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THE CONTENT OF VITAMIN C AND ESSENTIAL OILS IN HERBAGE OF SOME SPICE PLANTS DEPENDING ON LIGHT CONDITIONS AND TEMPERATURE

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this research was to compare the content of vitamin C and essential oils in herbage of five spice plants depending on light conditions and temperature. The mean content of vitamin C in all the species was the highest in the lower daily light integral ($2.9 \text{ mol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$). The temperature had the greatest influence on the content of essential oils in dry herbage of the three analysed species.

Key words: artificial light, radiation, temperature, vitamin C, essential oils, spice plants

Introduction

A growing interest in off-season spice plants has been recently observed. The assortment of these plants offered to Polish customers has increased dramatically and they are available as fresh plants throughout the whole year. Content of vitamin C and essential oils in herbage is dependent on different factors. The main factors are light and temperature. The aim of this work was to study the effect of quantity of light, length of day and temperature on content of vitamin C and essential oils in five species of spice plants.

Materials and methods

Experiments were carried out in the experiment station “Marcelin” of The August Cieszkowski Agricultural University of Poznań in the years 1999-2004. The five following species of spice plants: dill ‘Ambrozja’ (*Anethum graveolens* L.), garden chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium* L. Hoffm.), garden rocket (*Eruca sativa* Lam.), parsley ‘Titan’

(*Petroselinum crispum* Mill. subsp. *crispum*) and salad onion 'Sprint' (*Allium cepa* L.) were comprised of the experiment. Plants were grown in growing chambers. The three-factor experiment was performed in eight repetitions, where four pots were treated as one repetition. The first factor was the temperature, the second – daily light integral and the third – photoperiod. Three levels of temperature during the day were used: 25, 20 and 15°C (at night the temperature was 5°C degrees lower). Two daily light integrals (2.9 and 3.8 mol·m⁻²) and three levels of photoperiod (12, 14 and 16 h) were applied. Photosynthetic photon flux density (PPFD) was dependent on photoperiod so that daily light integral amounted to 2.9 or 3.8 mol·m⁻². Artificial light was provided using fluorescent lamps 36W/84 of Philips Company. The experimental plants were grown in pots of 280 cm³ volume. The number of seeds sown into pots was identical for individual species and amounted from 25 to 45. Plants were harvested once, when they developed to three fully expanded leaves. Only salad onion was harvested when the plants reached the height of about 15-17 cm. Vitamin C and essential oil content (for dill, parsley and chervil) were determined in herbage after harvest. Vitamin C was estimated in fresh herbage by the Tilmans' method. Essential oils contents were determined in air dried herbage by the Derynga apparatus.

Results and discussion

The content of vitamin C in spice herbage is dependent among others on species, growth stage, temperature, and quantity of PAR radiation (Moszczyński and Pyć 1999). The influence of research factors on the content of vitamin C in herbage was varied and dependent on species (Tables 1-5). Franke (1978) also reported the different content of vitamin C in dependent on species. In this investigations the highest content of vitamin C was for parsley directly proportional, but for chives was inversely proportional to light intensity and temperature. High content of vitamin C in the lower daily light integral (2.9 mol·m⁻²) and longer vegetation period was characterized for all species, which were researched by the authors. In research of Yamada et al. (2003) the ascorbic acid contents of spinach increased with delay in harvesting date. The highest differences in content of vitamin C were obtained in herbage of garden rocket and parsley. The length of day had the weakest effect on the content of vitamin C in herbage all species.

