

ABSTRACT

A Study of Changes in Dry Mass and Accompanying Changes in Anatomy in
Pigeon Pea (*Cajanus cajan*) Following Treatment with Benzylaminopurine (BAP)

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Cajanus cajan L. Millsp. is unique among grain legumes for its relatively low canopy extinction coefficient and low harvest index. The low harvest index in this species results from prolific vegetative growth, particularly of the stems and a high rate of abscission of immature reproductive organs.

Previous reports on the effect of the cytokinin benzylaminopurine (BAP) on *C. cajan* and other crop legumes indicated the potential for increased yield and accompanying morphological and anatomical changes. In this thesis, an assessment of dry matter accumulation and changes in sink activity of vegetative and reproductive sinks following BAP application is presented. Changes in anatomy of vegetative and reproductive structures are assessed. Pedicel anatomy is also assessed as a possible limiting factor to yield.

Following BAP application as a foliar spray to field grown plants, stem and leaf dry mass significantly increased. Pod and seed number increased but seed

mass declined. Vegetative sinks seemed to eventually out-compete reproductive sinks, even in the presence of excess cytokinin. This increase in vegetative and reproductive sink activity may have resulted from increased photosynthetic activity, redistribution of photoassimilates from untreated regions to BAP treated regions, or increased availability of photoassimilates via larger vascular pathways.

Following BAP treatment, significant anatomical changes in stems, leaf laminas, petioles, pedicels and pericarps occurred. The presence of excess cytokinin may have affected endogenous cytokinin to auxin ratios, resulting in increased cell size and cell number in vascular and ground tissue. Investigations into the effect of BAP on endogenous auxin levels are recommended.

Following the application of BAP as a lanolin based paste, pedicel cross-sectional pedicels increased. The cross-sectional area of the vascular tissue within pedicels also increased but seed mass was unaffected. Pedicel vasculature does not appear to limit seed yield in *C. cajan* but pericarp and funicle vasculature may limit photoassimilate availability to seeds. Further anatomical investigations of the pericarp and funicles are recommended.

Keywords: Devika Narine; pigeon pea; yield improvement; harvest index; abscission; cytokinin; anatomy; vascular tissue; ground tissue; tissue cross-sectional area; cell diameter; cell number.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. An Introduction to the Pigeon pea (<i>Cajanus cajan</i>)	1
1.1.1. Worldwide Importance	1
1.1.2. Aspects of Morphology, Growth Habit and Physiology of <i>C. cajan</i>	1
1.1.3. Aspects of <i>C. cajan</i> Anatomy	6
1.2. Benzylaminopurine causes dry matter redistribution, and changes in physiology, morphology and anatomy in several plants	8
1.2.1. An overview of the role of cytokinins in plant development	8
1.2.2. Examples of morphological and anatomical changes accompanying physiological changes following BAP application	9
1.3. Morphological and anatomical changes can be attributed to cell division and cell expansion	12
1.3.1. The role of cytokinin	12
1.3.2. The role of auxin in cytokinin mediated changes in plant growth	14
1.4. Problem Statement	17
1.5. General Aims and Objectives	18

2. METHODOLOGY	20
2.1. Experiment 1- Effects of BAP treatment on dry mass accumulation in vegetative and reproductive structures following foliar spraying of individual branches of ICPL 85015	20
2.1.1. Application of BAP	20
2.1.2. Statistical analysis	21
2.2. Experiment 2- Effects of BAP treatment on the morphology and anatomy of singly treated branches of ICPL 85015	22
2.2.1. Application of BAP	22
2.2.2. Histological methodology	23
2.2.3. Image analysis	23
2.2.3.1. Measurement of overall diameter the mean cross-sectional area of various tissues.	24
2.2.3.2. Measurement of cell diameters.	24
2.2.3.3. Measurement of cell number	25
2.2.4. Statistical analysis	25
2.3. Experiment 3- Effect of site specific application of BAP on anatomical parameters of pedicels and reproductive parameters of ICPL 85015	26
2.3.1. Application of BAP	26
2.3.2. Histological and Image Analysis	27
2.3.3. Statistical Analysis	28
3. RESULTS	29
3.1. Effects of BAP treatment on dry mass accumulation in vegetative and reproductive structures following foliar spraying of selected branches of ICPL 85015	29
3.2. Effects of BAP on the morphology and anatomy of singly	

