



ENZYMES ACTIVITY OF MICROPROPAGATED *ANTIGONON LEPTOPUS* PLANT UNDER EFFECT OF SALINITY STRESS

Rasha A. El-Ziat¹; Iman M.El-Sayed^{2*}; Lobna S. Taha² and Eman A. Ibrahim³

¹Ornamental Horticulture Department, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University, Giza, Egypt.

²Department of ornamental plants and woody trees, Agricultural and biological Research Division, National Research Centre (NRC), Egypt.

³Department of Plant Biochemistry, National Research Centre, 33 El Bohouth St. (former El Tahrirst.), Dokki, Giza, Egypt.

Corresponding author: imansayed6065@yahoo.com

Abstract

The micropropagation ability of *Antigonon leptopus* was investigated under different concentrations of NaCl (0, 1, 2, 4 and 8 g/L). Two levels of Iron Oxid Nanoparticles (5 and 10 mg/L) was examined to mitigate the effect of salt stress on micropropagated plants. The results showed that NaCl at different concentrations significantly reduced *in vitro* recorded shoots and roots parameters (survival%, number of shootlets, shootlet length, number of leaves, rooting%, number and length of roots). Moreover, proline content and enzymes (GSH, SOD and Catalase) were increased with increasing NaCl concentration in the culture medium. In addition, adding Iron Oxide NPs to the culture medium showed positive effect for alleviating salt stress on the micropropagated plants. Undertaking there are no reports on the *in vitro* growth behavior of this important medical plant under salinity stress. So, the aim of this study was to evaluate the adverse effect of salt stress on *Antigonon leptopus* plants and the possibility of using of Iron oxide nanoparticles to overcome these effects.

Keywords: *Antigonon leptopus*, micropropagation, salt stress, nanoparticles, *in vitro*.

Introduction

Nowadays, nanoparticles are used in many sections, such as medicine, agriculture, and industry. Nanoparticles cause many morphological and physiological changes in plants depending on the properties of nanoparticles (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2015). Synthesis of Nanoparticale (NPs) has gained an emerging interest as a result of their superior properties and potential application in almost every field (Shaban, 2012) such as catalysis (Shaban, 2012 and Ibrahim *et al.*, 2018), magnetic (Ali *et al.*, 2017), antimicrobial activity (El-Alfy *et al.*, 2015).

Salinity is one of a wide range of environmental stresses which limit plant growth and productivity (Parida and Das, 2005). Salt stress of soil or water in arid and semi-arid regions is one of the major stresses (Parvaiz and Satyawati 2008). High concentrations of salt affect plants in several ways, such as water stress, ion toxicity, nutritional disorders, oxidative stress, and alteration of metabolic processes, membrane disorganization, reduction of cell division and expansion and genotoxicity which reduce plant growth, development and survival (Carrillo *et al.*, 2011).

Corallita (*Antigonon leptopus*) is a perennial plant belongs to family Polygonaceae, native to Mexico (Rajput *et al.*, 2015). Corallita is an ornamental showy flowers and evergreen climber vine that hold via tendrils (Burke and DiTommaso, 2011). The aerial portion is used for cough and throat constriction (Vanisree *et al.*, 2008). In Thailand, the Leaves and pink flowers are often eaten as cooked vegetables. A hot herbal tea prepared of *Antigonon leptopus* is made from the leaves and blossoms (Lim, 2013). The sexual propagation of *Antigonon leptopus* gave a small quantity of seeds (Ghareeb and Taha, 2018).

Iron oxide nanoparticles used for a variety of applications, such as soil groundwater treatments and photocatalytic reactions, Iron nanomaterial have been shown

to promote plants to reduce the adverse effect of salt stress (Bombin *et al.*, 2015).

Undertaking there are no reports on the growth behavior of this important medical plant under salinity stress, the aim of this study was to evaluate the adverse effect of salt stress on *Antigonon leptopus* plants and investigate the possibility of using Iron oxide nanoparticles to overcome these effects.