Generally light is conducive to produce essential oils in spice plants (Léonhart et al. 2002). Daily light integral had the least influence on the content of essential oils in dill herbage (Table 6). Chervil contrary to parsley was characterized by a higher content of essential oils in 3.8 mol·m⁻² daily light integral compared with 2.9 mol·m⁻² (Tables 7-8). Hälvä et al. (1992) reported that in their investigations on dill they recorded the highest content of essential oils from cultivation, which received the greatest quantities of light. The temperature had the great influence on the content of essential oils in dry herbage of dill, parsley and chervil, in the authors' research. The content of essential oils in herbage of dill and parsley was directly correlated with temperature and increased linearly as temperature increased. Hornok (1986) and Hälvä et al. (1993) obtained similar results in investigations on dill. The highest essential oils accumulation occurred at higher temperature and longer day. In chervil herbage the highest content was obtained in temperature 15°C and decreased linearly as temperature increased. The effect of the day length on the content of essential oils in herbage of all three species was very varied.

Table 1
The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the vitamin C content in dill herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ f.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość witaminy C w ziele kopru ogrodowego (mg·100 g⁻¹ św.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|----|----|-----|----|----|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 54 | 57 | 36 | 44 | 32 | 52 | 46 |
| 20 | 55 | 34 | 40 | 44 | 54 | 33 | 43 |
| 25 | 46 | 39 | 43 | 36 | 52 | 30 | 41 |
| Mean – Średnia | 51 | 43 | 40 | 42 | 46 | 38 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 45 | | | 42 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 46 | 45 | 39 | | | | |

Table 2
The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the vitamin C content in parsley herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ f.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość witaminy C w ziele pietruszki naciowej (mg·100 g⁻¹ św.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|-----|----|-----|----|----|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 74 | 64 | 44 | 65 | 59 | 56 | 60 |
| 20 | 47 | 122 | 58 | 53 | 49 | 56 | 64 |
| 25 | 108 | 50 | 47 | 54 | 72 | 63 | 66 |
| Mean – Średnia | 76 | 79 | 50 | 57 | 60 | 58 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 68 | | | 58 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 67 | 69 | 54 | | | | |

Table 3

The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the vitamin C content in garden rocket herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ f.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość witaminy C w ziele rokiety siewnej (mg·100 g⁻¹ św.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|-----|-----|-----|----|----|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 119 | 107 | 49 | 70 | 50 | 57 | 75 |
| 20 | 125 | 204 | 170 | 40 | 44 | 49 | 105 |
| 25 | 54 | 80 | 56 | 36 | 34 | 50 | 52 |
| Mean – Średnia | 99 | 131 | 91 | 49 | 43 | 52 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 107 | | | 48 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 74 | 87 | 72 | | | | |

Table 4

The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the vitamin C content in salad onion herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ f.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość witaminy C w ziele szczypioru sałatkowego (mg·100 g⁻¹ św.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|----|----|-----|----|----|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 69 | 65 | 69 | 61 | 44 | 50 | 60 |
| 20 | 62 | 32 | 30 | 49 | 41 | 66 | 47 |
| 25 | 47 | 65 | 65 | 30 | 70 | 63 | 57 |
| Mean – Średnia | 59 | 54 | 55 | 46 | 52 | 59 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 56 | | | 53 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 53 | 53 | 57 | | | | |

Table 5
The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the vitamin C content in chervil herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ f.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość witaminy C w ziele trybuli ogrodowej (mg·100 g⁻¹ św.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|----|----|-----|----|----|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 39 | 33 | 40 | 40 | 49 | 36 | 40 |
| 20 | 45 | 39 | 43 | 38 | 32 | 33 | 38 |
| 25 | 44 | 48 | 46 | 25 | 46 | 37 | 41 |
| Mean – Średnia | 42 | 40 | 43 | 35 | 42 | 36 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 42 | | | 38 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 38 | 41 | 39 | | | | |

Table 6
The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the essential oils content in dill herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ d.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość olejków eterycznych w ziele kopru ogrodowego (mg·100 g⁻¹ s.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 1.90 | 0.88 | 1.53 | 1.15 | 0.86 | 1.14 | 1.24 |
| 20 | 1.40 | 1.30 | 1.40 | 1.40 | 1.30 | 1.60 | 1.40 |
| 25 | 1.30 | 1.30 | 1.20 | 1.20 | 1.50 | 1.80 | 1.38 |
| Mean – Średnia | 1.53 | 1.16 | 1.38 | 1.25 | 1.22 | 1.51 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 1.36 | | | 1.33 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 1.39 | 1.19 | 1.45 | | | | |

