

**Phenotypic variation of two localised populations of
Phytophthora cinnamomi from Western Australia and
how they impact on *Eucalyptus marginata* resistance**



by

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Declaration

The work described in this thesis was undertaken while I was an enrolled student for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Murdoch University, Western Australia. I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution. To the best of my knowledge, all work performed by others, published or unpublished, has been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

Phytophthora cinnamomi is an introduced soilborne phytopathogen to Western Australia (WA) and impacts on 2000 of the approximately 9000 plant species indigenous in the southwest of WA. Amongst these is *Eucalyptus marginata* (jarrah), the dominant and economically important hardwood timber species of the jarrah forest. This thesis aimed to investigate the morphological, pathogenic and genotypic variation in two local WA populations of *P. cinnamomi* isolates. The populations were selected from areas where jarrah clonal lines selected for resistance to *P. cinnamomi* may be used in the rehabilitation of infested jarrah forest and rehabilitated bauxite minesites in the southwest of WA. Resistance against a range of isolates using different inoculation methods.

Seventy-three isolates of *P. cinnamomi* were collected from diseased jarrah and *Corymbia calophylla* (marri) trees from two populations located 70 km apart and these were examined for phenotypic and genotypic variation. Microsatellite DNA analysis showed that all isolates were of the same clonal lineage. In *P. cinnamomi* for the first time I show that there is a broad and continuous variation in the morphology and pathology between two populations of one clonal lineage, and that all phenotypes varied independently from one another. No relationship was found between morphological and pathogenic characters. The ability of isolates in both populations to cause deaths ranged from killing all plants within 59 days to plants being symptomless 182 days after inoculation.

Single and multiple paragynous antheridia formed along with amphigynous ones in mating studies with all WA isolates and a sample of worldwide isolates. Developmental studies and cytological examination showed fertilisation tubes developed asynchronously or synchronously from both antheridial types and indicated

that either antheridial type contributed a nucleus for fertilisation of the oosphere. This is the first report of paragynous antheridial associations in *P. cinnamomi*. Antheridial variation is a characteristic that needs to be adjusted in the taxonomic *Phytophthora* identification keys.

In underbark and zoospore stem inoculations of three 1.5-year-old jarrah clonal lines (two ranked as resistant (RR) and one as susceptible (SS) to *P. cinnamomi* in the original selection trials) at 15, 20, 25 and 30°C, it was found that the method of inoculation did not produce comparable results, particularly at 25 and 30°C. At these temperatures, all three clonal lines had 100% mortality when inoculated underbark, but when inoculated with zoospores, one RR line had 60% survival and the SS and remaining RR line had 100% mortality. Generally, the level of resistance of all clonal lines declined with increasing temperature. Lesion development was measured at 20, 25 and 30°C for 4 days in detached branches of an RR and SS clonal line inoculated underbark with four different *P. cinnamomi* isolates. Detached branches were found to be a potential screen for jarrah resistance to *P. cinnamomi* and to allow the identification of susceptible and resistant clonal lines at 30°C.

Lesion and colonisation development of *P. cinnamomi* isolates were assessed *in situ* (late autumn) of seed-grown and clonal lines of 3.5 to 4.5 year-old jarrah trees growing in a rehabilitated minesite jarrah forest in underbark inoculation of lateral branches (1995) or simultaneously in lateral branches and lateral roots (1996). Trees were underbark inoculated in lateral branches and lateral roots. Colonisation was more consistent as a measure of resistance than lesion length over the two trials because it accounted for the recovery of *P. cinnamomi* from macroscopically symptomless tissue beyond lesions, which on some occasions, was up to 6 cm. In the two trials, one RR clonal line consistently had small lesion and colonisation lengths in branches and roots. In contrast, the remaining two RR clonal lines had similar lesion and colonisation

lengths to the SS clonal line and may, therefore, not be suitable for use in the rehabilitation of *P. cinnamomi* infested areas. The relative rankings of the jarrah clonal lines by colonisation lengths were similar between branch and root inoculations. Branch inoculations are a valid option for testing resistance and susceptibility of young jarrah trees to *P. cinnamomi*.

