

1 **Tundra vegetation community, not microclimate, controls asynchrony of**  
2 **above and belowground phenology**

3  
4 **Abstract:**

5 The below-ground growing season often extends beyond the above-ground growing season in tundra  
6 ecosystems. However, we do not yet know where and when this occurs and whether these phenological  
7 asynchronies are driven by variation in local vegetation communities or by spatial variation in  
8 microclimate. Here, we combined above- and below-ground plant phenology metrics to compare the  
9 relative timings and magnitudes of leaf and root growth and senescence across microclimates and plant  
10 communities at five sites across the tundra biome. We observed asynchronous growth between above-  
11 ground and below-ground plant tissue, with the below-ground season extending up to 74% beyond the  
12 onset of above-ground leaf senescence. Plant community type, rather than microclimate, was a key  
13 factor controlling the timing, productivity and growth rates of roots, with graminoid roots exhibiting a  
14 distinct ‘pulse’ of growth later into the growing season than shrub roots. Our findings indicate the  
15 potential of vegetation change to influence below-ground carbon storage as roots remain active in  
16 unfrozen soils for longer as the climate warms. Taken together, increased root growth in soils that  
17 remain thawed later into the growing season, in combination with ongoing tundra vegetation change  
18 including increased shrubs and graminoids, can act together to alter below-ground productivity and  
19 carbon cycling in the tundra biome.

20  
21 **Keywords:** *tundra ecology, phenology, root phenology, root dynamics, belowground, carbon cycling,*  
22 *shrubs, graminoids, permafrost thaw, climate change, soils*

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## 94 **Introduction**

95

96 Over the last three decades many tundra plants have exhibited earlier phenology in response to  
97 warmer summer temperatures, and at a rate of change higher than in the planet's more  
98 temperate regions (Høye et al., 2007; Panchen & Gorelick, 2015, 2017; Prevéy et al., 2019;  
99 Wookey et al., 1993). Above-ground (*leaf, shoot, and flower*) phenology varies in timing and  
100 in strength of sensitivity to local abiotic drivers (such as snowmelt and surface temperature)  
101 and by species (Assmann et al., 2019; Bjorkman et al., 2015; Prevéy et al., 2017). In Arctic  
102 Sweden and Western Greenland, the timing of above- and below- ground plant growth has been  
103 observed to be asynchronous, with the below-ground growing season extending up to 50%  
104 longer than the above ground growing season (Blume-Werry, 2021; Blume-Werry et al., 2016;  
105 Liu et al., 2021; Radville et al., 2016; Sullivan et al., 2007). In addition, below-ground root  
106 growth has been found to be relatively unresponsive to experimental manipulations of  
107 temperature and snowmelt timing (Blume-Werry et al., 2017). However, previous studies have  
108 not tested the asynchrony and drivers of above- *versus* below-ground root productivity and the  
109 timing of root growth across tundra sites and throughout tundra landscapes across  
110 microclimates.

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112 Belowground plant biomass represents 24% of overall global average plant biomass (Ma et al.,  
113 2021), yet in much of the tundra biome approximately 80% of vegetative biomass is found  
114 belowground (Mokany et al., 2006). Tundra plants have the shallowest roots among all of the  
115 world's biomes and are adapted to be highly productive despite the high permafrost table and  
116 cold soil conditions (Iversen et al., 2015; Schenk & Jackson, 2002; Shaver & Billings, 1975).  
117 However, the below-ground component of tundra ecosystem dynamics remains a 'black box'  
118 (Iversen et al., 2015). Root growth patterns and phenological dynamics are critically under-  
119 represented in terrestrial ecosystem and carbon models due to scarcity of data and  
120 oversimplification of root-microenvironment relationships (Smithwick et al., 2014; Warren et  
121 al., 2015). Plant roots efficiently convert atmospheric carbon into stable soil carbon (Jones et  
122 al., 2009; Sokol & Bradford, 2019) and are a large source of decomposable litter, much of  
123 which is respired back into the atmosphere (Sullivan et al., 2007; Zona et al., 2022). However,  
124 our understanding of the physiological coupling of above- and below-ground phenology and  
125 the abiotic drivers of tundra root growth remain limited, hampering our ability to accurately  
126 model tundra ecosystem carbon cycling in tandem with climate warming (Smithwick et al.,  
127 2014; Warren et al., 2015).

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129 Plant productivity, aboveground biomass, and shrub and graminoid abundance are increasing  
130 across multiple Arctic and alpine tundra field sites in concert with climate warming (Berner &  
131 Goetz, 2022; Bhatt et al., 2013; Elmendorf et al., 2012; Forbes et al., 2010, 2010; Myers-Smith  
132 et al., 2011, 2020). Much of this change is specifically attributed to the encroachment and  
133 subsequent range expansion of woody shrubs, including increases in both height and breadth  
134 of individual shrubs (Forbes et al., 2010; García Criado et al., 2020; Martin et al., 2017; Naito  
135 & Cairns, 2011; Tape et al., 2006). Graminoid species are also expected to increase in  
136 abundance in response to climate change (Bjorkman et al., 2020; Elmendorf et al., 2012) and  
137 through local phenomena such as flooding or water-logging via permafrost thaw (Heijmans et  
138 al., 2022). While there is ample evidence of regional- and local-scale tundra ecosystem change  
139 based on long-term observations of above-ground tundra vegetation, below-ground biomass  
140 and phenology change is much more challenging to track and thus rarely reported (Iversen et  
141 al., 2015).

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143 Different plant functional types have different root growth strategies, and thus any future  
144 vegetation range shifts may have important ecological consequences in tundra soils. The ways  
145 in which roots grow, acquire and use nutrients and interact with biotic stimuli vary considerably  
146 between plant functional types in tundra soils (de Kroon et al., 2012). For example, shrubs  
147 often root earlier in summer and in shallower soils while graminoids often root later in summer  
148 and in deeper soils near the thaw front (Keuper et al., 2017; McKane et al., 2002; Schwieger et  
149 al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2007). Increased root production in warmer soils could provide more  
150 efficient mechanisms of stable sequestration of atmospheric carbon (i.e., Sokol & Bradford,  
151 2019), but could also lead to greater long term loss in soil organic carbon through increased  
152 decomposition of root litter particularly for sedge species with annual root turnover (i.e.,  
153 Sullivan et al., 2007). Long-term vegetation changes in response to a warming climate may  
154 also be influenced by competitive advantages belowground, for example species able to forage  
155 deeper and for longer in permafrost soils may benefit as permafrost soils thaw (Hewitt et al.,  
156 2019; Pedersen et al., 2020)21/06/2024 13:17:00, while the expansion of some species may be  
157 promoted by the climate-enhanced development of ectomycorrhizal networks (Deslippe et al.,  
158 2011). Quantifying rooting phenology strategies across microclimates and plant communities  
159 will allow us to predict future changes in belowground growth patterns and changes in carbon  
160 and nutrient cycling dynamics in warming tundra ecosystems (Smithwick et al., 2014; Warren  
161 et al., 2015).

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Above-ground productivity and phenology are influenced by both macro- and micro-environmental variables, including snowmelt timing and soil, surface, and air temperatures (Assmann et al., 2019; Høye et al., 2007; Panchen & Gorelick., 2015; Wookey et al., 1993), yet these same drivers may have less influence below-ground (Abramoff & Finzi, 2016; Liu et al., 2021). Experimental warming studies at tundra sites have indicated that the duration of root growing seasons for some species are largely unresponsive to factors that influence aboveground phenology, such as snowmelt timing or warming (Möhl et al., 2022). However, while the overall length of the belowground growing season may not change, the timing of peak root growth may be shifted, for example to later in deeper and warmer soils as permafrost thaws (Blume-Werry et al. 2019). Thus, root phenology may be influenced to some degree by late-season timings of permafrost thaw, in particular for those species able to forage deeper to access the active layer thaw front (Blume-Werry et al., 2019; Hewitt et al., 2019; Salmon et al., 2018). Variation in temperature across heterogeneous landscapes in a space-for-time setup could inform our understanding of change over time with warming (Ma et al., 2022; Radville et al., 2018; Schwieger et al., 2018).

Abiotic (air temperature and thaw depth) and biotic (nutrient hormone allocation) controls may differ between above- and below-ground plant tissue (Abramoff & Finzi 2015, Liu et al. 2021, Ma et al 2022). However, we lack paired above- and below-ground phenology observations across vegetations types and local temperature variation to test the extent to which these drivers are decoupled. Here, we combined leaf phenology observations with root growth metrics collected across five tundra sites and 39 individual plots to compare the relative timings of plant tissue growth and senescence in both the above- and below-ground environment. We analysed root growth patterns across locally-varied temperature gradients to determine how root growth varies across warmer versus colder belowground conditions across the growing season. We also investigated root growth dynamics across graminoid- *versus* shrub-dominated plant communities to quantify different root phenological strategies between two dominant tundra plant community types. Analysing different root and leaf phenology across microclimates provides a useful space-for-time comparison whereby warmer areas, in comparison to cooler areas, act as a natural proxy for future climate warming. Analysing root growth patterns between community types will inform how tundra vegetation change could influence below-ground root productivity, dynamics and ultimately carbon cycling (Bjorkman et al., 2020; Heijmans et al., 2022; Myers-Smith et al., 2011; Niittynen et al., 2020).

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In this study, we address the following research questions:

**RQ1. (Above- and below-ground): Is there above- versus below-ground asynchrony in phenology, and how does it vary across microclimates and community types?** Site-specific studies indicate that the below-ground growth of tundra plants extends beyond the period of growth above ground (Blume-Werry, 2021; Blume-Werry et al., 2016; Radville et al., 2016). Therefore, we predict that root growth will continue accumulate as the leaf tissue above-ground is senescing and that this asynchrony will be greater in warmer microclimates versus colder microclimates. At sites with permafrost, if deeper active layers increase the overall volume of available soil in which roots can grow throughout the growing season, root growth could be greater in warmer microclimates. There may be a lag between above-ground phenology and below-ground phenology because soil temperatures lag behind air temperatures and thaw progressively across the summer, which may influence the timing of root production and foraging. If asynchrony is detected but is not explained by local temperature variation, plant community type could be the primary driver, particularly if there is clear differentiation in rooting strategy between plant functional types.

