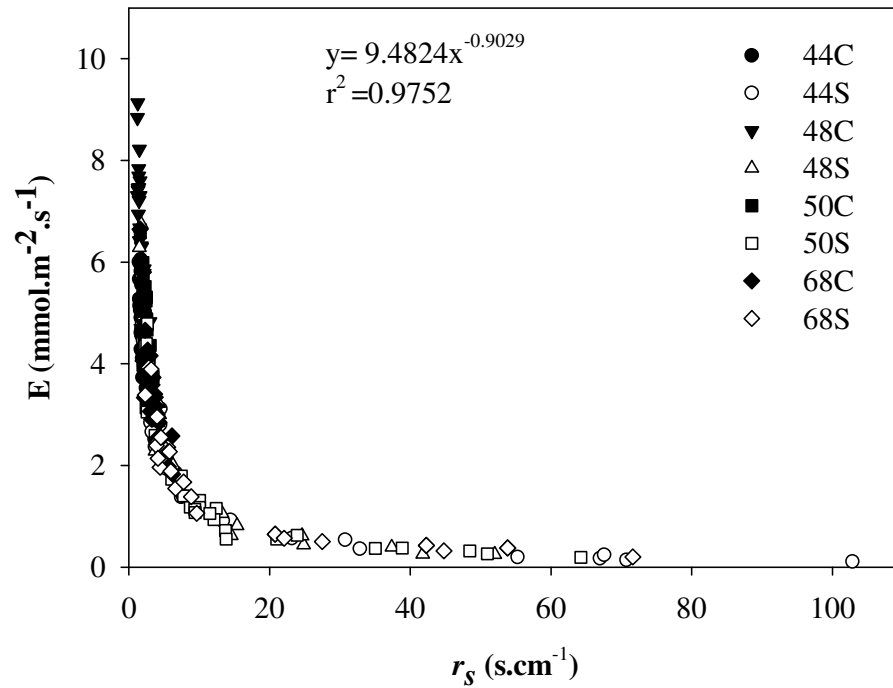


Figure 4. Transpiration alterations (E) relative to diffusive resistance (r_s) in grafted umbu trees genotypes grown under intermittent drought. The numbers 44, 48, 50 and 68 represent different genotypes and the letters represent water treatments: control (C) and stressed (S) by cycles of withholding water.

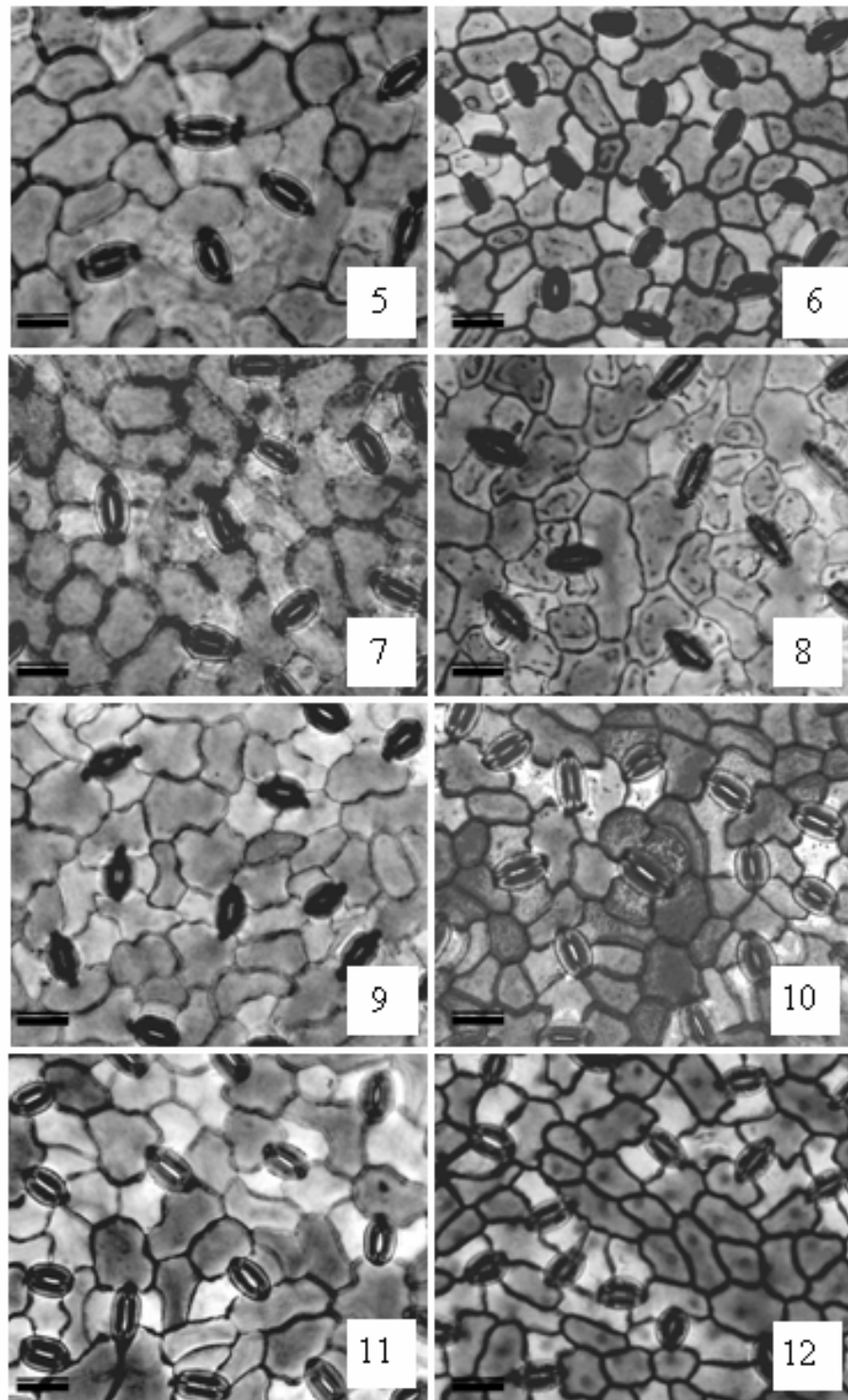
Photosynthetic active radiation (PAR) had a positive correlation with transpiration in GBU 50 alone, while relative humidity (RH), air temperature (T_{air}) and vapor pressure deficit (VPD) had a correlation with E in GBU 44 (Tab. 5). This genotype seems to undergo more of an influence from climatic parameters than the others. In the GBU 68 genotype, there was a negative correlation between RH and r_s and a positive correlation between r_s and T_{air} as well as VPD. In GBU 48, however, there were no correlations with the environmental parameters assessed. This demonstrates that water was the sole determinant factor to stomatal closure in GBU 48.

Table 5. Matrix of simple correlation between environmental (PAR, T_{air} , RH, and VPD) and physiological (E and r_s) factors of four grafted umbu tree genotypes grown in greenhouse conditions under intermittent drought.

Parameters	Genotypes			
	GBU 44	GBU 48	GBU 50	GBU 68
E X r_s	-0.690 **	-0.681 **	-0.691 **	-0.638 **
E X PAR	0.208 ^{NS}	0.151 ^{NS}	0.463 **	0.203 ^{NS}
E X RH	0.390 **	-0.049 ^{NS}	-0.131 ^{NS}	0.138 ^{NS}
E X T_{air}	-0.380 **	0.032 ^{NS}	0.229 ^{NS}	-0.197 ^{NS}
E X VPD	-0.417 **	0.032 ^{NS}	0.196 ^{NS}	-0.190 ^{NS}
r_s X PAR	-0.043 ^{NS}	-0.0003 ^{NS}	-0.122 ^{NS}	0.024 ^{NS}
r_s X RH	-0.171 ^{NS}	-0.066 ^{NS}	-0.170 ^{NS}	-0.290 *
r_s X T_{air}	0.259 *	0.0642 ^{NS}	0.054 ^{NS}	0.266 *
r_s X VPD	0.223 ^{NS}	0.078 ^{NS}	0.141 ^{NS}	0.306 **

^{NS}Non significant ; * Significant ($P<0.05$) ; ** Significant ($P<0.01$)

The umbu plants exhibited anomocytic stomata located on the lower surface of the leaves (Fig.5-12). We rarely found isolated stomata on the upper surface, which does not characterize an amphistomatous leaf. There were significant differences ($P<0.01$) between genotypes regarding some anatomical parameters. GBU 50 had the highest stomatal density (SD) under control conditions, whereas GBU 44 had higher SD under stress conditions (Tab. 6). Short-term intermittent drought (31 days) induced an increase in SD in GBU 44 alone. Unexpectedly, there was a significant reduction in SD in GBU 50. The remaining genotypes were unaltered (Tab. 6).



Figures 5–12. Abaxial epiderms of four grafted umbu trees genotypes (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda). Genotypes: 5–6. GBU 44; 7–8. GBU 48; 9–10. GBU 50; 11–12. GBU 68. Treatments: Control (5, 7, 9, 11) and stressed (6, 8, 10, 12). Bars = 20 μm.

Significant differences between genotypes were also observed regarding the stomatal index (SI) ($P<0.01$). Under control conditions, GBU 50 had a higher SI in comparison to the other genotypes. Under stress conditions, the SI was reduced in both GBU 50 and 44. The remaining genotypes were unchanged (Tab. 6). There was significant difference in stomatal aperture (SA) ($P<0.01$). GBU 68 had the highest SA values under both control and stress conditions (Tab. 6). Reductions in SA were observed in GBU 44 and 68 under stress conditions. This reduction was approximately 50% in GBU 44 and 28.6% in GBU 68.

Table 6. Stomatal density (SD), stomatal index (SI), and stomatal aperture size (SA) in four umbu tree genotypes after 31 days under intermittent drought.

Genotypes	Stomatal density (mm ²)		Stomatal index (%)		Stomata aperture size (mm)	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	340 bB	535 aA	20.84 aAB	18.00 bA	41.63 aB	20.34 bC
GBU 48	300 aB	340 aB	17.58 aC	15.41 aA	39.94 aB	33.71 aB
GBU 50	497.5 aA	215 bC	21.19 aA	12.62 bB	38.15 aB	35.62 aB
GBU 68	385 aB	330 aB	18.36 aBC	17.33 aA	74.73 aA	53.33 bA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and capital letters among genotypes differ by Tukey's test ($P<0.05$).

Differences between GBU 44 and GBU 68 were observed regarding tissue proportion as a consequence of the inversion in both spongy and palisade parenchyma thickness that occurred in these genotypes (Tab. 7). The same was not observed in GBU 48 and GBU 50. Drought induced a reduction in spongy parenchyma and an increase in palisade parenchyma thickness in GBU 44, which is a classic plant response to water deficit (Larcher, 2003), whereas GBU 68 increased spongy parenchyma and reduced palisade parenchyma.

Comparing control treatments between genotypes, GBU 68 was different from the others, exhibiting the largest lower surface thickness, least spongy parenchyma and largest palisade parenchyma thickness. GBU 44 had the lowest surface thickness (Tab. 7). Comparing genotypes of the stressed plants, GBU 44 was the most different genotype, with the lowest lower proportion of spongy parenchyma and highest proportion of palisade parenchyma. Total leaf thickness was not altered by any treatment.

Table 7. Abaxial epiderm, spongy parenchyma, palisade parenchyma, and adaxial epiderm tickness (μm) of four umbu trees genotypes after 31 days grown under intermittent drought.

Genotypes	Abaxial epidermis (μm)		Adaxial epidermis (μm)	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	4.57 aB	4.53 aB	7.3 aB	8.2 aA
GBU 48	4.13 aB	4.57 aB	8.57 aA	9.27 aA
GBU 50	4.53 aB	4.30 aB	8.00 aAB	8.33 aA
GBU 68	5.50 aA	5.87 aA	9.13 aA	9.40 aA
	Palisade parenchyma (μm)		Spongy parenchyma (μm)	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	47.57 aA	40.03 bB	40.70 bAB	47.23 aA
GBU 48	48.93 aA	49.73 aA	38.40 aB	36.50 aBC
GBU 50	47.47 aA	47.87 aA	40.03 aAB	39.73 aB
GBU 68	43.07 bB	49.27 aA	42.37 aA	35.70 bC

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and capital letters among genotypes differ by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$).

4. Discussion

There were significant differences between genotypes with regard to water vapor gas exchange ($P < 0.05$). Intra-specific differences were observed in transpiration rates, time

intervals and recovery time (Tabs.1 and 2, Figs. 2 and 3). These results have also been observed in another species. Gomes et al (2004) found significant reductions on transpiration and stomatal conductance in orange trees after seven days of withholding water. Nogueira and Silva (2002) observed similar results for *Schinopsis brasiliensis*, with reductions in E as soil drought was increased after seven days of withholding water.

Maize plants under water deficit recovered stomatal conductance after just three days of re-watering (Bergonci and Pereira, 2002). The same behavior was observed in grafted orange plants cv. 'Valência' (Medina and Machado, 1998), in which recovery occurred after just two days of re-watering. These facts suggest that there is a chemical communication between the roots and shoots, inducing stomatal movement (Schurr et al., 1992; Tardieu et al., 1992), which must be triggered by a growth substance, most likely ABA produced in the roots (Tardieu et al., 1992; Davies et al., 1994, Bergonci and Pereira, 2002). Thomas and Eamus (1999) found that ABA accumulation in the leaves of *Eucalyptus tetrodonta* contributed toward a decrease in stomatal conductance. When plants face periods of water deficit, ABA synthesis increases in the roots and is transported to the shoot through the xylem, causing stomatal closure (Taiz and Zeiger, 2002; Gomes et al., 2004). This hypothesis explains the behavior of the GBU 48 and 50 umbu genotypes. Further research on this topic should be pursued.

In the present study, the umbu genotypes decreased transpiration in intervals ranging from 5 to 7 days (Tab. 2) when soil humidity was near the permanent wilting point (Tab. 3). BGU 68 was more drought-sensitive than the other genotypes. As the plants did not exhibit reduced leaf water potential at the time (data not shown), reductions in E were a result of the reduction in soil water content. Similar results were found in grafted orange plants var. "Valência", with a decrease in stomatal conductance between the 4th and 5th days after withholding water. This result was caused more in response to the low soil moisture rather than the leaf water potential (Medina and Machado, 1998). Sasaki and Machado (1999)

found that a reduction in soil moisture from 16% to 12% induced significant E reductions in two wheat cultivars, although it did not significantly affect photosynthesis. The authors suggest that the stomatal aperture responds more quickly to soil water content variations than to leaf water potential and must be a response to a signal received and emitted by the roots.

How the stomata respond to environmental changes is related to interactions between relative humidity, transpiration and leaf water potential. A high difference in the vapor pressure deficit between the leaf and air results in stomatal closure (Thomas and Eamus, 1999; Larcher 2000). However, Thomas et al. (2000) found increases in E when VPD increased in five woody species from Australia during the rainy season, whereas E remained unchanged in the dry season despite increases in VPD. Nogueira et al. (2001) observed that the stomatal behavior in Surinam cherry plants (*Malpighia emarginata* D.C.) throughout the water stress period was more dependent on the water potential than of other environmental factors such as light and relative humidity. In orange plants, Gomes et al. (2004) observed that decreases in photosynthesis rates, transpiration and stomatal conductance in both watered and non-watered plants were the result of alterations in climatic changes such as T_{air} , VPD and PAR. Thus, plants respond differently under stress conditions, as observed in the present study on umbu plants, with the soil water availability certainly the most important environmental factor.

The stomatal density (SD) reductions in GBU 50 (Tab. 6) may result in better water loss control, which should explain the longer transpiration time. However, as stomatal differentiation is a process that occurs during leaf development (Alquini et al., 2004), the reductions in SD occurred soon after beginning the applied stress (when leaves were young); maturity was only reached at the end of the experimental period, precisely when gas exchange recovery was observed. This is in agreement with data in studies by Cominelli et al. (2005) and Inamullah and Akihiro (2005), who demonstrated the importance of the stomata in response to water stress. Thus, the initial changes observed in all the genotypes

studied should be interpreted as modulative (Larcher, 2000), thereby permitting better water availability management.

