

Second Round

Overall comment:

I thank the authors very much, as they have addressed most of my concerns and the article has since improved! This is a valuable article concerning fungal endophytes in tropical forests.

However, I urge the authors to address the misleading statements regarding bacterial endophytes. I strongly emphasize that the authors should remove the statement justifying their study of fungal endophytes by claiming that fungi offer more benefits to their plant hosts than bacterial endophytes. Bacterial endophytes provide numerous benefits to their plant hosts, including improving growth and resistance to environmental stressors. The claim discredits a long line of well-established research on the benefits of bacterial endophytes.

I also have some residual minor recommendations concerning the keywords and the protocol references in the M&M.

Keyword:

The authors can add two or three important keywords: Rubiaceae? Fungi? Endophytes? Or Fungal endophytes? I think 'coffee family' is vague and the authors studied many genres from the Rubiaceae family, not only coffee.

Introduction

The introduction is well constructed and the hypotheses are clear now.

Attention needs to be paid L52: I do not agree at all that fungal endophytes offer more benefits than bacterial endophytes. The cited literature does not say that either! Bacteria endophytes also improve growth and resistance of their host plants to environmental stressors. I advise the authors to be familiar with Compant et al., 2021 but there is a myriad of publications concerning the role of bacterial endophytes: Vacher et al., 2016; Rico et al., 2014; Frank et al., 2017; Santos-Medellin et al., 2017; Dimik et al., 2022 etc.. I emphasize again that the authors should justify why they chose to study fungal endophytes.

Materials and methods

Study site: Please provide the two protocol references:

L120: Was this protocol for leaf surface sterilization developed specifically for this study or is it a standard protocol? There is no reference provided.

L122: There is no reference provided for the sapwood protocol.

Discussion

I think the discussion is very well written and the authors took most of my comments into account. I would have liked in the section arguing about tissues, an opening to roots.