Materials and Methods

These investigations were conducted at Tissue Culture Technique Lab., Central laboratories, Department of Ornamental Plants and Woody Trees, National Research Centre (NRC), Department of Plant Biochemistry, National Research Center (NRC), and Ornamental Horticulture Department, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University, Giza, Egypt during years 2018-2019 to evaluate some morphological, chemical changes of *Antigonon leptopus* plants cultured *in vitro* under the effect of salt stress.

Explant source and surface sterilization

Stem nodal explants of *Antigonon leptopus* were collected from the unique climbing tree grown at Zohrya Botanical Garden, Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt, washed and sterilized in ethanol 70% (v/v) for 30 seconds. After that, the explants were immersed in 15% of sodium hypochlorite (Clorox) for 7 minutes then 1% of HgCl₂ (MC) solution (w/v) for 10 minutes and rinsed three times in sterile water.

Culture medium

After surface sterilization, nodal *Antigonon leptopus* explants (two nodes) were cultured for one month on MS free of hormones (Murashige and Skoog, 1962) supplemented with 0.2 ppm of 6- benzylamino-purine (BAP) and 0.1ppm indole butyric acid (IBA), 2.5% sucrose and 0.7% agar. The pH of the medium was adjusted to 5.6-5.8 then autoclaved at

121°C and 15 psi for 15 minutes. The *in vitro* obtained shootlets were used as explant source for two experiments:

First experiment: Various concentrations (0, 1, 2, 4 and 8 g/L) of NaCl were examined under *in vitro* conditions.

Second experiment: Testing two Iron oxide nanoparticles (5.0 and 10 mg/l) to alleviate salt stress on the micropropagated as following:

- 1-Control (MS free of salt)
- 2- NaCl (1 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs
- 3- NaCl (1 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs
- 4- NaCl (2g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs
- 5- NaCl (2 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs
- 6- NaCl (4 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs
- 7- NaCl (4 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs
- 8- NaCl (8 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs
- 9- NaCl (8 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs

The specification of used Nanoparticles in the present experiment was indicated in Table (1) and Fig. (1)

Table 1 : Iron Oxide NPs specification

Specification	Test method	
Phase	hematite	XRD
Particle size	< 50 nm	TEM
Surface area	> 50m ² /gm	BET (P/Po: up to 0.35)

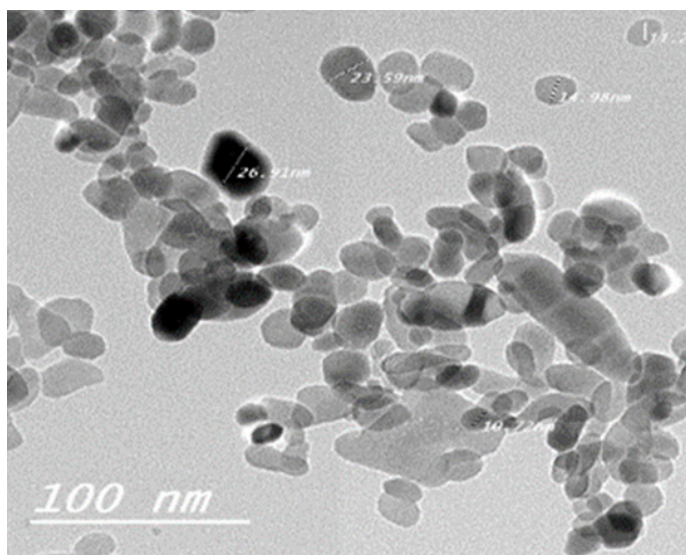


Fig. 1 : Scanning electron microscopy image of Iron oxide NPs

Culture conditions:

Cultures were incubated in growth chamber at $24 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ under white cool florescent lamps with light intensity of 3k lux at 16 hr photoperiod.