The anatomical alterations in GBU 44 and 50 demonstrate that these genotypes have higher phenotypic plasticity relative to genotypic expression regarding stomatal differentiation (Tabs. 6 and 7). Changes in leaf morphology as a response to water stress can be considerable (Rojas et al. 2005). However, this was not observed in umbu plants, even with significant data on this species. Reductions in the stomatal index were also rather limited in the umbu genotypes, observed only in GBU 44 and 50. A reduction in the stomatal index is an expected response in plants submitted to water stress, as observed in two avocado cultivars (Chartzoulakis et al., 2002) as well as in *Trigonella foenum-graecum* L (Ranjitha-Kumari et al., 1999) and in response to water deficit and high temperature in *Leymus chinensis* (Xu and Zhou, 2005).

The variation in stomatal aperture is decisive to the capacity of adaptation of the genotypes, as the aperture size is an important factor in stress response (Zhu et al. 2005) and plays a significant role in water-loss control processes by transpiration (Cominelli et al., 2005). As the survival of plants growing in drought conditions is associated to water economy, stomata in the leaves perform an important role in restricting water loss by transpiration (Bosabalidis and Kofidis, 2002). Changes such as an increase in stomata density and leaf thickness, as demonstrated in *Zygophyllum qatarense* Hadidi during the dry season (Sayed, 1996), and a reduction in stomata size (Bosabalidis and Kofidis, 2002), as observed in two olive cultivars submitted to intermittent drought, are examples of the adaptations to drought conditions. Studies on two olive cultivars demonstrate that anatomical changes in response to drought cycles occur in the long term (Chartzoulakis et al., 1999). Thus, it can be inferred that anatomical aspects of umbu trees may be altered with the prolongation drought cycles, as is classically expected in plants with phenotypic plasticity in

heterogeneous environments (Bradshaw, 1965; Bradshaw and Hardwick, 1989; Bussotti et al., 1995).

The anatomical differences observed in the umbu genotypes do not consistently support the physiological differences found in the present study. The lower E values found in GBU 68 led us to expect that this genotype would exhibit lower stomatal density or a reduction in stomata size. This, however, was not observed (Tab. 6). Similarly, the high transpiration rates observed in GBU 48 should be explained by a higher stomatal density or aperture size, which should facilitate stomatal conductance and explain the lower r_s when exposed to adequate soil water availability. However, the genotypes that had reductions in stomata aperture size (GBU 44 and GBU 68) were those that were capable of recovering transpiration rates after re-watering. Although there was no correlation between aperture size and transpiration recovery, these results suggest that morphological changes have an important physiological implication, likely related to the speed of the guard cell response.

There were differences in tissue proportions between genotypes. Drought induced a reduction in spongy parenchyma and an increase in palisade parenchyma thickness in GBU 44. These anatomical changes may result in higher photosynthetic efficiency in GBU 44, as the palisade parenchyma contains the most photosynthetic cells. However, we cannot make this claim, as photosynthesis was not measured in the present study, but we can affirm that drought induces different responses in different umbu tree genotypes.

5. Conclusions

Summarizing, stomatal responses to water deficit suggest that stomatal closure is the first line of defense from desiccation in umbu plant genotypes. The regularity of the stomatal closure period and the water vapor gas exchange recovery suggest that GBU 68 is the most drought-sensitive genotype. Anatomical changes induced by intermittent drought

demonstrate that the genotypes exhibit markedly different responses to water deficit, but not enough to explain the physiological differences between them.

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Capítulo 2

Water relations and organic solutes accumulation in four umbu tree genotypes under intermittent drought

Abstract

Resumo

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Water relations and organic solutes accumulation in four umbu tree genotypes under intermittent drought

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In order to evaluate changes in leaf water potential (Ψ_w) and solute accumulation induced by intermittent drought, an experiment was carried out in green house conditions using four umbu tree genotypes (GBU 44, GBU 48, GBU 50 and GBU 68) and two water treatments (control and stressed by withholding water), with four replicates. The Ψ_w was measured in four-hour intervals during a 24-hour period at the first stomatal closure and at the end of the experimental period. Carbohydrates, amino acids, protein and proline contents were also evaluated in leaves and roots. Significant differences were found in most of the studied parameters. The lower Ψ_w hour was between 800 h and 1200 h. GBU 44 and GBU 50 reduced significantly Ψ_w in stressed plants at 800 h. GBU 68 presented the higher Ψ_w . The extending of the stress induced reductions to carbohydrates in the leaves of all genotypes, increases in amino acids to GBU 44 and 48, and reductions of 40% and 43% to GBU 50 and 68, respectively; results also showed alterations in proline content. In the roots, increases in carbohydrates were observed only to GBU 48. Alterations in amino acids, protein, and proline

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were verified. Umbu trees presented isohidry behaviour maintaining high leaf water potential and a great variability in organic solutes accumulation in response to drought with marked differences among the genotypes.

Key words: carbohydrates, proline, *Spondias tuberosa*, water potential

Relações hídricas e acúmulo de solutos orgânicos em quatro genótipos de umbuzeiro sob

seca intermitente: Com o objetivo de avaliar as alterações no potencial hídrico foliar e o acúmulo de solutos compatíveis induzidos pela seca intermitente, foi desenvolvido um experimento em casa de vegetação utilizando-se quatro genótipos de umbuzeiro (GBU 44, GBU 48, GBU 50 e GBU 68) e dois regimes hídricos (controle e estresse com suspensão da irrigação), com quatro repetições. O potencial hídrico foliar (Ψ_w) foi medido em intervalos de quatro horas durante 24 horas no momento do primeiro fechamento estomático e no final do período experimental. Também foram avaliados os teores de carboidratos solúveis totais, aminoácidos, proteína e prolina nas folhas e nas raízes. Houve diferença significativa entre os acessos estudados para a maioria dos parâmetros avaliados. O horário de menor Ψ_w foi entre 8h e 12h. O Ψ_w das plantas estressadas do GBU 44 e GBU 50 reduziu significativamente às 8h. O acesso GBU 68 apresentou os valores mais elevados de Ψ_w . O prolongamento do estresse provocou reduções nos teores de carboidratos nas folhas de todos os acessos. Houve aumento no teor de aminoácidos nas folhas dos GBUs 44 e 48 e reduções de 40% e 43% para GBUs 50 e 68, respectivamente. Também foram observadas alterações nos teores de prolina. Nas raízes, houve aumento nos teores de carboidratos apenas no GBU 48. Foram verificadas alterações nos teores de aminoácidos, proteína e prolina. O umbuzeiro apresenta comportamento isoídrico, mantendo altos valores de potencial hídrico foliar e uma grande variação no acúmulo de solutos em resposta à seca, com marcada diferença genotípica.

Palavras-chave: carboidratos, potencial hídrico, prolina, *Spondias tuberosa*.

INTRODUCTION

Drought is a worldwide problem that adversely affects yield and crop quality (Chartzoulakis et al, 1999; Chartzoulakis et al., 2002; Souza et al., 2005; Hong-Bo et al, 2006). Reductions in the soil moisture as a result of withholding water lead straightly to changes in the plants physical environment, which affect subsequently the physiological and biochemical processes (Sarker et al., 2005; Sircelj et al., 2005).

Plant drought-response is characterized by fundamental changes in the cell water relations (Pimentel, 2004). Reductions in cell volume as well as increases in solute accumulation and protoplasm dehydration are consequences of water deficiency (Nogueira et al, 2005). Thus, a convenient way to express the water deficiency in tissue, particularly in leaves, is the measurement of leaf water potential (Slatyer, 1967).

Some species can adapt to water deficiency by modifying the solute level inside the cells; thus, turgor, stomatal aperture, and physiological activities can be maintained under low leaf water potential (Chartzoulakis et al., 2002; Zhu et al., 2005). This mechanism, known as osmotic adjustment, contributes to desiccation-tolerance and it is defined as the ability to accumulate osmotically active solutes in response to drought (Quezada et al., 1999; Pagter et al., 2005). However, the ability to accumulate osmotically active substances differs among species (Jones et al, 1980; Zhu et al., 2005).

It is well known that the osmotic regulators include many important molecules such as potassium, soluble sugar, amino acids, proline and betaine. These molecules, which have low molecular weights, are important plant physiological indicators used to evaluate the ability to adjust osmotically and the drought-resistance of many genotypes (Hong-Bo et al., 2006). The main function of organic solutes is relative to protein stabilization, protein-complex and membranes when plants are submitted to environmental stresses (Bohnert and Shen, 1999).

Drought affects the metabolism of carbohydrates, which act as compatible solutes as much as antioxidant, increasing in response of water stress (Sircelj et al., 2005). However, Zhu et al. (2005) demonstrated that in wheat soluble sugar and inorganic ions contributed principally to osmotic adjustment in the stage of seedling while proline and betaine accumulation had an important role in the subsequent stages, mostly as an osmoprotector when the soil was dry enough. Thus, for both different species and physiological developmental stages, plants response to drought must to be different.

Amino acids are another compound group affected by drought. The adaptable meaning concerning amino acids accumulation during stress period is still uncertain; however, research indicates that amino acids principal may be in osmotic adjustment (Sircelj et al., 2005).

Besides its contribution on osmotic adjustment, proline performs an important role in the membrane stabilization and free radical scavenging (Ashraf and Foolad, 2007). A relation between a higher proline accumulation and drought-tolerance has been found in plants or genotypes considered drought-tolerant (Quezada et al., 1999; Nogueira et al., 2001; Silva et al, 2004; Zhu et al., 2005).

The umbu tree (*Spondias tuberosa* Arruda) is a native species found in Brazilian dry lands (Caatinga), which shows a great phenotypic variation between its canopy and the weight of its fruits. Some genotypes produce fruits weighing 20 g, while another genotype can produce fruits weighing 120 g, called “giant umbu”(Santos et al., 1999). Among the 78 genotypes existent in the Active Germplasm Bank of Umbu Tree (GBU) located on the Brazilian Research Institute to the Semi Arid Tropic – Embrapa/CPATSA (Oliveira et al., 2004), the genotypes GBUs 44, 48, 50 and 68 are classified as giant umbu because the medium weight of the fruits of 86,7 g, 75,30 g, 85,0 g and 96,7 g, respectively (Santos et al. 1999).

Some works accomplished by Lima Filho (2001, 2004), demonstrate that the water balance of umbu tree under drought conditions should be maintained through the utilization of

the water storage in the roots (xylopodium) and a low transpiration rate. His results also showed that during the rainy season, water balance should be mediated by an osmotic adjustment.

Literature containing physiological information about these genotypes is still scarce. Thus, this work was carried out in order to test the hypothesis that the ability to overcome drought differs among genotypes and that this ability should be associated with maintaining leaf turgor by reducing water potential combined to the nature of compatible solutes involved. Therefore, the aim of this work was to evaluate alterations in leaf water potential and compatible solutes accumulation induced by intermittent drought in four umbu tree genotypes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Plant material, growth conditions and experimental design:

The experiment was carried out in green house conditions at the Laboratório de Fisiologia Vegetal, belonging to the Department of Biology at the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, from November to December 2005. Four six-month-old grafting umbu genotypes (*Spondias tuberosa* Arr. Cam.) produced by cleft graft were used. The plants were cultivated in vases containing 8 kg Argisoil from CPATSA Petrolina, Pernambuco, Brazil. The physical properties were sandy-loam texture, composed of 71% sand, 17% clay and 12% silt and soil moisture at field capacity (0.3 atm) 9.97% and at the wilting point (15 atm) 4.01%. The chemical soil analysis was done at the Laboratory of Soil Fertility of the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco. The soil contained: 41 mg/dm³ of P, 0.20 cmol_c/dm³ of Na⁺, 0.33 cmol_c/dm³ of K⁺, 7.15 cmol_c/dm of Ca⁺² + Mg⁺², 5.15 cmol_c/dm³ of Ca⁺², and 0.05 cmol_c/dm³ of Al⁺³.

The experiment used a randomized experimental design, in a factorial 4X2, corresponding to four umbu genotypes (GBU 44, GBU 48, GBU 50 and GBU 68) and two water treatments (control – watered daily until begin the free drainage, and stressed – by withholding water and re-watered when plants presented stomatal closure). Four replicates were performed. The plant transpiration was measured daily between 900 h and 1000 h with a steady state porometer Li-1600 (LI-COR, Inc. Lincoln, NE, USA), to verify stomatal closure (data unpublished). Climatic conditions during the experimental period are shown in Figure 1. The re-watering intervals-days of the stressed plants are found in Table 1.

Leaf water potential measurement:

When stressed plants presented the first stomatal closure, a time course of leaf water potential (Ψ_w) was accomplished using a pressure chamber model 3035 (Soil Moisture Equipment Corp, Santa Barbara, CA, USA) during 24-hours with four hours-intervals. Mature and full expanded leaves located above the medium part were sampled, wrapped in plastic film, and kept in a cold recipient. After harvesting, the measurements were performed in the laboratory of plant physiology. At the end of the experimental period, the same procedure was followed to measure Ψ_w again.

Soil moisture:

After water potential measurements and before irrigation, soil samples were taken from three vases of each treatment and genotype for determining soil moisture, a total of 24 samples. The soil moisture was estimated according to equation: $\theta = (WSW - DSW)/DSW \times 100$, where θ = soil moisture; PSU= wet soil weight; DSW= dry soil weight. Soil moisture characteristic curve was performed at the Laboratório de Física do Solo of the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco, by Buchner Funnel method (Haines, 1930).

Biochemical analysis:

The same leaves used to water potential measurements at 8h were collected without the central vein and frozen to determine total soluble carbohydrates, free amino acids, soluble protein, and free proline and sample of roots (xylopodium) were taken in the end of the experimental period. The extract was prepared by grinding about 2 g of fresh leaves and 5g of fresh roots (xylopodium) with 4 mL (for leaves) and 10 mL (for roots) of sodium and potassium buffer 0.1 M for 10 minutes. The homogenate was filtered in nylon mesh and centrifuged in a refrigerated centrifuge at 3,000 x g for 15 minutes and the supernatant was frozen to perform the analysis. Total soluble carbohydrates were determined for colorimetric technique (490 nm) by phenol-sulfuric acid, according to Dubois et al. (1956), using D(+)-glucose as standard. Total free amino acid was determined by reaction with ninidrin (570 nm) using L-leucine as standard (Yemm and Cocking, 1955). For determining soluble protein content (595 nm) a protein-dye binding method was performed using bovine serum albumin as standard (Bradford, 1976). Free proline was determined by Bates et al (1973) method using a spectrophotometer in a wavelength of 520 nm, ninidrin as specific reagent, and proline as standard.

Statistical analysis:

Data were submitted to analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the means were compared by Tukey's multiple range test ($P < 0.05$).

