Germination behaviour after storage of caper seeds
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This five-year study (1999-2003) was designed to analyse the effects of the duration of the storage period on the viability and germination of caper seeds. Seeds were stored at 7°C until the tests were conducted. Germination and viability were tested using seeds of the same lot, both recently-harvested and after storage for one, two, three and four years. Germination tests were performed in closed Petri dishes in a growth chamber. Seed viability was determined by tetrazolium testing. A treatment to enhance seed germination was assayed, consisting in acid scarification to remove hardseededness, followed by the addition of a gibberellic acid solution to saturate the test substrate to break physiological dormancy. Recently-harvested caper seeds present the highest germination rate and the shortest time to reach 50% of the final germination percentage. The longevity of caper seeds stored at 7°C is 3.85 years, but a storage period no longer than two years is recommended. During this period the viability does not decrease and high germination percentages can be obtained with scarification followed by the addition of gibberellic acid to the germination substrate. Individual treatment with gibberellic acid is preferable for longer periods of seed storage.