**RQ2. (Below-ground only): Is root productivity higher and the period root growth longer in warmer versus cooler parts of the landscape?** Microclimates influence the growth of tundra plants, with greater productivity in warmer versus colder microclimates (e.g., Blume-Werry, 2021; Liu et al., 2021). Thus, we predict that there will be higher fine root production in the warmer versus cooler parts of the landscape, leading to higher biomass in the warmer plots within each site (e.g., Sullivan et al., 2007). We expect that root growth will extend for longer in the warmer versus cooler plots within each site.

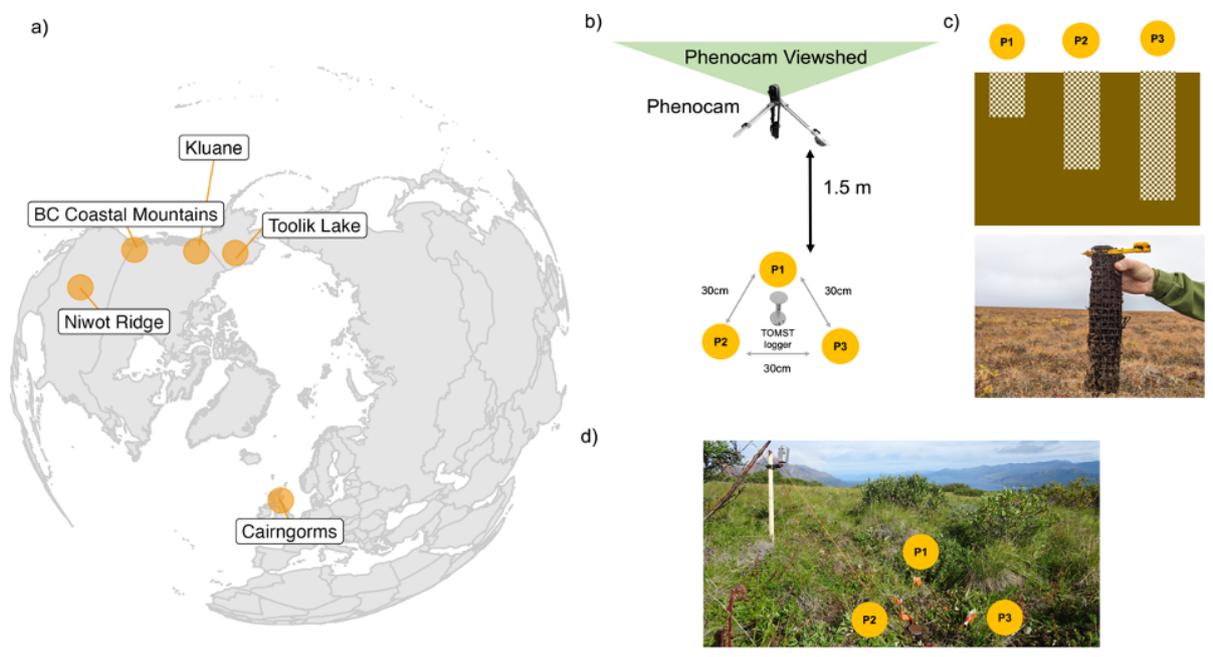
**RQ3. (Below-ground only): How does plant community type control below-ground plant biomass and phenology?** Different plant functional types have different root growth strategies and can exhibit differentiating timing of root foraging to acquire water and nutrients from permafrost soils (e.g., de Kroon et al., 2012; Pedersen et al., 2020). For this reason, we predict that graminoid-dominated communities will exhibit root growth later in the season than shrub-dominated communities as they are deeper-rooting and may grow later in the season to access nutrients released later in the summer by thawing permafrost.

230 **Methods**

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232 **Site Selection**

233 We studied five tundra biome sites including Arctic tundra (Toolik Lake, Alaska, USA),  
234 Subarctic alpine tundra (Kluane Lake, Yukon, Canada) and high latitude alpine tundra (BC  
235 Coastal Mountains, BC, Canada; Niwot Ridge, Colorado, USA; Cairngorms Mountains,  
236 Scotland, UK). These sites span a wide geographical and climatological range (**Fig. 1; Table**  
237 **S1**). Each site also spans a range of microenvironmental gradients and includes a combination  
238 of graminoid-dominated, shrub-dominated and mixed-species communities, which we  
239 classified using site-specific metadata, *in-situ* observations, and phenocam observations (**Table**  
240 **S1**). Each site was outfitted with in-growth cores with a paired TOMST environmental logger,  
241 and all sites had phenocams installed.  
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245 **Figure 1.** Our study includes five sites and subplots containing paired phenocams and in-  
246 growth cores. a) Polar projection map of the five Arctic, subarctic and alpine tundra sites  
247 included in this study. b) Birds-eye-view schematic of the subplots, showing the location of in-  
248 growth cores P1, P2 and P2 in relation to the phenocam and the TOMST microclimate logger.  
249 c) Cross-section schematic of the differential in-growth core depths in the soil profile at sites  
250 with permafrost (sites without permafrost had the same depth for all cores). Photograph of a  
251 P3 core removed from Toolik Lake in 2022 (Image Credit: Ruby An). d) Photograph of Kluane

252 Subplot 8 with a phenocam pointed northwards, alongside three buried in-growth cores in  
253 summer 2021 (Image Credit: Madeleine Anderson).

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### 255 ***In-Growth Core Construction***

256 The observation tools most commonly used in below-ground phenology studies  
257 (minirhizotrons) cannot be easily installed in Arctic and alpine tundra dominated by permafrost  
258 as the tubes can be pushed upwards due to freeze-thaw dynamics, and therefore we elected to  
259 use an in-growth soil core field approach. We constructed in-growth peat cores with a 7 cm  
260 diameter using plastic meshing (rigid garden netting or industrial mesh tubing) with mesh holes  
261 no wider than 1 cm x 1 cm diameter. Each core was filled with sterilised milled peat from  
262 garden centres local to the study sites (**Table S1**). We packed the milled peat into the in-growth  
263 cores tightly to achieve similar densities between cores. At sites with permafrost (**Table S1**),  
264 in each cluster of three cores (hereafter, *plot*), the cores were divided into lengths of 10 cm  
265 (Phenology 1, or 'P1'), 20 cm (Phenology 2, or 'P2'), 30 cm (Phenology 3, or 'P3'). These  
266 different core lengths accounted for the differing active layer depths across the growing season  
267 in the summer of core removal such that the P1 cores could be removed early in the growing  
268 season when the permafrost active layer was theoretically closer to the surface. At sites without  
269 permafrost (**Table S1**), all cores had the same depth based on the soil depth at each site  
270 (between 15-20 cm). We recorded the weight and length of the cores at each site prior to  
271 deployment in the field.

272

### 273 ***Core Installation***

274 At each site in the summers of 2021 and 2022, we separated the cores into clusters (one cluster  
275 = one x P1, one x P2, one x P3) and chose site locations whereby a minimum of five plots (15  
276 cores in total) were distributed along environmental gradients specific to those sites, including  
277 soil moisture gradients, shrub versus graminoid-dominated communities, and elevational  
278 gradients. We recorded the geographic location of each site/plot using equipment available to  
279 contributors across sites. The core installation process took place at the end of the growing  
280 season at all sites to ensure limited root growth in the year of installation.

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282 At each plot, the three cores were buried 30 cm away from one another in a triangular  
283 arrangement (see **Fig. 1**). Using a soil auger, we took a core of up to 30 cm depth (depending  
284 on the phenology classification of the core; i.e., P3) and recorded from this core the depth (cm)  
285 from the top of the core from at which the organic material transitions to a sandy or silty layer,

286 a qualitative description of the soil type and density (e.g., ‘loose loamy’ or ‘dense clay’), and  
287 the depth (cm) from the top of the core of maximum rooting. We gently placed the peat-filled  
288 in-growth cores into the boreholes, making sure the base of the core reached the bottom of the  
289 hole and that there was no mesh extending upwards from the surface of the hole.

290

291 At each plot, we labelled the cores with a unique ID on a small flag or stake. In the centre of  
292 each plot, we installed microclimate loggers (**Table S1**) which logged temperature at -6, +2  
293 and +15 cm from the surface (TMS) or 0 cm from the surface (HOBO Pendant) over the course  
294 of the experiment. For each of the sites, we reclassified the raw surface temperature data into  
295 quantiles (hereafter ‘temperature quantiles’) to generate even and comparable groupings of the  
296 relative coldest-Q1, cool-Q2, warm-Q3, and warmest-Q4 areas across the landscape at each  
297 site (**Table S1**). We intended initially to use soil temperature (-6 cm) data to better represent  
298 belowground climate conditions. However, the soil temperature readings were corrupted at  
299 some plots in two (Toolik Lake, Niwot Ridge) of the five sites, so we used July and August  
300 surface temperature (+2 cm) for consistency across sites and microclimate datasets.

301

### 302 ***Phenocam Installation***

303 At the sites (**Fig. 1, Table S1**), we installed time lapse cameras (Moultrie Wingscape  
304 TimelapseCam Pro) at the location of each plot where possible. We affixed the phenocams to  
305 sturdy metal tripods at a height of 1 m above the ground. The phenocams pointed northwards  
306 to avoid direct sunlight and prevent glare, allowing the cameras to capture snow melt timing  
307 and the landscape greenness over the course of the growing season. We set the cameras to  
308 infinite focus and set to capture one photograph per hour or four photographs per day at the  
309 highest pixel resolution possible for each camera. We installed these phenocams in 2021 when  
310 burying the cores, programmed them to collect imagery over the winter and following summer,  
311 and downloaded the data at the end of the growing season once the last core (P3) had been  
312 removed from each plot.

313

### 314 ***Core Removal***

315 The summer following core installation (i.e., 2022 when cores were installed in 2021), we  
316 removed the cores from the plots at staged intervals. We collected the P1 cores at the beginning  
317 of the growing season (shortly after snowmelt), the P2 cores at the middle of the growing  
318 season (corresponding with peak aboveground productivity), and the P3 cores at the end of the  
319 growing season (before the return of snow). Due to logistical constraints and site-specific

320 productivity differences, the removal dates varied across sites but were consistent within sites.  
321 During the 2022 field season, we used soil moisture probes to once again record the soil  
322 moisture content (%) at each of the plots. In addition, the temperature logger data and  
323 phenocam images were downloaded at the end of the growing season. Upon removal, the cores  
324 were immediately frozen to prevent root rot, and at the end of the growing season all cores  
325 were shipped to the University of Edinburgh for laboratory analysis.