The culture period for each experiment (first and second) took two months after start of culture then, the following data were recorded:

Shooting behavior: Survival %, number of formed shootlets per explant, shootlet length (mm) and number of leaves per shootlet.

Rooting behavior: Percentage of roots formation (%), number of roots/shootlet and root length (mm).

Extraction and chemical analysis

1. Photosynthetic pigments

Photosynthetic pigments (chlorophylls a and b) as well as carotenoids were determined in shootlets tissues as mg/100g fresh weight using spectrophotometer, according to the procedure achieved by Saric *et al.*, 1967.

2. Proline

The proline content in dry leaves (mg/g F.W.) was determined using the method described by Bates *et al.*, 1973.

3. Antioxidant enzymes extraction

Fresh plant material (0.1g) was homogenized in 5 ml of ice-cold buffer phosphate (pH7.4). The homogenate was centrifuged at 10,000 rpm for 30 min and supernatant was collected. The resulting supernatant was used for determination of enzyme activities.

(a) Superoxide dismutase (SOD)

It is measured by (Marklund and Marklund, 1974) method. The degree of inhibition of autoxidation of Pyrogallol at alkaline pH by SOD was used as a measure of the enzyme activity. The buffer (2 ml) containing DEAPAC, Pyrogallol (0.5 ml of 2mM) and water (1.5 ml) were mixed for autoxidation. Initially, 1-3 min interval needed for autoxidation of Pyrogallol. To give a final volume of 4 ml for the assay mixture of the enzyme, water was added to 2 ml of 0.05 MT Tris-HCl buffer, 0.5 ml pyrogallol, aliquots of the homogenate. The absorbance at 420 nm after addition of pyrogallol was inhibited by the presence of SOD.

(b) Glutathione peroxidase (GSP)

Glutathione peroxidase was estimated by the method of (Paglia and Valentine, 1967). The homogenate of tissue (0.2 ml) was added with the reaction mixture content (0.2 ml of 0.8 mM EDTA, 0.1 ml of 10 mM sodium azide, 0.1 ml of 2.5 mM H₂O₂, 0.2 ml of reduced glutathione, and 0.4 ml of 0.4 M) and was incubated at 37.8 °C for 10 min. The reaction was arrested by the addition of 0.5 ml of 10 % TCA and the tubes were centrifuged at 2000 rpm. The supernatant were mixed with disodium hydrogen phosphate (3.0 ml of 0.3 mM) and DTNB (1.0 ml of 0.04 %). The absorbance of samples was measured at 412 nm.

(c) Glutathione reductase (GSR)

The reduced glutathione content of supernatant was determined by the method of (Beutler and Kelly, 1983). The absorbance was spectrophotometrically recorded at 412 nm.

Statistical analysis

The data were analyzed as described by Snedecor and Cochran (1980) using a randomized complete block design with 3 replicates per treatments. Means of all characters were compared using L.S.D test at 0.05% level.

Results and Discussion

1. *In vitro* shooting behavior under effect of NaCl

The results in Table (2) showed that NaCl concentration had inversely proportional with the shoot parameters of *in vitro* propagated *Antigonon leptopus* plants. Subsequently, the lowest NaCl concentration in culture medium gave the

best values. It is recorded that, the high concentration of NaCl (8 g/L) in culture medium decreased the survival percentage to 77.70%, number of shootlets (4.00), shootlet length (36.25 mm), number of leaves (19.01) as compared to other salt levels (1, 2 and 4 g/l) and control. Similar results were found by (Shivanna *et al.*, 2013) on *Azadirachta*

indica who found that increasing salinity up to 150 and 200 μM increased shoot growth. Also, (Teixeira and Retired, 2015) observed that NaCl concentrations ranging from 5 μM to 200 μM showed reduced of explant survival, fresh weight and dry weight on hybrid *Cymbidium*.

Table 2: *In vitro* shooting behaviors under effect of various concentrations of NaCl.

