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## Elevated carbon dioxide does not affect average canopy stomatal conductance of *Pinus taeda* L.

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**Abstract** While photosynthetic responses of C<sub>3</sub> plants to elevated CO<sub>2</sub> are fairly well documented, whole-plant water use under such conditions has been less intensively studied. Woody species, in particular, have exhibited highly variable stomatal responses to high CO<sub>2</sub> as determined by leaf-level measurements. In this study, sap flux of *Pinus taeda* L. saplings was periodically monitored during the 4th year of an open-top chamber CO<sub>2</sub> fumigation experiment. Water use per unit sapwood area did not differ between treatments. Furthermore, the ratio of leaf area to sapwood area did not change under high CO<sub>2</sub>, so that average canopy stomatal conductance (on a unit leaf area basis) remained unaffected by the CO<sub>2</sub> treatment. Thus, the only effect of high CO<sub>2</sub> was to increase whole-plant water use by increasing sapling leaf area and associated conducting sapwood area. Such an effect may not directly translate to forest-level responses as the feedback effects of higher leaf area at the canopy scale cannot be incorporated in a chamber study. These feedbacks include the potential effect of higher leaf area index on rainfall and light interception, both of which may reduce average stomatal conductance in intact forest canopies.

**Key words** *Pinus taeda* · Stomatal conductance · Elevated CO<sub>2</sub> · Whole-plant water use

### Introduction

As atmospheric partial pressures of CO<sub>2</sub> increase, the effects of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on terrestrial vegetation have

become of interest. While a majority of studies have found increases in photosynthetic rates in C<sub>3</sub> plants under elevated CO<sub>2</sub>, particularly when resources are abundant (Eamus and Jarvis 1989; Mousseau and Saugier 1992; Ceulemans and Mousseau 1994), responses of stomatal conductance ( $g_s$ ), and therefore water use, have been considerably more variable (Eamus and Jarvis 1989; Field et al. 1995).

As stomatal aperture is moderated in part by sub-stomatal partial pressures of CO<sub>2</sub> (Mott 1988), reductions in  $g_s$  that increase water use efficiency (WUE) under high CO<sub>2</sub> have been hypothesized, and this effect has been observed in many studies (Morison and Gifford 1984). However, recent reviews suggest that the magnitude of the response of woody species may be far less than that of herbaceous crops (Curtis 1996). Among tree species, responses are highly variable. In a review of the responses of  $g_s$  to high CO<sub>2</sub> in 23 tree species, Field et al. (1995) found a mean 23% decrease across all studies. However, individual responses ranged from a 36% increase in  $g_s$  in *Liriodendron tulipifera* seedlings (Norby and O'Neill 1991) to an 87% decrease in *Cecropia obtusifolia* seedlings (Reekie and Bazzaz 1989).

As photosynthetic responses to CO<sub>2</sub> are generally greater in deciduous than conifer species (Ceulemans and Mousseau 1994; Guehl et al. 1994), a similar trend may be expected for responses of  $g_s$ . In fact, there is preliminary evidence that this is the case (Tolley and Strain 1985; Picon et al. 1996; Saxe et al. 1998). However, for all functional groups, existing data have been primarily collected at the leaf level, so that water-use responses of whole crowns to elevated CO<sub>2</sub> are generally not known (Ceulemans and Mousseau 1994). Sap flow studies of crop species crowns have heretofore found small or no CO<sub>2</sub> effects on a whole plant or ground area basis (Dugas et al. 1994; Senock et al. 1996). As increases in leaf area and reductions in  $g_s$  have been reported for the same species (Akita and Moss 1972; Morison and Gifford 1984; Bhattacharya et al. 1994), sap flow presumably incorporated compensatory changes in both parameters. However, in the absence of

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concurrent measurements of leaf area, sap flow measurements alone may provide information on the effects of CO<sub>2</sub> on whole-canopy fluxes, but not on associated physiological mechanisms.