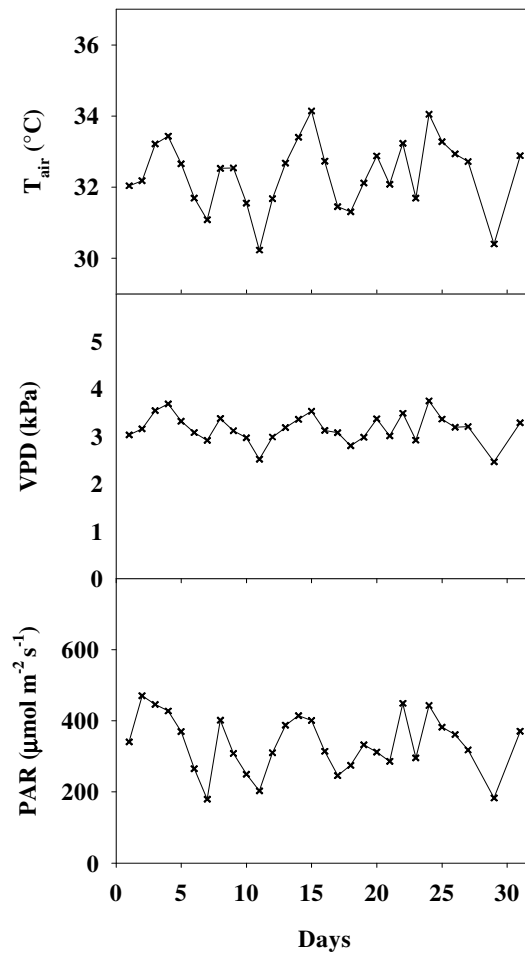


Figure 1. Air temperature (T_{air}), vapor pressure deficit (VPD), and photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) taken daily during the experimental period, between 900 h and 1000 h, in greenhouse conditions.

Table 1. Re-watering intervals (days) of four grafted umbu trees genotypes relative to stomatal closure.

Genotypes	Watering days-intervals					Mean
	1 st watering	2 ^{sn} watering	3 rd watering	4 th watering	5 th watering	
GBU 44	5	6	5	5	5	5.2
GBU 48	5	7	7	5	-	6
GBU 50	5	8	7	6	-	6.5
GBU 68	4	5	6	5	4	4.8

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During water-withholding period, the soil moisture content decreased from 34.23% to 8.14% for occasion of the first stomatal closure (Table. 2), and from 30.7% to 3% after 31 days of treatment, value considered lower than permanent wilting point to this soil, which correspond to 4.0% (-1.5MPa), as mentioned above in the material and method topic.

Table 2. Percent soil moisture on a weight basis of four umbu tree genotypes grown under intermittent drought. The first samples were taken before perform re-watering in stressed plants for occasion of the water potential measurements, when plants presented stomatal closure. The second sample collection corresponds to the last evaluation after 31 treatment days (harvest).

Genotypes	Soil moisture (%)			
	1 st . Sample		2 ^{sn} . Sample	
	Treatment		Treatment	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	15.76	5.76	17.35	1.89
GBU 48	19.34	6.07	16.52	1.69
GBU 50	18.69	8.98	17.37	2.31
GBU 68	17.55	4.60	18.81	3.89

Significant differences in leaf water potential (Ψ_w) were observed among genotypes ($P < 0.01$). GBU 68 showed the highest value of Ψ_w while GBU 50 showed the lowest. However, statistic analysis did not show significant differences between treatments (Table. 3).

Table 3. Daily average of leaf water potential (Ψ_w) of four umbu trees genotypes grown in greenhouse conditions under intermittent drought. Data was taken for occasion of the first stomatal closure and after 31 treatment days. The first stomatal closure occurred after four days of withholding water to genotype GBU 68 and after five days to GBU 44, 48 and 50.

Genotype	Ψ_w (MPa)	
	1° stomatal closure	After 31 treatment days
GBU 44	-0.44bA	-0.48bA
GBU 48	-0.37bA	-0.33aA
GBU 50	-0.59cA	-0.55cA
GBU 68	-0.27aA	-0.34aA
Treatments		
Control	-0.40aA	-0.38aA
Stressed	-0.44aA	-0.47aA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and among genotypes, and upper case between period, do not significantly differ by Tukey test ($P < 0.05$).

In general, the hour of lower Ψ_w was between 800 h and 1200 h for most genotypes (Figure 2). Differences between treatments to GBU 44 and GBU 68 were not observed during the 24-hour period when stressed plants presented the first stomatal closure.

The stressed plants of the GBU 48 reduced Ψ_w at 800 h. However, there was no difference between treatments to the further hours. GBU 50 significantly reduced Ψ_w at 800 h ($P < 0.01$), recovering its Ψ_w in the subsequent hours, while the control plants showed a Ψ_w reduction at 1200 h (Figure 2).

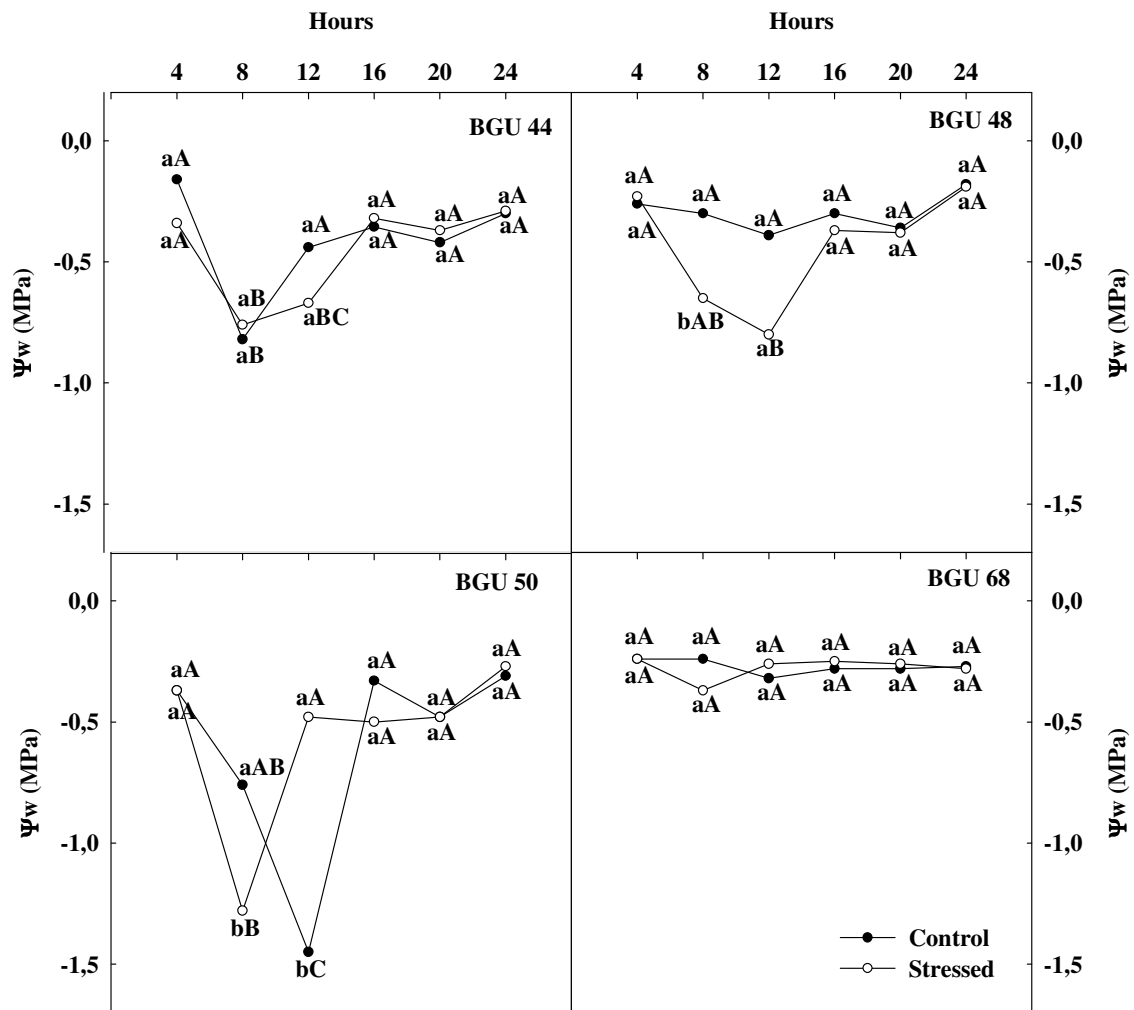


Figure 2. Daily course of leaf water potential (Ψ_w) of four umbu tree genotypes growing in green house conditions under intermittent drought by withholding water after four (genotype BGU 68) and five days (the remained genotypes). Values followed by different letters, lower case between treatments and upper case among hours, do not significantly differ by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$).

Different behavior relative to leaf water potential was verified after 31 days in genotypes under intermittent drought. The genotypes BGU 44 and BGU 50 reduced significantly Ψ_w at 800 h, in comparison to control plants. This behavior was not observed to BGU 48 and BGU 68 (Figure 3).

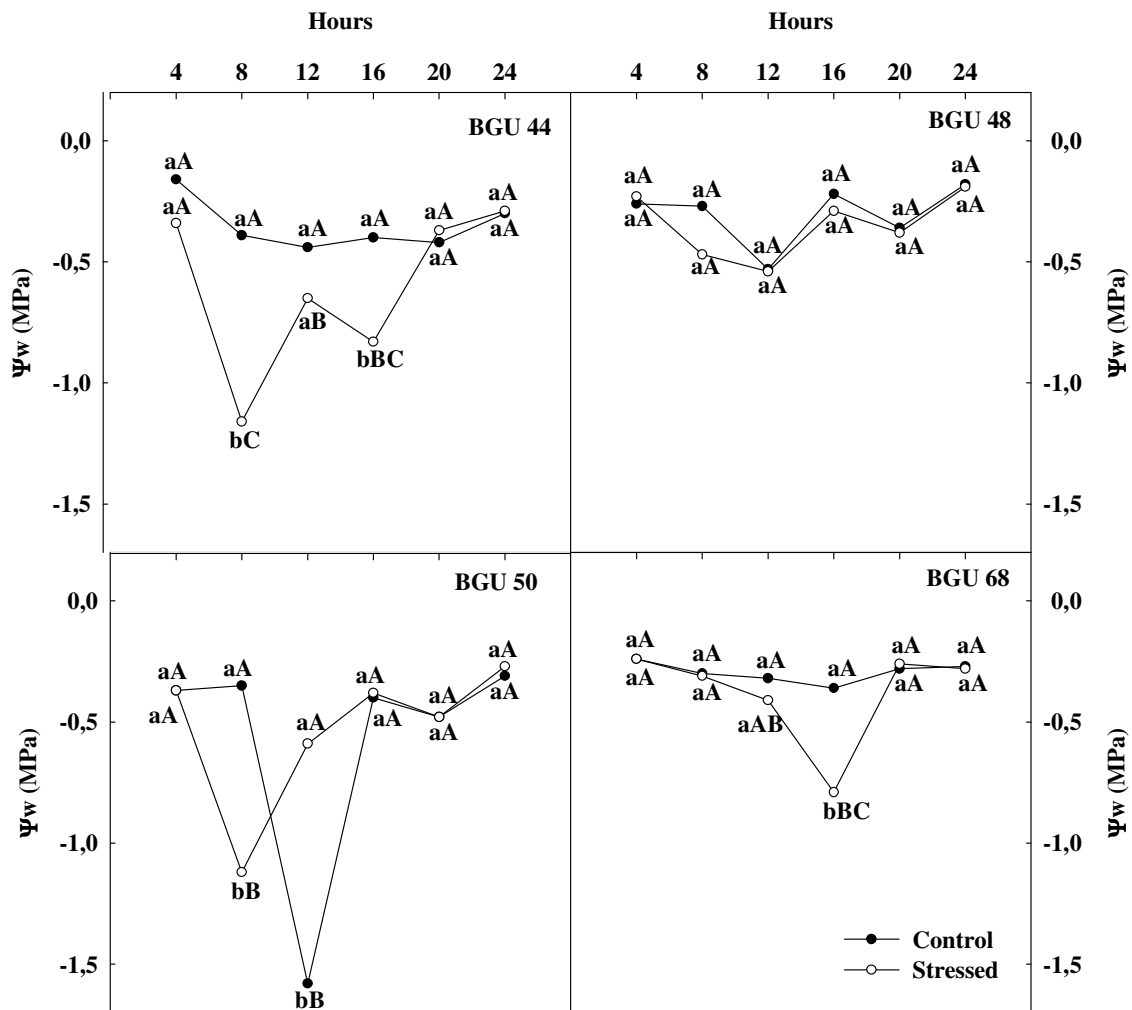


Figure 3. Daily course of leaf water potential (Ψ_w) of four umbu tree genotypes growing in green house conditions after 31 days under intermittent drought by withholding water. Plants were re-watered in function of stomatal closure. Values followed by different letters, lower case between treatments and upper case among hours, do not significantly differ by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$).

In the hottest hour (1200 h) control plants of GBU 50 reduced Ψ_w , while the stressed plants recovered Ψ_w , following the same pattern observed in the first evaluation (Figures 2 and 3). GBU 68 showed a different pattern again, waning Ψ_w of the stressed plants at 1200 h culminating with the lower values at 1600 h. Even though, the values of Ψ_w in this genotype

are still higher in comparison with the GBU 44 and 50. Reductions in Ψ_w at 1600 h were also observed to GBU 44, showing subsequent recovering.

Field observations accomplished by Lima Filho (2001) demonstrate that the lowest Ψ_w in umbu tree was at 800 h (-0.97 MPa) during dry season, corroborating the results found in this work. However, the author did not observe Ψ_w recovering during the daytime, which differs of our results. This difference should be attributed to the cultivation conditions. Once on the field, the environmental factors; i.e. radiation, vapor pressure deficit, and the speed of the wind, exert a bigger impact on the plants than in greenhouse conditions. In this last case, the smaller volume of the soil to be explored also becomes a stress factor.

Some authors have reported that the measurement of pre-dawn leaf water potential (Ψ_{pd}) is more sensitive than other hours because it does estimate the maximum value of water potential on the root zone and it does not depend of the short-term climatic changes (Améglio et al., 1999; Sircelj et al., 2005). If predawn transpiration does not occur, the water potential gradient on the plant disappears, and the Ψ_{pd} can be taken to represent the water potential in the soil explored by the roots (Améglio et al., 1999). It was observed in two eucalyptus species and in three woody native species of Ethiopia in response of water deficit. The difference between Ψ_{pd} values in plants cultivated under 25% of field capacity (FC) and the control ones (100% FC) was around 1.0 MPa (Gindaba et al., 2005).

The fact that umbu trees still show high leaf water potential, even with soil moisture below 4%, equivalent to -15 kPa (Tab. 1) supports the hypothesis that the water stored in the xylopodium is responsible for maintaining the water status combined with stomatal closure (Lima Filho, 2001, 2004) as the first defense line against desiccation in this species. The higher Ψ_{pd} with lower soil moisture content suggest that the measurements of Ψ_{pd} is not appropriate to estimate soil water potential in umbu plants and probably to other plant species with similar root system architecture.

The water loss by transpiration in the higher evaporative demand hour may cause reductions on the leaf water potential; reduction is apparent even in plants grown under good water conditions, once the leaf water potential results in the interaction of the atmospheric evaporative demand with the soil water potential (Silva et al., 2003) .

Thus, the roots does not absorb water at the same speed in which the water is lost to the atmosphere, because the water is passively moved throughout the roots in response of a water potential gradient created by transpiration (Steudle and Peterson, 1998). This transient water deficit on the higher transpiration demand hour could explain the temporary Ψ_w reductions in the control plants of the genotype GBU 50 at midday (Fig. 2 and 3).

Reductions on leaf water potential at midday in well-irrigated plants were found in two eucalyptus species, with value of Ψ_{pd} around -0.4 MPa and of -0.8 MPa at midday. However, the difference between Ψ_w of well irrigated plants and the ones under severe stress (25% FC) at midday was of 1.4 MPa to *Eucalyptus globules* and of 1.14 MPa to *E. camaldulensis* (Gindaba et al., 2005).

The high values of Ψ_w found in umbu plants with little variations throughout the day and between treatments suggest that this specie has isohydric behaviour (Tardieu and Simonneau, 1998), because its rigid stomatal control reduced the transpiration at midday (Lima Filho, 2004). According to the same author the umbu tree exhibits two peaks of transpiration (at 800 h and 1400 h) in the field. This information should support the genotypes GBU 50 and GBU 68 behavior, which reduced the Ψ_w at 800 h and 1400 h, respectively (Figure 3).

