

NEWSCORNER

GINCO

GINCO (Glomales IN vitro COllection) (http://www.mbla.ucl.ac.be/ginco-bel and http://res2.agr.ca/ecorc/ginco-can/) is the first available international culture collection of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (AMF) based exclusively on in vitro propagated fungal strains. The collection has been erected to address a growing demand by the scientific community for germ-free inocula. This culture collection is the result of close international scientific collaboration between the Mycothèque de l'Université Catholique de Louvain (MUCL, Belgium) and the Eastern Cereal and Oilseed Research Centre (ECORC, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), in charge of the Canadian Collection of Fungal Cultures (CCFC/DAOM, Canada). It has been set up by Dr Stéphane Declerck (MUCL, Belgium) and Dr Yolande Dalpé (ECORC, Canada), and is supported by research teams with considerable know-how in the isolation, cultivation, propagation and conservation of in vitro produced AMF.

GINCO aims to provide the scientific community and industrial sector with high-quality, contaminant-free AMF inocula through the efficient supply of strains, continuous quality-control of the fungal material and a growing diversity in the strains available. Additional services such as deposit (for public access, safe deposit and patent deposit), characterization and preservation of strains are also offered on request.

The cultures maintained in GINCO originate either from the intraradical phase of the fungus or from germinated spores. They are propagated on synthetic media together with transformed carrot roots. More than 40 AMF strains of at least 12 species and four genera (*Glomus*, *Gigaspora*, *Scutellospora* and *Acaulospora*) are cultured successfully and four of them (*Glomus proliferum*, *Glomus intraradices*, *Glomus lamellosum* and *Glomus cerebriforme*) are presently offered to the scientific community for research purposes. GINCO strain diversity will be increased gradually. Strains are distributed in vials containing spores embedded in the growth medium. These allow the initiation of 3–5 new in vitro cultures, and may also be used for pot-culture propagation.

The quality charter of GINCO guarantees (1) reliability of the cultures (contaminant-free throughout the life cycle), (2) monospecificity of the inoculum (no cross-contamination with other Glomales throughout the life cycle), (3) viability of the spores (high germination rate) and (4) infectivity of the inoculum either in vitro or in vivo.

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