In this study, rates of water flux per unit active sapwood area ( $J_s$ , g H<sub>2</sub>O cm<sup>-2</sup> sapwood day<sup>-1</sup>) were periodically monitored in loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda* L.) saplings with constant heat sap flow gauges (Granier 1987). Saplings were grown under ambient or elevated CO<sub>2</sub> (+30 Pa) during a 4-year experiment to determine the long-term effects of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on carbon assimilation and water use in this common southeastern species. Based on previous work on leaf-level stomatal conductance ( $g_s$ ) in *P. taeda*, (Tolley and Strain 1985; Ellsworth et al. 1995) we hypothesized that reductions in whole-canopy stomatal conductance ( $G_s$ ) would be minimal under elevated CO<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, changes in  $J_s$  would not be detected unless elevated CO<sub>2</sub> altered the ratio of leaf area ( $A_l$ ) to cross sectional-sapwood area ( $A_s$ ). However, as saplings grown under high CO<sub>2</sub> were significantly larger (Tissue et al. 1997), we hypothesized that whole-tree water use, estimated as the product of  $J_s$  and  $A_s$ , would be greater in the elevated CO<sub>2</sub> treatment.

## Materials and methods

### Experimental design

The study was conducted in open-top chambers in the Durham Division of the Duke Forest, North Carolina. The chambers were planted with 1-month-old seedlings of *P. taeda* in May 1992, as described previously by Tissue et al. (1997). Briefly, seedlings were germinated and grown in the Duke University phytotron at ambient or +30 Pa CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations before transplant into six 3 m × 3 m tall cylindrical open-top chambers supplied with standardized soil mixtures of native clay: topsoil: sand at 1:1:1 v/v to 1 m depth. Three chambers were supplied with ambient air, and three received ambient +30 Pa CO<sub>2</sub>. Each plot initially contained 24 seedlings, growing at ambient light, temperature, and soil moisture conditions. During the 4-year study, two seedlings from each treatment were harvested during nine harvest periods for biomass measurements. As seedlings grew, chambers were increased in height.

### Sap flow measurements

In the last year of the study, two saplings from each chamber treatment were chosen for sap flux monitoring. Granier-type sap flow gauges were installed after Granier (1987) and Oren et al. (1998). Gauges were 2 cm in length and placed at approximately 0.5 m. Each gauge was carefully insulated to prevent radial heat loss due to small stem diameters (5–9 cm in November 1994). Sap flux measurements were logged on a datalogger (DL2, Delta-T Devices Ltd., Cambridge, UK) at 30-s intervals, averaging every 30 min. In November 1994, trees used in sap flux measurements were harvested, and biomass, including leaf area, were determined. Leaf area values used to calculate canopy stomatal conductance per unit leaf ( $G_s$ ) after Pataki et al. (1998) are on an all-sided needle area basis as described in Tissue et al. (1997). Sap flux was used to calculate  $G_s$  with an inverted form of the Penman-Monteith equation, assuming large aerodynamic conductance as a result of chamber wind speed (>1 m s<sup>-1</sup>):

$$G_s = \frac{\gamma \lambda J_s A_s}{\rho c_p D A_l}$$

where  $A_l$  is leaf area (m<sup>2</sup>),  $\gamma$  is the psychrometric constant (kPa K<sup>-1</sup>),  $\lambda$  is the latent heat of vaporization (J kg<sup>-1</sup>),  $\rho$  is the density of moist air (kg m<sup>-3</sup>),  $c_p$  is the volumetric heat capacity of moist air (J kg<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>),  $D$  is the vapor pressure deficit (kPa), and  $A_s$  is sapwood area (m<sup>2</sup>), which for the diameter range in this study is equal to the cross-sectional stem area inside bark (Monteith and Unsworth 1990). Values for ambient daily  $D$  were calculated from a temperature and relative humidity sensor (Vaisala HMP 35C, Campbell Scientific Inc., Logan, Utah, USA) located in the canopy of a nearby pine plantation in Duke Forest. Maximum differences between ambient and chamber temperatures were found to be less than 1.5°C during autumn and winter (Tissue et al. 1997).

Following the harvest period, sap flow gauges were moved to two other saplings in each chamber treatment. In January 1995 these saplings were harvested for biomass determination, and sap flow gauges were moved to the two remaining saplings in each treatment. These saplings were harvested at the conclusion of the study in November 1995, after four growing seasons of continuous CO<sub>2</sub> enrichment.