326

### 327 *Laboratory Analysis*

328 After thawing each of the frozen cores for 24 hours in a refrigerator, we sub-sectioned each  
329 core into distinct depth increments from surface to base (0-5 cm, 5-15 cm, 15-25 cm and 25-  
330 30 cm as appropriate for overall length). We recorded the full weight of each core, and the full  
331 weight of each of these subsections. In addition, we recorded the weight of a wet soil subsample  
332 from the 0-5 cm increment of each core before drying them in an oven at 60°C for 72 hours,  
333 and then recording the weight of the dried subsamples. We used the difference between these  
334 two weights to calculate the bulk densities of each of the depth increments, whereby;

335

### 336 *Equation 1a*

337

$$BD_{wet} = W / V$$

338

339  $BD_{wet}$  = wet weight bulk density

340  $W$  = wet weight of ingrowth core depth increment

341  $V$  = cylindrical volume of ingrowth core depth increment

342

### 343 *Equation 1b*

344

$$BD_{dry} = BD_{wet} * (W_{ds} / W_{ws})$$

345

346  $BD_{dry}$  = dry weight bulk density

347  $W_{ds}$  = dry weight of soil subsample

348  $W_{ws}$  = wet weight of soil subsample

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350 For each depth increment, we used tweezers to extract all of the roots within the soil, and used  
351 distilled water to clean off the excess peat. We separated the roots into petri-dishes based on

352 morphological and colour differences. Once cleaned and separated by group and depth  
353 increment, we scanned each of the root groups using an Epson Perfection V850 scanner with  
354 an inbuilt wet tray, in 16-bit grayscale and using an 800 dpi resolution. After scanning each  
355 root type by depth increment, we then placed the roots in metal tins and dried them in an oven  
356 at 60°C for 72 hours, and then recorded the weight using a fine scale.

357

358 We summed the overall root biomass for each depth increment, before calculating root biomass  
359 density (i.e., root biomass per unit soil volume  $\text{g cm}^{-3}$ , see: Freschet et al., 2021). We calculated  
360 a daily root growth rate over the course of the growing season for each plot using the following  
361 equation:

362

363 **Equation 2**

364 
$$R = \frac{P3_{rd} - P1_{rd}}{P3_{day} - P1_{day}}$$

365

366  $R$  = Root biomass growth rate

367  $P3_{rd}$  = Root biomass per unit of dry bulk density for P3 ingrowth core

368  $P1_{rd}$  = Root biomass per unit of dry bulk density for P1 ingrowth core

369  $P3_{day}$  = Day of year of P3 in – growth core removal

370  $P1_{day}$  = Day of year of P1 in – growth core removal

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372 Cores varied in length across sites due to site-specific differences (i.e., soil quality, depth,  
373 presence or absence of permafrost) and in timing of extraction (due to the timing of site-specific  
374 permafrost thaw, snow melt and snow return). To examine the differences between whole-core  
375 root biomass versus distinct sections of the soil depth profile, we plotted average root density  
376 for the full cores to compare against the average root density from only the top 5 cm of the  
377 cores (**Fig. S2**) and ran alternate versions of the statistical analysis using data from just the top  
378 0-5 depth increments of each of the cores (**Table S3**). In this article, we present both sets of  
379 results, but focus on the whole-core data because these data better capture the full rooting depth  
380 of each sample (see: Freschet et al., 2021).

381

382 **Phenocam Analysis**

383 We sequentially manually browsed phenocam images for each plot and recorded the day-of-  
384 year for the first occurrence of the following phenophases: plants first visible through snow,

385 90% snow melted, first 100% snow-free day, first green leaf, 50% leaves green, 100% leaves  
 386 green, first senesced leaf, 50% leaves senesced, 100% leaves senesced, first end-season snow  
 387 return, 50% end-season snow cover, 100% end-season snow cover. We made these  
 388 observations at the community level (i.e., the across the entire viewshed of the phenocam)  
 389 instead of recording the phenophases of individual plants of select species to ensure consistency  
 390 of approach across all sites, and to generate proxies of greenness that we could use to interpret  
 391 above-ground productivity and the timing of both green-up and senescence.

392

393 We used a combination of phenocam imagery, metadata from collaborators, and scanned root  
 394 images to qualitatively classify the plots into graminoid-dominated, shrub-dominated, or  
 395 mixed-species community groupings. Finally, we calculated a “synchrony metric” for each  
 396 core cluster to estimate the percentage of total root growth that had occurred per plot between  
 397 the first in-growth core removal date (P1) and the date of peak aboveground growth for each  
 398 plot, relative to the maximum root growth from stage P3. This metric represents a coarse  
 399 estimate of root growth accumulation by the time of peak above-ground greenness relative to  
 400 the total root accumulation observed in the P3 cores (see **Fig. S1**). Therefore, the metric is more  
 401 comparable within sites (i.e., all of the P1 and P3 removal dates are consistent at each location),  
 402 but is not as comparable across sites (i.e., P1 and P3 removal dates will vary between, for  
 403 example, Toolik Lake and Niwot Ridge).

404

405 **Equation 3:**

$$406 \quad S = (((PG_{day} - P1_{day}) * R) / P3_{rd}) * 100$$

407

408  $S = Synchrony\ Metric = \% \text{ Root Growth at date of } 100\% \text{ Greening}$

409  $PG_{day} = \text{Day of year of peak aboveground growth (i.e. } 100\% \text{ living leaves in plot green)}$

410  $P1_{day} = \text{Day of year of P1 in - growth core removal}$

411  $P3_{rd} = \text{Root biomass per unit of dry bulk density for P3 ingrowth core}$

412  $R = \text{Root biomass growth rate (accounting for P1 to P3 growth rate)}$

413

414 We also calculated specific P1-P2 and P2-P3 root growth rates to distinguish any accelerations  
 415 between time periods. However, due to the differential timing of P2 removals across sites (i.e.,  
 416 the removals were not always exactly mid-season) we chose not to include these in any  
 417 statistical analyses, but have instead visualised the results in **Figure S4**.

418

### 419 *Statistical Analysis*

420 We used Bayesian linear models to run three sets of regression analysis: 1) one set examining  
421 the variation of root biomass across microclimates and plant communities, 2) one set examining  
422 the variation in root growth rates across microclimates and plant communities, and 3) one set  
423 examining the variation of our derived synchrony metric across microclimates and plant  
424 communities. We square-root transformed the root biomass density data to fit a gaussian  
425 distribution. For each model we included ‘community type’ and ‘microclimate quantile’ as  
426 categorical fixed effects, and for the biomass model alone we included the removal stage (P1,  
427 P2, P3) as a categorical fixed effect to examine the differences in root biomass development  
428 across in-growth core removal intervals. Microclimate and community type do not co-vary  
429 strongly at these sites (**Fig. S3**).

430

431 To account for differences in environmental characteristics and in-growth core materials used  
432 between sites, we included “site” as a random intercept term. We intended to include random  
433 slopes in the model design to allow for different relationships between root phenology variables  
434 and the fixed effects, but ultimately removed this model structure due to lack of model  
435 convergence. We used the ‘brms’ package (Bürkner, 2017) in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team,  
436 2013) and fitted each of the models with weakly informative priors (half Student-t priors with  
437 three degrees of freedom), with three chains of 4000 iterations each and a warmup of 1000  
438 iterations. To assess model convergence, we examined Bayesian trace plots and posterior  
439 predictive fits, and checked to ensure that  $R_{\text{hat}}$  values (ratio of effective sample size to overall  
440 number of iterations) were all close to 1.00.

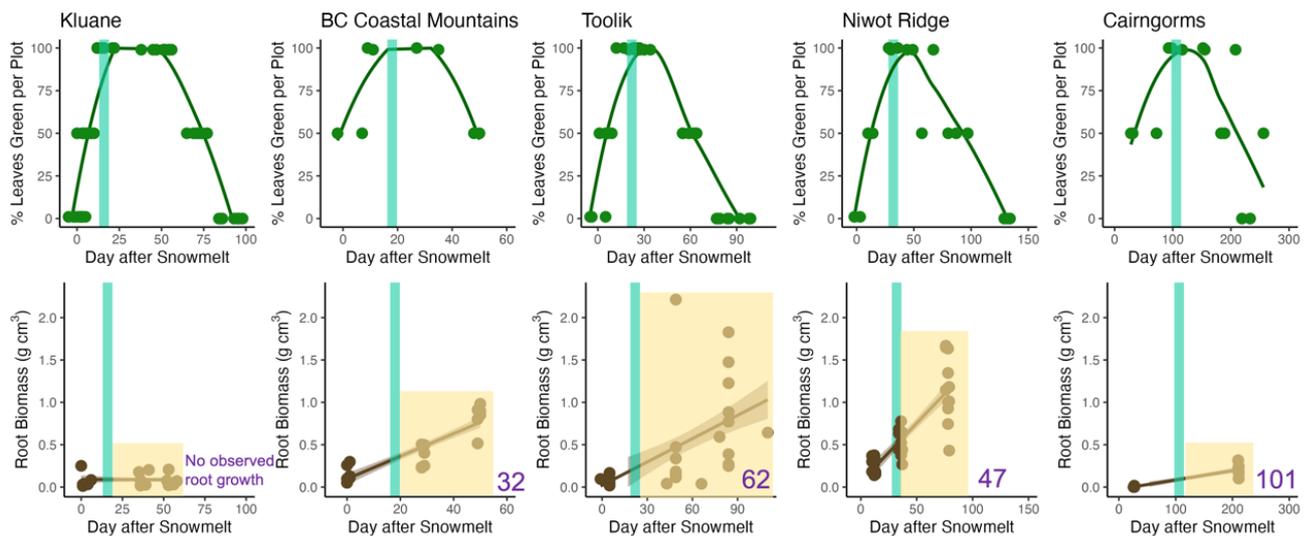
441

### 442 **Results**

443

444 We found that root growth continued for at least 56 days (on average) after the date of peak  
445 above-ground productivity at each site (**Fig. 2**). These root growth timings are under-estimates,  
446 as we did not collect any additional belowground data before the start, and beyond the end of  
447 our respective field expeditions. Calculated as the period of time relative to the first date of  
448 above-ground leaf yellowing, root biomass continued to increase for at least 62 days (or 74%)  
449 after the onset of above-ground senescence at Toolik Lake, 32 days (64%) in the BC coastal  
450 mountains, 60 days (47%) at Niwot Ridge, and 101 days (48%) in the Cairngorms. Meanwhile

