

# Effects of an induced drought on soil carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) efflux and soil CO<sub>2</sub> production in an Eastern Amazonian rainforest, Brazil

ELENEIDE DOFF SOTTA\*, EDZO VELDKAMP\*, LUITGARD SCHWENDENMANN†, BRENDA ROCHA GUIMARÃES‡, ROSIENE KEILA PAIXÃO‡, MARIA DE LOURDES P. RUIVO‡, ANTONIO CARLOS LOLA DA COSTA¶ and PATRICK MEIRS§

\*Institute of Soil Science and Forest Nutrition, University of Göttingen, Büsgenweg 2, D-37077, Göttingen, Germany, †Institute of Silviculture, University of Göttingen, Büsgenweg 1, D-37077, Göttingen, Germany, ‡Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi – Campus de Pesquisa, Coordenacao de Ciencias da Terra e Ecologia, TerraFirme, Av. Perimetral 1901, CEP 66077530, Belém, PA, Brazil, §School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh, Drummond Street, Edinburgh, UK, ¶Departamento de Meteorologia, Centro de Geociências, Universidade Federal do Pará, Avenida Augusto Correa s/n, Guamá, CEP 66075900, Belem, PA, Brasil

## Abstract

In the next few decades, climate of the Amazon basin is expected to change, as a result of deforestation and rising temperatures, which may lead to feedback mechanisms in carbon (C) cycling that are presently unknown. Here, we report how a throughfall exclusion (TFE) experiment affected soil carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) production in a deeply weathered sandy Oxisol of Caxiuanã (Eastern Amazon). Over the course of 2 years, we measured soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and soil CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations, soil temperature and moisture in pits down to 3 m depth. Over a period of 2 years, TFE reduced on average soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux from  $4.3 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$  (control) to  $3.2 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$  (TFE). The contribution of the subsoil (below 0.5 m depth) to the total soil CO<sub>2</sub> production was higher in the TFE plot (28%) compared with the control plot (17%), and it did not differ between years. We distinguished three phases of drying after the TFE was started. The first phase was characterized by a translocation of water uptake (and accompanying root activity) to deeper layers and not enough water stress to affect microbial activity and/or total root respiration. During the second phase a reduction in total soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux in the TFE plot was related to a reduction of soil and litter decomposers activity. The third phase of drying, characterized by a continuing decrease in soil CO<sub>2</sub> production was dominated by a water stress-induced decrease in total root respiration. Our results contrast to results of a drought experiment on clay Oxisols, which may be related to differences in soil water retention characteristics and depth of rooting zone. These results show that large differences exist in drought sensitivity among Amazonian forest ecosystems, which primarily seem to be affected by the combined effects of texture (affecting water holding capacity) and depth of rooting zone.

*Keywords:* Brazil, carbon dioxide production, drought, ENSO, soil moisture, soil respiration, soil temperature, soil texture

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## Introduction

In the next few decades, climate of the Amazon basin is expected to change, as a result of regional deforestation and rising global temperatures (Nobre *et al.*, 1991; Werth

& Avissar, 2002). Several climate scenarios predict a warming trend of 1.5–2.5 °C in annual mean temperature for a large part of the tropics (Hulme & Viner, 1998; Cox *et al.*, 2000) and some of these scenarios predict more frequent occurrence of ENSO droughts of increasing severity induced by global warming (Timmermann *et al.*, 1999). These changes in climate may lead to feedback mechanisms in global biogeochemical cycles

Correspondence: Edzo Veldkamp, tel. + 49 551 397339, fax + 49 551 393310, e-mail: eveldka@gwdg.de

that are presently unknown. For example, climate changes may affect C stocks in vegetation as well as shifts in total soil C and belowground C allocation (Davidson *et al.*, 2004).

One-third of the global soil C storage (to 3 m depth) is in the upper metre of tropical soils (Jobbagy & Jackson, 2000). Moreover, a large portion of the soil organic C (SOC) in tropical soils has a short residence time (Amundson, 2001), which implies a high potential for rapid changes in soil C stocks (Trumbore *et al.*, 1995). Increasing temperature may therefore lead to additional carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) release, especially in the tropics (Trumbore *et al.*, 1996). Until the early 1990s C fluxes in soil below 1 m depth were often thought to be insignificant compared with C fluxes in the upper metre (e.g. Sombroek *et al.*, 1993). However, many forest soils in the Brazilian Amazon are very deep, strongly weathered and contain significant living root biomass below 1 m depth (Nepstad *et al.*, 1994). For these Amazonian ecosystems (but also e.g. for deeply weathered forest soils in Costa Rica) it has been shown that significant amounts of labile SOC exists in the subsoil and that between 7% and 17% of total CO<sub>2</sub> efflux at the soil surface originated below 1 m depth (Davidson & Trumbore, 1995; Veldkamp *et al.*, 2003; Schwendenmann & Veldkamp, 2006).

Given the projected intensification of ENSO events, which may lead to an increasing frequency of droughts and higher temperatures, an experiment was set up in which throughfall was experimentally reduced to create an artificial drought (Fisher *et al.*, 2006). Manipulation of soil moisture availability by experimental reduction of throughfall has been done in temperate forest ecosystems (Borken *et al.*, 2003; Hanson *et al.*, 2003). Our experiment was part of the Large Scale Biosphere Atmosphere Experiment in Amazon (LBA). Using this throughfall exclusion (TFE) experiment, our goal was to study how an artificially imposed drought affects depth and amount of soil CO<sub>2</sub> production and transport in a deeply weathered soil of the Eastern Amazon. Our hypothesis is that soils with lower capacity to maintain water in the root zone (smaller difference between field capacity and wilting point) will be more promptly affected by reduced precipitation. A similar experimental rainfall manipulation was implemented in another site in Eastern Amazon, Santarém (Nepstad *et al.*, 2002). In this experiment, the TFE of three rainy seasons did not lead to significant differences in soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux (Davidson *et al.*, 2004). However, within the Amazon region there is a great diversity of soils and vegetation thus different responses to drought may be expected (Sombroek, 1966). Over the course of 2 years, we monitored soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and soil CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations, soil temperature and soil moisture in pits down to 3 m

depth in a sandy Oxisol. Using a simple one-dimensional gas diffusion model, which was calibrated using naturally occurring <sup>222</sup>Rn profiles, we calculate CO<sub>2</sub> production with depth and we relate this to a range of environmental controls that can potentially affect the production and emission of CO<sub>2</sub> in the soil.

## Material and methods

### Study site

The experimental site was located in Caxiuanã National Forest, Para, Brazil, (1°43'3.5"S, 51°27'36"W). The forest is a lowland *terra firme* rainforest. Mean annual rainfall is 2272 mm, with a pronounced dry season, when on average only 555 mm of rainfall occurs (Fisher *et al.*, 2006). Months with more than 100 mm rainfall were assigned to the wet season (December to June), and the dry season consisted of the period of months with <100 mm rainfall (July to November).