### Statistical analyses

We chose sap flux measurement intervals between each harvest period when signals were free of electrical interference, thermal stem gradients, or other sensor malfunctions. These dates were 5–6 November 1994, 1 January 1995, and 3–20 September 1995. Treatment effects on water use during these intervals were evaluated with several statistical methods. A multivariate ANOVA (Proc MANOVA, SAS software, SAS Institute Inc., Cary, N.C., USA) was used to detect effects across intervals, with daily sap flux averaged for each chamber within each interval. During the last interval, sap flux measurements were available from three ambient chambers and two CO<sub>2</sub> chambers. Therefore, treatment effects during this period were tested with a three-way nested ANOVA (Proc GLM, SAS software) with CO<sub>2</sub> level, chamber replicate nested within CO<sub>2</sub> level, and day as a repeated measure as effects. Sap flux values were daily chamber means. To ensure that small sample size was not obscuring treatment effects, the analysis was repeated with pseudo-replication, maintaining individual tree values as replicates rather than chamber averages.

## Results

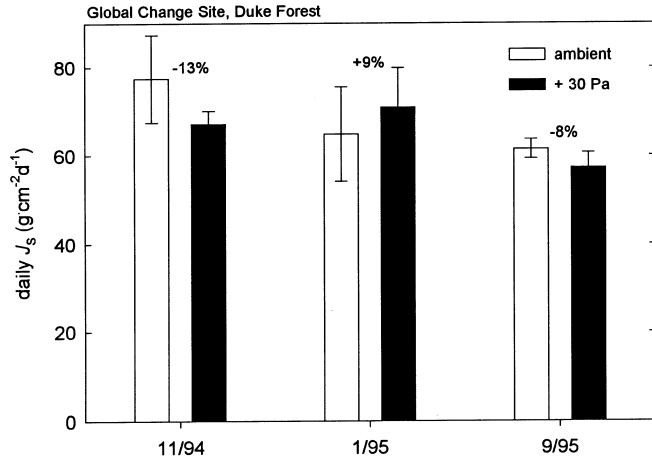
No treatment effect of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on water use was found with any statistical method, including the analysis with pseudo-replication ( $P > 0.05$ ). Figure 1 shows mean daily  $J_s$  in each measurement period for ambient and elevated CO<sub>2</sub>. Although  $J_s$  was not different for each period, or for all periods combined, percentage differences from ambient are shown. No consistent trend in  $J_s$  differences was found, nor did time of day affect  $J_s$  differences, as shown in a representative diurnal pattern given in Fig. 2. It should be noted that some variability across measurement periods may be attributed to the use of different individual trees in each period. In the second period, the flux was actually greater under elevated CO<sub>2</sub> (Fig. 1), although this effect was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). This harvest period was the only one in which  $A_l$  and  $A_s$  of the sample trees were not affected by CO<sub>2</sub> (Table 1).

To calculate  $A_l/A_s$ , all-sided leaf area was regressed against basal area for each measurement period to

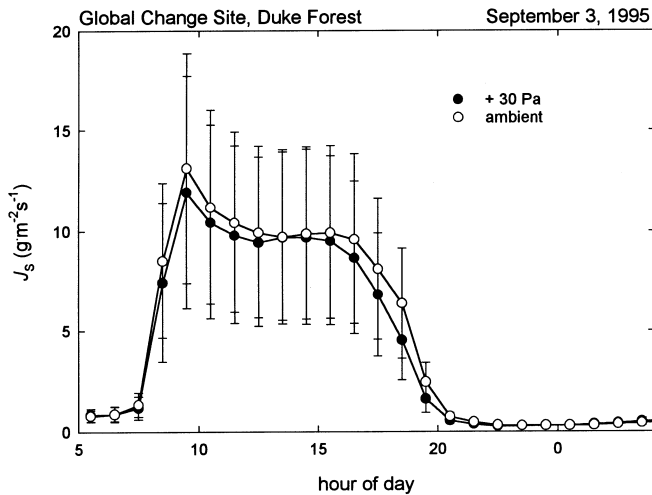
obtain the  $A_1/A_s$  values given in Table 1. The intercepts of these models were not different from zero ( $P > 0.05$ ), so that regression models were driven through the origin. The residual sum of squares (RSS) of these models,

which combined both treatments, was then tested against the RSS of models which included treatment level as a categorical variable (Weisberg 1985). No treatment differences in the relationships were found for any measurement period ( $P > 0.05$ ), although differences in absolute values between measurement periods were evident (Table 1). This reflected seasonal changes in leaf area, with low winter leaf area occurring during the second measurement period in January 1995.