The initial drought period induced reductions in the soluble carbohydrates content (CH) only in genotype GBU 50 (Table 4). Under good water availability conditions, this genotype significantly differed of the others, showing the higher CH in the leaves. There were reductions in CH content with the drought cycle prolongation (Table 4).

Sircelj et al (2005) observed significant increases of CH mainly on sorbitol content in apple tree cultivated after 10, 15 and 20 days of withholding water (considered moderate stress treatment). However, at 23 days of treatment (considered severe stress), a fall in the sorbitol contents was observed of about 22% and 23% for the two studied cultivars, suggesting depletion in the sorbitol levels when plants were submitted to severe stress. The reductions in CH content in umbu plants suggest that sugars are not the main solute responsible for reducing water potential in this species, although it has an important role in the osmotic adjustment.

Table 4. Soluble carbohydrate contents in the leaves of four umbu tree genotypes growing under intermittent drought. The first harvest was done when the first stomatal closure occurred (4th day to GBU 68 and 5th day to the remained genotypes) and the second harvest was performed after 31 days of treatments at 800 h.

Genotypes	Carbohydrates ($\mu\text{mol.gFW}^{-1}$)			
	1 st harvest		2 nd harvest	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	151.16 aB	127.00 aA	124.46 aA	94.84 bA
GBU 48	153.82 aB	136.10 aA	134.30 aA	87.33 bA
GBU 50	224.12 aA	126.65 bA	158.50 aA	95.85 bA
GBU 68	127.68 aB	144.52 aA	148.04 aA	99.50 bA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and upper case among genotypes, do not significantly differ by Tukey test ($P < 0.05$).

There was a significant difference among genotypes to amino acid content (AA) ($P < 0.01$). The genotypes GBU 44 and 48 reduced about 40% and 43% respectively in response of the initial reduction in the soil moisture (Table 5). At the end of the experimental period the genotype GBU 44 stayed showing increases in the AA and GBU 50 showed

reductions in it. The remained genotypes did not show significant differences between treatments ($P<0.05$) (Table 5).

Table 5. Free amino acids contents in the leaves of four umbu tree genotypes growing under intermittent drought. The first harvest was done when the first stomatal closure occurred (4th day to GBU 68 and 5th day to the remained genotypes) and the second harvest was performed after 31 days of treatments at 800 h.

Genotypes	Amino acids ($\mu\text{mol.gFW}^{-1}$)			
	1 st harvest		2 nd harvest	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	6,84 bA	8,65 aA	5,13 bB	8,17 aA
GBU 48	6,86 bA	8,26 aA	6,97 aAB	7,92 aA
GBU 50	8,65 aA	5,20 bB	8,40 aA	5,65 bA
GBU 68	7,09 aA	4,00 bB	5,08 aB	6,09 aA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and upper case among genotypes, do not significantly differ by Tukey test ($P<0.05$).

Increases in free amino acid level have been observed in the plants submitted to water deficit (Rabe, 1990; Sirclj et al., 2005). Alterations in the AA content were verified in two apple tree cultivars under severe water deficit, increasing more than 40% in comparison with the control plants (Sirclj et al., 2005).

There were not significant differences among genotypes and between treatments relative to protein content in the leaves (Table 6), indicating that there was not proteolysis in response to drought cycles imposed during the stress period. These results suggest that the increase in the AA content in the genotype GBU 44 and 48 occurred through synthesis and not because protein degradation in response to drought.

There was no significant difference among genotypes to proline content in plants grown in good soil water availability (Table 7).

Among the genotypes, GBU 48 showed a significant increase of proline in the leaves at the first evaluation (72%). The drought cycle prolongation induced accumulation of proline in the leaves in the most stressed plants, except to GBU (Table 7). In percentile term there were increases of 52%, 49.3% and 49.4% to GBU 44, 48 and 68, respectively.

Proline is broadly found in high plants and it has been often accumulated in response to environmental stresses (Ashraf and Foolad, 2007). A significant increase in proline content was reported in leaves of zarzamora (*Rubus* spp.) when plants were submitted to withholding of water (Quezada et al., 1999). The authors observed two-folds more proline in stressed plants ($1.81 \text{ mg.g}^{-1}\text{MS}$) than in control ones ($0.83 \text{ mg.g}^{-1}\text{MS}$). Nogueira et al. (2001) verified high values of proline in stressed plants by withholding water of Surinam cherry until 38-folds than in daily-irrigated plants.

Table 6. Total soluble protein content in leaves of four umbu tree genotypes growing under intermittent drought. The first harvest was done when the first stomatal closure occurred (4th day to GBU 68 and 5th day to the remained genotypes) and the second harvest was performed after 31 days of treatments at 800 h.

Genotypes	Protein ($\mu\text{mol.gMF}^{-1}$)			
	1 st harvest		2 nd harvest	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	163.38 aA	216.91 aA	77.04 aA	88.32 aA
GBU 48	158.00 aA	171.91 aA	76.25 aA	82.03 aA
GBU 50	231.26 aA	259.41 aA	117.86 aA	109.99 aA
GBU 68	145.06 aA	121.55 aA	76.37 aA	85.04 aA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and upper case among genotypes do not significantly differ by Tukey test ($P < 0.05$).

Table 7. Free proline content in leaves of four umbu tree genotypes growing under intermittent drought. The first harvest was done when the first stomatal closure occurred (4th day to GBU 68 and 5th day to the remained genotypes) and the second harvest was performed after 31 days of treatments at 800 h.

Genotypes	Proline ($\mu\text{mol.gMF}^{-1}$)			
	1 st harvest		2 nd harvest	
	Control	Stressed	Control	Stressed
GBU 44	12.09 aA	10.61 aB	5.44 bA	8.54 aA
GBU 48	12.86 bA	22.38 aA	4.97 bA	7.74 aAB
GBU 50	11.23 aA	10.44 aB	5.44 aA	6.01 aB
GBU 68	6.86 aA	5,59 aB	5.99 bA	9.15 aA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and upper case among genotypes, do not significantly differ by Tukey test ($P < 0.05$).

The organic solutes accumulation in the roots did not follow the same patter found in the leaves. The intermittent drought induced increases in the carbohydrate content in the roots only to genotype GBU 48 (Table 8). Contrary, there were reductions in CH to GBU 68. This last genotype was the only one that showed the higher AA in response to stress, increasing 2.5-fold in comparison to control. The remained genotypes remained unchanged.

There were increases in the protein content in the roots of stressed plants to GBU 44 (Table 8). The genotype GBU 48 stayed unchanged and genotypes GBU 50 and 68 reduced protein content. This proteolysis could be responsible by increasing AA content to GBU 68, but the same did not occur with GBU 50.

Proline content in the roots (xylopodium) differs significantly among genotypes GBU 48 and GBU 44 and 50 under control conditions (Table 8). Under stress conditions, the

genotype GBU 68 showed the higher proline content in the roots in comparison with control plants. Stressed plants of GBU 68 increased about 3-fold more proline in response to drought than control plants. As roots are in contact with the soil, it is also the first organ that suffers the impacts of the soil moisture changes. Thus, the accumulation of active organic solutes is important for maintaining the water inflow inside the cells and the transport to the shoot.

According Taiz and Zeiger (2004), the osmotic adjustment develops slowly in response to the tissue dehydration. Leaves capable to osmotic adjust can to maintain its turgor more effectively under lower water potential than the ones without this capacity. The turgor maintenance makes possible the continuity of cell elongation and facilitates higher stomatal conductance under lower water potential, suggesting that the osmotic adjustment is a type of acclimatization, which increases tolerance to dehydration. Certainly, the substances accumulated during the stress period did not contribute to maintaining the turgor in all umbu tree genotypes, like the case of proline in the leaves of the most genotypes studied and in the roots of the GBU 68. However, in quantitative terms, the values of proline content are not too representative when compared with carbohydrates, which represent about 50% of the total osmotically active solutes in plants (Ashraf and Harris, 2004), and this solute was reduced in response to water stress. Thus, in the growth conditions of the present work, osmotic adjustment by solutes accumulation is not evident in umbu plants.

Table 8. Total soluble carbohydrates, free amino acids, total soluble protein and free proline contents in the roots (xylopodium) of four umbu tree genotype under intermittent drought after 31 treatment days.

Genotypes	Control	Stress
Carbohydrates ($\mu\text{mol.gMF}^{-1}$)		
GBU 44	126.72 aAB	128.65 aA
GBU 48	118.71 bB	127.84 aA
GBU 50	123.4 aAB	122.89 aA
GBU 68	132.85 aA	108.09 bB
Amino acids ($\mu\text{mol.gMF}^{-1}$)		
GBU 44	1.03 aA	1.81 aAB
GBU 48	1.76 aA	1.31 aAB
GBU 50	1.10 aA	1.20 aB
GBU 68	0.97 bA	2.39 aA
Protein ($\mu\text{mol.gMF}^{-1}$)		
GBU 44	54.31 bA	66.41 aA
GBU 48	52.81 aA	60.59 aAB
GBU 50	57.84 aA	48.29 bB
GBU 68	52.46 aA	35.68 bC
Proline ($\mu\text{mol.gMF}^{-1}$)		
GBU 44	0.85 aB	1.11 aB
GBU 48	2.10 aA	1.54 aB
GBU 50	0.88 bB	1.43 aB
GBU 68	1.14 bAB	3.49 aA

Values followed by different letters, lower case among treatments and upper case among genotypes do not significantly differ by Tukey test ($P < 0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS

Umbu trees presented isohidry behaviour maintaining high leaf water potential and a great variability in organic solutes accumulation in response to drought with marked differences among the genotypes. The maintenance of the high Ψ_w values throughout the day

in the highest transpiration demand hour with decreases in sugar contents and just small proline accumulation in response to drought in the most of the genotypes evaluated, suggest that the maintenance of turgor in the umbu tree genotypes is relative to water storage in the xylodermis and not to decreases in the water potential caused by solutes accumulation.

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**PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO SALT STRESS IN YOUNG UMBU
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PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO SALT STRESS IN YOUNG UMBU PLANTS*

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Abstract

Soil salinity affects plant growth and development due to harmful ion effects and water stress caused by reduced osmotic potential in the soil solution. In order to evaluate the effects of salt stress in young umbu plants, research was performed in green house conditions at the Laboratory of Plant Physiology at Federal Rural University of Pernambuco, Brazil. Growth, stomatal behaviour, water relations, and both inorganic and organic solutes were studied aiming for a better understanding of the responses of umbu plants to increasing salinity. Plants were grown in washed sand with Hoagland and Arnon nutrient solution with 0, 25, 50, 75, and 100 mM NaCl. Growth, leaf water potential, transpiration, and diffusive resistance were evaluated. Na⁺, K⁺, Cl⁻, soluble carbohydrates, and free amino acid contents were measured in several plant organs. Most variables were affected with salinity above 50 mM NaCl showing decreases in: number of leaves, plant height, stems diameter, and dry masses, and increases in root to shoot ratio. Reductions in Ψ_{pd} were observed in plants grown under 75 and 100 mM NaCl. All salt levels above zero increased Na⁺ and Cl⁻ contents in leaves. However, K⁺ content was not affected. Na⁺ and Cl⁻ in stems and roots reached saturation in treatments above 50 mM NaCl. Organic solute accumulation in response to salt stress was not observed in umbu plants. These results suggest that umbu plants tolerate salt levels up to 50 mM NaCl without showing significant physio-morphological alterations.

Key words: *Spondias tuberosa*; water potential; transpiration; organic solutes; sodium; chloride.

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1. Introduction

Soil salinization is a serious problem in the entire world and it has grown substantially causing loss in crop productivity. It has been estimated that about 954 million hectares of land around the world are already salinised and 4.5% of these lands are located in Brazil (Dias et al., 2003). Although the information about the saline areas in Brazil is not well defined, it is estimated that 20-25 percent of the irrigated areas near rivers and intermittent streams face salinity and/or drainage problems. Irrigated perimeters in the Northeastern Brazil are approximately 23,000 ha and 25% are already salt affected (FAO, 2006).

Salinity reduces plant growth due to osmotic and ionic effects on soil solution (Marschner, 1990; Munns, 2002). Short-term effects include reduction on growth by salt due to osmotic effects, which reduces cell expansion. Long-term effects include excessive salt absorption, which causes plants to suffer ionic stress, leading to premature leaf aging following a reduction in the available photosynthetic area to maintain growth (Munns, 2002). In both long and short-term, reductions on growth are generally attributed to low photosynthetic rates due both stomatal and non-stomatal limitations.

Stomatal closure is likely the first plant defence against desiccation and an important factor to control carbon fixation. Non-stomatal limitations on photosynthesis have been attributed to reductions in the carboxylation efficiency (Bethke and Drew, 1992; Robinson et al., 1997). Thus, independent of the limitation type, salinity affects growth and can alter leaf water potential, stomatal conductance, and transpiration (Sultana et al., 1999; Parida and Das, 2005).

Salt stress tolerance in plants is a complex phenomenon that may involve developmental changes as well as physiological and biochemical processes (Delauney and Verma, 1993; Hare and Cress, 1997). In halophytes, salt tolerance is a result of inorganic ion accumulation, mainly Na^+ and Cl^- , which are compartmentalized in the vacuole. Whilst organic solutes accumulate in cytoplasm balancing water potential through several cellular compartments (Greenway and Munns, 1980; Marschner, 1990; Robinson et al., 1997; Serraj and Sinclair, 2002). In addition to their role in cell water relations, organic solutes accumulation may also contribute to the maintenance of ionic homeostasis and stabilization of some macromolecules and organelles such as proteins, protein complexes and membranes (Bohnert and Shen, 1999; Bray et al., 2000).

Umbu tree (*Spondias tuberosa* Arr. Cam.) is a xerophytic tree belonging to the Anacardiaceae which produces fruit edible to humans and animals. It is from the semi-arid

region of the Brazilian Northeast. The tuberous roots (xylopodium) help to adapt it to the climate due to their ability to store water, mineral salts, and organic solutes essential to its survival during dry seasons (Epstein, 1998; Duarte et al., 2004).

The effects of salt stress on umbu tree physiology have been little studied. Neves et al. (2004) classified the umbu tree as moderately tolerant to salinity using the percentage reductions on dry mass as an evaluation standard. Considering the increase of salinization on arable lands and that the umbu tree is a native species in arid environments, this study was carried out to test the hypothesis that salinity induces changes in the ionic and osmotic relations in salt-stressed umbu plants, with consequences in the gas exchanges, growth, and solutes accumulation. Thus, this study may contribute for a better understanding of the responses of umbu plants to increasing salinity and improve knowledge of the physiology and ecology of this important species and perhaps other drought tolerant species.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Plant material, growth, and treatment conditions:

Research was carried out in greenhouse conditions at the Laboratory of Plant Physiology of Federal Rural University of Pernambuco, Brazil, between July and September, 2004. Umbu seeds coming from Embrapa – CPATSA, Petrolina, Pernambuco state were sown in washed sand trays and watered daily. Thirty days after emergence, uniform, 1-month-old seedlings, of 13 cm height, four leaves, and 0.2 cm stem diameter were transplanted to pots containing 8 kg of washed sand. Plants were irrigated daily with full strength Hoagland's nutrient solution (Hoagland and Arnon, 1950) for 30 days prior to starting salt treatments. After this period, a stress period was imposed in which plants of all treatments were irrigated daily until the free drainage with full strength Hoagland's nutrient solution with 0, 25, 50, 75 or 100 mM NaCl for 36 days.

2.2 Growth measurement:

Each week, shoot length, the number of leaves, and stem diameter were measured. At the end of the experimental period, plants were carefully removed from the substrate, the roots were washed with distilled water, and plants were partitioned in different organs. Sigma Scan program SPSS Inc was used to determine total leaf area. After drying at 65°C in an oven until constant dry weight, mass of leaves, stem, and root dry was determined. These data were used to calculate biomass allocation to leaves, stem and roots as well as root to shoot ratio (R/Sh) as described by Benincasa (1988).