The pathogen was recovered on *Phytophthora* selective agar 3–6 months after inoculation from 50% of samples with lesions and 30% of symptomless samples in a series of growth cabinet, glasshouse and field experiments. However, up to 11% of samples with and without lesions and from which *P. cinnamomi* was not initially isolated contained viable pathogen after leaching the plant material in water over 9 days. This indicates that the pathogen could be present as dormant structures, such as chlamydospores, where dormancy needs to be broken for germination to occur, or fungistatic compounds in the tissue need to be removed to allow the pathogen to grow, or both. These results have important implications for disease diagnosis and management, disease-free certification and quarantine clearance.

No clonal line of jarrah was found to be 100% resistant using different inoculation methods, environmental conditions and when challenged by individuals from a large range of *P. cinnamomi* isolates. Even the most promising RR line had individual replicates that were unable to contain lesions or died with time. This suggests that further screening work may be required using more isolates varying in their capacity to cause disease and a broader range of environmental conditions. Jarrah clonal lines that survive such rigorous screening could then be expected to survive planting out in a range of environments in the jarrah forest and rehabilitated bauxite minesites.

Authorities for species

The authorities of scientific names of pathogens and their plant hosts will not be presented in this thesis. The thesis adopts the policy of Mycological Research (Hawksworth, 2000: 124), whereby only taxonomic studies where species have been verified give authorities.

Table of contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Authorities of species	vi
Table of contents	vii
List of abbreviations	xi
List of publications	xiii
List of conference proceedings	xiv
Acknowledgements	xv

CHAPTER 1 1

General introduction

1.1 <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> and its impact on the natural ecosystem	1
1.2 Factors that affect selection of resistant <i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>	5
1.2.1 Plant host: Development of <i>Eucalyptus marginata</i> clonal lines	5
1.2.2 The pathogen: <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i>	8
1.2.3 Environmental factors	13
1.3 Thesis aims	16

CHAPTER 2 18

Phenotypic variation in a clonal lineage of two *Phytophthora cinnamomi* populations from Western Australia

2.1 Chapter abstract	19
2.2 Introduction	20
2.3 Materials and methods	22
2.3.1 Isolates	22
2.3.2 Microsatellite loci analysis	26
2.3.3 Macro-morphological phenotypes	26
2.3.4 Micro-morphological phenotypes	27
2.3.4.1 Sporangia	27
2.3.4.2 Oogonia, oospores and antheridia	27
2.3.5 Disease and pathogenicity phenotypes	28
2.3.5.1 Capacity to form lesions in detached jarrah and marri branches	28
2.3.5.2 Capacity to cause deaths of clonal jarrah plants	30
2.3.6 Data analysis	31
2.4 Results	33
2.4.1 Microsatellite loci analysis	33
2.4.2 Macro-morphological phenotypes	34
2.4.2.1 Radial growth rates	34
2.4.2.2 Colony types	36
2.4.3 Micro-morphological phenotypes	38
2.4.3.1 Sporangia	38

2.4.3.2 Oogonia, oospores and antheridia	38
2.4.4 Disease and pathogenicity phenotypes	40
2.4.4.1 Capacity to form lesions in detached jarrah and marri branches	40
2.4.4.2 Capacity to cause deaths of clonal jarrah plants	41
2.4.5 Correlations of morphological and pathogenicity phenotypes	42
2.5 Discussion	45
2.5.1 Genotypic variation	45
2.5.2 Macro-morphological phenotypes	46
2.5.3 Micro-morphological phenotypes	47
2.5.4 Disease and pathogenicity phenotypes	48
2.5.4.1 Capacity to form lesions in detached jarrah and marri branches	48
2.5.4.2 Capacity to cause deaths of clonal jarrah plants	50
2.5.5 Correlations of morphological and pathogenicity phenotypes	52

CHAPTER 3 **54**

The role of paragynous and amphigynous antheridia in sexual reproduction of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*

3.1 Chapter abstract	55
3.2 Introduction	56
3.3 Materials and methods	57
3.3.1 Isolates	57
3.3.2 Development and behaviour of paragynous antheridia	58
3.4 Results	59
3.5 Discussion	64

CHAPTER 4 **68**

Temperature and inoculation method influence disease phenotypes and mortality of *Eucalyptus marginata* clonal lines inoculated with *Phytophthora cinnamomi*