The studied soil is a yellow Oxisol (Brazilian classification: Latosol), which has a broken ironstone layer (0.3–0.4 m thick) at 3–4 m depth. On average, the top 0.5 m of the soil contains 75% sand, 15% clay and 10% silt (Table 1), while the soil deeper than 5 m contains 90% sand, 5% clay and 5% silt. Mineralogy of the clay fraction is dominantly Kaolinite while the sand fraction consists mainly of quartz (Ruivo & Cunha, 2003). The location of the experiment is about 15 m above river level, and during wet season, the water table has been observed at a depth of 10 m (Fisher *et al.*, 2006). The forest contains on average 434 trees ha<sup>-1</sup>. Basal area is 23.9 m<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>-1</sup> and leaf area index (LAI) is 5.2 m<sup>2</sup> m<sup>-2</sup> (D. Metcalfe, unpublished data).

### Experimental design

The experiment consisted of two plots of 1 ha (100 m × 100 m), one control plot and one experimental TFE plot. Both plots were located about 800 m north of the research station. In the TFE plot, a roof of transparent plastic sheeting and wooden guttering was installed at approximately 2 m height above the soil, with the purpose of displacing part of the throughfall from the plot to impose an artificial drought. Both control and the TFE plots were trenched to a depth of 1 m around their borders to reduce the lateral flow of water in roots and soil across plot boundaries. TFE started in January 2002; about 50% of the rainfall was excluded from the soil of the TFE plot. During the peak of the dry season (from mid-September to mid-November) only 50% of the plastic panels were left on the TFE plot in order to have a better aeration under the covered area. At each plot four pits (0.8 m × 1.8 m with 5 m depth) were

**Table 1** Chemical and physical properties of the soil of our study area in Caxiuana, Para, Brazil

Depth (cm)	Clay (%)	Silt (%)	Sand (%)	pH H <sub>2</sub> O	ECEC (cmol dm <sup>-3</sup> )	Total P (mg dm <sup>-3</sup> )	Total C** (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	Total N (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	C/N
<i>Control</i>									
0–10	18	5	77	4.0	4.4	3.0	9.1	0.4	22.7
10–25	21	6	73	4.1	4.3	1.8	8.8	0.4	22.0
25–50	19	8	73	4.2	4.4	1.2	5.2	0.4	13.7
50–100	22	10	68	4.4	2.8	1.0	5.1	0.4	13.8
100–200	28	9	63	4.5	2.0	0.6	4.0	0.3	12.5
200–300	20	10	70	4.6	1.4	0.7	4.9	0.3	15.8*
<i>TFE</i>									
0–10	13	4	83	4.0	5.2	3.1	11.7	0.3	35.4
10–25	15	7	78	3.0	4.3	2.3	10.1	0.3	33.7
25–50	20	10	70	4.1	3.2	1.2	6.7	0.4	18.6
50–100	23	9	68	4.3	2.7	0.7	4.1	0.3	12.8
100–200	26	10	64	4.4	2.0	0.5	4.9	0.3	16.3
200–300	20	10	70	4.7	1.4	0.5	6.1	0.3	21.8*

\*The high C/N ratio observed at 200–300 cm depth may be due to an accumulation of carbon in the broken ironstone layer at 3–4 m depth present in the study site.

Root biomass profile for these plots can be found in Fisher *et al.* (2007).

\*\*Total C and total N include organic plus inorganic C and N.

TFE, throughfall exclusion; C, carbon; N, nitrogen.

established at randomly chosen locations. The plots were further divided into four quadrants in order to facilitate the systematic placement of soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux chambers.

#### Measurements of soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux

Sixteen respiration chambers were deployed systematically forming a cross in the TFE and control plot of the drought experiment, four at each quadrant. Systematic sampling was chosen to cover the plots uniformly. In June 2001, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) rings (0.296 m in diameter, 0.20 m tall) were inserted to a depth of about 0.02 m into the soil. Once inserted, the rings were left in place throughout the time investigated. Rings were kept free of seedlings throughout the whole study period. Dynamic, closed chambers were used to determine soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux (Sotta *et al.*, 2006). Average chamber volume was about 13 L. Flux chambers were closed with a PVC cover for about 5 min. Air was circulated at a flow rate of about 0.8 L min<sup>-1</sup> between an infrared CO<sub>2</sub> gas analyser (LI-6262; Li-Cor Inc., Lincoln, NE, USA) and the flux chambers. To prevent pressure differences between chamber and atmosphere, chambers were vented to the atmosphere through a 0.25 m long stainless-steel tube (3.2 mm outer diameter). CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were recorded at 5 s intervals with a datalogger (Campbell CR10X; Campbell Scientific Inc., Logan, UT, USA). CO<sub>2</sub> flux

( $\mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) was calculated from the linear change in CO<sub>2</sub> concentration multiplied by the density of air and the ratio of chamber volume to soil surface area. Air density was adjusted for air temperature measured at the time of sampling. A linear increase in CO<sub>2</sub> concentration usually occurred between 2 and 4 min after placing the cover over the ring. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) of the regression was typically better than 0.99. The infrared gas analyser was calibrated in the lab using a loop with a column with CO<sub>2</sub> scrubber (soda lime indicating 4–8 mesh) as zero-standard and a secondary CO<sub>2</sub> standard (510 ppm). The secondary CO<sub>2</sub> standard was calibrated against primary standards from the LBA project.

Each plot was measured every 2 weeks from December 2001 to November 2002 and monthly from December 2002 to November 2003. It took 2 days to measure both plots. All measurements were conducted between 8:00 and 14:00 hours local time. For each plot, the average CO<sub>2</sub> efflux rate was calculated from the 16 chamber flux measurements on a sampling day. Daily mean soil efflux for each plot was calculated by linear interpolation between sampling dates. Daily CO<sub>2</sub> flux rates were then summed up to estimate annual flux rates. Soil temperature at 0.05 m depth was measured with a thermocouple probe (HI 93551; Hanna Instruments, Ann Arbor, MI, USA) and soil water content (SWC) was measured with a soil moisture probe (CS 615, Campbell Scientific Ltd., Loughborough, UK).