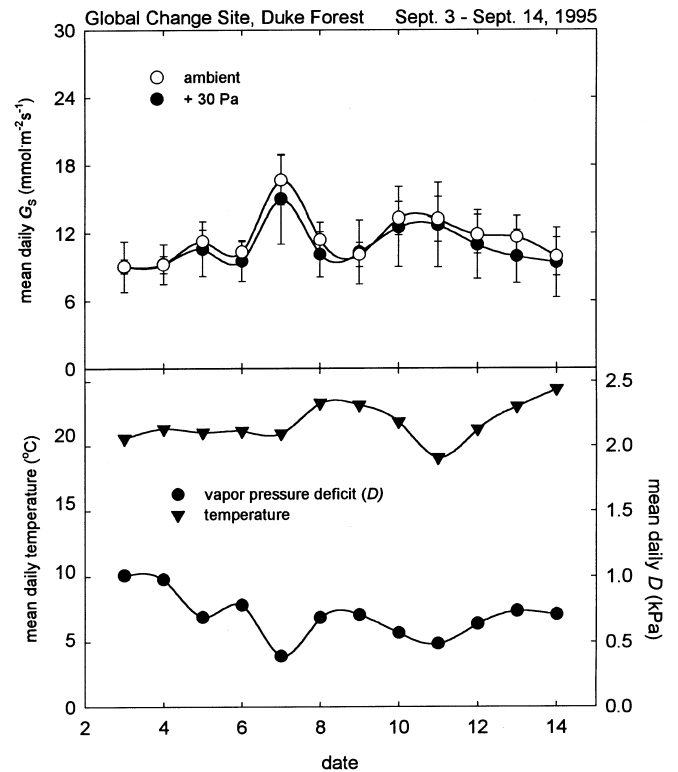
Daily canopy stomatal conductance was calculated with Eq. 1 to illustrate treatment effects on stomatal behavior. During the last measurement period 12 days without precipitation were chosen to evaluate the potential interacting effects of increasing soil drought and elevated  $\text{CO}_2$  concentration. The pattern of  $G_s$  for ambient- and elevated- $\text{CO}_2$  treatments during this period is



**Fig. 1** Daily sap flux ( $J_s$ ,  $\text{g cm}^{-2} \text{sapwood s}^{-1}$ ) for ambient and elevated  $\text{CO}_2$  (+30 Pa) treatments is shown during three measurement periods. Percent changes from ambient are given, although treatment means for each period are not different ( $P > 0.05$ ). Error bars represent the standard error of the mean. The sample size is three chambers for each treatment, with the exception of the last measurement period, when two elevated- $\text{CO}_2$  chambers were available



**Fig. 2** Mean diurnal sap flux ( $J_s$ ) is shown for saplings in ambient- and elevated- $\text{CO}_2$  chambers on 5 September 1995. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean. Sample size was three ambient- $\text{CO}_2$  and two elevated- $\text{CO}_2$  chambers



**Fig. 3** Canopy stomatal conductance ( $G_s$ ) calculated from sap flux is shown during a period without precipitation. Error bars represent the standard error of the mean. Sample size was three ambient  $\text{CO}_2$  and two elevated  $\text{CO}_2$  chambers. In the lower panel, mean daily temperature and vapor pressure deficit ( $D$ ) are given for the same period

**Table 1** All-sided leaf area ( $A_1$ ,  $\text{m}^2$ ), basal area ( $A_s$ ,  $\text{cm}^2$ ), and  $A_1/A_s$  (regression coefficient,  $\text{m}^2 \text{cm}^{-2}$ ) for the three harvests. Values are given  $\pm 1$  SE (for  $A_1/A_s$  SE is given for the slope of the relationship).  $P$ -values are given for  $t$ -tests of ambient and +30 Pa  $\text{CO}_2$  treatments

	November 1994			January 1995			September 1995		
	Ambient	+30 Pa	$P$	Ambient	+30 Pa	$P$	Ambient	+30 Pa	$P$
$A_1$	$13.5 \pm 1.0$	$21.4 \pm 2.8$	0.02	$26.2 \pm 3.9$	$28.2 \pm 4.5$	0.7	$31.4 \pm 6.6$	$57.0 \pm 8.6$	0.04
$A_s$	$11.7 \pm 1.3$	$20.5 \pm 2.6$	0.01	$37.2 \pm 5.1$	$43.0 \pm 5.8$	0.5	$33.7 \pm 6.7$	$57.3 \pm 7.4$	0.04
$A_1/A_s$	$1.0 \pm 0.1$	$1.1 \pm 0.1$	0.4	$0.6 \pm 0.1$	$0.7 \pm 0.1$	0.7	$1.0 \pm 0.1$	$0.9 \pm 0.1$	0.6

shown in Fig. 3. Although the variance is high, both treatments exhibit almost identical behavior. However, it should be noted that stomatal closure as a result of soil moisture depletion is not evident, so that the lack of precipitation during this period did not appear to provide conditions dry enough to evaluate CO<sub>2</sub> effects under drought conditions.