4.1 Chapter abstract	69
4.2 Introduction	70
4.3 Materials and methods	72
4.3.1 Experimental design	72
4.3.2 Experiments 4.1 and 4.2: Effect of temperature and inoculation method on disease	72
4.3.2.1 Plant material and growth conditions	72
4.3.2.2 Inoculum production and inoculation	73
4.3.2.3 Monitoring plant symptoms	75
4.3.2.4 Harvest of surviving plants	76
4.3.3 Experiment 4.3: Effect of temperature on lesion development in detached branches	77
4.3.3.1 Isolates	77
4.3.3.2 Plant material	77
4.3.3.3 Inoculum production and inoculation	77
4.3.3.4 Lesion and colonisation assessment	78

4.3.4 Statistical analysis	78
4.4 Results	79
4.4.1 Experiments 4.1 and 4.2: Effect of temperature and inoculation method on disease	79
4.4.1.1 Survival	79
4.4.1.2 Disease symptoms of underbark inoculated plants	84
4.4.2 Experiment 4.3: Effect of temperature on lesion development in detached branches	87
4.5 Discussion	91
CHAPTER 5	97
<hr/>	
Evaluation of resistance to <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> in seed-grown trees and clonal lines of <i>Eucalyptus marginata</i> inoculated in lateral branches and roots	
5.1 Chapter abstract	98
5.2 Introduction	99
5.3 Materials and methods	100
5.3.1 Experimental design	100
5.3.2 Isolates and inoculum production	100
5.3.3 Plant material, inoculation and growth conditions	101
5.3.4 Harvest	102
5.3.5 Statistical analysis	103
5.4 Results	104
5.4.1 Comparison of 1995 and 1996 lateral branch inoculations	106
5.4.2 Comparison of root and lateral branch inoculations	107
5.5 Discussion	108
CHAPTER 6	113
<hr/>	
False-negative isolations or absence of lesions may cause mis-diagnosis of diseased plants infected with <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i>	
6.1 Chapter abstract	114
6.2 Introduction	115
6.3 Materials and methods	116
6.3.1 Experimental design	116
6.3.2 Isolates	117
6.3.3 Plant material and growth conditions	117
6.3.4 Inoculum production and inoculation	118
6.3.5 Harvest	118
6.4 Results and discussion	119
CHAPTER 7	123
<hr/>	
General Discussion	
7.1 Variation of <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i>	124
7.1.1 Paragynous antheridia	128

7.1.2 <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> clonal lineages	129
7.2 The host	130
7.2.1 What are the mechanisms of resistance?	130
7.2.2 Developing robust resistance	131
7.3 Future risks	135
7.3.1 Global warming	135
7.3.2 Other <i>Phytophthora</i> species and hybrids	138
7.4 Managing cumulative risks	141
APPENDICES	143
<hr/>	
Appendix 1 Agar, broth and potting media recipes	143
Mineral salts solution	143
Modified vegetable-8 agar (MV8A) - For oospore production	143
<i>Phytophthora</i> -selective agar medium (NARPH)	144
Potting medium	145
Vegetable-8 agar (V8A)	146
10% Vegetable-8 broth (V8B) - Clarified	146
20% Vegetable-8 broth (V8B) - Non-clarified	146
Appendix 2 Preliminary results for stem inoculations with <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> of 2 and 6 year-old seed-grown trees and clonal lines of <i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>	147
A2.1 Introduction	147
A2.2 Materials and methods	147
A2.2.1 Inoculum production and inoculation	147
A2.2.2 Mortality assessment	148
A2.3 Results and discussion	148
REFERENCES	151
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List of abbreviations

Universally accepted abbreviations and those listed by Hawksworth (2000: 122) are not listed below and are used throughout the thesis without explanation.