### Measurements of CO<sub>2</sub> concentration profiles

In December 2001, all eight pits were instrumented for sampling of soil air. Stainless-steel gas sampling tubes (3.2 mm outer diameter) were inserted horizontally at 0.10, 0.25, 0.50, 1.00, 2.00 and 3.00 m depth. The tubes were perforated at one end and closed with a septum holder with septum at the other end to allow sampling of soil air (Davidson & Trumbore, 1995). Tubes at depths of 0.10–1.00 m were 0.90 m long; tubes at greater depth were 1.80 m long. Samples at 0.05 m depth were collected using a 0.10 m stainless-steel tubing adapted to a syringe, which was vertically inserted in the top soil every sampling date. Soil air samples were collected in polypropylene syringes, which were closed with a three-way stopcock. Before a sample was taken, 10–20 mL of soil air was withdrawn and discarded.

Gas samples were analysed for CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the lab within 8 h using a gas chromatograph (GC 11; Delsi Instruments, Suresnes, France) with a thermal conductivity detector (TCD). Soil air CO<sub>2</sub> concentration was calculated by comparison of integrated peak areas of samples with standard gases (0.051% and 3% CO<sub>2</sub>), which were used to make a two-point calibration. The coefficient of variation for replicate injections of standard gases was <1%. Storage tests indicated that on average 9–12% of CO<sub>2</sub> was lost between time of sampling and analysis. Soil CO<sub>2</sub> concentration measurements were made in all pits every 2 weeks in 2002 and monthly in 2003.

### Measurements of soil radon activity and radon production

To validate the gas diffusion model, we measured <sup>222</sup>Rn activity and <sup>222</sup>Rn production rates as described by Davidson & Trumbore (1995). Soil air samples were withdrawn from the stainless-steel gas sampling probes to determine soil air <sup>222</sup>Rn concentration (also called radon activity). Soil air (90–120 mL) was dried using a CaCl<sub>2</sub> column and introduced into pre-evacuated 150 mL scintillation cells (110A Lucas Cell; Pylon Electronics Inc., Ottawa, ON, Canada). Impulses were measured using a Pylon AB-5 radiation monitor (Pylon Electronics Inc.). Radon production rates were measured for each site and depth interval individually, for both dry and wet conditions following the procedure described by Davidson & Trumbore (1995).

### Calculation of CO<sub>2</sub> production

The diffusive properties of a soil media are usually characterized by means of relative diffusion coefficient  $D_s/D_o$ .  $D_s$  is the diffusion coefficient of a gas in soil air and  $D_o$  is the diffusion coefficient of the same gas in free air at standard conditions, (i.e. 0.158 cm<sup>2</sup> s<sup>-1</sup> for CO<sub>2</sub> at

20 °C and standard pressure of 1013 hPa; Mason & Monchick, 1962). The gas diffusion coefficient in soil ( $D_s$ ) is a fraction of the gas diffusion coefficient in free air ( $D_o$ ), as diffusivity depends not only on gas pressure and temperature but also on the amount of air-filled pores and on their continuity and shape. The relationship between  $D_s/D_o$ , and soil properties have been investigated in multiple studies and several empirical formulas have been developed to describe soil gas diffusivity. In our experiment, we tested the gas diffusion models with three different approaches:

(a) the model described by Millington & Quirk (1961) for nonaggregated media,

$$\frac{D_s}{D_o} = a^{2x} \left( \frac{a}{\varepsilon} \right)^2, \quad (1)$$

where  $a$  is the air-filled porosity (m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>),  $\varepsilon$  the total porosity (m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>).

(b) the model developed by Millington & Shearer (1971) for aggregated media,

$$\frac{D_s}{D_o} = \left[ \frac{\left( \frac{a_{ra}}{\varepsilon_{ra}} \right)^2 \left( \frac{a_{ra}}{1-\varepsilon_{er}} \right)^{2x} (1 - \varepsilon_{er}^{2y}) (a_{er} - a_{er}^{2z})}{\left( \frac{a_{ra}}{\varepsilon_{ra}} \right)^2 \left( \frac{a_{ra}}{1-\varepsilon_{er}} \right)^{2x} (1 - \varepsilon_{er}^{2y}) + (a_{er} - a_{er}^{2z})} \right] + \left[ a_{er}^{2z} \left( \frac{a_{er}}{\varepsilon_{er}} \right)^2 \right], \quad (2)$$

where  $a_{ra}$  is the intra-aggregated air-filled pore space (m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>),  $\varepsilon_{ra}$  the intra-aggregated total pore space ( $\varepsilon_{ra} = \theta_W$  at field capacity),  $a_{er}$  the interaggregated air-filled pore space (m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>),  $\varepsilon_{er}$  the interaggregated total pore space ( $\varepsilon_{er} = \varepsilon - \varepsilon_{ra}$ ) (m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>),  $x$  the determined from the relation  $a^{2x} + (1-a)^x = 1$  (m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>),  $y$  the exponent usually between 0.6 and 0.8 and  $z$  the exponent usually between 0.6 and 0.8. and

(c) the model described by Moldrup *et al.* (2000) based on the soil water characteristic curve,

$$\frac{D_s}{D_o} = (2a_{100}^3 + 0.04a_{100}) \left( \frac{a}{a_{100}} \right)^{2+3b}, \quad (3)$$

where  $a_{100}$  is the air-filled porosity at -100 cm H<sub>2</sub>O (porosity with the soil tension at -10 kPa) (m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>),  $b$  the pore-size distribution characterized by the slope of the line determined from the water retention curve, which is:  $\log -\psi = a + b\theta$ , where  $\psi$  is the water potential and  $\theta$  is volumetric water content.

To calculate gas diffusivity we estimated total porosity ( $\varepsilon$ ) from measurements of bulk density and an assumed particle density of 2.65 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>. Air-filled porosity ( $a$ ) was calculated by the difference between total porosity and water-filled porosity ( $\theta$ ). Water-filled porosity is the volumetric SWC determined from the Time Domain Reflectometry (TDR) probes on a given sampling date. For the aggregated soil model the pore

space is divided into intra-aggregated porosity (estimated from volumetric water content at field capacity) and interaggregated porosity (calculated as the difference between total porosity and volumetric water content at field capacity).