Treatment	Survival%	Number of shootlets/explant	Shootlet length (mm)	Number of leaves /shootlet
Control	100	11.67	30.53	45.00
NaCl at 1g/L	100	10.00	53.80	39.50
NaCl at 2 g/L	100	8.66	44.43	31.67
NaCl at 4 g/L	88.80	7.16	39.24	39.00
NaCl at 8 g/L	77.70	4.00	36.25	19.01
LSD _{0.05}	9.73	2.38	5.89	5.18

2. *In vitro* rooting ability under effect of NaCl

Data in Table (3) demonstrated the effect of NaCl concentrations on rooting parameters of *Antigonon leptopus* formed *in vitro*. Variance analysis showed that, the lowest NaCl concentration (1 g/L) gave the best values of root parameters such as rooting percent (66.66%), number of roots (5.50) and length of roots (21.20 mm). On the other

hand, NaCl at 8 g/L caused none rooting of forming shoots. Similarly, the reduction of root growth as a result of high salt concentration in culture medium was explained by Khenifi (Khenifi *et al.*, 2011), they suggested that the osmotic potential of the media was decreased by the addition of NaCl to the culture media so, inducing salinity stress affected the shoots and roots growth of *Antigonon leptopus* plants.

Table 3: *In vitro* rooting ability under effect of various concentrations of NaCl.

Treatment	Rooting%	Number of roots	Root length(mm)
Control	33.33	3.00	16.60
NaCl at 1g/L	66.66	5.50	21.20
NaCl at 2 g/L	44.44	1.30	18.80
NaCl at 4 g/L	33.3	1.00	10.50
NaCl at 8 g/L	---	---	---
LSD _{0.05}	4.40	1.60	5.30

3. Effect of NaCl on proline content

The results of the proline content in leaf samples that were taken from plantlets receiving different NaCl concentrations (Fig. 2) showed that, with increasing NaCl in culture medium, the proline content was generally increased. Accordingly, the highest salt concentration (8 g/l) had the highest proline content (0.64 mg/g F.w.). On the other hand, control plants and those were cultured on the lowest NaCl concentration had the lowest proline content (0.23 and 0.43 mg/g F.W., respectively). These results agreed with the results that were found (Ayala-Astorga G.I. and Alcaraz-Melendez, 2010 and Ayala-Astorga *et al.*, 2009) on *Paulownia imperialis*, (El-Sayed *et al.*, 2019) mentioned that proline content was increased with increasing salinity concentration in the culture medium on *Moringa oleifera* L. The considerable enhancement of proline accumulation in plants using high salt concentration in culture medium may lead to the conclusion that proline plays a role in plants tolerance to salinity. This role was explained by Greenway and Munna (Greenway and Munnus, 1980), who mentioned that proline can be considered as a stabilizer of osmotic pressure within the cell. Also, (Marcum and Murdoch, 1994) concluded that proline can make a substantial contribution to cytoplasmic osmotic adjustment.

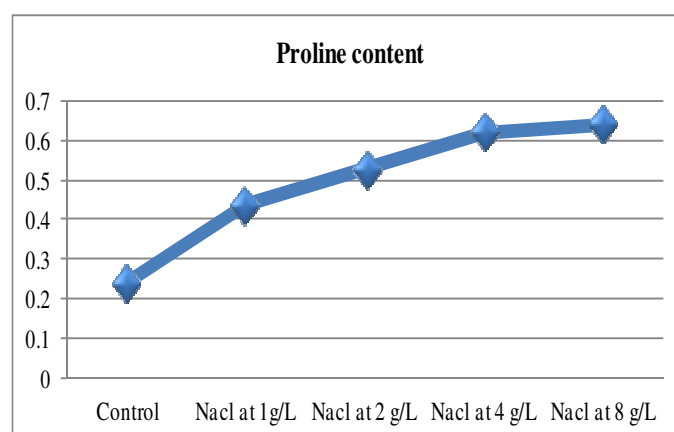


Fig. 2 : Effect of various concentrations of NaCl levels on proline content.