451 there was no detectable increase in root biomass over time at Kluane Lake, potentially due to  
 452 the scarcity of core extractions during the above-ground senescence period (**Fig. 2**). Across  
 453 sites, we did not find any difference between above- and below-ground synchrony across local  
 454 temperature variation and plant communities (**Table S2**). While there were no significant  
 455 differences in synchrony between graminoid-dominated and shrub-dominated communities,  
 456 we found that the proportion of total root biomass at the time of peak above-ground greenness  
 457 was 47% higher for graminoid relative to mixed-species communities ( $-5.49 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ , CI:  $-9.51$   
 458 to  $-1.42$ ).



x = Number of days of observed root growth after the date of peak aboveground growth

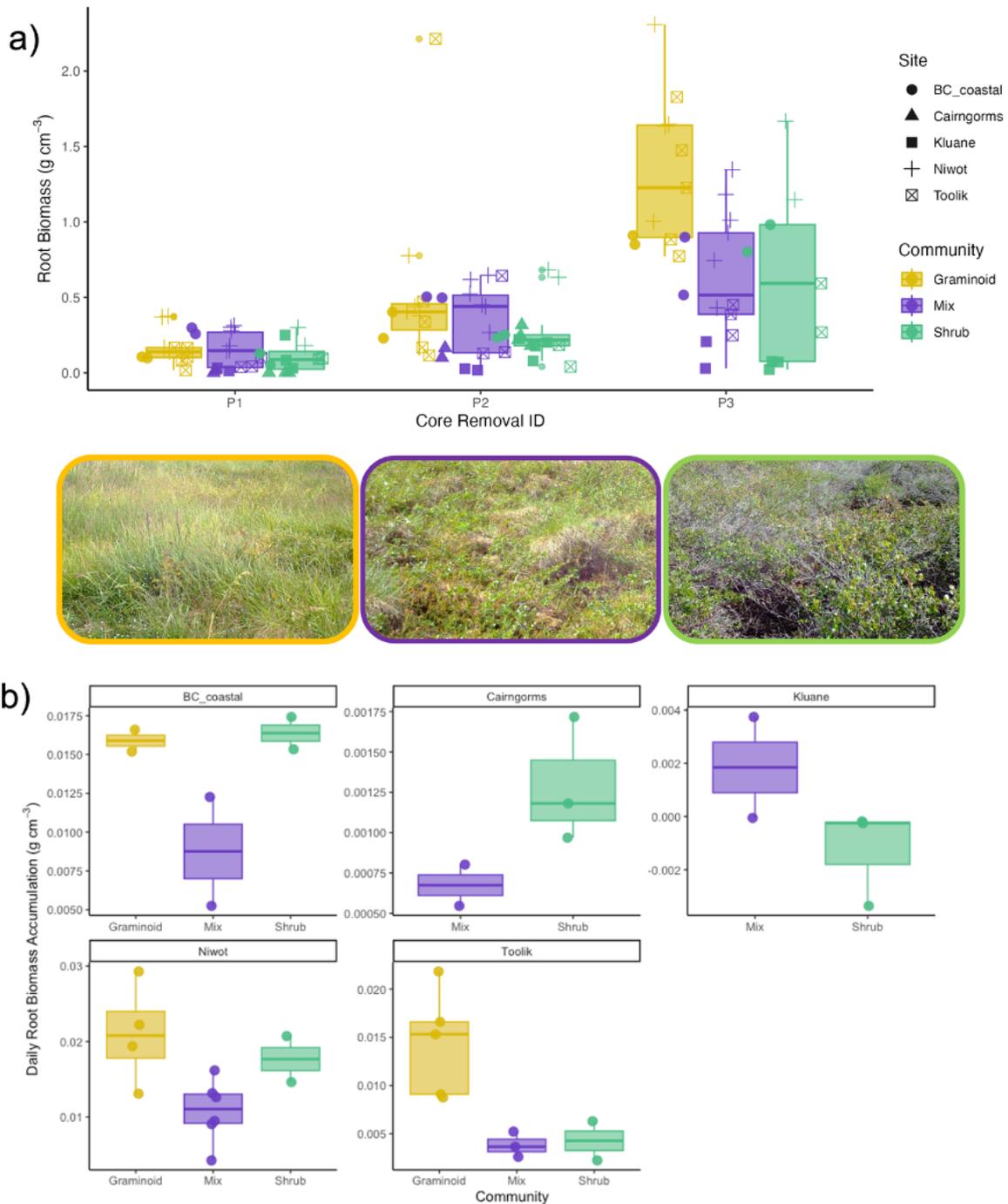
459  
 460 **Figure 2.** Root growth continues after above-ground plant tissues begin to senesce across all  
 461 but one site. Top panel represents phenocam-derived greening curves for each site, with each  
 462 green point representing the date after 100% snowmelt per plot that a recorded phenophase  
 463 occurred (bud burst, 50% green leaves, 100% green leaves, first yellow leaf, 50% yellow  
 464 leaves, and 100% yellow leaves). Brown points in the bottom panel represent the root biomass  
 465 per  $\text{g cm}^{-3}$  of dry bulk soil density averaged across each in-growth core corresponding to their  
 466 extraction from the experiment and the timing of that extraction in relation to the date of 100%  
 467 snowmelt per plot. Teal vertical lines represent the site-averaged dates of peak aboveground  
 468 growth, or the mean ‘day after snowmelt’ that plots reached 100% green leaves. Yellow  
 469 coloured backgrounds represent senescence (yellow). Sites are ordered here by time taken to  
 470 achieve full green-up, from fastest (Kluane) to slowest (Cairngorms). Purple numeric labels on  
 471 the bottom panel indicate the number of days of observed root growth beyond the date of peak  
 472 aboveground productivity, excluded for Kluane because there was no observed biomass

473 increase over time at this site. Yellow shading represents the length and magnitude of root  
474 growth after above-ground growth peaks.

475

476 Root biomass varied significantly by community type across the sites (**Fig. 3, Fig. S2a, Table**  
477 **S2**). We found that in-growth cores from graminoid-dominated communities had 41% higher  
478 root biomass than shrub-dominated communities (categorical difference of  $0.12 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ , CI:  
479  $0.03$  to  $0.24$ ) and 36% higher biomass than mixed-species communities (categorical difference  
480 of  $0.14 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ , CI:  $-0.02$  to  $-0.01$ ). Likewise, daily root growth rates (i.e., rate of daily root  
481 growth as calculated between first and last core harvest; **Table S2b**; see **Equation 2**) were  
482 faster in graminoid, relative to mixed and shrub dominated plant communities (**Fig. 3, Fig. S4,**  
483 **Table S2**), with in-growth cores installed in graminoid-dominated plots exhibiting daily root  
484 growth rates 51% faster than shrub-dominated communities (shrub slope:  $-0.01 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$  per day,  
485 CI:  $-0.01$  to  $-0.002$ ), and 61% faster than mixed-species communities (mixed slope:  $-0.01 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$   
486 per day, CI:  $-0.01$  to  $-0.004$ ).

487



488

489 **Figure 3.** (a) Root biomass accumulation was greater for graminoid-dominated relative to  
 490 shrub-dominated plots. Error bars represent the distributions of the root biomass per bulk  
 491 density (g cm<sup>-3</sup>) for each stage of removal (P1, P2 or P3) across the three community types:  
 492 graminoid-dominated, mixture of graminoid and shrub, shrub-dominated. Points represent the  
 493 root biomass per g cm<sup>-3</sup> of dry bulk soil density averaged across each in-growth core. Photos  
 494 are select screenshots from 9th July 2021 across three Toolik Lake plots representing the  
 495 corresponding community types (Image Credits: Ruby An). (b) Root growth rates were  
 496 generally faster at the graminoid-dominated plots than the shrub-dominated or mixed-species

497 plots. Error bars represent the distributions of the daily root biomass accumulation ( $\text{g cm}^{-3}$ )  
498 across the summer across the three community types. Points represent the daily root biomass  
499 accumulation per  $\text{g cm}^{-3}$  of dry bulk soil density averaged across each in-growth core cluster.

500

501 Contrary to our predictions, root biomass did not vary across microclimate (**Fig. 4, Table S2a**).

502 The difference in root biomass per bulk dry soil density between the coldest and warmest

503 microclimate groupings was  $-0.001 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$  ( $-0.015$  to  $0.014$ ). Similarly, daily root growth rates

504 (i.e., daily rate of root growth as calculated between first and last core harvest) across the

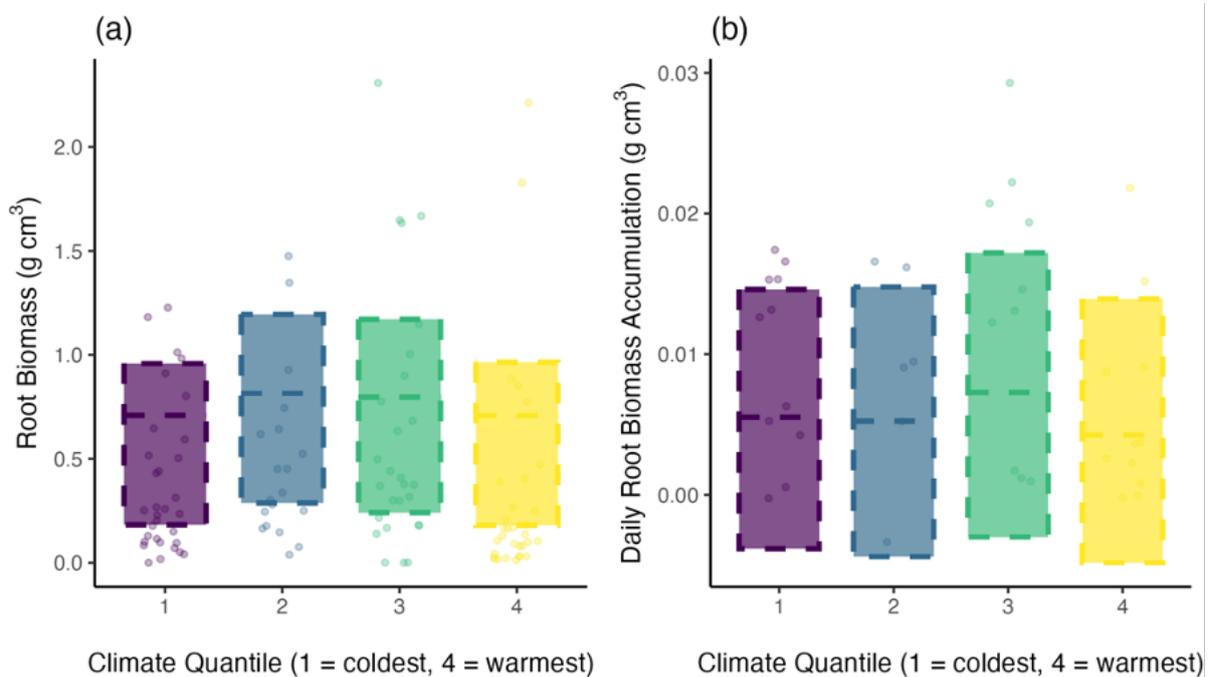
505 growing season were not significantly different between across surface temperature quantiles