A one-dimensional gas diffusion model developed by Schwendenmann & Veldkamp (2006) was used to predict  $^{222}\text{Rn}$  activity throughout the soil profile. Input parameters are measured radon production rates and the diffusion coefficient calculated by the three approaches. These predicted values were compared with measured  $^{222}\text{Rn}$  activities from the profile to test the diffusion models for their applicability. The estimated diffusion values from the Millington & Quirk (1961) soil model (M&Q) provided best agreement with the observed  $^{222}\text{Rn}$  activities (Fig. 1). Millington & Shearer (1971) model overestimated diffusivity resulting in an underestimation of  $^{222}\text{Rn}$  activities, while Moldrup *et al.*

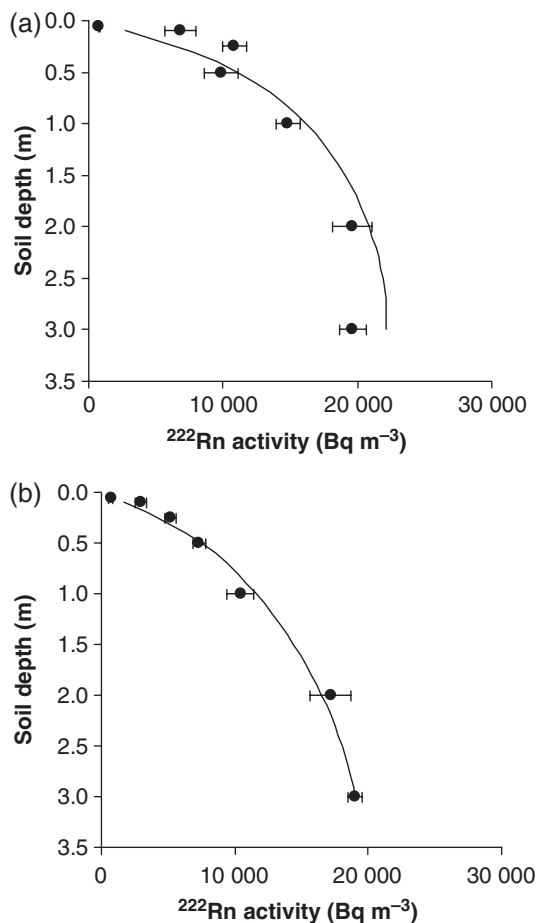
(2000) model underestimated diffusivity which resulted in an overestimation of  $^{222}\text{Rn}$  activities. Sandy soils normally have a weak aggregation and we speculate that the high sand content of the soil caused the M&Q model (that does not account for soil aggregation) to perform better than the other models. We thus decided to use the M&Q model to estimate gas diffusion coefficients for Caxiuanã soils. Fluxes of  $\text{CO}_2$  were estimated at each sampling depth, based on Fick's law (Uchida *et al.*, 1997).

Because a uniform diffusion coefficient in the soil is unlikely, a multibox model was used (Davidson & Trumbore, 1995) to calculate soil  $\text{CO}_2$  production ( $P_{\text{CO}_2}$ ).  $\text{CO}_2$  production was calculated for each 0.1 m layer, but as the  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  rate for these individual layers may not be reliable, we summed the  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  estimates for larger depth intervals (0.5–1.0, 1.0–2.0 and 2.0–3.0 m; Schwendenmann & Veldkamp, 2006). For the topsoil (0–0.5 m depth)  $\text{CO}_2$  production was estimated as the difference between the measured soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux and the sum of the  $\text{CO}_2$  production rates for all individual 0.1 m layers between 0.6 and 3.0 m (subsoil) on a given date. This approach avoids negative production values, in case soil constituents are not uniformly distributed and the soil  $\text{CO}_2$  gradient near the surface is not smooth (Davidson & Trumbore, 1995).

#### Additional measurements

Soil thermocouples sensors were installed at the same depths as the air sampling tubes by attaching them to the perforated end of the air-sampling tubes. Soil temperature was measured using thermocouple T-probes (Omega Engineering, Stamford, CT, USA) read with a handheld thermocouple meter (HI 93551 Microprocessor K, J, T-Type Thermocouple Thermometer; Hanna Instruments Deutschland GmbH, Kehl/Rhein, Germany). At 0.05 m depth the temperature was measured with a T-type thermocouple penetration tip probe (HI 766 Thermocouple probe, Hanna Instruments GmbH).

For soil moisture monitoring, TDR sensors (Soil Moisture Corp, Santa Barbara, CA, USA) were installed vertically at the soil surface (0–0.30 m depth) and horizontally at 0.50, 1.00, 2.00 and 3.00 m depth (Fisher *et al.*, 2007). TDR probes were inserted 1.5 m into the walls, with connections sticking out of the repacked soil wall. Soil moisture measurements were made manually at the time of soil air sampling. Water retention curves of intact soil cores were determined on pressure plates by Dr E. J. M. Carvalho in the soil physics laboratory of Embrapa Amazonia Oriental in Belém, Brazil. The water retention curve for each plot was used to transform SWC in soil water potential (SWP) ( $\psi$ ). Half-hourly air temperature, photosynthetically



**Fig. 1** Depth profiles of simulated and measured radon activity in (a) control and (b) TFE plots. Solid lines (—) show the calculated values using the Millington and Quirk (1961) model. The closed circles (●) are the measured radon activity, where each point is the mean ( $\pm$  standard error) of four profiles. TFE, throughfall exclusion.

active radiation (PAR) and rainfall were measured by a tower-based automatic weather station in the vicinity of the study site (Carswell *et al.*, 2002).

From November 2001 to November 2003, litter was collected monthly, put in paper bags and dried in a ventilated oven for 48 h at 80 °C. The material was separated into three fractions: (a) leaves, (b) twigs and (c) reproductive organs (flower, fruit and seeds); and weighed.

### Statistical analyses

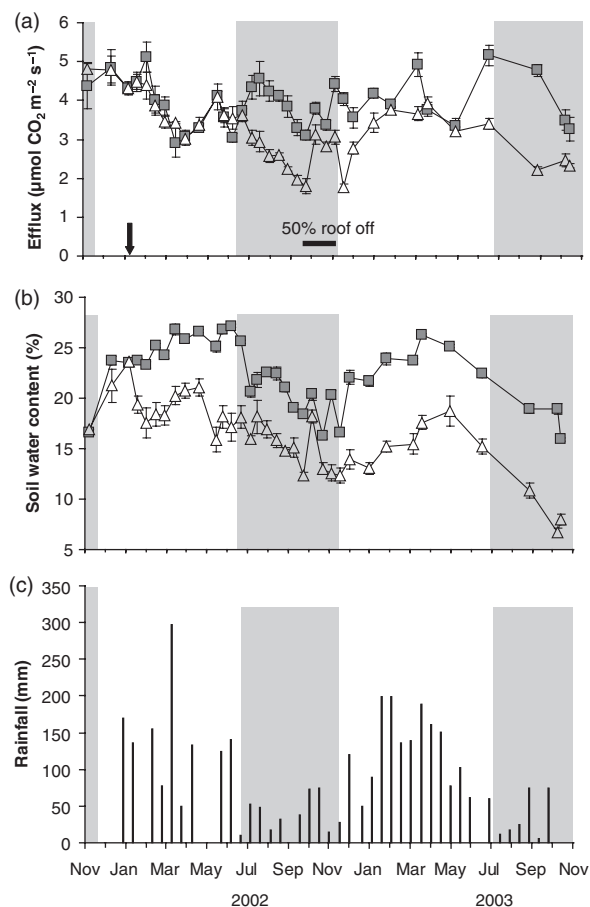
Repeated measures ANOVA was used to examine differences in season and treatment. Significant effects were determined at  $P < 0.05$ . Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine relationships between CO<sub>2</sub> production rates and environmental variables. All statistical analyses were carried out using the STATISTICA 6 software package (StatSoft Inc., Tulsa, OK, USA).