treated branches of ICPL 85015	33
3.2.1. Morphological changes	33
3.2.2. Changes in anatomy of <i>C. cajan</i> stems	35
3.2.3. Changes in anatomy of <i>C. cajan</i> petioles	46
3.2.4. Changes in anatomy of <i>C. cajan</i> leaves	55
3.3. Effect of site specific application of BAP on anatomical parameters of pedicels and reproductive parameters of associated pods	65
4. DISCUSSION	77
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	88
REFERENCES	92
APPENDICES	99
Appendix 1. Fixative Formula	99
Appendix 2. Staining Schedules	99
Appendix 3. Adhesive Formula	100
Appendix 4. Measurement of stem, petiole and pedicel diameter, and lamina thickness	100
Appendix 5. Measurement of tissue cross-sectional area	101
Appendix 6. Measurement of cell diameters	101
Appendix 7. Measurement of cell numbers	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1.	Harvest indices of selected grain legumes	3
Table 3.1.1.	Effect of BAP treatment on vegetative and reproductive dry mass of <i>C. cajan</i> branches	30
Table 3.2.2.1.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cross-sectional area of major tissue regions in the stem of <i>C. cajan</i>	43
Table 3.2.2.2.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell diameter of cells in major tissue regions in the stem of <i>C. cajan</i>	43
Table 3.2.2.3.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell numbers in major tissue region in the stem of <i>C. cajan</i>	43
Table 3.2.3.1.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cross-sectional area of the major tissue regions in the petiole of <i>C. cajan</i>	52
Table 3.2.3.2.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell diameter of cells in major tissue regions in the petiole of <i>C. cajan</i>	52
Table 3.2.3.3.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell numbers in major tissue region in the petiole of <i>C. cajan</i>	52
Table 3.2.4.1.	Effect of BAP treatment on the mean thickness of tissue layers in the lamina of <i>C. cajan</i>	56
Table 3.2.4.2.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cross-sectional area of the major tissue regions in the midrib of <i>C. cajan</i>	62
Table 3.2.4.3.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell diameter of cells in major tissue regions in the midrib of <i>C. cajan</i>	62
Table 3.2.4.4.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell numbers in major tissue region in the midrib	62
Table 3.3.1.	Reproductive parameters of pods following BAP treatment of associated pedicels of <i>C. cajan</i>	65
Table 3.3.3.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cross-sectional area in the major tissue regions of the pedicels of <i>C. cajan</i>	74
Table 3.3.4.	Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell diameter of cells in major tissue regions in the pedicels of <i>C. cajan</i>	74

Table 3.3.5. Effect of BAP treatment on mean cell numbers in major tissue region in the pedicels of <i>C. cajan</i>	74
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Pot grown ICPL 85015 nearing the end of the vegetative phase of development	5
Figure 1.2. Single raceme of <i>C. cajan</i> variety ICPL 85015	6
Figure 3.1.1. Effect of foliar BAP application on mean dry mass distribution in single <i>C. cajan</i> branches	31
Figure 3.1.2. Effect of BAP on proportions of pericarp and seed mass in the TPM	32
Figure 3.2.1.1. Effect of BAP on axillary bud development in <i>C. cajan</i>	33
Figure 3.2.1.2. Effect of BAP treatment on overall thickness of stems, petioles and laminae of <i>C. cajan</i>	34
Figure 3.2.2.1. Cross-section of <i>C. cajan</i> stem	35
Figure 3.2.2.2. Effect of BAP treatment on percentage increase of cross-sectional areas of tissues in stems of <i>C. cajan</i>	36
Figure 3.2.2.3. Effect of BAP on <i>C. cajan</i> stem anatomy	37
A. Cross-section of control stem	37
B. Cross-section of BAP treated stem	37
C. Collenchyma tissue of control stem	38
D. Collenchyma tissue of BAP treated stem	38
E. Cambium of control stem	39
F. Cambium of BAP treated stem	39
G. Phloem tissue of control stem	40
H. Phloem tissue of BAP treated stem	40
I. Xylem vessels in control stem	41
J. Xylem vessels in BAP treated stem	41

Figure 3.2.2.4. Effect of BAP treatment on proportions of tissues relative to mean total cross-sectional area in the stem of <i>C. cajan</i>	45
Figure 3.2.3.1. Cross-section of <i>C. cajan</i> petiole	46
Figure 3.2.3.2. Effect of BAP treatment on percentage increase of cross-sectional areas of tissues in petioles of <i>C. cajan</i>	47
Figure 3.2.3.3. Effect of BAP on <i>C. cajan</i> petiole anatomy	48
A. Cross-section of control petiole	48
B. Cross-section of BAP treated petiole	48
C. Section through the ridge of control petiole	49
D. Section through the ridge of BAP treated petiole	49
Figure 3.2.3.4. Effect of BAP treatment on proportions of tissues relative to mean total cross-sectional area in the petiole of <i>C. cajan</i>	54
Figure 3.2.4.1. Section through the mid-rib and lamina of the <i>C. cajan</i> leaf	55
Figure 3.2.4.2. Effect of BAP on <i>C. cajan</i> lamina	57
A. Control lamina	57
B. BAP treated lamina	57
Figure 3.2.4.3. Effect of BAP treatment on percentage increase in cross-sectional area of tissues in midribs of <i>C. cajan</i>	58
Figure 3.2.4.4. Effect of BAP on <i>C. cajan</i> mid-rib anatomy	59
A. Cross section of control leaf mid-rib and lamina	59
B. Cross-section of BAP treated leaf mid-rib and lamina	59
C. Section through control mid-rib	60
D. Section through BAP treated mid-rib	60
Figure 3.2.4.5. Effect of BAP treatment on proportions of tissues	

relative to total cross-sectional area in midribs of <i>C. cajan</i>	64
Figure 3.3.1. Effect of exogenous BAP application on <i>C. cajan</i> pericarp thickness	67
A. Cross-section of control pod	67
B. Cross-section of BAP treated pod	67
Figure 3.3.2. Cross-section of <i>C. cajan</i> pedicel	68
Figure 3.3.3. Effect BAP treatment on pericarp thickness and pedicel diameter of <i>C. cajan</i>	69
Figure 3.3.4. Effect of BAP treatment on percentage increase of tissues in pedicels	70
Figure 3.3.5. Effect of BAP on the anatomy of <i>C. cajan</i> pedicels	71
A. Cross-section of control pedicel	71
B. Cross-section of BAP treated pedicel	71
C. Section through control pedicel showing vascular tissue	72
D. Section through BAP treated pedicel showing vascular tissue	72
Figure 3.3.3. Effect of BAP treatment on proportions of tissues relative to mean total cross-sectional areas of pedicels	76