2.3 Transpiration, diffusive resistance, and water potential measurements:

Transpiration (E) and diffusive resistance (r_s) were measured using a steady-state porometer, model LI-1600 (LI-COR, Inc. Lincoln, NE, USA), which set the null point near humidity in the greenhouse. As the porometer gave us the values of E in $\mu\text{g cm}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$, the values were converted to $\text{mmol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$. Two mature and fully-expanded leaves located 5 to 7 leaves from the shoot tip on each plant were sampled. The measurements were carried out over one day (8-16 h at 2h intervals) each week. Photosynthetic active radiation (PAR) varied from 14.8 to 776.9 $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$, air temperature (T_{air}) varied from 25.5 to 33.7°C and vapour pressure deficit (VPD) from 1.42 to 2.96 kPa, respectively, exhibiting peaks at midday. At the end of the experimental period, the same leaves used for transpiration measurement were sampled to determine pre-dawn water potential using a model 3035 pressure chamber (Soil Moisture Equipment Corp, Santa Barbara, CA, USA).

2.4 Na⁺, K⁺, Cl⁻, amino acid, and soluble carbohydrate contents:

The extracts used for determination of sodium, potassium, chloride, amino acids, and soluble carbohydrates contents were prepared by grinding 0.5 mg of dry mass tissue with 10 mL of distilled water at 25°C for 10 minutes. The homogenate was centrifuged at $3,000 \times g$ for 15 minutes, and the supernatant filtered through qualitative filter paper. An aliquot of filtrate was used for Na⁺ and K⁺ determination by flame photometry (Sarruge and Haag, 1974) and Cl⁻ by precipitation titration with silver nitrate by Mohr's method (Azevedo Neto and Tabosa, 2001). Soluble carbohydrates were determined according to Dubois et al. (1956), using D(+)-glucose as standard. For free amino acid determination, 0.5 mL of 10% trichloroacetic acid was added to an aliquot of 0.5 mL of the water extract and the mixture was kept at 25°C for an hour. This mixture was then centrifuged at $12,000 \times g$ for 5 minutes, and the supernatant used for amino acid determination (Yemm and Cocking, 1955), using L-leucine as standard.

2.5 Experimental design and statistical analysis:

The experimental design was completely randomized with five salt levels and six replicates. Data were submitted to analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the means compared by Tukey's multiple range test ($P < 0.05$).

3. Results

3.1 Growth

Salt stress induced significant differences on plant growth during the experimental period. After 15 stress days, decreases in plant height were observed in plants grown with 75 and 100 mM NaCl ($P < 0.01$) (Fig. 1A). At the end of the stress period (36 days), only plants submitted to 25 mM NaCl did not show significant differences compared to control plants. The means values of plant height were 58.4 cm, 54.6 cm, 52.4 cm, 49.9 cm, and 48.4 cm for treatments of 0, 25, 50, 75, and 100 mM NaCl respectively.

The number of leaves was more sensitive than plant height, showing a significant reduction ($P < 0.01$) seven days after the beginning of the treatments (Fig.1B). After 36 days the mean values of number of leaves were respectively 9.7, 7.7, 8.4, 6.2, and 5.8 to 0, 25, 50, 75, and 100 mM NaCl. Thus, salinity reduced number of leaves at all NaCl levels. It was especially visible in plants submitted to 75 and 100 mM of NaCl (37% and 40%, respectively).

Stem diameter was less sensitive to NaCl levels than plant height and number of leaves. The means values of stem diameter at the end of the experimental period were 0.79 cm (control), 0.80 cm (25 mM), 0.75 cm (50 mM), 0.63 cm (75 mM), and 0.58 cm (100 mM) as shown in Figure 1C. Significant reductions in stems diameter were verified only in plants submitted to 75 and 100 mM of NaCl (Fig 1C). This represents 20% and 26%, respectively, in comparison with control plants.

Salt stress resulted in considerable decreases in leaves, stem, and total dry masses verified in NaCl levels of 75 and 100 mM. These reductions were approximately 39 and 47%; 46 and 52%; 31 and 34%, respectively (Figs 2A, 2B e 2D). Contrasting these results, root dry masses increased 45% in plants submitted to 25 mM NaCl, decreasing to the same control values in the other treatments (Fig. 2C). Root to shoot ratio (R/Sh) increased with salt stress, having been more visible in plants under 100 mM NaCl (93%) as shown in Figure 2E.

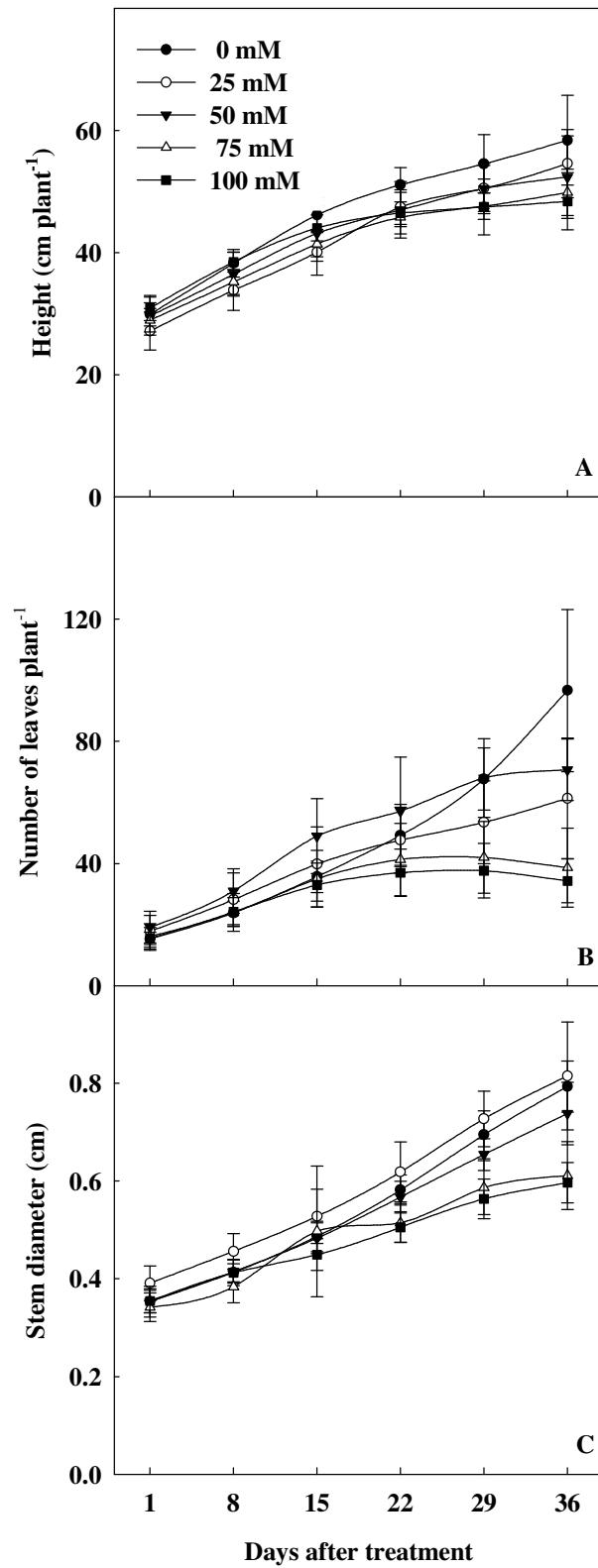


Fig.1. Plant height, number of leaves, and stem diameter of young umbu plants cultivated at increasing NaCl levels. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown.

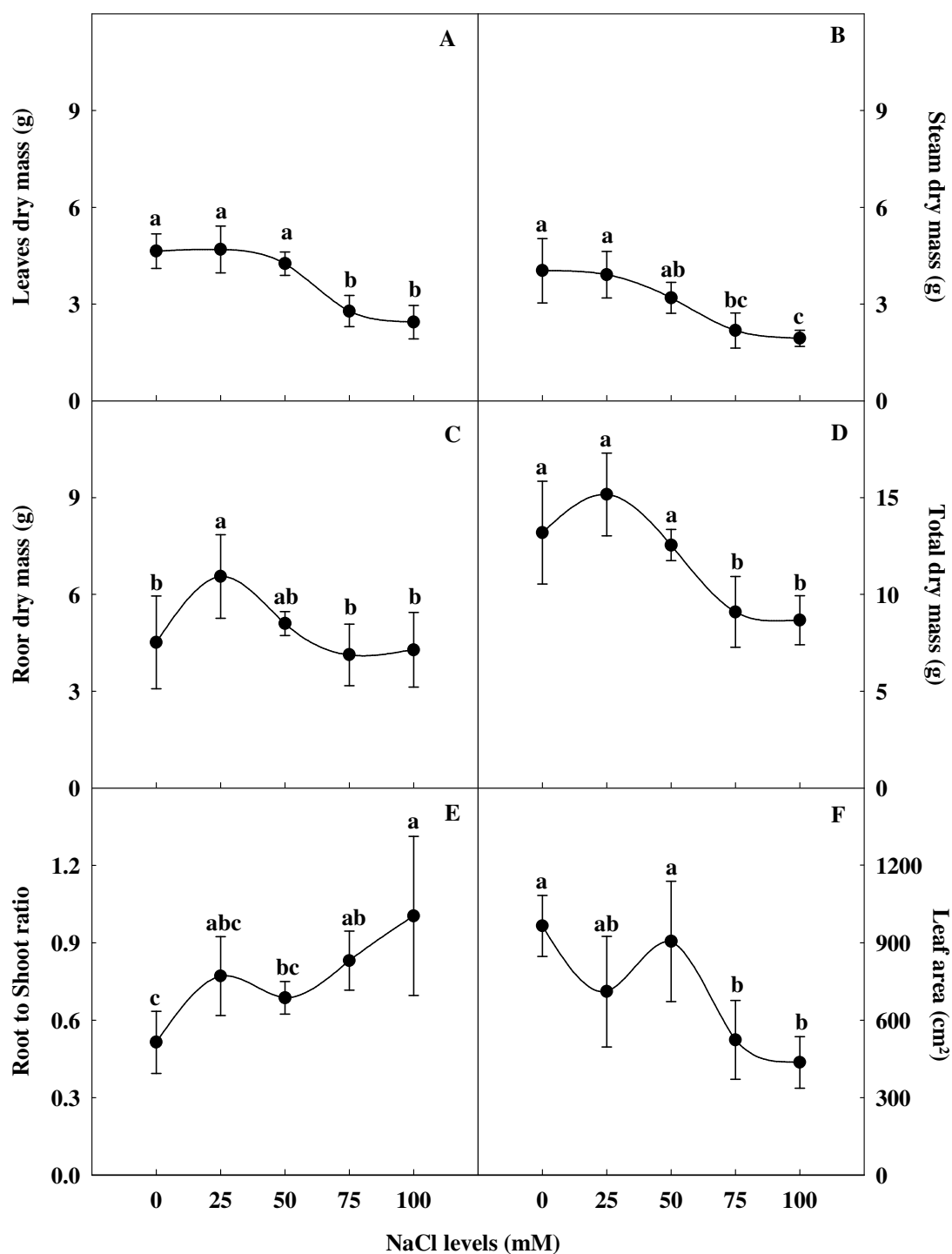


Fig. 2. Leaves (A), stem (B), root (C), and total dry masses (D), root to shoot ratio (E) and leaf area (F) of young umbu plants after 36 days at increasing salt levels. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown. Different letters denote statistical difference by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$) among treatments.

Leaf area reduced as salt concentration increased (Fig. 2F). It occurred in plants submitted to severe levels of NaCl at 75 and 100 mM, these reductions being 46% and 55%, respectively, compared with control plants.

According to Table 1, specific leaf area (SLA) and leaf area ratio (LAR) were not affected by salinity irrespective of the considered treatment.

Biomass allocation varied with the NaCl levels applied and with the plant organs (Fig.3). Thus, level of 100mM NaCl increased biomass allocation to roots by 45% and decreased stems by 25% and leaves by 20% when compared with control plants.

Table 1. Specific leaf area (SLA) and leaf area ratio (LAR) of young umbu plants under increasing NaCl levels after 36 days of stress. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown.

NaCl levels	Specific leaf area (cm ² /g LDM)	Leaf area ratio (cm ² /g TDM)
0 mM	211.07 \pm 21.94a	75.22 \pm 13.92a
25 mM	159.22 \pm 66.34a	49.13 \pm 20.68a
50 mM	211.28 \pm 47.91a	71.50 \pm 15.89a
75 mM	187.88 \pm 43.60a	58.14 \pm 16.29a
100 mM	180.46 \pm 26.79a	50.25 \pm 7.55a

Values followed by different letters differ significantly according Tukey's multiple range tests at $P < 0.05$

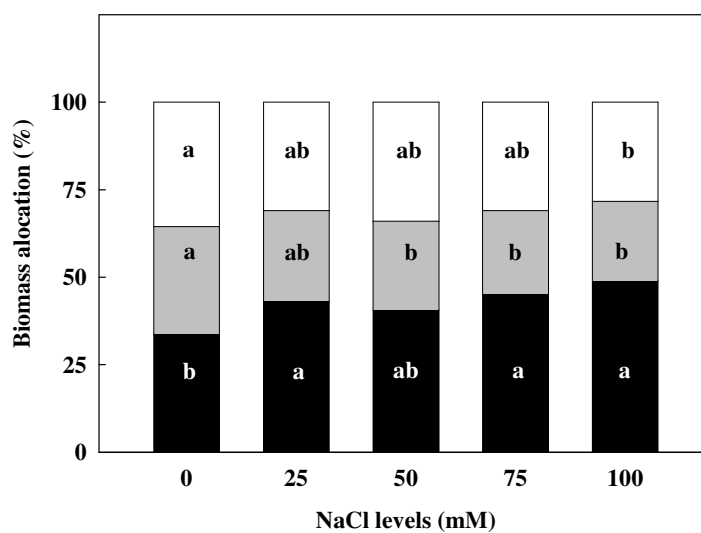


Fig.3. Biomass allocation to roots (■), stem (■) and leaves (□) in young umbu plants after 36 days at increasing salt levels. Different letters denote statistical difference by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$) among treatments.

3.2 Transpiration, diffusive resistance, and water potential

Young umbu plants showed a peak of transpiration at 12 h (noon) in all assessments (Figs. 4A, 4C, 4E, and 4G). However, transpiration rates (E) were lower at 21 and 28 days

than observed in the beginning of the experimental period (Figs. 4E and 4G). Irrespective of the evaluation day, salinity reduced E in plants grown under 75 and 100 mM NaCl. In addition, the lowest values of E were observed at 16h. Plants submitted to 100 mM NaCl in nutrient solution showed the smaller values of E at 28 treatment days when compared with the other treatments, independent of the time of assessment (Fig. 4G).

Salinity did not induce stomatal closure during the experimental period. However, increases in r_s became more conspicuous at 28 days of treatment and the highest value of r_s was observed at 4pm, particularly in plants under 75 and 100 mM NaCl (Figs. 4B, 4D, 4F e 4H).

Pre-dawn water potential in plants submitted to 25 and 50 mM NaCl remained unchanged, while plants grown under 75 and 100 mM NaCl treatments showed reduced Ψ_{pd} (-0.96 and -0.89 MPa, respectively) in comparison to control plants.

3.3 Na^+ , Cl^- , K^+ , carbohydrates, and amino acids

Na^+ content in leaves increased linearly with increases in NaCl levels, reaching the highest value in plants submitted to 100 mM NaCl (Fig.6). Na^+ content in the stem and roots increased in plants submitted to 25 mM NaCl, however remained relatively stable at the other salt levels. Comparing the different plant organs when plants were submitted to 100 mM NaCl, Na^+ content in leaves was about 3 and 2-fold higher than in stem and roots, respectively.