## Results

### Magnitude and seasonality of soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and CO<sub>2</sub> production

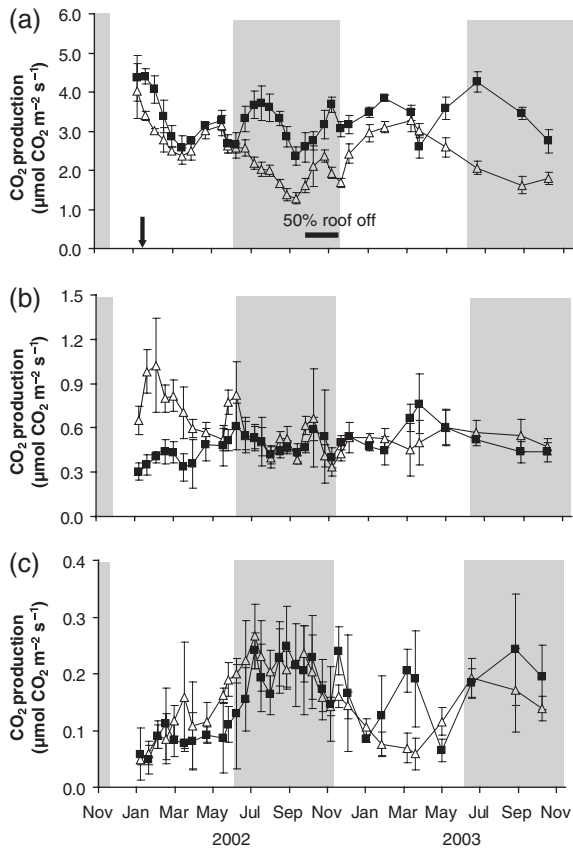
The coefficient of variation of soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux among soil chambers within plots was on average 23% for control plot and 26% for TFE plot, and typically ranged from 13% to 40%. The 2-year average CO<sub>2</sub> efflux rates were higher ( $P < 0.01$ ) for the control plot ( $4.3 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) than the TFE ( $3.2 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ; Fig. 2a). Although the CO<sub>2</sub> efflux of the control plot did not differ significantly between wet season ( $4.2 \pm 0.2 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) and dry season ( $4.5 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ), we detected strong intraseasonal changes in soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux. At the onset of the rainy season, soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux was high, and tended to decrease during the course of the wet season when SWC increased. This was especially clear during the first year. CO<sub>2</sub> efflux in the TFE plot differed significantly ( $P < 0.001$ ) between wet ( $3.7 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) and dry season ( $2.6 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ). During the wet season the TFE did not differ ( $P > 0.05$ ) from the control plot; however, during the dry season CO<sub>2</sub> efflux from the TFE was lower than the control ( $P < 0.01$ ).

The importance of the topsoil (0–0.5 m) for soil CO<sub>2</sub> production ( $P_{\text{CO}_2}$ ) is illustrated by the following numbers: between 71% and 73% of soil CO<sub>2</sub> production in both plots occurred within the top 0.5 m of the soil including the forest litter layer. In the topsoil (0–0.5 m including litter layer) the TFE ( $2.3 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) had a significantly lower CO<sub>2</sub> production than the control plot



**Fig. 2** Temporal variation of (a) soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux, (b) soil water content (SWC) at 0.3 m depth in control (—■—) and throughfall exclusion (TFE) (—△—) plots and (c) biweekly rainfall from November 2001 to November 2003. Each point is the mean ( $\pm$  standard error) of 16 chambers per treatment. Shaded area mark the dry season and white background indicates wet season. The arrow shows when the TFE began.

( $3.1 \pm 0.1 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ; Fig. 3a). At the onset of the dry season in July 2002 CO<sub>2</sub> production at 0–0.5 m in the TFE plot decreased by approximately  $0.8 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ . CO<sub>2</sub> production in this layer in the TFE plot dropped by another  $0.8 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$  between August and September 2002. Production of CO<sub>2</sub> in the subsoil (0.6–3.0 m depth) in both plots was on average  $0.8 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ . During the first 2 months of TFE (February to March 2002) the  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  between 0.6 and 2.0 m depth was significantly higher in the TFE plot as compared with the control plot ( $P < 0.05$ ; Fig. 3b). Higher  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  was also observed in the 2.1–3.0 m layer of the TFE plot in the subsequent months (May to June 2002; Fig. 3c). During the dry season there was no difference in  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  between plots at the subsoil (0.6–3.0 m depth).



**Fig. 3** Temporal variation in carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) production rates from January 2002 to November 2003 in both control (—■—) and TFE (—△—) plot. (a)  $\text{CO}_2$  production of the 0–0.5 m layer; (b)  $\text{CO}_2$  production of the 0.6–2.0 m layer; and (c)  $\text{CO}_2$  production of the 2.1–3.0 m layer. Each point is the average ( $\pm$  standard error) of four profiles. Shaded area mark the dry season and white background indicates wet season. The arrow shows when the throughfall exclusion began.

In the control plot, soil  $\text{CO}_2$  production at 0–0.5 m depth was negatively correlated ( $r = -0.45$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) to 0.6–3.0 m  $\text{CO}_2$  production for the whole experiment, which suggests a compensation of  $\text{CO}_2$  production in deeper soil layers when  $\text{CO}_2$  production decreased because of water stress in the top soil and *vice versa*. The same was not observed for the TFE plot. Nonetheless, the  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  at 2.1–3.0 m depth in the TFE plot did have a negative correlation ( $r = -0.70$ ,  $P < 0.000$ ) with the  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  of the top 0.5 m. The contribution of subsoil (0.6–3.0 m) to the total soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux was higher in the TFE plot (28%) compared with the control plot (17%,  $P < 0.000$ ; Table 2), and it did not differ between seasons and years.