506 (**Table S2b**). For example, the difference in root growth rate per day between the coldest and

507 warming quantile groupings was  $-0.0012 \text{ g cm}^{-3} \text{ day}^{-1}$  ( $-0.0061$  to  $0.0035$ ). For all model

508 designs, the top 5cm only model results revealed the same trends (**Table S3**).

509



510

511

512 **Figure 4.** Root biomass allocation and root growth rates did not correspond with local surface

513 temperature. Error bars in (a) represent the modelled distributions (Table S2a) of the root

514 biomass / bulk density ( $\text{g cm}^{-3}$ ) for the final stage of removal (P3), plotted across summer

515 surface temperature microclimate quantile groups. Error bars in (b) represent the modelled

516 distributions (Table S2b) of the daily root growth rates between P3 and P1, plotted across

517 summer surface temperature microclimate quantile groups. Points represent the root biomass

518 per  $\text{g cm}^{-3}$  of dry bulk soil density averaged across each in-growth core.

## 519 **Discussion**

520

### 521 *Synthesis*

522 As predicted, we found that above-ground leaf phenology and below-ground root phenology  
523 was asynchronous across all sites, with root growth continuing long after the timing above-  
524 ground peak productivity (**Fig. 2**). At some sites there was evidence that the below-ground  
525 growing season extended beyond the point of 50% above-ground leaf senescence, although  
526 without continuous core removals later in the season it was not possible to determine the time  
527 of root growth cessation (**Fig. 2**). Our findings from five sites from the Western Arctic, North  
528 American and Scottish alpine tundra correspond with studies from Arctic Sweden and Western  
529 Greenland (Blume-Werry et al., 2016; Radville et al., 2016; Sullivan et al., 2007). Taken  
530 together, we now have compelling evidence that above- and below- ground tundra phenology  
531 is asynchronous and that the below-ground growing season can extend 50% longer than the  
532 above ground growing season (Blume-Werry et al., 2016; Radville et al., 2016; Sullivan et al.,  
533 2007). Importantly in this cross-site study, we found that vegetation community composition,  
534 rather than microclimate, had the greatest influence on root biomass accumulation and root  
535 growth rates. We found that root biomass was greater and root growth rates faster in graminoid-  
536 dominated relative to shrub-dominated plots (**Fig. 3**). Additionally, we observed a distinct peak  
537 in root growth in graminoid-dominated plots, usually taking place towards the end of the above-  
538 ground growing season, while root biomass accumulated more linearly over time in the mixed-  
539 species and shrub-dominated plots (**Fig. 3; Fig. S4**). Contrary to our hypotheses, we found no  
540 correspondence between microclimate and root biomass accumulation, daily root growth rates  
541 or above- versus below-ground phenological asynchrony (**Fig. 4**). This analysis therefore  
542 highlights that plant community types rather than microclimates may be the most important  
543 influence on root productivity and the timing of root growth.

544

### 545 *Root biomass was higher - and growth rates faster - in graminoid dominated plots*

546 We found that root biomass was greater and daily root growth rates were faster in the  
547 graminoid-dominated plots than shrub-dominated or mixed-species plots (**Fig. 3; Table S3a**).  
548 Many studies highlight different root growth strategies between and within plant functional  
549 types, often noting that graminoid species will forage root later in the growing season, and in  
550 deeper soils, in order to access nutrients available at the permafrost thaw front (Blume-Werry  
551 et al., 2019; Hewitt et al., 2019; Keuper et al., 2017; McKane et al., 2002; Pedersen et al., 2020;  
552 Salmon et al., 2018; Schwieger et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2007). Annual root turnover by

553 sedge communities already contributes significantly to net primary productivity (NPP) in the  
554 tundra (Iversen et al., 2015; Sloan, 2011; Sloan et al., 2013). In areas where conditions are  
555 projected to become more mesic and provide optimal habitat to support graminoid expansion  
556 (Andresen & Lougheed, 2021; Heijmans et al., 2022), NPP may therefore increase. However,  
557 in areas where woody shrubs outcompete other plant species (Mekonnen et al., 2018), root  
558 biomass may be reduced, particularly at depths close to the active layer thaw front. Different  
559 root biomass and growth characteristics are likely, therefore, to influence local and regional  
560 carbon flux dynamics in areas where tundra vegetation composition is predicted to reshuffle,  
561 potentially bringing carbon stores towards the surface with increasing shrub cover.

562

563 We found that daily root growth rates were significantly faster in graminoid-dominated  
564 communities than mixed-species or shrub-dominated communities (**Fig. 3; Table S2b**), which  
565 was particularly defined by a visible graminoid growth peak towards the end of the growing  
566 season in comparison to a more linear growth rate in the other plots (**Fig. 3; Table S2b**). This  
567 rapid increase in biomass in late summer may reflect enhanced uptake of nutrients by graminoid  
568 roots towards the end of the growing season when this abundant nutrient source is made  
569 available by thaw (Hewitt et al., 2019; Keuper et al., 2017; Pedersen et al., 2020; Wang et al.,  
570 2017). If this ability to harness nutrients late-season is unique to deep-rooting graminoid  
571 species, these results potentially challenge the assumption that shrubs have a competitive  
572 advantage in warming tundra landscapes (Mekonnen et al., 2018), or at least emphasise that  
573 rooting strategies differ greatly across plant communities. Furthermore, in areas where we are  
574 seeing an advancement in both the green-up and the onset of senescence within the  
575 aboveground growing season (Gallois et al., *in prep*), extensions of the belowground growing  
576 season could extend the length of the total growing season and increase the above-ground  
577 below-ground asynchrony.

578

### 579 *Root productivity and phenology did not correspond to spatial variation in surface* 580 *temperature*

581 Across these five tundra sites representing variation in topography and landscape  
582 heterogeneity, root growth rates and root biomass did not vary consistently across surface  
583 temperature ranges within sites (**Fig. 4, Table S2**). Previous research presents contrasting  
584 evidence on the influence of microclimate on root productivity and phenology in tundra  
585 ecosystems. For example, field studies using experimentally warmed plots often indicate that  
586 the timing of the start of the below-ground growing season, and the length of this growing

587 season, are generally unaffected by increased temperatures (Ma et al., 2022; Radville et al.,  
588 2018), however, warming may increase total root biomass (Collins 2024, unpublished data;  
589 Wang et al., 2017). Likewise, experimental snowmelt removal indicates that while advanced  
590 snowmelt often leads to an advanced above-ground growing season, the timing of root  
591 phenology is largely unaltered (Blume-Werry et al., 2017; Möhl et al., 2022). In contrast, Liu  
592 *et al* (2021) found that the below-ground growing season at a tundra site lengthened by  
593 approximately two days for each additional 1°C of warming. The timing of phenophases above-  
594 ground appears to be driven jointly by variation in snowmelt timing and surface microclimatic  
595 conditions (Assmann et al., 2019; Jerome et al., 2021; Kelsey et al., 2021). Taken together, root  
596 phenology does not appear to have the same degree of sensitivity to microclimate indicates the  
597 potential for further above- versus below-ground asynchrony under climate warming scenarios.

598

599 These five study sites varied in their permafrost status and depth to permafrost with Toolik  
600 Lake being underlain by ice-rich permafrost, alpine sites being underlain by discontinuous  
601 mountain permafrost, and the more southerly Cairngorms site being underlain by bedrock.  
602 There is evidence to suggest that root growth is enhanced where permafrost thaw is deeper  
603 (Hewitt et al., 2019; Keuper et al., 2017; Pedersen et al., 2020). Permafrost active layers are  
604 highly spatially heterogeneous, and typically deeper in correspondence with warmer air  
605 temperatures (Biskaborn et al., 2019; Yi et al., 2018). In alpine soils, root growth is strongly  
606 limited by soil temperature due to the cessation of cell elongation and differentiation below 0.8  
607 to 1.2°C (Nagelmüller et al., 2017; Sebastian et al., 2016). The average summer soil  
608 temperature at 6 cm depth was over 5°C across all sites (**Table S1**, not including plots where  
609 logger readings were corrupted), so it is likely that the roots in this study were not subject to  
610 soil temperatures below their thermal tolerance in summer. It is also possible that above this  
611 thermal threshold of 0.8 to 1.2°C, temperature no longer controls root growth patterns. Tundra  
612 roots may be more strongly influenced by alternative abiotic conditions such as the depth of  
613 available soil nutrients or water. The site with the warmest July-August surface temperatures  
614 (Toolik Lake; **Table S1**) had the greatest end-of-season root biomass, while the site with the  
615 coldest summer surface temperatures (Kluane; **Table S1**) had the lowest end-of-season root  
616 biomass. While both the timing of core extractions and overall levels of biomass varied by site,  
617 it is possible that on a macro-scale, if not a micro-scale, warmer summer conditions may  
618 prompt greater root growth.