Cl^- content in leaves increased linearly up to levels of 75 mM NaCl. In the stem and roots, Cl^- increased also up to 50 mM NaCl. However, differences among salt levels above 50 mM were not observed (Fig.6). The chloride content in the leaves was about 2 and 1.5 fold higher than in stem and roots at the highest salt level. Chloride content was substantially higher than sodium in all organs.

Salinity did not significantly affect K^+ contents in the leaves, stems and roots ($P < 0.01$) (Fig. 7). Na^+/K^+ ratio increased linearly in leaves with increases in NaCl levels (Fig.7). In stems and roots, the Na^+/K^+ ratio was significantly lower for the 0 NaCl treatment than all the higher treatments which did not differ.

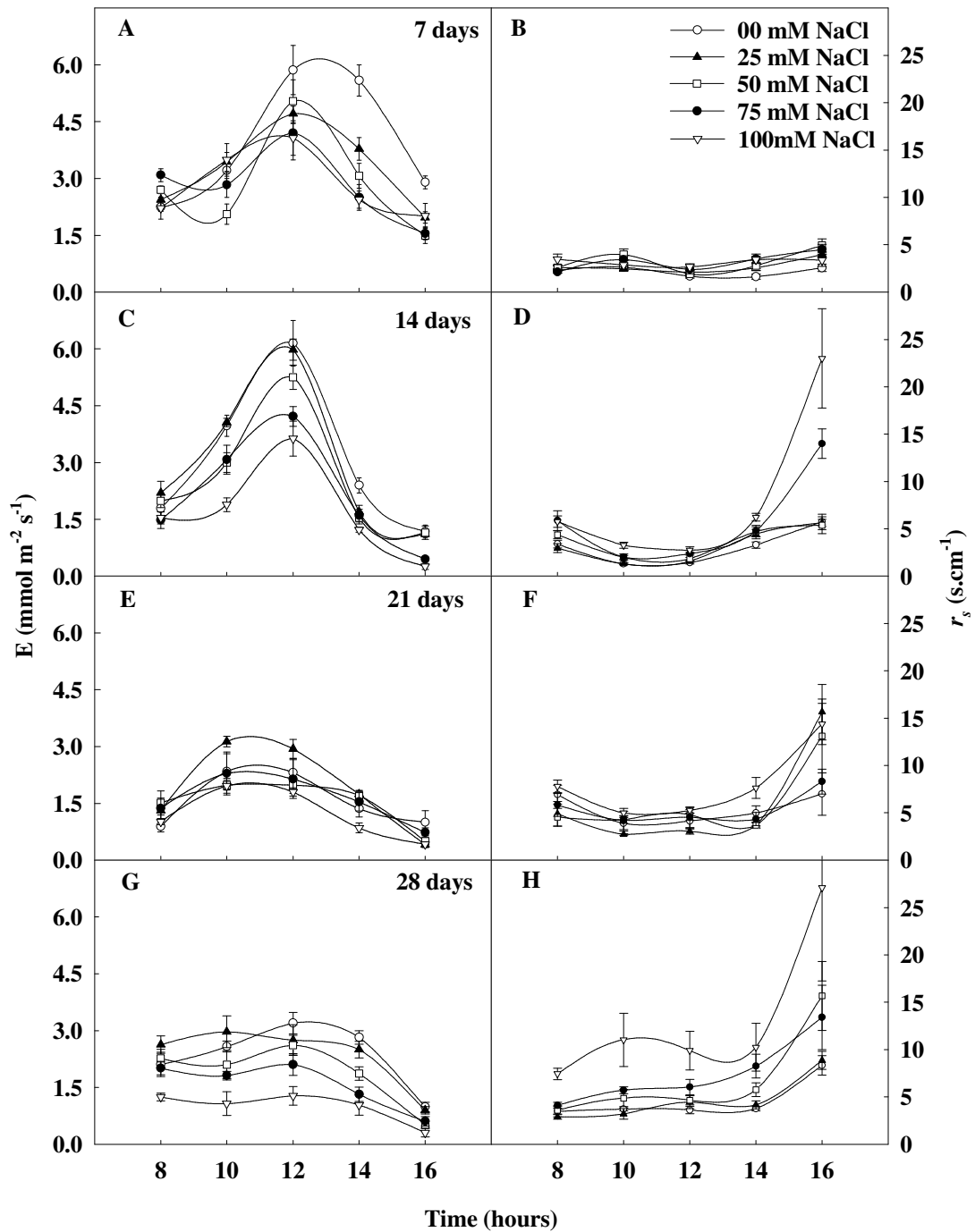


Fig. 4. Daily course of transpiration (E) and diffusive resistance (r_s) in young umbu plants cultivated at increasing NaCl levels. Measurements were accomplished after 7 (A and B), 15 (C and D), 21 (E and F), and 28 (G and H) days of salt stress. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown.

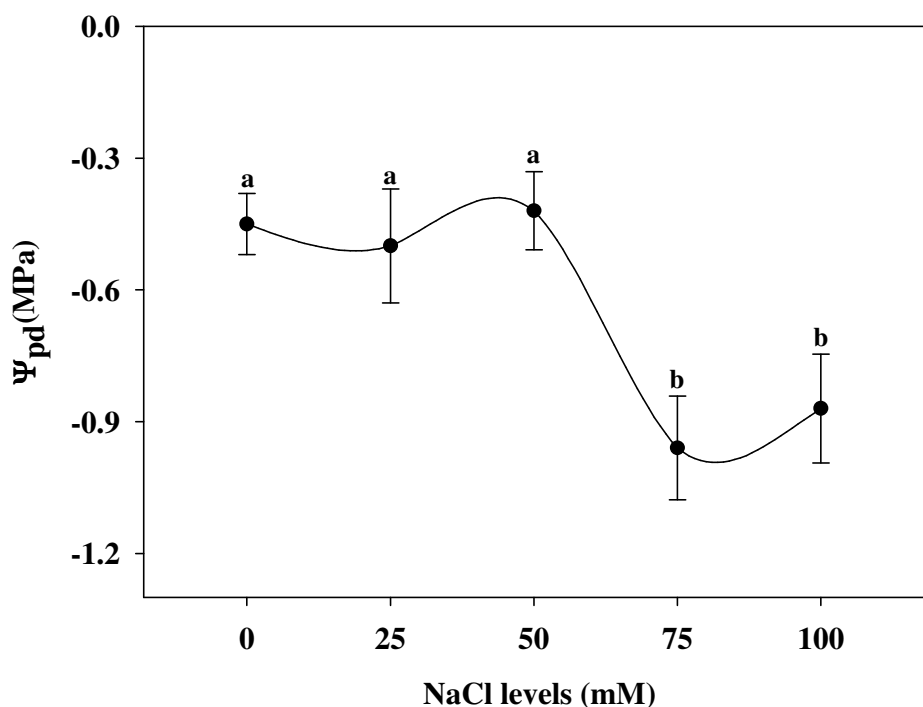


Fig. 5. Pre-dawn leaf water potential (Ψ_{pd}) of young umbu plants cultivated under increasing NaCl levels. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown. Different letters denote statistical difference by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$) among treatments.

The carbohydrate content in leaves showed a small but significant increase (18%) in plants grown above 50 mM NaCl ($P < 0.01$) (Fig. 8). In stems, carbohydrate contents increased 40% in plants submitted to 25 mM NaCl. However, it returned to the same as the control level in the other treatments. In roots, a reduction of 32% in the soluble carbohydrate content was observed at salt levels of 50, 75, and 100 mM NaCl.

In relation to the amino acid content of leaves, there was a decrease of 53% in the highest NaCl level when compared with control plants (Fig. 8). In contrast amino acid content increased nearly 110% in stems of plants grown under higher salt levels (75 and 100 mM NaCl). In the roots, significant differences in free amino acid content were not observed as a result of NaCl levels applied.

Under salt stress, carbohydrate content in leaves and roots was respectively 3 and 87-fold higher than amino acid content.

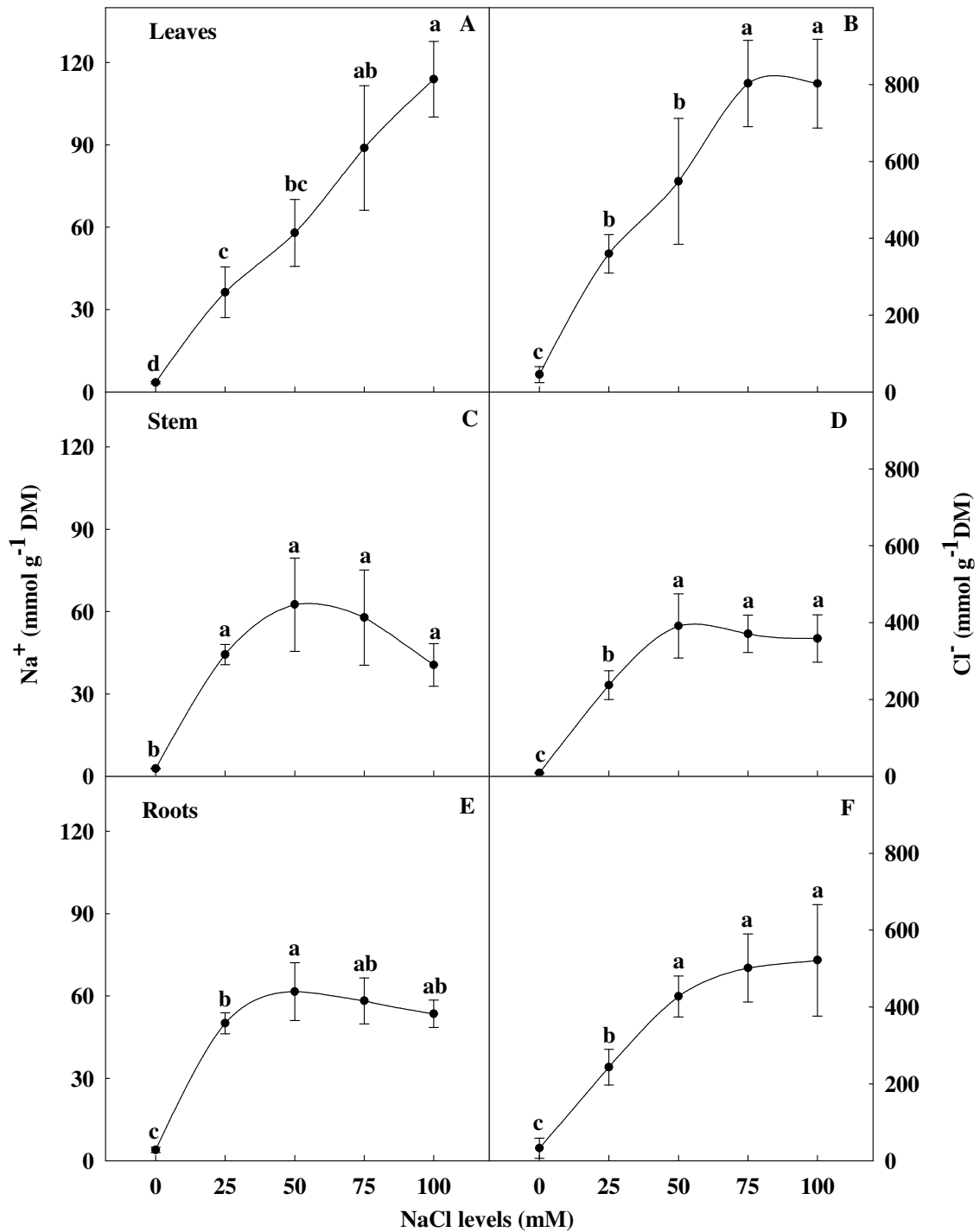


Fig. 6. Sodium (Na⁺) and chloride (Cl⁻) contents in leaves (A and B), stem (C and D), and roots (E and F) in young umbu plants cultivated under increasing NaCl levels. DM = dry mass. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown. Different letters denote statistical difference by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$) among treatments.

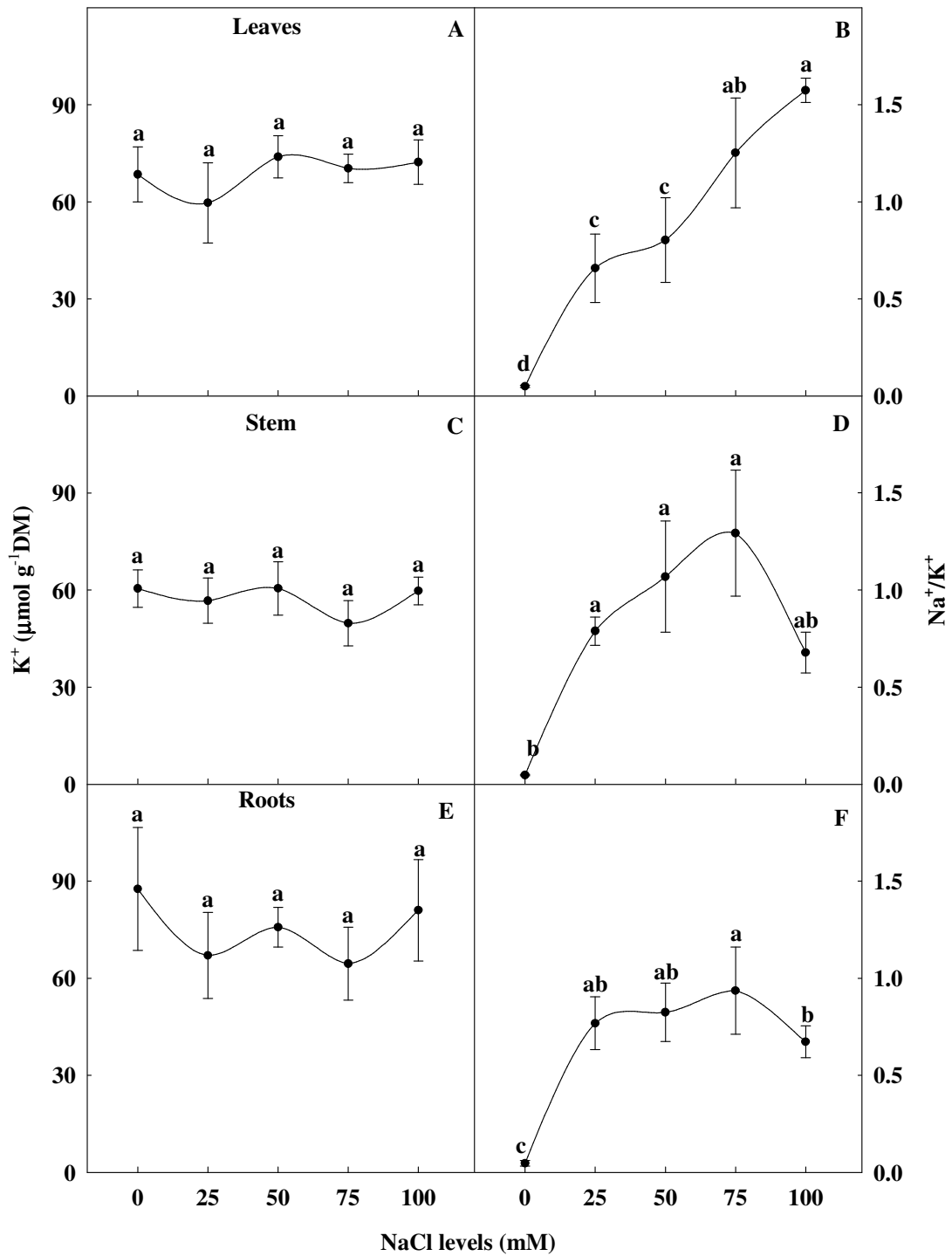


Fig. 7. Potassium content (K^+) and sodium/potassium ratio (Na^+/K^+) in leaves (A and B), stem (C and D), and roots (E and F) in young umbu plants cultivated under increasing NaCl levels. DM = dry mass. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown. Different letters denote statistical difference by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$) among treatments.