#### Soil $\text{CO}_2$ concentrations

Soil  $\text{CO}_2$  concentration profiles (at 0–3.0 m depth) changed with season in both TFE and control.  $\text{CO}_2$  concentrations

**Table 2** Contribution of the subsoil (0.6–3.0 m depth) to the  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux by seasons for both plots

Relative contribution of deep soil (%)	2002		2003	
	Wet season	Dry season	Wet season	Dry season
Control plot	16 <sup>A</sup>	19 <sup>A</sup>	19	17 <sup>A</sup>
TFE plot	27 <sup>B</sup>	32 <sup>B</sup>	20	31 <sup>B</sup>

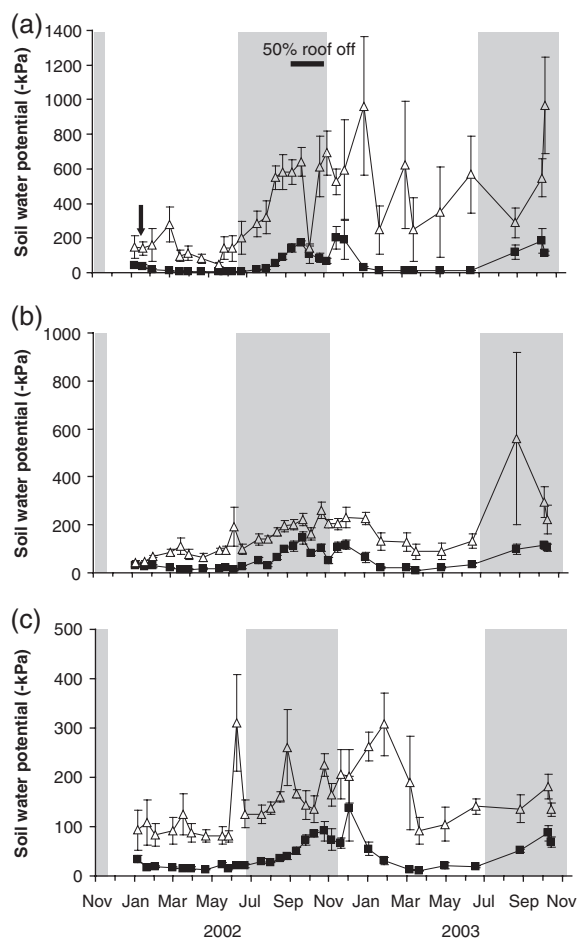
Letters indicate difference between treatments (ANOVA,  $P < 0.05$ ).

TFE, throughfall exclusion;  $\text{CO}_2$ , carbon dioxide.

increased over the course of the wet season and decreased soon after the beginning of the dry season (Fig. 4a and b). Up to 2%  $\text{CO}_2$  were measured in the upper layers (0.05 and 0.10 m depth; Fig. 5) of control plot during periods of high precipitation and high SWCs. This observation corroborates with our observations of soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux, which tends to be lower towards the end of the wet season (Fig. 2a). During the 2-year period the average soil  $\text{CO}_2$  concentration measured in the control plot (3.2%) was higher than the concentration in the TFE (1.0%).  $\text{CO}_2$  concentration at 0–0.5 m depth in the control plot was three times higher than in the TFE plot, while at 0.6–3.0 m depth the concentration of the control was double the concentration in the TFE plot.

#### Environmental parameters

SWC at 0–0.3 m depth differed between plots ( $P < 0.01$ ). The 2-year average for the control plot was  $22.4 \pm 0.6\%$  and for TFE was  $16.2 \pm 0.6\%$  (Fig. 2b) with a calculated corresponding SWP of  $-47 \pm 8$  and  $-201 \pm 29$  kPa, respectively. In the control, SWP reached a maximum of  $-184$  kPa in the dry season and a minimum of  $-8$  kPa in the wet season, while in the TFE plot SWP varied between  $-744$  kPa in the dry and  $-22$  kPa in the wet season. At the onset of the dry season in July 2002, SWP at 0–0.5 m decreased in the TFE plot from  $-200$  to  $-319$  kPa, and between August and September 2002 it further decreased to  $-640$  kPa (Fig. 4a). During the first 2 months of TFE (February to March 2002) the SWP between 0.6 and 2.0 m depth was  $-68$  kPa lower in the TFE plot as compared with the control plot ( $P < 0.05$ , Fig. 4b). SWC was also significantly different for control and TFE at all depths in the soil profile and throughout the year. We did not observe differences in soil temperature at 0.05 m depth between control ( $23.9 \pm 0.2$  °C) and TFE plot ( $24.0 \pm 0.2$  °C), nor at greater depth in the soil profile. Total fine root biomass (<5 mm diameter) in the 0–0.50 m layer recorded in October 2002 was not



**Fig. 4** Temporal variation in soil water potential from January 2002 to November 2003 in both control (—■—) and TFE (—△—) plot. (a) Soil water potential of the 0–0.5 m layer; (b) soil water potential of the 0.6–2.0 m layer; and (c) soil water potential of the 2.1–3.0 m layer. Each point is the average ( $\pm$  standard error) of four profiles. Shaded area mark the dry season and white background indicates wet season. The arrow shows when the throughfall exclusion began.

different between control ( $13.9 \pm 1.3 \text{ Mg ha}^{-1}$ ) and TFE plot ( $15.2 \pm 2.1 \text{ Mg ha}^{-1}$ ).

#### *Effects of environmental parameters on soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and on CO<sub>2</sub> production*

For both control and TFE plot, the relationship between soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and SWP (at 0–30 cm depth) could be described with a parabolic function ( $r^2 = 0.43$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). The shape of the curves from both plots was complementary (Fig. 6a) with the higher water potential from the TFE plot and lower from the control. Taking only the values from the TFE plot, we observed a linear relationship between SWP and CO<sub>2</sub> efflux

( $r^2 = 0.36$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). We did not find an effect of temperature on soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux, but there was a positive covariation between soil temperature and SWP ( $r^2 = 0.07$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ; Fig. 6b).