619

620

621 ***Above- and below-ground phenology are not synchronised***

622 As predicted, above- and below-ground root phenology was asynchronous across almost all  
623 sites, with root growth continuing up to 74% after the above-ground peak in leaf phenology  
624 (**Fig. 3**). However, we found no correspondence between microclimate and phenological  
625 synchrony (**Table S2c**). These findings directly support observations that the below-ground  
626 growing season in tundra ecosystems can significantly extend beyond the above-ground  
627 growing season, in accordance with studies in Arctic Sweden and Western Greenland (Blume-  
628 Werry, 2021; Blume-Werry et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Radville et al., 2016; Sullivan et al.,  
629 2007). Adding five additional sites to existing studies, our results provide a cross-biome  
630 perspective that is critical for improved understanding of tundra carbon cycling. Plant  
631 phenology is intrinsically tied to carbon cycling with tundra ecosystems - with increased  
632 vegetation productivity increasing uptake of atmospheric carbon, and longer growing seasons  
633 triggering increased respiration towards the end of the summer (Bruhwiler et al., 2021; Ueyama  
634 et al., 2013). The drivers of above- versus below-ground phenology in the tundra may be  
635 decoupled, potentially as a function of internal nutrient and hormone allocation timings within  
636 plants (Abramoff & Finzi, 2015), or via the varying physiological relevance of above-ground  
637 conditions such as air temperature versus below-ground conditions such as thaw depth (Liu et  
638 al., 2021). In areas where the aboveground growing season advances, and the belowground  
639 growing season extends long after peak leaf productivity, the total growing season  
640 incorporating both above-ground and below-ground plant components is therefore lengthened  
641 and elements of plant productivity functionally decoupled.

642

643 ***Scope for future research***

644 While these results showcase clear asynchrony in root productivity and phenology between  
645 tundra vegetation community types, key questions remain. Firstly, we were only able to capture  
646 summer growing season dynamics in this study and could therefore not quantify root growth  
647 throughout the entirety of the potential growing season as we were not able to quantify the  
648 cessation of root growth. However, there is evidence that root growth may be possible outside  
649 of the snow-free period where photosynthesis and growth are constrained by snow cover and  
650 light (Blume-Werry et al., 2017; Riley et al., 2021). A priority for future research will be to  
651 investigate how much root growth occurs outside of the snow-free season window, both before  
652 spring snowmelt and after autumn snow-return. Our analyses revealed evidence of late-season  
653 root-growth ‘peaks’ in graminoid dominated plots, which may at some sites (such as Toolik)  
654 be exacerbated by permafrost thaw dynamics. Analysis of both thaw depth and root growth

655 over the course of one growing season using a fine temporal resolution could help identify  
656 whether graminoid root growth and rooting depth closely track the timing of active layer thaw  
657 (see: Blume-Werry et al., 2019; Hewitt et al., 2019; Keuper et al., 2017; Shaver & Billings,  
658 1975), and pinpoint the extent to which these phenomena track aboveground phenology. Future  
659 analysis could use the significantly varying below-ground biomass and growth rate data  
660 alongside projections of future vegetation range shifts to scale up projections of both carbon  
661 uptake and carbon respiration from root systems in tundra ecosystems. Finally, the methods we  
662 used for this study could easily be extended over the course of time to analyse the difference  
663 between above- and below-ground phenology and root yield in warmer and colder years.  
664 Critically, extending these analyses across multiple years (and a greater number of sites) could  
665 further refine our understanding of how above- versus below-ground asynchrony is changing  
666 spatiotemporally.

667

## 668 **Conclusion**

669 The tundra biome is undergoing a rapid shift in vegetation towards more shrub and graminoid  
670 dominated plant communities as the climate warms (Berner & Goetz, 2022; Bhatt et al., 2013;  
671 Elmendorf et al., 2012; Forbes et al., 2010, 2010; Myers-Smith et al., 2011, 2020). We found  
672 that below-ground root growth continues late into the tundra growing season (**Fig. 2**), offset by  
673 an average of 56 days from the peak of plant growth above-ground. Graminoid-dominated  
674 communities had a much higher root biomass density than shrub-dominated and mix-species  
675 communities (**Fig. 3; Table S2a**), and also exhibited a clear late-season root growth ‘pulse’ in  
676 comparison to more linear growth trends across other community types (**Fig. 3; Fig. S4; Table**  
677 **S2b**). Contrary to our expectations, we found no clear correspondence between root  
678 productivity or phenology and local surface temperature variation (**Fig. 4; Table S2**),  
679 suggesting that indirect effects of warming on vegetation change might be a more important  
680 driver than the direct effects of warming on below-ground root growth and dynamics. Taken  
681 together, this study highlights that changes in the vegetation community type could influence  
682 root biomass and root growth rates in Arctic and alpine tundra with important implications for  
683 carbon cycling (Jones et al., 2009; Sokol & Bradford, 2019).

684

685 The drivers of root growth and phenology are critically understudied, and the importance of  
686 roots in tundra carbon cycling is commonly oversimplified in Earth systems models  
687 (Smithwick et al., 2014; Warren et al., 2015; Blume-Werry et al., 2023). Roots constitute

688 approximately 80% of the total biomass within the tundra ecosystem (Mokany et al., 2006) and  
689 provide both an efficient mechanism for stable sequestration of atmospheric carbon (Jones et  
690 al., 2009; Sokol & Bradford, 2019) and a substantial source of carbon to be decomposed and  
691 respired back into the atmosphere (Sullivan et al., 2007; Zona et al., 2022). Root dynamics  
692 underpin plant productivity and carbon sequestration in one of the most rapidly changing  
693 biomes on the planet, and therefore incorporating these processes into global climate models  
694 will critically enhance our ability to predict carbon fluxes. The results from this study reveal a  
695 clear pathway toward modelling these changes – by using above-ground community  
696 composition to estimate below-ground productivity and phenology.

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964 Author contributions

965 EG conceived of the study together with IMS, CI and VS. EG, LT and MG designed the field protocol  
966 with feedback from IMS and CI. Field experiments were carried out by EG, LT, IMS, MA, MG, SE,  
967 CC, LP, RA, AY, GBW, GDJ, CTC, SL, CE, GH, NR, MM, CS, CR and RH. GH, CE, NR, VS, CI and  
968 CC assisted with procurement of materials for the field experiment. IMS, CI, GBW, CC and VS  
969 provided advice on statistical methods. EG designed the laboratory protocol together with IMS, LP, LT  
970 and CI. All data collation, laboratory management, statistical analysis, and writing were completed by  
971 EG, with feedback from all other authors.

972

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987

988 Open Science statement

989 Data and code are publicly available from:

990 [https://github.com/EliseGallois/Above\\_v\\_Below\\_Phenology](https://github.com/EliseGallois/Above_v_Below_Phenology)

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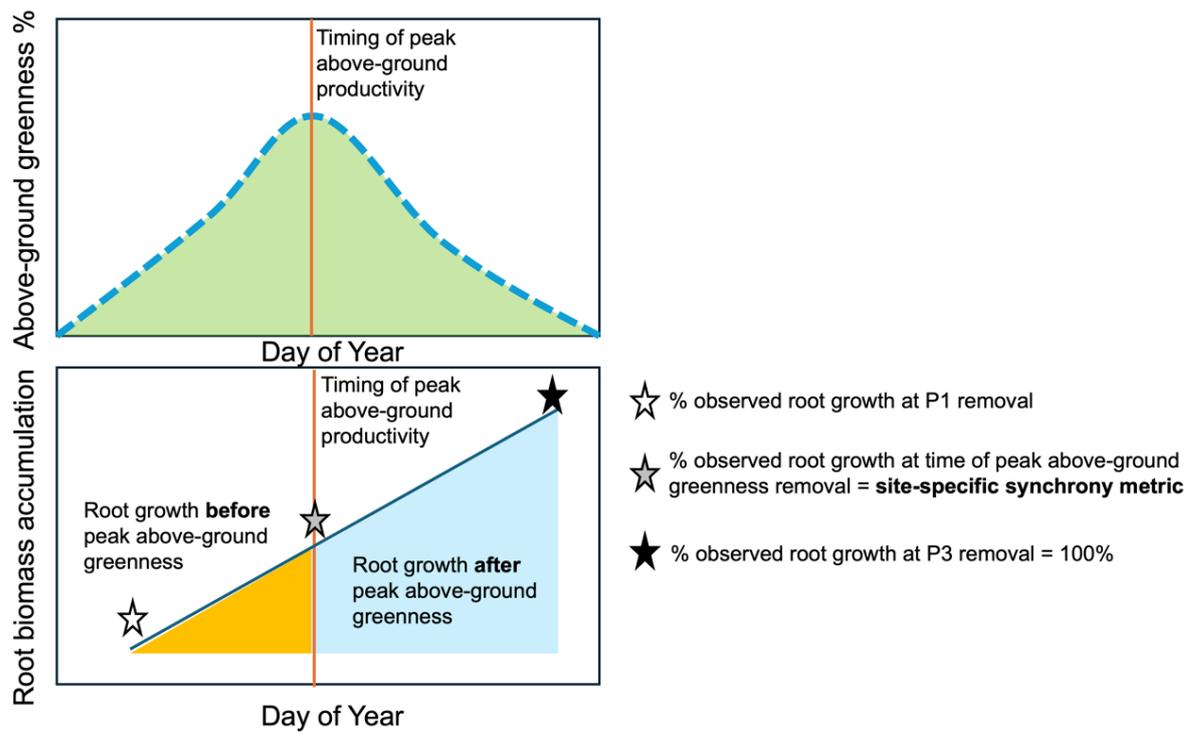
1000 **Supplementary Materials**

1001 **Table S1.** Site metadata summaries, including geographical location, soil type, site climate summaries,  
 1002 and vegetation properties.