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
CMA	corn meal agar
EBL	extension of <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> beyond the visible lesion
J1	Jarraah (<i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>) site 1 (Jarrahdale) isolates
J2	Jarraah (<i>E. marginata</i>) site 2 (Willowdale) isolates
LSD	Least Significant Difference test
M1	Marri (<i>Corymbia calophylla</i>) site 1 (Jarrahdale) isolates
M2	Marri (<i>C. calophylla</i>) site 2 (Willowdale) isolates
MV8A	modified vegetable-8 juice agar (Appendix 1)
NARPH	<i>Phytophthora</i> -selective agar (Appendix 1)
PDA	potato dextrose agar
<i>r</i>	correlation coefficient
ROI	region of inoculation (for zoospore inoculation)
RR	<i>E. marginata</i> resistant (to <i>P. cinnamomi</i>) clonal lines from resistant families as determined by McComb <i>et al.</i> (1990)
SOI	site of inoculation (for underbark inoculation)
SS	<i>E. marginata</i> susceptible (to <i>P. cinnamomi</i>) clonal lines from susceptible families as determined by McComb <i>et al.</i> (1990)
V8A	vegetable-8 juice agar (Appendix 1)
WA	Western Australia

***Eucalyptus marginata* clonal line abbreviations**

RR1	1J30
RR2	5J336
RR3	12J96
RR4	77C40
RR5	121E47
RR6	121E293 (or 121E29)

RR7	326J51
SS1	11J379
SS2	11J402

List of publications

The results of all five experimental chapters have been published or submitted as indicated below. Only minor changes have been made to these publications in the thesis. My co-authors included I. C. Tommerup and G. E. St J. Hardy (supervisors) and I. J. Colquhoun (industry supervisor), M. P. Dobrowolski provided expertise and guidance in microsatellite analysis, and M. C. Calver, provided assistance on experimental design and data analysis. This thesis outlines my individual role in each of these publications.

1. Chapter 2 published as follows:

Hüberli, D., Tommerup, I. C., Dobrowolski, M. P., Calver, M. C. & Hardy, G. E. St J. (2001) Phenotypic variation in a clonal lineage of two *Phytophthora cinnamomi* populations from Western Australia. *Mycological Research* **105**: 1053-1064.

2. Chapter 3 published as follows:

Hüberli, D., Tommerup, I. C. & Hardy, G. E. St J. (1997) The role of paragynous and amphigynous antheridia in sexual reproduction of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. *Mycological Research* **101**: 1383-1388.

3. Chapter 4 published as follows:

Hüberli, D., Tommerup, I. C., Calver, M. C., Colquhoun, I. J. & Hardy, G. E. St J. (2002) Temperature and inoculation method influence disease phenotypes and mortality of *Eucalyptus marginata* clonal lines inoculated with *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. *Australasian Plant Pathology*, in press.

4. Chapter 5 submitted as follows:

Hüberli, D., Tommerup, I. C., Colquhoun, I. J. & Hardy, G. E. St J. Evaluation of resistance to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* in seed-grown trees and clonal lines of *Eucalyptus marginata* (jarrah) inoculated in lateral branches and roots. *Plant Pathology*.

5. Chapter 6 published as follows:

Hüberli, D., Tommerup, I. C. & Hardy, G. E. St J. (2000) False-negative isolations or absence of lesions may cause mis-diagnosis of diseased plants infected with *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. *Australasian Plant Pathology* **29**: 164-169.

List of conference proceedings

1. Oral Presentation

Hüberli, D. (1997) Environmental effects on *Phytophthora cinnamomi* disease expression in jarrah. *Phytophthora* and Other Plant Diseases of Natural Ecosystems Workshop, Eleventh Biennial Conference of the Australasian Plant Pathology Society. Perth, Western Australia.

2. Poster Presentation

Hüberli, D., Hardy, G. E. St J. & Tommerup, I. C. (1997) Morphological and physiological characteristics of two *Phytophthora cinnamomi* populations. In *Eleventh Biennial Conference of the Australasian Plant Pathology Society*, Abstract p. 307. Perth, Western Australia.

3. Poster presentation

Hüberli, D., Tommerup, I. C., Hardy, G. E. St J. & Colquhoun, I. J. (1998) Temperature changes resistance of clonal *Eucalyptus marginata* to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. In *Seventh International Congress of Plant Pathology*, Abstract p. 2.5.4. Edinburgh, Scotland.

4. Oral presentation

Hüberli, D., Tommerup, I. C., Colquhoun, I. J. & Hardy, G. E. St J. (2001) Measuring resistance in jarrah, *Eucalyptus marginata*, to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*: What factors change disease expression? In *Second International IUFRO Meeting on Phytophthora in Forests and Natural Ecosystems*, p. 30. Albany, Western Australia.

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