Table 7

The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the essential oils content in parsley herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ d.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość olejków eterycznych w ziele pietruszki naciowej (mg·100 g⁻¹ s.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 1.20 | 0.68 | 0.37 | 0.58 | 0.20 | 0.54 | 0.60 |
| 20 | 1.11 | 1.40 | 1.70 | 0.64 | 1.80 | 1.60 | 1.38 |
| 25 | 1.50 | 1.70 | 1.20 | 0.65 | 1.65 | 1.80 | 1.42 |
| Mean – Średnia | 1.27 | 1.26 | 1.09 | 0.62 | 1.22 | 1.31 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 1.21 | | | 1.05 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 0.95 | 1.24 | 1.20 | | | | |

Table 8

The influence of light quantity, temperature and day length on the essential oils content in chervil herbage (mg·100 g⁻¹ d.m.)
Wpływ ilości światła, temperatury i długości dnia na zawartość olejków eterycznych w ziele trybuli ogrodowej (mg·100 g⁻¹ s.m.)

| Temperature Temperatura (°C) | Daily light integral (mol·m ⁻²) Dobowa ilość światła (mol·m ⁻²) | | | | | | Mean for temperature Średnia dla temperatury |
|---|--|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| | 2.9 | | | 3.8 | | | |
| | length of day (h) długość dnia (h) | | | | | | |
| | 12 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 16 | |
| 15 | 0.48 | 0.72 | 0.54 | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.48 | 0.64 |
| 20 | 0.20 | 0.30 | 0.40 | 0.50 | 0.40 | 0.50 | 0.38 |
| 25 | 0.10 | 0.30 | 0.20 | 0.30 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.28 |
| Mean – Średnia | 0.26 | 0.44 | 0.38 | 0.53 | 0.53 | 0.46 | |
| Mean for daily light integral Średnia dla dobowej ilości światła | 0.36 | | | 0.51 | | | |
| Mean for length of day Średnia dla długości dnia | 0.40 | 0.49 | 0.42 | | | | |

Conclusions

1. All species were characterized by higher vitamin C content in lower light quantity.
2. Light had the greatest effect on vitamin C content in garden rocket herbage.
3. Temperature and day length had a slight influence on the vitamin C content in herbage of all species.
4. Temperature had a stronger effect on the content of essential oils in dry herbage than light.

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ZAWARTOŚĆ SUBSTANCJI CZYNNYCH W ZIELU KILKU GATUNKÓW ROŚLIN PRZYPRAWOWYCH W ZALEŻNOŚCI OD WARUNKÓW ŚWIETLNYCH I TEMPERATURY

Streszczenie

Celem pracy było zbadanie wpływu ilości światła, długości dnia i temperatury na zawartość witaminy C i olejków eterycznych w ziele pięciu gatunków roślin przyprawowych. Przedmiotem badań były następujące gatunki: koper ogrodowy (*Anethum graveolens* L.) odm. 'Ambrozja', pietruszka naciowa (*Petroselinum crispum* Mill. subsp. *crispum*) odm. 'Titan', rokieta siewna (*Eruca sativa* DC.), szczypior sałatkowy (cebula sałatkowa) (*Allium cepa* L.) odm. 'Sprint', trybula ogrodowa (*Anthriscus cerefolium* (L.) Hoffm.). U wszystkich badanych gatunków średnie zawartości witaminy C były większe, gdy wartość dobowej ilości światła była mniejsza ($2,9 \text{ mol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$), niż gdy wartość ta była większa ($3,8 \text{ mol}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$). Temperatura miała większy wpływ na zawartość olejków eterycznych w powietrznie suchym ziele badanych gatunków niż światło.