1003

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Coordinates (Lat, Lon)</b>	<b>Average July- Aug Surface Temperature (°C )</b>	<b># Plots (Clusters containing 3 x soil cores)</b>	<b>Vegetation Properties</b>	<b>Milled Peat Type</b>	
<b>Kluane Plateau</b>	61.28, 138.93	-	6.8	5	Shrub dominated and mixed-species plots	Golf Green Sphagnum Peat Moss
<b>Toolik Lake</b>	68.63, 149.59	-	14.3	10	Graminoid dominated, shrub dominated, and mixed-species plots	Sunshine Canadian Peat Moss
<b>Niwot Ridge</b>	70.49, 147.29	-	10.8	12	Graminoid dominated, shrub dominated, and mixed-species plots	Golf Green Sphagnum Peat Moss
<b>BC Coastal Mountains</b>	50.04, 123.19	-	7.1	6	Graminoid dominated, shrub dominated, and mixed-species plots	Golf Green Sphagnum Peat Moss + Promix Peat Moss (mixed)
<b>Cairngorms</b>	57.07, -3.49		13.6	6	Shrub dominated and mixed-species plots	Jamieson Brothers Irish Peat Moss

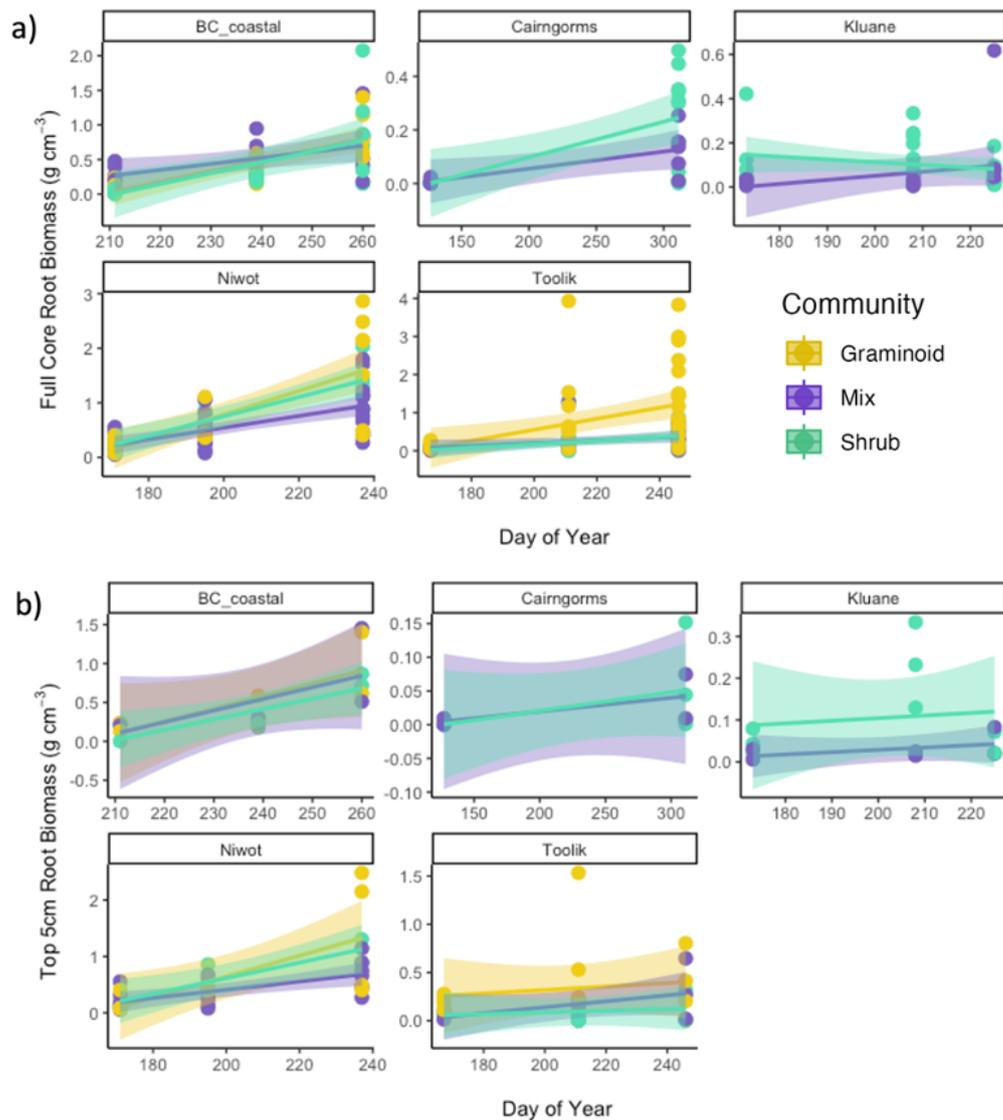
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1006 **Figure S1.** Schematic of the site-specific “synchrony metric” described in the methods and calculated

1007 using **Equation 3.**



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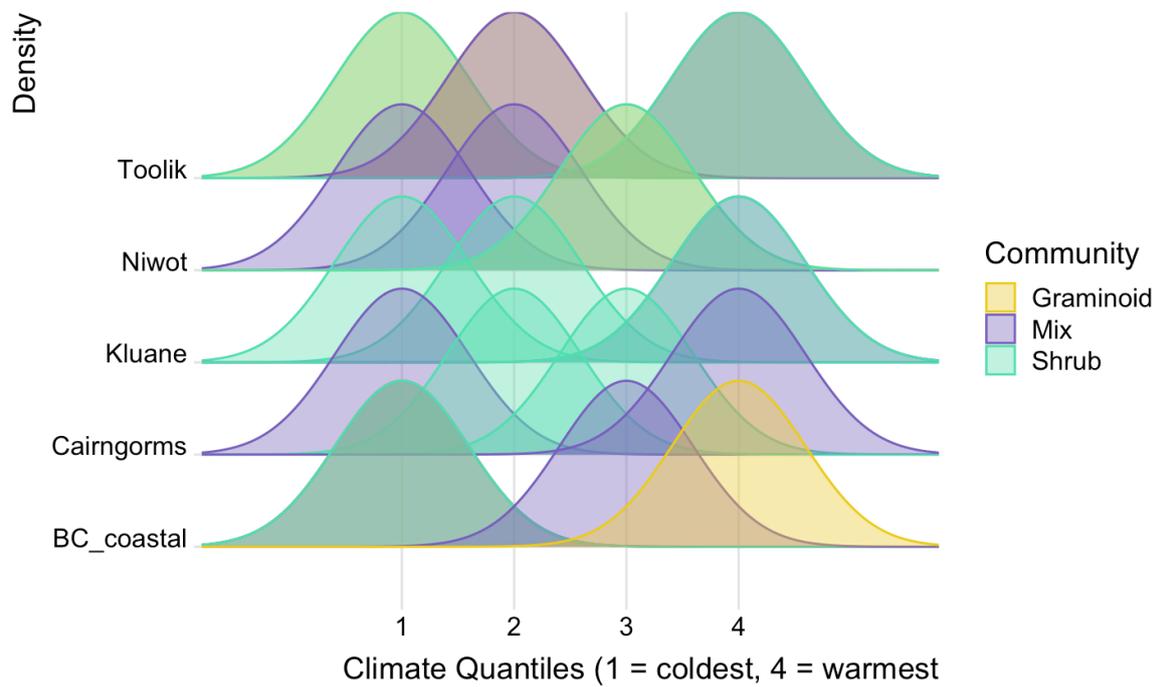
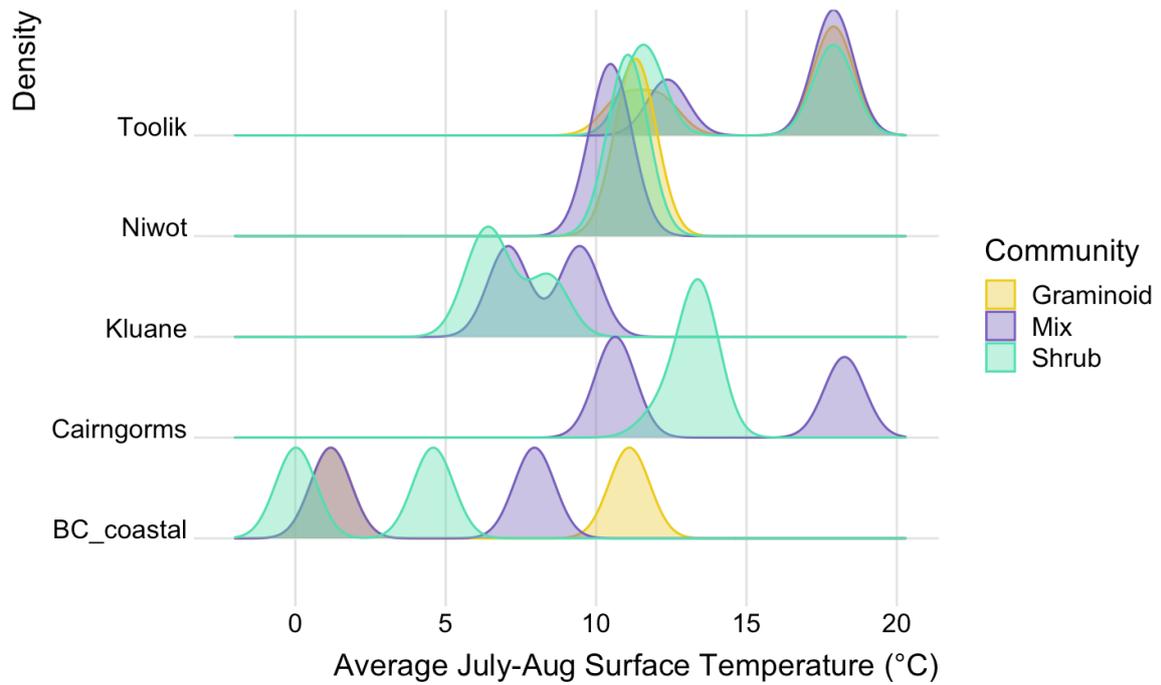
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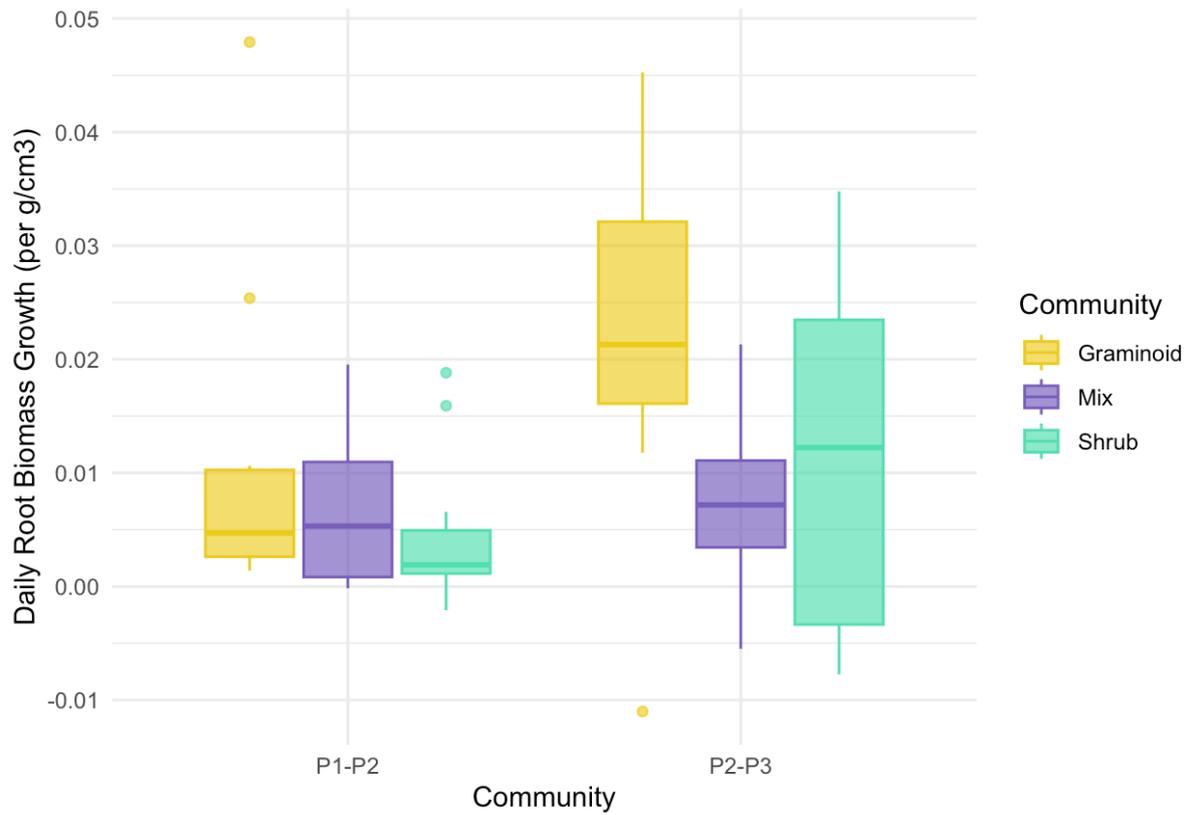
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**Figure S2.** While relative magnitudes of root biomass differ across both data types, the differences between community types at each site remain consistent. Root Biomass accumulation over time categorised by plant community type. Panel (a) includes data calculated from the full length of each core. Panel (b) includes data calculated from only the top 5cm of each core.