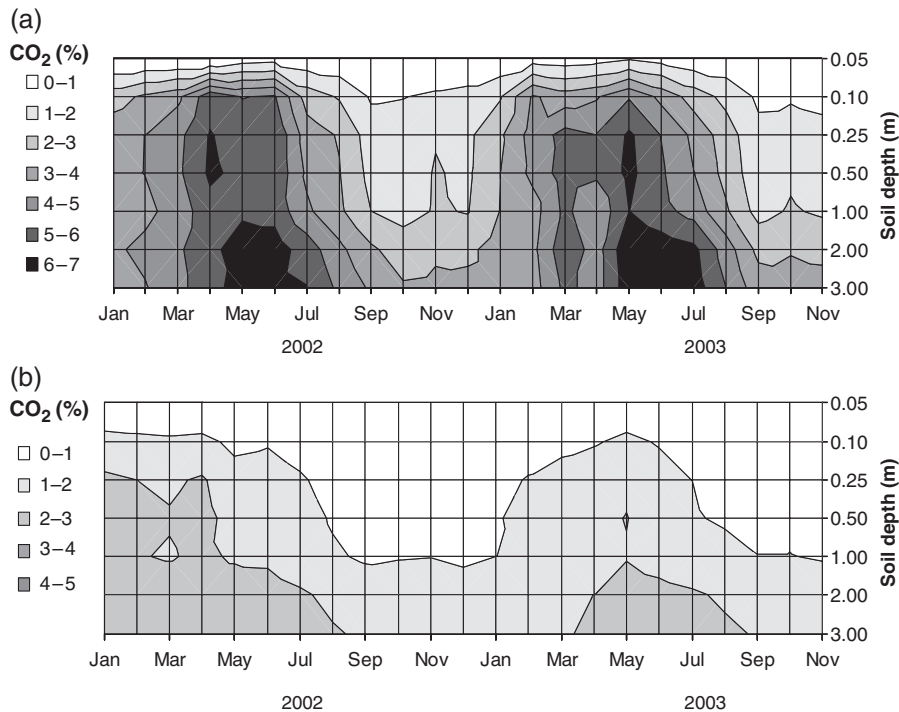
Total litter biomass for both plots had a significant polynomial relationship with soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux ( $r^2 = 0.13$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) which is probably explained by the positive linear relationship between total litter and SWC ( $r^2 = 0.25$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). The reproductive part of the litter ( $\sim 15\%$  of total litter biomass) also had a high correlation with soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and covaried with SWC. A positive linear correlation was found between reproductive part of the litter and SWC for the TFE plot ( $r^2 = 0.35$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), but for the control plot this linear relationship was negative and only marginally significant ( $r^2 = 0.16$ ,  $P = 0.05$ ).

For the control plot at 0–0.5 m and 0.6–1.0 m depth there was no correlation between  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  and any other variable. At 1.1–2.0 m depth soil temperature correlated positively with  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  ( $r = 0.41$ ), while at 2.1–3.0 m depth SWC ( $r = -0.52$ ), soil temperature ( $r = 0.41$ ) and PAR ( $r = 0.46$ ) correlated with  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$ . For the TFE plot at 0–0.5 m depth SWC ( $r = 0.63$ ) and soil temperature ( $r = -0.35$ ) correlated with  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$ . At 0.6–1.0 m SWC ( $r = 0.41$ ), and soil temperature ( $r = -0.44$ ) also had significant correlations with  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$ .  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  rate at 1.1–2.0 m depth did not correlate with any variable but  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  rate at 2.1–3.0 m depth did correlate with SWC ( $r = -0.48$ ) and PAR ( $r = 0.47$ ).

## Discussion

### *Effects of seasonality on soil CO<sub>2</sub> emission and production*

Although on average no difference was detected in soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux between dry and wet season, this masks the strong intraseasonal response that we observed as a result of changes in soil moisture content (Fig. 2). The low soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux at the end of the wet season corresponded with high CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the topsoil (Fig. 5), which suggests that low gas diffusivity may have contributed to the low soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux. A similar pattern in soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux during the wet season in Costa Rica was also explained with reduced gas diffusivity (Schwendenmann *et al.*, 2003). However, as was the case in Costa Rica, this cannot be the only explanation as soil CO<sub>2</sub> production rates (calculated with the gas diffusion model) in the top 0.5 m of our study were also reduced at the end of the wet season (Fig. 3). The high water content at the end of the wet season may have reduced microbial activity and root activity, which may have resulted in lower CO<sub>2</sub> production. Reduced soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux from an Amazonian forest during the wet season has also been attributed to lower solar flux



**Fig. 5** Isopleths of carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) concentration in soil air as a function of soil depth and time in (a) control and (b) TFE plot. Each measurement is the mean of four profiles per plot. TFE, throughfall exclusion.

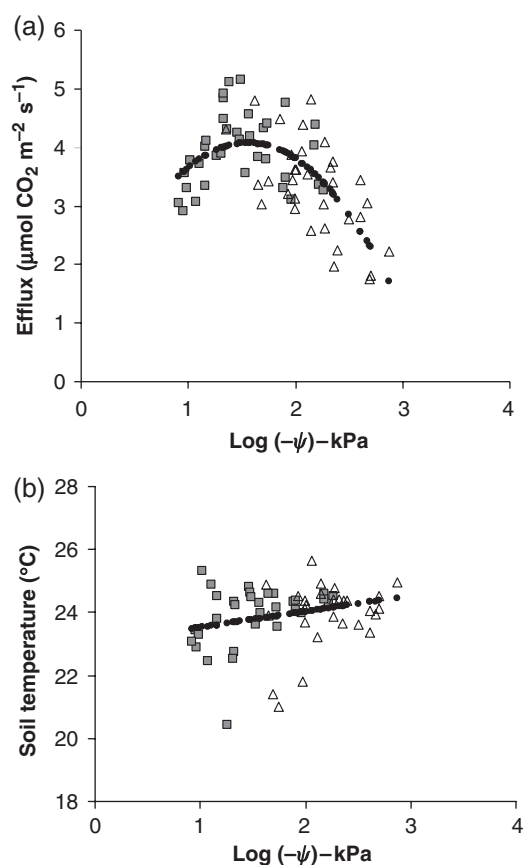
rates, which could affect photosynthesis rates and indirectly also root respiration (Wofsy *et al.*, 1988).

At the beginning of the dry season, the observed increase in soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux corresponded with a strong decrease in  $\text{CO}_2$  concentrations (Figs 2a and 5) in the control plot. A similar increase in  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux has been observed in a study in Paragominas (Davidson *et al.*, 2000) and in Costa Rica (Schwendenmann *et al.*, 2003). The increase may be the result of  $\text{CO}_2$  diffusing out of the soil that had accumulated during the wet season. However, the transition of wet to dry season may also have caused increased root growth as has been observed (e.g. in a Panamanian rainforest; Cavelier *et al.*, 1999). We attribute the decrease in soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux during the dry season to water stress, which may have reduced root respiration, as well as heterotrophic respiration. Such a decrease has been observed in the forest in Paragominas which has also a strong dry season (Davidson *et al.*, 2000) but not in Costa Rica, which has a very weak dry season (Schwendenmann *et al.*, 2003). This analysis is also consistent with the negative correlation between  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  and SWC in control as well as in TFE plot (indicating the high dependency of soil  $\text{CO}_2$  production on SWC) and the positive correlation between  $P_{\text{CO}_2}$  and PAR at depth observed for the control plot (indicating the influence of the solar

radiation on soil  $\text{CO}_2$  production). A strong increase in  $\text{CO}_2$  production after some rainstorms at the beginning of the wet season was probably caused by the effect of rewetting. During rewetting normally a soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux peak occurs which depends on the amount of decomposable SOC (Franzluebbers *et al.*, 2000). Field experiments in temperate forests have shown that this  $\text{CO}_2$  peak occurs within minutes of rewetting and strongly depends on the amount of rain added to the ecosystem (Borken *et al.*, 2003).