4. Effect of iron oxide NPs on alleviation of salt stress on shooting ability

The data in Table (4) observed that, control plant had the highest value of *in vitro* shoot parameters (survival 100%, number of shootlets/explant (11.6) and leaves/shootlet (45.00). Moreover, the iron oxide NPs decreased the effect of

salt stress on *in vitro* shooting ability of *Antigonon leptopus* plants. The data showed that, using iron oxide NPs at 10 mg/L with NaCl at 1g/L gave a higher value of survival (100%), number of shootlets/explant (10.19), shootlet length (45.20 mm), and number of leaves/shootlet (39.50) than using NaCl at 1 g/L only. On the other hand, using iron oxide NPs at high concentration (10 mg/L) with high salinity stress was favored than low concentration (5 mg/L) of iron oxide (survival 100 and 100 %, number of shootlets/explant (4.60 and 4.09), shootlet length (37.00) and (34.33 mm), and leaves/shootlet 19.30 and 18.00, respectively). These results agreed with those obtained by (Soliman *et al.*, 2015) on *Moringa peregrina* which found that spraying *Moringa* plants with ZnO and Fe₂O₄ NPs increased growth parameters under salt stress.

5. Effect of salt stress and iron oxide NPs on rooting ability

Data in Table (5) showed that, all roots parameters (rooting %, number of roots/plantlet, and length of roots (mm)) were significantly affected by different concentrations of NaCl and iron oxide NPs in MS culture medium. These parameters were decreased gradually under salt stress levels as compared to control plants. Moreover, the application of iron oxide caused significant increase in root parameters. It is clearly noticed with the highest concentration of NaCl (8

g/L) and iron oxide NPs at 10 mg/L increased rooting by (11.10%), number of roots/plantlet (0.65), and length of roots (7.00 mm). These results agreed with (Soliman *et al.*, 2015) on *Moringa peregrina* and (El-Kereti *et al.*, 2013) on sweet basil plant.

6. Effect of salt stress and iron oxide NPs on proline content

Fig. (3) illustrated that proline content was increased gradually with increasing NaCl concentrations. The plantlets, which were treated with NaCl at 1 g/L in culture media, gave the lowest content of proline, but those which were treated with 8 g/L gave the highest value of proline. The application of iron oxide NPs (5 and 10 mg/L) gave promotion effect on alleviating salt stress with most concentrations of NaCl on the *in vitro* grown plants. Using 10 mg/L iron oxide was more effective than 5mg/L. Plants treated with 8g/L NaCl with 5 mg/L iron oxide NPs in culture media gave the highest proline content (1.27 mg/g F.W.). On the other hand, plants treated by 8 g/L NaCl with 10 mg/L iron oxide NPs gave proline content with less amount than that of the plantlets treated with 8 g/L of NaCl and 5 mg/L iron oxide NPs with a mean value (0.88 mg/g F.W). The data were confirmed by the same results were obtained by (Rezvani *et al.*, 2012) on saffron plants.

