

In this MS, Muller's ratchet is studied experimentally in plants with the intention of demonstrating the complexity of the process unlike in the unicellular asexuals in prior studies.

However, I am at a loss to understand how this addresses the question in the title - are you suggesting/hypothesizing that the third demographic condition [bottleneck followed by expansion] is the mechanism? Please clarify. And if this is so, how does this demography work in natural populations (I am probably missing some biology here).

At several places, the text is quite vague – some of this has already been pointed by reviewers but their comments have not been carefully addressed. For e.g., on l. 65, instead of one, you now write 'very small quantity' – how much? You also mention '4' on l. 330. Similarly, on l. 219, you have now changed 100% to nearly 100% - although you have not shown the data but from your data, you can quantify 'nearly'.

l. 20: generation of genetic diversity - What does this mean?

Although you cite the relevant experimental literature on Muller's ratchet, the theoretical contributions are largely ignored. Surely, the work on mutational meltdown is relevant to your work and merits discussion.