#### *Effects of TFE on soil $\text{CO}_2$ efflux and $\text{CO}_2$ production*

During the first year, we were able to distinguish three drying phases in the TFE plot. The first phase started with a reduction in soil  $\text{CO}_2$  production in the 0.0–0.5 m depth interval shortly after throughfall was excluded (Fig. 3a) which was accompanied by an increase in the depth interval 0.5–2.0 m until May 2002 (Fig. 3b) and in the depth interval 2.0–3.0 m depth from March until July 2002 (Fig. 3c). These features can be explained by a translocation of water uptake (and accompanying root activity) to deeper layers in the TFE plot. This is indicated by the corresponding reduction in SWP throughout the depth profiles (Fig. 4). In the depth interval 2.0–3.0 m depth sufficient water was available



**Fig. 6** Relationship between (a) soil water potential at 0.3 m depth and soil carbon dioxide efflux and (b) between soil water potential at 0.3 m depth and soil temperature at 0.05 m depth with data from both control (■) and TFE (△) plot. The regression equation for (a) is  $\text{Efflux} = -1.3664 (\log \psi)^2 + 4.2622 (\log \psi) + 0.7486$  ( $r^2 = 0.43$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and for (b) is  $\text{soil temperature} = 0.5051 (\log \psi) + 23.008$  ( $r^2 = 0.07$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

until the beginning of the dry season, when SWP started to decrease, indicating a more intensive use of the water at this depth. Roots will respond to reduced water availability in the topsoil by searching for water deeper in the soil profile (Joslin *et al.*, 2000). Our interpretation is further supported by the lack of difference between total soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux between TFE and control in this period (Fig. 2a) which suggests that there was not yet enough water stress to affect total microbial activity and/or total root respiration. A similar translocation of root activity to deeper layers has been observed in a Costa Rican rain forest even though the dry season in this forest is very weak (Schwendenmann & Veldkamp, 2006). It should be mentioned that in our methodology to derive CO<sub>2</sub> production in the top 0.5 m, CO<sub>2</sub> production in topsoil and subsoil are not completely independent so these results should be interpreted with care.

The second phase of the drying started at the onset of the dry season (July 2002; Fig. 3a). The observed

reduction in total soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and soil CO<sub>2</sub> production (0–0.5 m) in the TFE plot compared with the control was probably related to a reduction of the activity of soil and litter decomposers, which are sensitive to water stress (Lavine *et al.*, 2004; Li *et al.*, 2005). At this moment a reduction in total root respiration did not yet occur because sap flow measurements from this period in the TFE plot did not show a reduction suggesting that water stress was not yet severe enough to affect photosynthesis (Fisher *et al.*, 2007). Further support comes from an ancillary experiment where we showed that during the wet season about 25% of the soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux originated from the litter layer, a contribution which became negligible during the dry season (Sotta *et al.*, 2006). Bacterial activity declines sharply as water potential falls from –50 to –300 kPa and is negligible at –1500 kPa (Wong & Griffin, 1976). In our experiment, the decrease in soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux in July 2002 was accompanied with a drop in SWP from –200 to –319 kPa. The lag between the start of the TFE and the reduction in soil CO<sub>2</sub> production and CO<sub>2</sub> efflux was probably related to the time necessary for the litter to dry out. In a temperate forest, Salamanca *et al.* (2003) showed that after 12 months of partial TFE, litter mass loss was not different from the control. However, 3 months of total exclusion resulted in lower litter mass loss, lower CO<sub>2</sub> efflux and lower microbial biomass of decomposing forest litter.

The third phase of drying was characterized by a continuing decrease in soil CO<sub>2</sub> production between August and September 2002 which was probably dominated by a water stress-induced decrease in total root respiration when SWP dropped from –319 to –640 kPa. This is supported by a decline in sap flow which was probably caused by the reduced stomatal conductance due to the low soil-to-leaf water supply (Fisher *et al.*, 2007). The reduction in stomatal conductance caused a decrease in estimated gross primary production (GPP) suggesting a reduction in the photosynthetic supply (Fisher *et al.*, 2007). This may also explain the high observed correlation between the reproductive parts of the litter and CO<sub>2</sub> efflux.

#### *Comparison with the drought experiment in Santarém and consequences for drought sensitivity*

In the control plot (no TFE) the annual estimate of soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux in Santarém was about 30% lower (10 Mg C ha<sup>-1</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>, Davidson *et al.*, 2004) than the estimate for Caxiuanã (15 Mg C ha<sup>-1</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>). The higher soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux in the control of Caxiuanã may be related to soil texture as the soil CO<sub>2</sub> efflux from an Oxisol with a clay texture in Caxiuanã was also lower compared with the sand (Sotta *et al.*, 2006). Apart from soil texture,

rooting depth may have contributed to the difference between the two sites [at least 12 m rooting depth in Santarém (Davidson *et al.*, 2004); 10 m rooting depth in Caxiuanã with very low root density under 5 m because of coarse sands (Fisher *et al.*, 2007)]. In contrast to our results, 3 years of TFE in Santarém led to a marginal increase of about 9% ( $11 \text{ Mg C ha}^{-1} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ ) in the annual soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux while in Caxiuanã already the first year of TFE led to a decrease of 22% ( $12 \text{ Mg C ha}^{-1} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ ) in annual soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux. As the most likely explanation for these different reactions to an induced drought, we hypothesize that in the Santarém experiment more available water is stored in the soil profile than in the Caxiuanã experiment. For Caxiuanã, this would result in a shorter time period needed to reach a matrix potential where decomposition and photosynthesis are strongly reduced because of water stress, and it would explain why, in contrast to Santarém, there was a strong reduction in soil  $\text{CO}_2$  efflux in the first year of induced drought. At the moment we can only speculate about the cause of the difference in available water between these sites. Work on soil water retention characteristics from the Brazilian Amazon suggests that clay-rich Oxisols (like in Santarém) do not have higher plant available water (Tomasella & Hodnett, 1998) than the sandier soils at our site (Fisher *et al.*, 2007). However, small differences in soil grain size distribution (e.g. fine sand vs. coarse sand or slight differences in clay + silt in a coarse sand) can have a strong effect on soil water retention characteristics. The coarse sand below 5 m depth at Caxiuanã, in combination with very low root biomass at this depth may have affected plant-available water for the whole soil. Identification of the factor(s) that have caused the differences in water storage between Santarém and Caxiuanã is critical because these factors will determine the resilience of Amazonian forests to prolonged dry periods. If our speculation is correct, the texture in the deep subsoil may turn out to be a critical parameter to determine drought sensitivity of Amazonian forests.

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