1016 **Figure S3.** Community type and surface temperature do not covary across the sites. Distribution of  
 1017 summer surface temperatures by site, coloured by community type. In the top panel, climate is  
 1018 represented by average July-August surface temperature. In the bottom panel, climate is represented by  
 1019 climate quantile classifications.



1020

1021 **Figure S4:** Root growth rate accelerates across all community sites, but especially in graminoid-  
 1022 dominated plots. Daily root growth rates between P1 and P2, and daily root growth rates between P2  
 1023 and P3 across sites, coloured by community type.

**Table S2:** Statistical results for the hierarchical Bayesian models relating local surface temperature variation (i.e., climate quantiles 1-4), community type (graminoid, shrub, mix), and phenophase timing (P1, P2, P3, biomass model only) to root biomass, daily root growth rates, and above-vs below-ground asynchrony. These models included ‘Site’ as a random intercept.

MODEL NAME	TERM	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	LOWER 95% CI	UPPER 95% CI
<b>ROOT BIOMASS</b> Versus <b>TEMPERATURE</b> and <b>COMMUNITY</b> and <b>PHENOPHASE</b>	Intercept	0.34	0.14	0.05	0.63
	Community: Mix	-0.14	0.05	-0.24	-0.04
	Community: Shrub	-0.12	0.06	-0.23	-0.02
	Core_ID:P2	0.24	0.04	0.15	0.33
	Core_ID:P3	0.51	0.05	0.42	0.6
	Climate Quantile 2	0.1	0.06	-0.01	0.22
	Climate Quantile 3	0.08	0.06	-0.04	0.21
	Climate Quantile 4	0	0.06	-0.12	0.12
	Site__Intercept	0.26	0.14	0.1	0.66
	sigma	0.19	0.01	0.17	0.23
	Site[BC_coastal,Intercept]	0.1	0.13	-0.17	0.38
	Site[Cairngorms,Intercept]	-0.12	0.14	-0.41	0.15
	Site[Kluane,Intercept]	-0.2	0.14	-0.48	0.06
	Site[Niwot,Intercept]	0.19	0.13	-0.07	0.48
Site[Toolik,Intercept]	0.03	0.13	-0.24	0.3	
<b>ROOT GROWTH</b> <b>RATE</b> Versus <b>TEMPERATURE</b> and <b>COMMUNITY</b>	Intercept	0.01	0	0	0.02
	Community: Mix	-0.01	0	-0.01	0

	Community: Shrub	-0.01	0	-0.01	0
	Climate Quantile 2	0	0	-0.01	0
	Climate Quantile 3	0	0	0	0.01
	Climate Quantile 4	0	0	-0.01	0
	Site__Intercept	0.01	0	0	0.02
	sigma	0	0	0	0.01
	Site[BC_coastal,Intercept]	0	0	0	0.01
	Site[Cairngorms,Intercept]	-0.01	0	-0.02	0
	Site[Kluane,Intercept]	-0.01	0	-0.01	0
	Site[Niwot,Intercept]	0.01	0	0	0.02
	Site[Toolik,Intercept]	0	0	-0.01	0.01
<b>ROOT SYNCHRONY METRIC Versus TEMPERATURE and COMMUNITY</b>	Intercept	2.1	2.13	-2.14	6.37
	Community: Mix	-5.48	2.05	-9.51	-1.42
	Community: Shrub	0.87	2.05	-3.25	4.88
	Climate Quantile 2	0.8	2.59	-4.28	5.89
	Climate Quantile 3	-1.04	2.25	-5.48	3.37
	Climate Quantile 4	-0.4	2.14	-4.54	3.75
	Site__Intercept	1.17	1.03	0.04	3.71
	sigma	4.65	0.6	3.65	6.02
	Site[BC_coastal,Intercept]	-0.09	1.13	-2.62	2.3
	Site[Cairngorms,Intercept]	0.06	1.14	-2.34	2.61
	Site[Kluane,Intercept]	-0.12	1.13	-2.76	2.22

Site[Niwot,Intercept]	0.34	1.13	-1.76	3.15
Site[Toolik,Intercept]	-0.33	1.15	-3.13	1.69

**Table S3:** Statistical results for the hierarchical Bayesian models relating local surface temperature variation (i.e., climate quantiles 1-4), and community type (graminoid, shrub, mix), and phenophase timing (P1, P2, P3 -biomass model only) to root biomass, daily root growth rates, and above-vs below-ground asynchrony. These models included ‘Site’ as a random intercept. These results only include root biomass data from the top 5cm of each core.

Model Name	Term	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
<b>ROOT BIOMASS</b> Versus <b>TEMPERATURE</b> and <b>COMMUNITY</b> and <b>PHENOPHASE</b>	Intercept	0.29	0.16	-0.03	0.61
	Community: Mix	-0.11	0.07	-0.24	0.02
	Community: Shrub	-0.09	0.07	-0.23	0.04
	Core_ID:P2	0.15	0.06	0.04	0.26
	Core_ID:P3	0.33	0.06	0.21	0.44
	Climate Quantile 2	0.07	0.08	-0.08	0.21
	Climate Quantile 3	0.09	0.08	-0.06	0.25
	Climate Quantile 4	0.09	0.08	-0.07	0.23
	Site_Intercept	0.31	0.17	0.12	0.76
	sigma	0.24	0.02	0.21	0.28
	rSite[BCcoastal,Intercept]	0.2	0.15	-0.12	0.52
	rSite[Cairngorms,Intercept]	-0.21	0.15	-0.54	0.09
	rSite[Kluane,Intercept]	-0.16	0.16	-0.51	0.14
	rSite[Niwot,Intercept]	0.21	0.15	-0.09	0.52
	rSite[Toolik,Intercept]	-0.07	0.15	-0.39	0.22
<b>ROOT GROWTH</b> <b>RATE</b> Versus <b>TEMPERATURE</b> and <b>COMMUNITY</b>	Intercept	0.01	0.01	0	0.02
	Community: Mix	0	0	-0.01	0
	Community: Shrub	0	0	-0.01	0
	Climate Quantile 2	0	0	-0.01	0
	Climate Quantile 3	0.01	0	0	0.01
	Climate Quantile 4	0	0	-0.01	0

	Site_Intercept	0.02	0.03	0	0.09
	sigma	0.01	0	0.01	0.01
	rSite[BCcoastal,Intercept]	0.01	0.01	0	0.02
	rSite[Cairngorms,Intercept]	-0.01	0.01	-0.03	0
	rSite[Kluane,Intercept]	0	0.01	-0.02	0.01
	rSite[Niwot,Intercept]	0	0.01	-0.01	0.01
	rSite[Toolik,Intercept]	0	0.01	-0.02	0.01
<b>ROOT SYNCHRONY METRIC Versus TEMPERATURE &amp; COMMUNITY</b>	Intercept	2.05	3.29	-4.41	8.82
	Community: Mix	-5.55	3.28	-11.98	0.91
	Community: Shrub	1.15	3.35	-5.38	7.79
	Climate Quantile 2	-0.53	4.91	-10.44	9.11
	Climate Quantile 3	-2.4	3.88	-10.18	5.23
	Climate Quantile 4	-0.37	3.01	-6.24	5.56
	Site_Intercept	1.61	1.4	0.06	5.29
	sigma	5.81	0.97	4.28	8.14
	rSite[BCcoastal,Intercept]	-0.03	1.53	-3.39	3.28
	rSite[Cairngorms,Intercept]	0.31	1.64	-2.81	4.32
	rSite[Kluane,Intercept]	-0.04	1.61	-3.62	3.31
rSite[Toolik,Intercept]	-0.3	1.51	-3.87	2.68	