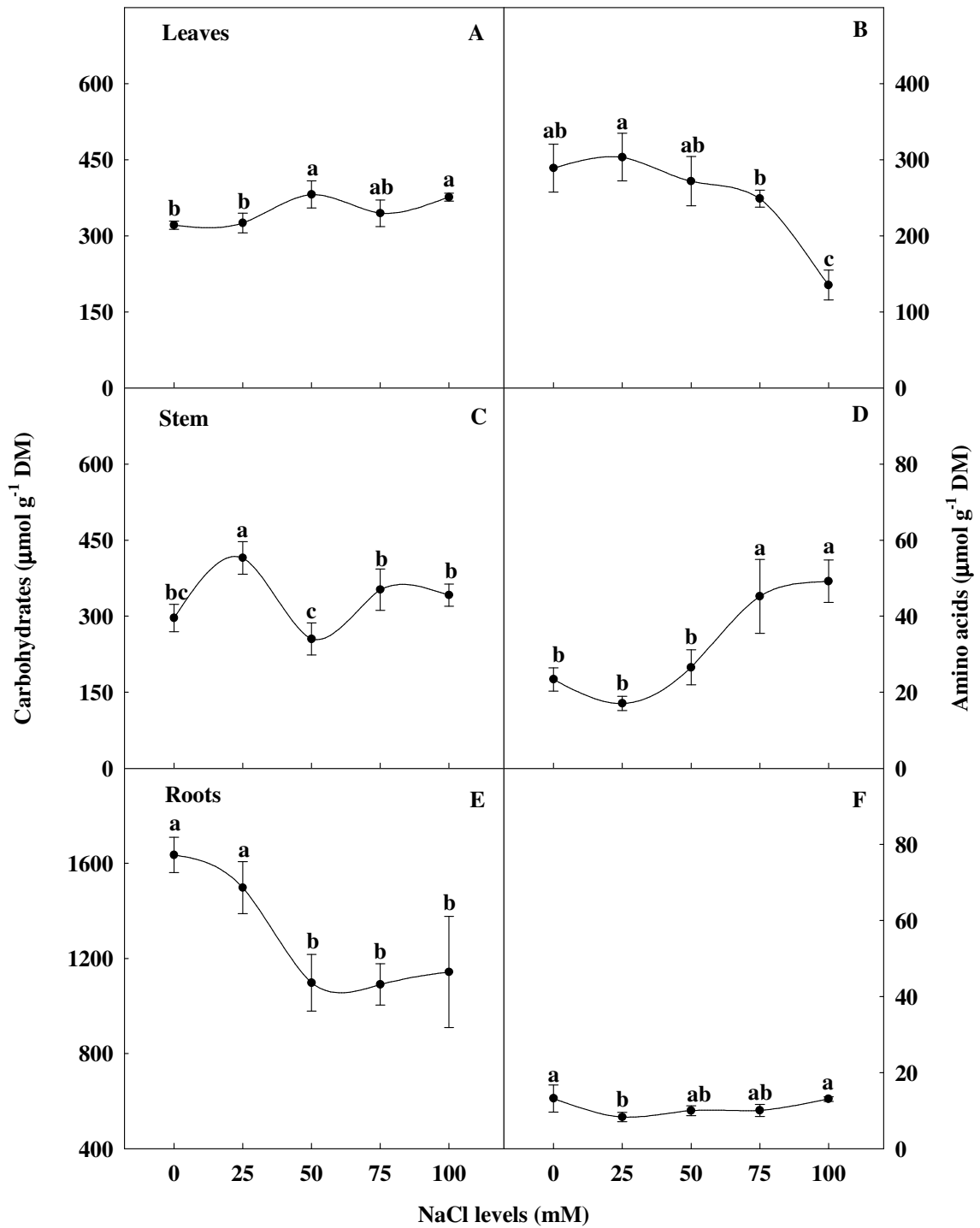


Fig. 8. Soluble carbohydrates and free amino acids content in leaves (A and B), stem (C and D), and roots (E and F) in young umbu plants cultivated under increasing NaCl levels. DM = dry mass. Means of six replicates \pm SD are shown. Different letters denote statistical difference by Tukey's test ($P < 0.05$) among treatments.

4. Discussion

Salinity inhibits plant growth for two reasons: first, water-deficit and second due to salt-specific or ion-excess effects (Munns et al., 2006). Different plant species have developed different mechanisms to cope with these effects (Munns, 2002). In this work reduction in plant height, number of leaves, and stem diameter in stressed plants were observed (Fig.1A, 1B, and 1C). However, growth inhibition was not verified during the experimental period. Stem diameter was less affected by salt stress than plant height and number of leaves, corroborating the results obtained by Neves et al (2004) in umbu plants. Reductions in stem diameter were also observed in avocado (Bernstein et al., 2001). Seedlings of *Leucaena leucocephala* showed reduced shoot growth by 60% when submitted to 100 mM NaCl, while seedlings of *Prosopis juliflora* were reduced just 15% under the same salt conditions (Viégas et al., 2003).

Salt tolerance has usually been assessed as the percentage biomass production in saline versus control conditions over a prolonged period of time (Munns, 2002). Plants submitted to high salinity (75 and 100 mM NaCl) decreased both leaf and stem dry masses (Figs. 2A and 2B). Contrasting with these results, root dry mass increased in plants grown in the lowest NaCl level (25mM) while plants submitted to 50, 75, and 100 mM NaCl did not differ from control plants (Fig.2C). Several researchers have shown that shoot growth is more sensitive to salinity than root growth (Shalhevet et al., 1995; Azevedo Neto and Tabosa, 2000; Bernstein et al., 2001). Our results demonstrate also that the shoot of young umbu plants is more sensitive to salinity than the root system (Fig. 2E). According to Munns (1993), this sensitivity could be explained due to an imbalance among cations as a result of the complex interaction in the xylem transport system. Alternatively, when compared with shoots, this phenomenon could be associated to both a faster osmotic adjustment and a slower turgor loss in the roots (Shalhevet et al., 1995).

Leaf area (LA) was the most sensitive growth parameter in response to high salt levels in the nutrient solution (75 mM and 100 mM NaCl) (Fig. 2F). For example, in young guava plants leaf area was reduced by 92% compared to control when plants were submitted to 150 mM NaCl (Távora et al, 2001). The same was observed for mangabeira plants (*Hancornia speciosa* Gomes) which showed a 47% reduction in leaf area when cultivated in sand with 125 mM NaCl (Albuquerque, 2003). Leaf area is a function of leaf size. Considering that leaf area was more affected than number of leaves, our results suggest that salinity affected also cell elongation ratio, therefore decreasing leaf size.

The increases in salinity did not significantly affect specific leaf area (SLA) and leaf area ratio (LAR) (Table 1) suggesting that the effects of salt stress on leaf area was as intense as the effect on dry mass yield. Similar results were found in maize by Azevedo Neto and Tabosa (2000). The contrary was found in mangabeira plants where LAR increased 41% when NaCl levels increased (Albuquerque, 2003).

The increasing of biomass allocation to roots to the detriment of the shoot induced a raise in R/Sh ratio (Figs. 2E and 3). These results differ from those found by Neves et al. (2004) in young umbu plants in which the authors verified reductions in R/Sh with the increases in NaCl levels in the medium. In contrast, other authors found similar results with other crops as to those obtained in this work (Azevedo Neto and Tabosa 2000; Bernstein et al., 2001; Chartzoulakis et al., 2002), while in other research, R/Sh remained unchanged (Albuquerque, 2003).

Stomatal closure was not observed with the increase of NaCl in nutrient solution. In stressed plants, however, significant reductions in transpiration rate were verified, primarily in high evaporative demand hours (Figs. 4A, C, E, G). Decline in transpiration rates usually occurs in both halophytes and glycophytes when salinity of the root zone increases. Short-term results indicate that the reduction in E occurs due to decrease in water potential in roots. Long-term results indicate that high salt concentrations are associated with the inhibition of photosynthesis caused by the accumulation of salts in the mesophyll and increases in intercellular CO₂ concentration which reduces stomatal apertures (Robinson et al., 1997).

The regulation in the transpiration rate has an important role in controlling ion accumulation in the shoot because salt transport occurs via transpiration flow (Robinson et al., 1997). Lima Filho (2004) observed that umbu trees exhibit two peaks of transpiration during the daytime, at 10h and 16h under field conditions. This shows that even in good soil with appropriate humidity conditions, umbu trees exert strict control over the water loss through stomata by restricting transpiration at high evaporative demand hours, assuring a significant water economy (Lima Filho and Silva, 1998). We found no information about gas exchange in umbu tree within a saline environment in the literature. Hence our results are the first report on this topic.

Salinity reduces water potential in guava (Távora et al., 2001), avocado (Chartzoulakis et al., 2002), Barbados cherry (Nogueira et al., 1998a; Gurgel et al., 2003), mangabeira tree (Albuquerque, 2003), maize (Azevedo Neto et al., 2004), and sugar apple (Nogueira et al., 2004). However, information about the effects of salt stress on Ψ_{pd} in umbu tree was not found in the literature. Plants cultivated under low and moderate salinity (25 and 50 mM NaCl), maintained high values of Ψ_{pd} , while plants under high NaCl levels (75 and 100 mM)

exhibit low values of Ψ_{pd} (Fig. 5). These results suggest that salt-induced water stress led to non-recovering of water potential in the more stressed plants. It is well known that salt stress reduces hydraulic conductivity in roots, resulting in decreases of water flow from root to shoot. Thus, there is an alteration in water relations even in osmotically adjusted plants (O'Leary, 1969; Prisco, 1980).

The association between osmotic and ionic effects (ionic toxicity, nutritional deficiency and/or imbalance) has been reported as being the main reason of the growth reduction under salt stress (Yahya, 1998, Neves et al., 2004). Our results showed an increase in tissue Na^+ and Cl^- when salinity increased. However this increase was more conspicuous in leaves than in roots (Figs. 6A, B, E, and F). The stabilization in Na^+ and Cl^- contents verified in moderate and high salinity in the roots suggests saturation in the sodium and chloride retention mechanism in this organ (Figs. 6E and F). Greater Na^+ and Cl^- accumulation in roots than shoot has been considered a physiological trait indicator of salt-tolerance in plants (Viégas et al., 2003). Studying four forest species, these authors verified that salt sensitivity was correlated with a lower Na^+ and Cl^- retention in roots. Additional support of this hypothesis is provided by some olive genotypes, moderately salt tolerant species, for which Na^+ and Cl^- accumulation in roots was greater than in leaves (Chartzoulakis et al., 2002).

The maintenance of K^+ content in both leaves and roots of stressed umbu plants (Figs. 7A and 7E) were reported also for other forest species (Viégas et al., 2003), suggesting that the absorption and transport processes were not affected by competition between this ion and Na^+ as shown by Azevedo Neto and Tabosa, (2000b) and Azevedo Neto et al. (2004).

Although salinity did not affect K^+ content, increases of Na^+ content in leaves and roots substantially raised Na^+/K^+ ratio in these organs (Figs. 7A, B, E, and F). Na^+/K^+ ratios equal to or smaller than 0.6 are necessary for an optimal metabolic efficiency in non-halophyte plants (Greenway and Munns, 1980). High Na^+ concentration can induce K^+ deficiency inhibiting the activity of enzymes that require K^+ . Thus, the interaction between relative K^+ and Na^+ concentration has been considered a key factor in determining salt tolerance in plants (Willadino and Câmara, 2005). In this work, Na^+/K^+ ratios above 1.0 were found in the leaves (Fig. 7A), with values of 1.4 and 1.5 in plants submitted to 75 and 100 mM NaCl, respectively. These results suggest that the reduction in growth can be, at least in part, related to metabolic disorders induced by salt.

Soluble carbohydrates and free amino acids have been mentioned as important compounds in osmoregulation in plants under water and salt stresses (Hare et al., 1998). Accumulation of these compatible solutes reduces osmotic potential in the cytoplasm and contributes to maintaining water homeostasis among several cellular compartments (Sairam

and Tyagi, 2004). Among all organic compounds, soluble carbohydrates represent about 50% of the total osmotically active organic solutes (Ashraf and Harris, 2004). However, salinity may increase carbohydrates in some plant species (Lacerda et al, 2003, Silva et al, 2003) or decrease in others (Agastian et al., 2000). In this work, carbohydrate content increased 18% in leaves (Fig. 8A) and decreased 32% in roots (Fig. 8E) when plants were grown at 50 mM NaCl and higher. In stems, substantial differences in soluble carbohydrates were not verified (Fig. 8C). The greater carbohydrate accumulation in leaves and the reduction in roots under stressed conditions may be associated with decreases in this compound exported from leaves to roots. It is interesting to observe that even in stressed conditions, soluble carbohydrate content was three fold higher in leaves, contributing therefore to water status maintenance in roots.

Free amino acid accumulation in plants under salt stress has often been attributed to alterations in biosynthesis and degradation processes of amino acids and proteins (Dhindsa and Cleland, 1975; Ranieri et al, 1989; Roy-Macauley et al, 1992). Considering that salinity significantly decreased the free amino acid content in leaves (Fig. 8B), but did not alter content in roots (Fig. 8F), our results could be related to an increase in amino acid degradation or inhibition in synthesis jointly with reductions in degradation or increases in protein synthesis. Considering that soluble carbohydrate contents in leaves and roots were much higher than free amino acids, our results suggest a greater participation of carbohydrates than amino acids in maintaining water relations in both leaves and roots of umbu plants.

Summarizing, salt stress did not significantly affect the initial growth, transpiration, diffusive resistance, or leaf water potential of umbu plants grown in salt levels up to 50 mM NaCl. The low Na^+ and Cl^- retention capacity in stem and roots may be responsible for the high ion levels observed in the leaves. The organic solute accumulation at the salt levels studied was not shown to be a physiological trait in response to salt stress in umbu plants. These results suggest that young umbu plants tolerate salinity levels until 50mM NaCl without showing significant physio-morphologic alterations in the initial developmental phase.

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Considerações finais

O estudo das respostas fisiológicas do umbuzeiro quando submetido tanto à seca como à salinidade dos solos, ainda é escasso, principalmente quando se trata de uma espécie com grande variabilidade quanto às características de interesse agrônomo.

As respostas do umbuzeiro à seca encontradas nesta pesquisa comprovam que a manutenção da turgescência foliar se dá pelas reservas de água e substâncias orgânicas armazenadas nos xilopódios, reforçado por um rígido controle estomático para evitar as perdas de água pela transpiração. Embora diferenças significativas tenham sido encontradas entre os genótipos estudados, o fechamento estomático, em função do grau de dessecação do solo, mostrou-se um mecanismo de defesa eficiente, que mantém uma regularidade nessa resposta quando o ciclo de seca se repete. No entanto, as modificações anatômicas que ocorreram ainda não respondem, de maneira clara, às diferenças fisiológicas encontradas, merecendo que outras investigações sejam feitas a esse respeito.

Surpreendentemente, o umbuzeiro mantém altos valores de potencial hídrico ao longo do dia. A redução do Ψ_w ocorreu apenas temporariamente para alguns genótipos, como o BGU 50, não mostrando uma resposta ao déficit hídrico, e sim uma modificação modulativa, provavelmente em função de uma maior perda de água por transpiração durante o período das 8 às 12 horas. Esse comportamento permitiu classificar o umbuzeiro com uma espécie isoídrica.

A seca estimula o acúmulo de substâncias orgânicas no citossol como um mecanismo de defesa, mas essa resposta é muito variável nos genótipos de umbuzeiro. O acúmulo de açúcares, tão amplamente relatado na literatura por colaborar com mais de 50% dos solutos envolvidos no ajustamento osmótico de várias espécies, não foi observado no umbuzeiro, nem sob condições de seca nem de salinidade. Apenas observou-se reduções de açúcares em níveis de salinidade acima de 50mM e em alguns genótipos sob déficit hídrico.

