Table S1. Preliminary screening of $CdCl_2$ and thyme essential oil (TO) concentrations used for selecting the experimental conditions in *Vicia faba* root meristem cells.

Treatment	Concentration	Mitotic index (% ± SD)	% of control	Interpretation
Control	**–**	**5.92 ± 1.67**	**100**	**Normal mitotic activity**
$CdCl_2$	100 μM	4.57 ± 1.1	77	Mild inhibition of mitosis
$CdCl_2$	150 μM	2.2 ± 0.7	38	Strong inhibition (used in previous studies [1,2])
$CdCl_2$	**175 μM**	**0.54 ± 0.2**	**9**	**Strong but sublethal mitotic inhibition - selected (used in previous studies [3,4])**
$CdCl_2$	200 μM	0.2 ± 0.05	3.4	Severe inhibition; poor meristem/cell condition
TO	0.01%	6.0 ± 1.1	101	No effect on mitosis
TO	**0.03%**	**5.6 ± 1.9**	**94**	**Comparable to control - selected**
TO	0.06%	5.1 ± 1.2	86	Mild inhibition of mitotic activity
$CdCl_2$ + TO	175 μM + 0.01%	1.97 ± 0.5	33	Partial recovery of mitotic activity
$CdCl_2$ + TO	**175 μM + 0.03%**	**3.3 ± 0.68**	**56**	**Strong mitigation of Cd-induced mitotic inhibition - selected**
$CdCl_2$ + TO	175 μM + 0.06%	2.89 ± 0.97	48.7	Mitigation of Cd-induced mitotic inhibition

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