

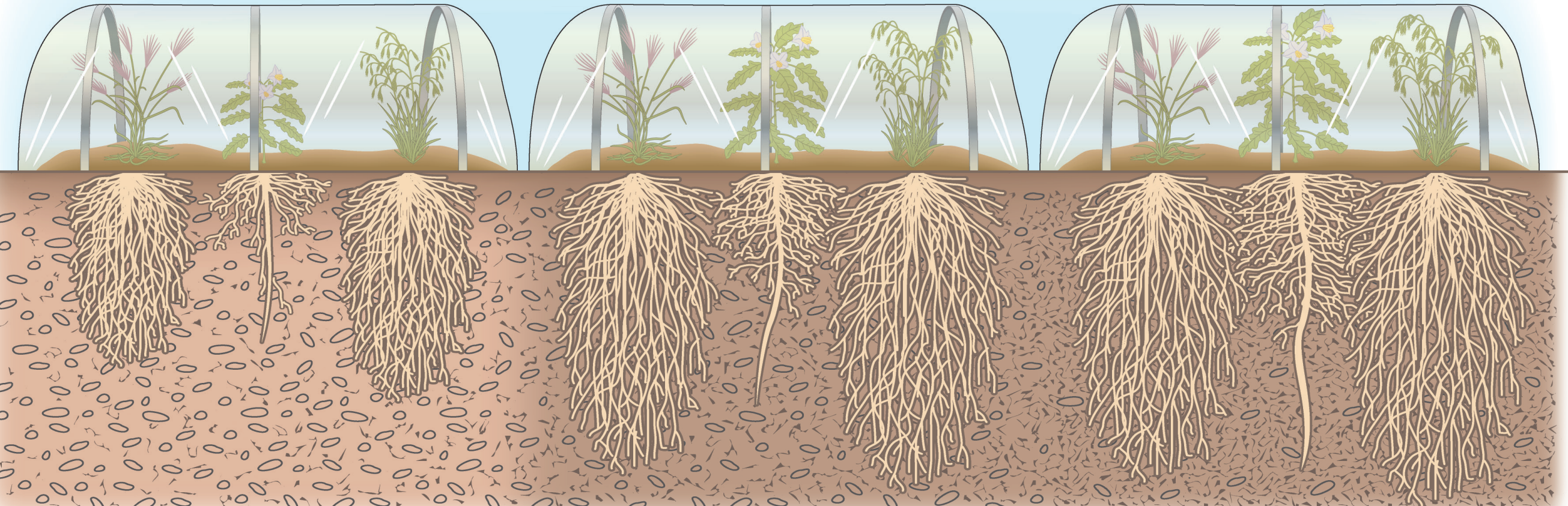
Low
CO₂



Current
CO₂



High
CO₂



Rick Gill's enclosed strip of Texas prairie showed that plants, nitrogen cycling, and soil organisms under current levels of CO₂ (center) have already changed, compared to those under pre-industrial levels of CO₂ (left). Higher levels of CO₂, projected for the future (right) resulted in even bigger root mass and more soil fungi, as the organisms tried to tap into deep sources of nitrogen that would allow them to use the extra carbon. Exposing plants to higher CO₂ levels is akin to giving them more bricks without supplying the mortar to hold them together, says Gill. "You can't keep building higher and higher, if you don't have everything you need."



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