Fertilizer and water regime influence preference of Solanum scabrum by tomato red spider mite

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**Objectives**

To determine the effects of fertilizer and water supply to African nightshades, Solanum scabrum var. Olevolosi, on host plant preference by the tomato red spider mite, T. evansi.

**Hypothesis:**

Female mites will prefer nightshade plants treated with high levels of fertilizer and water to ensure best performance of their offspring.

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**Methods and Results**

**Discussion**

T. evansi preferred plants that were supplied with the highest fertilizer level (mean 4.22). Fertilizer treatments had significant influence (P, 0.034) on T. evansi preference but no significant interactions with water treatments. The indication that T. evansi prefers plants that are highly nourished suggests implications for management of water and fertilizer against this pest in smallholder vegetable farming systems in Africa. Since farmers use optimal levels of fertilizer to maximize yields, manipulation of fertilizer for pest management requires more considerations. Plant compounds involved in plant-pest interactions can be monitored for variations at various fertilizer rates.

**References:**


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**Acknowledgment**

Project HORTINLEA (Horticultural Innovation and Learning for Improved Nutrition and Livelihood in East Africa) is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) within the framework of the program GlobE – Global Food Security.