A prolina, também conhecida por aumentar sua concentração em grandes proporções nas plantas submetidas a estresses abióticos, foi a substância mais acumulada em condições de seca em plantas jovens de umbuzeiro. No entanto, quantitativamente representou uma mínima fração do total de solutos analisados. Houve variação também no teor de aminoácidos de alguns acessos sob condições de seca e em níveis acima de 50 mM NaCl. Neste caso, o acúmulo de substâncias orgânicas de baixo peso molecular, embora contribua para a manutenção do status hídrico da planta, não pode ser indicado como um marcador fisiológico de tolerância à seca ou salinidade no umbuzeiro.

A manutenção de elevados valores de potencial hídrico em condições de seca, mesmo quando ocorre o fechamento estomático, leva a crer que os estômatos respondem a algum sinal hormonal enviado das raízes à medida que o ambiente radicular fica mais seco. É provável que o ácido abscísico (ABA) seja responsável por esse rígido controle estomático no umbuzeiro. Investigações a esse respeito são necessárias para compreender os mecanismos de restrição das perdas de vapor d'água no horário de maior demanda evaporativa, mesmo em condições hídricas favoráveis, e a redução gradativa do grau de abertura dos estômatos com um alto potencial hídrico.

O crescimento, as relações hídricas e as trocas gasosas do umbuzeiro não foram afetadas significativamente em níveis de NaCl de até 50mM, o que permitiria indicá-lo como uma espécie que tolera níveis moderados de salinidade no solo. Contudo, para se indicar o umbuzeiro como uma espécie que pode ser cultivada em solos moderadamente salinos, é necessário que se desenvolvam estudos em campo, ficando aqui abertas novas alternativas para futuras pesquisas.

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4. For chemical nomenclature, the conventions of the *International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry* and the official recommendations of the *IUPAC-IUB Combined Commission on Biochemical Nomenclature* should be followed.

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Environmental and Experimental Botany has no page charges.

Revised: September 2005

ANEXO 2. Normas para publicação no Brazilian Journal of Plant Physiology

Brazilian Journal of Plant Physiology - BJPP (ISSN 0103-3131) é o periódico oficial da **Sociedade Brasileira de Fisiologia Vegetal** e voltado para a publicação de trabalhos científicos originais nas várias áreas da Fisiologia Vegetal. BJPP publica trabalhos regulares, comunicações, minirrevisões e minirrevisões brasileiras. Essas minirrevisões são publicadas mediante convite, mas autores também podem consultar o Editor-Chefe para o envio de um artigo. Minirrevisões Brasileiras devem versar, preferentemente, sobre a fisiologia de plantas de ecossistemas tropicais naturais. BJPP publica artigos nas seguintes áreas de conhecimento:

Processos Bioquímicos (Metabolismo primário e secundário, e bioquímica)

Fotobiologia e Processos Fotossintéticos

Regulação Gênica, Transformação, Biologia Celular e Molecular

Nutrição Mineral de Plantas

Desenvolvimento, Crescimento e Diferenciação (Fisiologia de sementes, hormônios vegetais e morfogênese)

Fisiologia Pós-Colheita

Ecofisiologia/Fisiologia da Produção e Fisiologia do Estresse

Interações Planta-Microrganismos e Planta-Insetos

Instrumentação em Fisiologia Vegetal

BJPP somente publica trabalhos na língua inglesa, escritos de forma clara, concisa e fluente. Recomenda-se que o texto seja revisado por alguém fluente em inglês e familiarizado com terminologia e textos científicos. Os artigos enviados para publicação devem apresentar resultados novos e significantes. Isso é particularmente importante para trabalhos na área de Cultura de Células, Tecidos e Órgãos Vegetais, que devem basear-se em dados que contribuam para a compreensão da fisiologia de plantas. Simples experimentação sobre a aplicação de métodos já existentes não será considerada para publicação, tampouco trabalhos originados de experimentos do tipo dose-resposta, sem discussão com base fisiológica.

Submissão e revisão

A submissão de um manuscrito ao Editor-Chefe necessariamente implica no fato de que o trabalho não foi publicado ou que está sendo avaliado para publicação em outro periódico. Submissão de manuscritos de vários autores significa que o autor correspondente obteve a aprovação de todos os outros co-autores para submeter o manuscrito a BJPP. BJPP considera que todas as informações contidas em um artigo são de completa responsabilidade dos autores, inclusive a exatidão dos resultados e as conclusões deles extraíveis. Os autores devem enviar o manuscrito (em um único arquivo contendo texto como também tabelas, legendas para figuras e figuras) mediante e-mail para o Editor-Chefe. Solicita-se também aos autores que submetam um arquivo adicional contendo apenas o "abstract". Arquivos com extensão pdf ou doc (Word) são preferíveis. Fotografias importantes ou essenciais para a compreensão dos resultados têm de ter alta qualidade. Ao submeter um manuscrito, o Editor-Chefe verificará se o trabalho está dentro do escopo de BJPP e se segue as diretrizes do periódico. Submissões que não respeitarem as diretrizes de BJPP serão devolvidas imediatamente aos autores para correção, antes de serem enviadas para revisão. Os manuscritos serão enviados a um Editor Associado, que escolherá revisores baseando-se em suas competências nas várias áreas especializadas da fisiologia vegetal. Quando da submissão, os autores poderão indicar até cinco revisores potenciais (com seus respectivos e-mails) com competência reconhecida na área de pesquisa do manuscrito. Todavia, ao Editor Associado é reservado o direito de não considerar essas sugestões. Os autores receberão uma carta do Editor-Chefe juntamente com as avaliações dos revisores. Manuscritos que necessitarem de revisão deverão ser retornados

ao Editor-Chefe dentro de 30 dias; caso contrário, serão considerados como submissões novas. A versão revisada deverá ser enviada via e-mail e deve ser acompanhada de uma carta em que se responde aos questionamentos dos revisores e do editor. Os autores deverão justificar claramente quando não concordarem, ou quando não acatarem, um dado questionamento. Solicita-se aos autores que utilizem o aplicativo "Microsoft Word for Windows 95-2003" como processador de textos. Manuscritos rejeitados para publicação somente serão devolvidos aos autores se contiverem comentários importantes dos revisores que possam contribuir para as pesquisas do autor.

Diretrizes para elaboração do manuscrito

Os autores deverão organizar o manuscrito na seguinte forma:

Manuscrito

Formatar o manuscrito, baseando-se em artigos recentemente publicados em BJPP. As páginas devem ser numeradas consecutivamente, inclusive figuras e tabelas. As linhas de cada página deverão ser numeradas para facilitar o trabalho de revisão. Na primeira página, inclua o título do manuscrito (em negrito, fonte 16, justificado à esquerda, com inicial maiúscula apenas para a primeira palavra - quando aplicável), os nomes dos autores (em negrito, fonte 12, justificado à esquerda) e afiliação (em itálico, fonte 12, justificado à esquerda). O autor correspondente deverá ser indicado por um asterisco. O "Abstract" não deve conter mais que 250 palavras. Os autores devem sugerir de três a seis palavras-chave (em ordem alfabética) que não constem no título. O texto deve ser digitado em espaço duplo, fonte "Times New Roman" (fonte 12) em apenas um lado do papel, com margens de 3 cm. Os manuscritos devem ser divididos em Introdução; Materiais e métodos; Resultados; Discussão; Agradecimentos; Referências; Tabelas; Legenda para figuras; e Figuras. Partes principais (e.g., Introdução, Resultados etc.) deverão estar em negrito, com letras maiúsculas e separadas do texto. Dentro dessas partes, subdivisões deverão estar em itálico, com apenas a letra inicial maiúscula. Apresentação conjunta de "Resultados e Discussão" só será aceita em circunstâncias excepcionais. A "Discussão" não deve conter repetição da descrição dos resultados. Nomes científicos deverão ser escritos em itálico. O nome científico completo (gênero, espécie, autoridade, e cultivar, quando apropriado) deverá ser citado para cada organismo, após a sua primeira menção. O epíteto genérico deverá ser abreviado após a primeira menção, desde que não resulte em conflito com abreviaturas para outros gêneros com a mesma letra inicial. Quando nomes comuns forem utilizados, deverão ser acompanhados dos respectivos nomes científicos após a primeira menção. Nomes de equipamentos especializados mencionados em "Material e métodos" deverão ser acompanhados de detalhes do modelo, fabricante, cidade e país de origem. Os nomes de enzimas deverão ser acompanhados de seu EC ("Enzyme Commission") após a primeira menção. Números de zero a nove deverão ser escritos por extenso, a menos que sejam acompanhados de uma unidade. Acima de dez, números deverão ser escritos com algarismos arábicos, exceto quando em início de frases. Datas deverão estar na forma "20 May 2006", e horas, na forma de 1200 h. Citações de literatura, ao longo do texto, deverão aparecer em ordem cronológica e, então, ordenadas por autor e ano (e.g., Styles, 1978; Meier and Bowling, 1995; Meier et al., 1997; Silva et al., 2004a, b). Não use "et al." em itálico. Sempre insira espaço entre um numeral e a unidade (por exemplo, 1 mL), com exceções de %, ‰ e °C (e.g., 1%). Apenas utilize o termo "in press" para artigos já aceitados para publicação, caso contrário, utilize a expressão "unpublished results". Observações não-publicadas ou comunicações pessoais devem ser mencionadas no texto (e.g., "T. Carter, personal communication"; "T. Carter and J. Spanning, unpublished results"). Evite citar teses. Títulos de periódicos devem ser abreviados de acordo com o "*Bibliographic Guide for Editors and*

Authors - BIOSIS". O último fascículo de cada volume de BJPP contém abreviaturas para a maioria dos periódicos científicos relacionados à fisiologia vegetal e áreas afins.

Short communications

"Short Communications" poderão ser publicadas, mas sem a intenção de publicação de resultados preliminares. Devem ser concisas e conter resultados significantes. Não devem ter mais que 10 páginas digitadas em espaço duplo, incluindo tabelas e figuras. Devem ser enviadas com a primeira página seguindo as orientações para manuscritos regulares, mas sem subdivisões. As referências deverão seguir o texto.

Minireviews

Em "Minireviews", os autores são livres para sugerir a estrutura do artigo, mas tabelas e figuras deverão seguir as diretrizes para a publicação de manuscritos em BJPP. "Minireviews" serão também avaliadas por revisores. Deverão ser apresentadas concisamente, com foco em assuntos relevantes de pesquisa em que se evidencie o estado-da-arte das informações disponíveis, devendo ainda servir de referência para estudos futuros. "Minireviews" deverão ser apresentadas em espaço duplo, contendo não mais que 20 páginas.

Referências de periódicos

Carelli MLC, Fahl JI, Ramalho JDC (2006) Aspects of nitrogen metabolism in coffee plants. *Braz. J. Plant Physiol.* 18:9-21.

Referências de livros

Salisbury FB, Ross CW (1992) *Plant Physiology*. 4th ed. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont.

Referências de capítulos de livros

Fujiwara K, Kozai T (1995) Physical and microenvironment and its effects. In: Aitken-Christie A, Kozai T, Smith MAL (eds), *Automation and Environmental Control in Plant Tissue Culture*, pp.301-318. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

Anais de conferências e resumos publicados

Prisco JT, Pahlich E (1989) Recent advances on the physiology and salt stresses. In: *Annals (or Proceedings/Abstracts) of the II Reunião Brasileira de Fisiologia Vegetal*. Piracicaba, Brazil, pp.23-24.

Teses

Melotto E (1992) Characterization of endogenous pectin oligomers in tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill) fruit. Davis, University of California. PhD thesis.

Tabelas e Figuras

Figuras e tabelas não devem repetir dados e devem ser reduzidas ao mínimo necessário. Devem ser numeradas consecutivamente, com números arábicos e, no texto, menções para tabelas e figuras devem aparecer na forma de "Table 1", "Figure 1", "Figure 1A"...Títulos para figuras e tabelas deverão estar também em espaço duplo. Utilize a formatação de tabelas usando células, não utilizando as teclas "tab" ou teclas de espaço para formatação. Utilize apenas linhas horizontais para a divisão das tabelas. Notas de rodapé para tabelas devem ser feitas com fonte de tamanho 10 e indicadas por meio de letras sobrescritas minúsculas, começando com a em cada tabela. Cada tabela e figura deve ser apresentada em página

separada do manuscrito, e nunca devem ser incluídas no texto. Títulos de figuras devem ser digitados em uma página separada, antecedendo às páginas das figuras. Textos e números nas ordenadas das figuras não devem ser digitados com fonte de tamanho inferior a 10. Todas as figuras deverão ter tamanho que permita reprodução direta para impressão. Fotografias eletrônicas devem ser submetidas no tamanho desejado de impressão (85 mm de largura para uma coluna e até 175 mm para acompanhar a largura da página). BJPP reserva-se ao direito de reduzir o tamanho das figuras.

Unidades, símbolos e abreviaturas

O Sistema Internacional (SI) de unidades deve ser usado ao longo do manuscrito. Recomenda-se o livro ("Units, Symbols and Terminology for Plant Physiology", editado por F.B. Salisbury, Oxford University Press, Oxford) para uma descrição detalhada e útil sobre unidades, símbolos e terminologia utilizados em fisiologia vegetal e ciências afins. Resumidamente, use pascal (Pa) para pressão, L para litro, $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$ para irradiância, becquerel (Bq) para radioatividade, *gn* (*g* em itálico) para aceleração devido à gravidade, s para segundo, min para minuto, h para hora, Da para indicar massa molecular, que é representada por *m* (massa molecular relativa de proteínas é o mesmo que peso molecular, *Mr*, e não deve ser acompanhado por Da; e.g., a massa molecular relativa *Mr* = 10,000), *y_w* para potencial hídrico, (*y_p* para potencial de pressão, *y_s* para potencial osmótico, e *y_m* para potencial mátrico. O último fascículo de cada volume de BJPP contém vários símbolos e unidades usadas em fisiologia vegetal. Recomendam-se abreviaturas apenas para unidades de medida, símbolos químicos (e.g., Fe, Na), nomes de substâncias químicas (e.g., ATP, MES, HEPES, H₂SO₄, NaCl, CO₂), procedimentos corriqueiros (e.g., PCR, PAGE, RFLP), terminologia molecular (e.g., bp, SDS) ou termos estatísticos (e.g., ANOVA, SD, SE, *n*, *F*, teste *t* e *r*²). Outras abreviaturas devem ser escritas por extenso após a primeira menção, não devendo ser utilizadas em início de frases. Abreviações de termos científicos não devem ser seguidas de ponto. Use o índice *menos* para indicar "por" (e.g., m⁻³, L⁻¹, h⁻¹), exceto nos casos "por planta", "por vaso". O autor poderá fornecer, caso julgue conveniente, uma lista de abreviaturas, como um Apêndice.

Ilustrações

Fotografias devem ter alta qualidade e incluídas no fim do texto. O número de fotografias deve ser reduzido ao mínimo. Linhas nas figuras devem ter espessuras uniformes. Texto e números devem ter dimensões apropriadas.

Provas de imprensa

Autores devem devolver as provas de imprensa de seus manuscritos dentro de três dias após o recebimento. Não serão aceitas alterações extensas.

Separatas

Os autores receberão um arquivo em formato PDF como separata.

Custos de página

Não há custos para os autores ao publicarem seus manuscritos em BJPP.

Envio do manuscrito

Manuscritos devem ser enviados preferentemente por e-mail para:

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Anexo 3. Aceite da revista *Environmental and Experimental Botany***Accepted Manuscript**

Title: Physiological responses to salt stress in young umbu plants

Authors: Elizamar Ciríaco da Silva, Rejane Jurema Mansur Custódio Nogueira, Francisco Pinheiro de Araújo, Nataniel Franklin de Melo, André Dias de Azevedo Neto

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