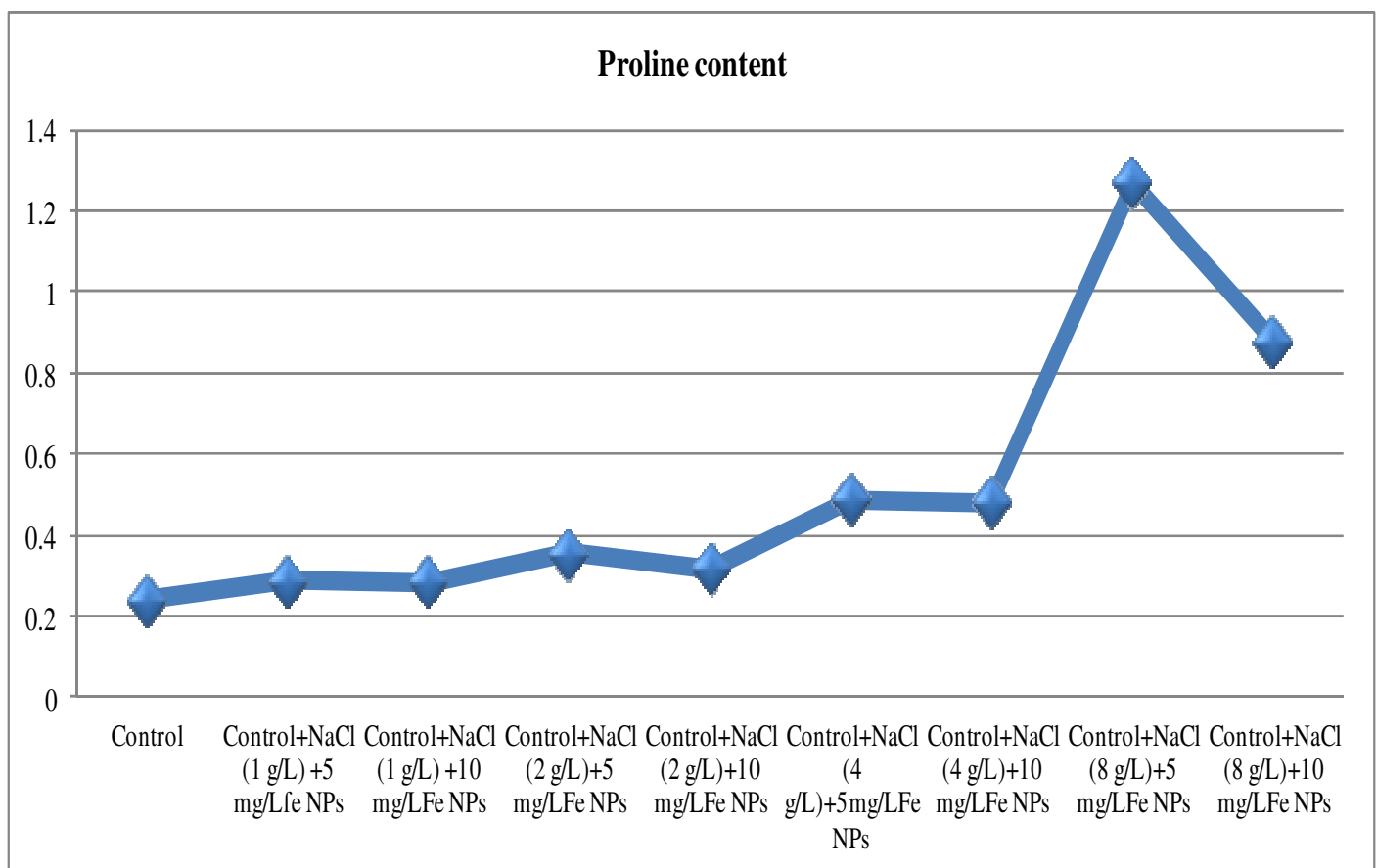


Fig. 3 : Proline content under effect of various concentrations of NaCl and iron oxide NPs.