## Discussion

There have been few studies on the effects of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on water use in whole crowns, and these have primarily focused on non-woody species (Dugas et al. 1994; Senock et al. 1996). The results of these studies are inconsistent, sometimes contradicting reductions in water use hypothesized from leaf-level studies on these same species (Akita and Moss 1972; Bhattacharya et al. 1994). In this study, no CO<sub>2</sub> effect on  $J_s$  was found. As  $J_s$  represents flux on a sapwood area basis, a treatment effect on water use per unit leaf area may still be present if elevated CO<sub>2</sub> increased the ratio of leaf area to sapwood area ( $A_1/A_s$ ) so as to compensate for a reduction in average canopy stomatal conductance ( $G_s$ ). In fact, Eq. 1 may be simplified to:

$$J_s A_s = G_s A_1 D c \quad (2)$$

where  $c$  is a constant for a limited range of ambient air temperatures (Phillips and Oren 1998). Thus, reductions in  $G_s$  may be present if  $A_1/A_s$  is higher in CO<sub>2</sub> treatments without a noticeable effect on  $J_s$ .

Reductions in water use in response to elevated CO<sub>2</sub> have generally been discussed in terms of stomatal clo-

sure. However, alterations in water use may also result from changes in wood structure and anatomy following long-term exposure to high CO<sub>2</sub>. Conroy et al. (1990) found that increases in wood density occurred due to thickening of tracheid walls in *Pinus radiata* grown under high CO<sub>2</sub>. If such changes reduce the permeability of pit membranes,  $A_1/A_s$  may be expected to decrease (Schulte and Gibson 1988) and affect whole-tree water relations independent of direct effects of CO<sub>2</sub> on  $g_s$ . In this study, wood anatomy and hydraulic conductance were not affected inasmuch as the proportion of leaf area to cross-sectional wood area did not change in the elevated CO<sub>2</sub> treatment (Table 1). Such information on the effects of CO<sub>2</sub> on hydraulic architecture is necessary for predictions of whole-stand water relations under future climate scenarios. In Table 2, previously reported CO<sub>2</sub> effects on  $A_1/A_s$  in tree species are reviewed. In all species, effects on  $A_1/A_s$  are muted in comparison to effects on  $A_1$  and/or  $A_s$  alone. In general, relative changes in  $A_1/A_s$  in response to elevated CO<sub>2</sub> were often similar to those reported for  $g_s$  (Field et al. 1995), and thus could double (negative changes) or cancel (positive changes) the effects of  $g_s$  responses on  $J_s$ .

In the absence of CO<sub>2</sub> effects on  $J_s$  and  $A_1/A_s$ , no effect on  $G_s$  can be expected. Leaf-level  $g_s$  was previously reported to be reduced as much as 40% under high CO<sub>2</sub> in this same study (Tissue et al. 1997). However, gas exchange measurements were performed under saturating light conditions, such that  $g_s$  represented maximum values. Even under these conditions, the CO<sub>2</sub> effect on gas exchange was large only under summer conditions when photosynthetic rates were highest. During autumn and spring, leaf-level effects were sometimes undetect-

**Table 2** Percent changes in cross-sectional area (% $\Delta A$ ), leaf area or mass (% $\Delta L$ ), and leaf to cross-sectional area ratios ( $A_1:A_s$ ) under elevated CO<sub>2</sub>. For % $\Delta A$  and % $\Delta L$ , differences were significant at  $P \leq 0.05$  unless marked as not significant (*ns*). In the absence of

raw data, it was not possible to test differences between treatments in  $A_1:A_s$  except in the current study, but it was assumed not to be different when no effects were found in both leaf area and/or biomass and diameter

