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## Quantitative comparison of root water uptake simulated by functional-structural root architecture models

**Andrea Schnepf**<sup>1</sup>, Valentin Couvreur<sup>2</sup>, Benjamin Delory<sup>3</sup>, Claude Doussan<sup>4</sup>, Mathieu Javaux<sup>1,2</sup>, Deepanshu Khare<sup>1,11</sup>, Axelle Koch<sup>5</sup>, Timo Koch<sup>6</sup>, Christian Kuppe<sup>7</sup>, Daniel Leitner<sup>8</sup>, Guillaume Lobet<sup>1,11</sup>, Félicien Meunier<sup>9</sup>, Johannes Postma<sup>7</sup>, Ernst Schäfer<sup>10</sup>, Jan Vanderborgh<sup>1,11</sup>, and Harry Vereecken<sup>1,11</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, IBG-3 Agrosphäre, Jülich, Germany (a.schnepf@fz-juelich.de)

<sup>2</sup>Earth and Life Institute, Agronomy, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

<sup>3</sup>Institute of Ecology, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Universitätsallee 1, 21335 Lüneburg, Germany

<sup>4</sup>UMR 1114 EMMAH, INRA/UAPV, 84914, Avignon cedex 9, France

<sup>5</sup>Earth and Life Institute, Environmental Sciences, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

<sup>6</sup>Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, University of Oslo, Norway

<sup>7</sup>Institut für Bio- und Geowissenschaften: Plant Sciences (IBG-2), Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Wilhelm-Johnen-Str., D-52425 Jülich, Germany

<sup>8</sup>Simulationswerkstatt, Ortmayrstrasse 20, A-4060 Leonding, Austria

<sup>9</sup>CAVElab - Computational and Applied Vegetation Ecology, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

<sup>10</sup>School of Mathematical Sciences, University of Nottingham, Mathematical Sciences Building, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, United Kingdom

<sup>11</sup>International Soil Modelling Consortium ISMC, Jülich, Germany

3D models of root growth, architecture and function are becoming important tools to aid the design of agricultural management schemes and the selection of beneficial root traits. While benchmarking is common for water and solute transport models in soil, 3D root-soil interaction models have not yet been systematically analysed. Several interacting processes might induce disagreement between models: root growth, sink term definitions of root water and solute uptake and representation of the rhizosphere. Schnepf et al. (2020) proposed a framework for quantitatively comparing such models. It builds upon benchmark scenarios that test individual components, followed by benchmark scenarios for the coupled root-rhizosphere-soil system.

Here we present the results of benchmarking different well-known models (“simulators”) with respect to water flow in soil, water flow in roots, and water flow and root water uptake in a coupled soil-root system for the case of a given prescribed root architecture as observed from an MRI experiment. The participating simulators are

CPlantBox and DuMux (Koch et al. 2021; Mai et al. 2019), R-SWMS (Javaux et al. 2008), OpenSimRoot (Postma et al. 2017) and ArchiSimple, RootTyp and SRI (Beudez et al. 2013; Pagès et al. 2014; Pagès et al. 2004).

In the benchmark scenarios that represent individual modules, the different simulators solved the

same mathematical model but with different numerical approaches; all perform well with respect to the given analytical reference solution. For the coupled problem of root water uptake from a drying soil, the different simulators make different choices for the coupling of the different sub-problems. Thus, the results of the different simulators show a larger heterogeneity amongst each other.

We expect that this benchmarking will result in improved models, with which we can simulate various scenarios with greater confidence, avoiding that future work is based on accidental results caused by bugs, numerical errors or conceptual misunderstandings and will set a standard for model development.

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