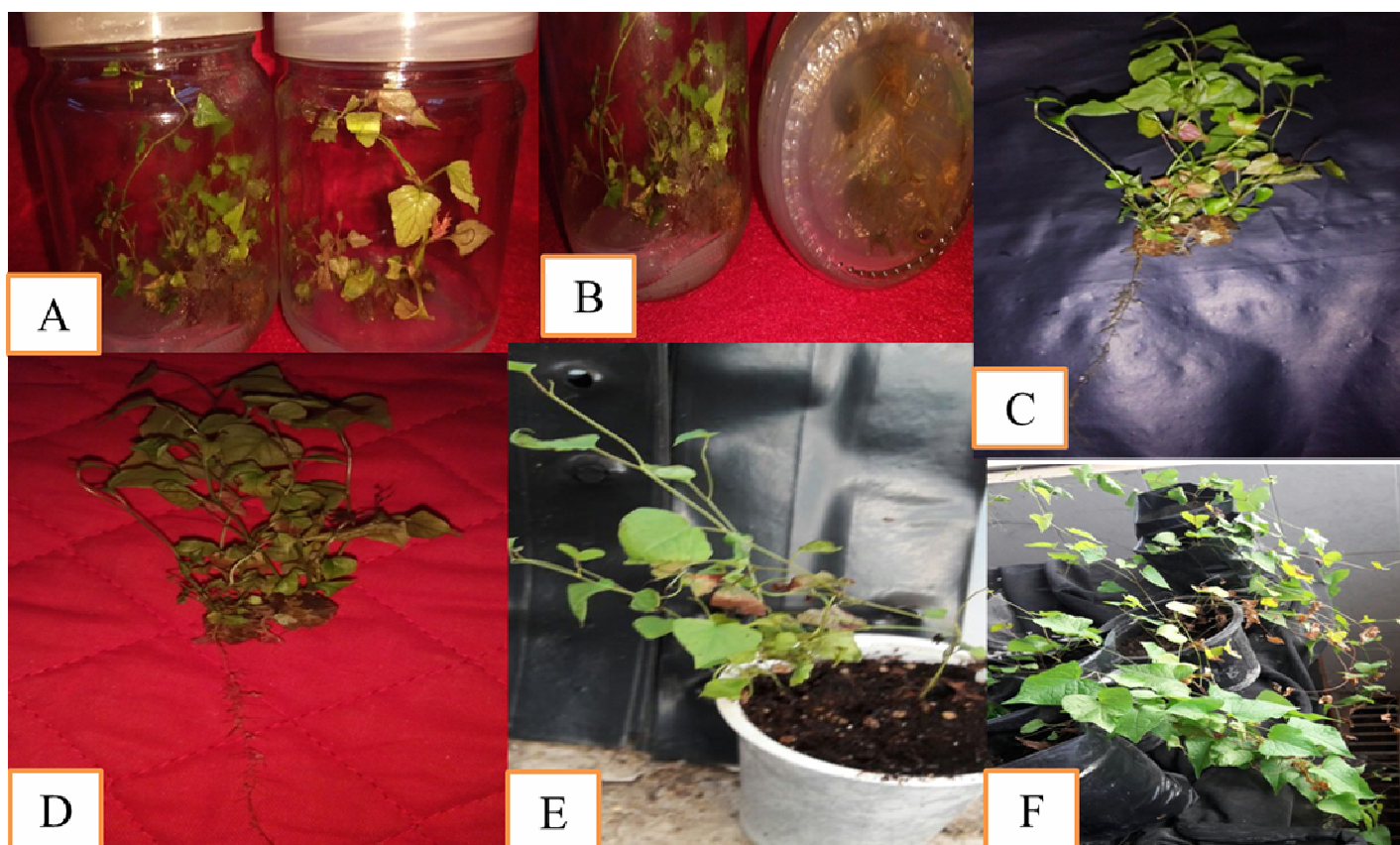


Fig. 4: Micropropagation of *Antigonon leptopus* A: *In vitro* culture establishment stage, B: Rooting of *in vitro* microshoots and C- F: *Ex vitro* acclimatization stage.

Table 4: *In vitro* shooting behavior under effect of various concentrations of NaCl and iron oxide NPs.

