



Studies on German Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita* L.) propagation and the effect of light and age on seed viability

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1 ABSTRACT

Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) is a herb grown for its flowers which have medicinal properties and are used to make tea and for oil extraction. The current research was carried out to determine the effect of light and age on germination of chamomile seeds and to compare vegetative (use of cuttings) and seed propagation methods. In the first experiment chamomile seeds were sown in 10 Petri dishes lined with moistened paper towel to retain moisture. Half of the Petri dishes were covered with aluminum foil to prevent entry of light while the rest were exposed to sunlight. In experiment 2 chamomile seeds were sown in a nursery bed. The seedlings were transplanted to the field at 6 weeks and raised to maturity (flower production). Cuttings were obtained from mature plants and rooted in polythene sleeves filled with soil before transplanting into the main seedbed. Results showed that the seeds germinated by the 4th day and light did not affect germination. Plants raised by use of cuttings took a shorter period to flower compared to those raised from seeds. Based on the results we recommend that chamomile seeds can be sown directly without covering with soil and that cuttings can be used to increase the number of plants. The results of this study will encourage farmers to adopt production of chamomile as an alternative cash crop since the crop is relatively easy to produce. More research should be carried out on other agronomic practices such as nutrition, weeding and water management.