Species	% $\Delta A$	% $\Delta L$	% $\Delta A_1:A_s$	Source
<i>Castanea sativa</i> Mill	6 <sup>ns</sup>	-5 <sup>ns</sup>	8 <sup>ns</sup>	El Kohen et al. 1993
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> L.	12 <sup>ns</sup>	50	29	El Kohen et al. 1993
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> L.	25	33*	-5	Sionit et al. 1985
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> L.				Tolley and Strain 1985
High light treatment	44	44 <sup>ns</sup>	-2	
Low light treatment	25 <sup>ns</sup>	31	1	
<i>Picea rubens</i> Sarg	77	42	-17	Samuelson and Sieler 1993
<i>Pinus pinaster</i> Ait.				Guehl et al. 1994
Well-watered treatment	25	63*	26	
Drought treatment	17 <sup>ns</sup>	31 <sup>ns*</sup>	15 <sup>ns</sup>	
<i>Pinus taeda</i> L.	74	82	11 <sup>ns</sup>	This study
<i>Pinus taeda</i> L.	30	50*	-14	Sionit et al. 1985
<i>Pinus taeda</i> L.				Tolley and Strain 1985
High light treatment	-8 <sup>ns</sup>	-14 <sup>ns</sup>	8 <sup>ns</sup>	
Low light treatment	19 <sup>ns</sup>	17 <sup>ns</sup>	-12 <sup>ns</sup>	
<i>Quercus alba</i> L.	72	77	8	O'Neill et al. 1987
<i>Quercus petraea</i> Liebl.				Guehl et al. 1994
Well-watered treatment	72	112	21	
Drought treatment	69	21 <sup>ns</sup>	-25	

Where  $A_1$  was not available, leaf mass was substituted, on the assumption that there were no CO<sub>2</sub> effects on specific leaf area ( $A_1$  divided by leaf mass)

able (Tissue et al. 1997). Canopy stomatal conductance values calculated from sap flux in this study indicate that CO<sub>2</sub> has no detectable effect on the mean whole-plant rates found under ambient light conditions (Fig. 3).

Ellsworth et al. (1995) suggested that stomatal closure in *P. taeda* under high CO<sub>2</sub>, which was found to be minimal under drought conditions, may be more pronounced when soil moisture is abundant. This hypothesis was generated from the results in Ellsworth et al. (1995) and the finding that *P. taeda* is highly sensitive to soil drought, resulting in rapid stomatal closure and decreased transpiration as soil moisture declines (Oren et al. 1998; Phillips and Oren 1998). Conductance values in this study were very similar to those reported at the beginning of a drying cycle in a nearby stand taking into account the use of projected leaf area (Phillips and Oren 1998), indicating that soil moisture was highly available throughout the 12-day period without precipitation, probably due to the deep rooting zone (1 m). Thus, the hypothesis that elevated CO<sub>2</sub> may affect *g<sub>s</sub>* of *P. taeda* only when soil moisture is not limiting is refuted in the present study.

In summary, the only effect of CO<sub>2</sub> enrichment on water relations of *P. taeda* found in this study was increased whole-plant water use in direct proportion to the increase in leaf and sapwood area of saplings grown at high CO<sub>2</sub> (Table 1). Changes in whole-plant water use under high CO<sub>2</sub> are of interest for predictions of large-scale water vapor fluxes, as well as stand growth and composition under future elevated atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub>. Results of chamber studies, however, cannot be directly extrapolated to forest-level responses. As total biomass and leaf area increase under elevated CO<sub>2</sub>, increased rain interception by the canopy may promote the onset and increased frequency of drought as soil moisture is more rapidly depleted by higher transpiration, particularly when root:shoot ratios do not increase, as has been found for some species, including *P. taeda* (Tissue et al. 1997). Furthermore, higher light interception by larger canopies under elevated-CO<sub>2</sub> conditions will lower the average stomatal conductance. Thus, increased leaf area may represent an indirect mechanism by which elevated CO<sub>2</sub> may cause a reduction in average canopy stomatal conductance. While open-top chambers provide a means of studying mechanisms of leaf and whole-plant level responses under controlled conditions, these stand-level responses cannot be adequately tested in chambers that do not mimic the effect of increased leaf area index on rain interception and permit light penetration on all sides. Thus, extrapolations of results to the forest level will be greatly improved using a modeling approach (Baldochi et al. 1991) or stand-level experiments.

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