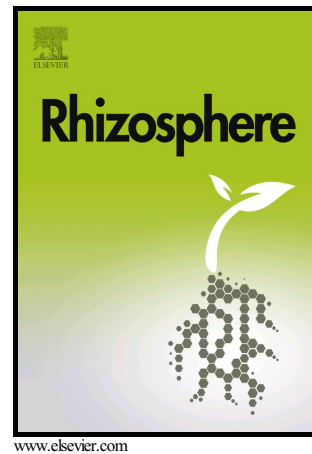


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Either low inoculum or a multi-trophic interaction can reduce the ability of *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* to kill an invasive plant

Rubén **García De la Cruz**¹, Guy R. **Knudsen**², Lynn K. **Carta**³, George **Newcombe**^{4*}

¹Laboratorio de Control Biológico, Colegio de Postgraduados, Campus Tabasco, México.

²Department of Plant, Soil and Entomological Sciences, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID, 83844. USA. Deceased.

³Mycology and Nematology Genetic Diversity and Biology Laboratory, USDA, ARS, NEA, BARC, Beltsville, MD 20705-2350.

⁴Department of Forest, Rangeland and Fire Sciences, University of Idaho, Moscow ID, 83844-1133.

*Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 208 596 8271

rubeng@colpos.mx

georgen@uidaho.edu.

ABSTRACT:

In greenhouse experiments *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* has killed seedlings of *Centaurea stoebe*, an invasive plant that is commonly known as spotted knapweed in Pacific Northwestern North America. *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* is widespread in this invaded range, yet mortality of the plant due to *S. sclerotiorum* has not been observed in the field. Our greenhouse experiments address this paradox. To explore multitrophic interactions, four levels of inoculum were used: zero (control), and 1, 5, or 10 alginate pellets. Combinations of four organisms were varied: two fungi (phytopathogenic *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* and mycoparasitic *Trichoderma harzianum*), one fungivorous nematode (*Apehlenchoides saprophilus*), and the host plant (*Centaurea stoebe*). Soil of potted

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