Treatment	Characters	Number of shootlets/ explant	Shootlet length (mm)	Number of leaves /shootlet
Control		11.60	36.60	45.00
NaCl (1 g/L) + 5 mg/L Fe NPs		9.96	43.80	37.00
NaCl (1g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		10.19	45.20	39.50
NaCl (2 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs		7.78	42.20	36.00
NaCl (2 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		9.30	44.40	36.30
NaCl (4 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs		6.69	40.80	20.00
NaCl (4 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		7.39	41.02	23.00
NaCl (8 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs		4.09	34.33	18.00
NaCl (8 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		4.60	37.00	19.30
LSD _{0.05}		0.15	0.31	0.49

Table 5: *In vitro* rooting behavior under effect of various concentrations of NaCl and iron oxide NPs.

Treatments	Characters	Rooting%	Number of roots/plantlet	Root length (mm)
Control		33.33	3.00	16.60
NaCl (1 g/L) + 5 mg/L Fe NPs		66.66	4.00	21.60
NaCl (1 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		66.66	5.90	22.40
NaCl (2 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs		44.40	1.50	15.20
NaCl (2 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		66.66	2.00	18.10
NaCl (4 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs		33.33	1.30	9.00
NaCl (4 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		44.40	3.00	12.00
NaCl (8 g/L) +5 mg/L Fe NPs		---	---	---
NaCl (8 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs		11.10	0.65	7.00
LSD _{0.05}		0.05	0.17	0.39

7. Antioxidant and enzymes activity under salinity stress

Data presented in Table (6) showed the increase of SOD enzyme activity at concentration 1g/l salinity comparing with high concentration (8 g/l) of salinity which

had also stimulation effect on the activity of catalase enzyme (25.52 U mg^{-1}) as compared to control. This might attributed to that salinity could change the physiological and biochemical activities by controlling the anabolic and

stimulating the catabolic processes (Corchete and Guerra, 1986). Peroxidase, catalase, glutathione reductase and superoxide dismutase enzymes are mainly intracellular scavengers of reactive oxygen species (Uchida *et al.*, 2002). Salt tolerance can be correlated with higher levels of antioxidant enzyme activities and these enzymes can be a defense team in protecting the cells from oxidative damage (Baby and Jini, 2010).

8. Effect of Salinity with iron oxide NPs on activity of antioxidant enzymes.

The highest activity of antioxidant enzymes in *Antigonon leptopus* (SOD and catalase) were observed at

high concentration (8.0 g/L) of salinity plus 5.0 mg/l iron oxide NPs followed by the treatment NaCl 1g/l +10 mg/l iron oxide NPs. The *glutathione reductase* activity was increased in control to the highest value (22.01 mg/g) followed by these found with NaCl 8g/l +5mg/l iron oxide NPs and finally, the treatment of NaCl 1g/l +10 mg/l iron oxide NPs (Table 7). Earlier reports mentioned that Iron NPs plays a role in increasing the growth, development, and enhancement of the stress tolerance of plants and the provision of nutrients (Muhammad *et al.*, 2018).

Table 6 : Effect of Salinity on antioxidant enzymes.

Treatments	GSR (mg g ⁻¹ tissue)	SOD (U mg ⁻¹ protein)	Catalase (µg ⁻¹ tissue)
Control	22.16	3.72	21.00
Nacl at 1g/L	20.91	4.80	22.63
Nacl at 8 g/L	21.39	4.25	25.52
LSD _{0.05}	0.20	0.69	1.48

Table 7 : Effect of Salinity with iron oxide NPs on activity of antioxidant enzymes.

Treatments	GSR (mg g ⁻¹ tissue)	SOD (U mg ⁻¹ protein)	Catalase (µg ⁻¹ tissue)
Control	22.01	3.72	21.00
NaCl (1 g/L) +10 mg/L Fe NPs	19.78	5.34	27.03
NaCl (8 g/L)+5.0 mg/L Fe NPs	20.27	6.05	30.18
LSD _{0.05}	2.17	0.80	2.34

Conclusion

In this study, the results showed that it could overcome the effect of salt stress by using iron oxide NPs. The micropropagated shoot and root parameters were increased by using iron oxide NPs under salt stress.

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