

Table of Contents

In Press

Online First

Article Archive

PPS (55) 2019

PPS (54) 2018

PPS (53) 2017

PPS (52) 2016

PPS (51) 2015

PPS (50) 2014

PPS (49) 2013

PPS (48) 2012

PPS (47) 2011

PPS (46) 2010

PPS (45) 2009

PPS (44) 2008

PPS (43) 2007

Issue No. 1 (1-34)

Issue No. 2 (35-76)

Issue No. 3 (77-126)

Issue No. 4 (127-168)

PPS (42) 2006

PPS (41) 2005

PPS (40) 2004

PPS (39) 2003

PPS (38) 2002

PPS (37) 2001

PPS (36) 2000

PPS (35) 1999

Editorial Board

Ethical Standards

Reviewers 2017

For Authors

Author Declaration

Instruction for Authors

Submission Templates

Guide for Authors

Copyright Statement

Fees

Submission/Login

For Reviewers

The effect of cryopreservation on germination of dandelion seeds

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Germination experiments frequently use seeds that had been stored frozen. We investigated whether short, 5 day freezing changes percentage and rate of germination of seeds of dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.). Seeds (i) collected at dispersal, (ii) dried at +50°C for 5 days, (iii) frozen at -20°C for 5 days, (iv) dried for 5 days and subsequently frozen for 5 days, and (v) frozen and subsequently dried, were then germinated at +10°C and a long-day photoperiod. None of the temperature pre-treatments affected the proportion of germinating seeds. By contrast, the time to germinate 50% of the seed (germination time) was shortened slightly (0.7 days) but significantly following the freezing treatment, regardless of whether it was applied without, before or after drying of the seed. Cryopreservation is therefore a convenient method of seed storage for comparative studies of seed germination because it causes no change in germination percentage and only a small and systematic change in germination rate.

Keywords:dandelion; *Taraxacum officinale*; weed; seed; freezing; drying; germination; storage
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