



Maintenance of Cultures

Cultures sent to customers remain alive for at least 14 days provided that the following precautions are observed. Cultures should be unpacked immediately after receipt and stored at 15-18°C under low light intensity (north window, no direct sun light, or weak white fluorescent light). Screw caps or vessels should be loosened but not removed. Further maintenance or multiplication of cultures requires transfer into new culture media. This presupposes experience in simple microbial techniques.

Many species are cultivated and dispatched on agar media for safety reasons but develop their morphological characteristics only in liquid media, e.g. flagellates, colony-forming Volvocales and Chlorococcales. For teaching purposes these species should be transferred into liquid media 2-3 weeks before demonstration, e.g. into Soil Water Media, Basal Medium, or Desmidiacean Medium.

Culture Media

The following media have proved suitable for the maintenance of cultures in test tubes at the SAG for many years. The recipes originate from E. G. Pringsheim and W. Koch, unless stated otherwise. It must be emphasized that the maintenance medium indicated is not always the best medium for the cultivation of a species. There are other media which are just as suitable, e.g. those given in the catalogues of other culture collections of algae (Thompson et al., 1988, Watanabe and Nozaki, 1994, Andersen et al., 1991, Rippka and Herdman, 1992, Starr and Zeikus, 1993). Mass algal culture often requires more concentrated media (for recipes and methods consult Kuhl and Lorenzen, 1964; Starr, 1971; Stein, 1973; Guillard, 1975; Werner, 1982; Castenholz, 1988; Richmond, 2004; Andersen, 2005).

All solutions should be made up with de-ionized water. Media are usually prepared from stock solutions of macronutrients, trace metals, and vitamins which are added to a large proportion of the final volume of water in order to avoid precipitation.

Media may be used as liquid or solidified by 1.0-1.5% agar. Before sterilization the agar has to be dissolved in the medium in a steamer. After this test tubes should be filled with 10 ml of the hot medium, closed with cotton plugs, sterilized (usually by autoclaving at 121°C for 15 min.) and may be stored for several weeks, after cooling, in a refrigerator. Solid media for Cyanobacteria are prepared by mixing, after cooling to 50°C, equal volumes of separately autoclaved double strength solutions of the mineral salts medium and either agar to give a final agar concentration of 0.6-1.0 %.

2. Spirulina Medium (=Spirul.)

(modified from S. Aiba and T. Ogawa 1977)

Solution I:

NaHCO ₃	13.61 g
Na ₂ CO ₃	4.03 g
K ₂ HPO ₄	0.50 g
de-ionized or distilled water	500.0 ml

Solution II:

NaNO ₃	2.50 g
K ₂ SO ₄	1.00 g
NaCl	1.00 g
MgSO ₄ · 7H ₂ O	0.20 g
CaCl ₂ · 2H ₂ O	0.04 g
FeSO ₄ · 7H ₂ O	0.01 g
EDTA (Titriplex III, Merck)	0.08 g
micronutrient solution *	5.0 ml
de-ionized or distilled water	500.0 ml

* Preparation of the micronutrient solution (as in medium 1):

	stock solution [g/100 ml]	applied solution
ZnSO ₄ · 7H ₂ O	0.1	1 ml
MnSO ₄ · 4H ₂ O	0.1	2 ml
H ₃ BO ₃	0.2	5 ml
Co(NO ₃) ₂ · 6H ₂ O	0.02	5 ml
Na ₂ MoO ₄ · 2H ₂ O	0.02	5 ml
CuSO ₄ · 5H ₂ O	0.0005	1 ml
de-ionized or distilled water		981 ml
FeSO ₄ · 7H ₂ O		0.7 g
EDTA (Titriplex III, Merck)		0.8 g

Autoclave solutions I and II separately, unite after cooling and add 5×10^{-6} g/l vitamin B₁₂ in sterile solution, if required.

Ref.: Aiba, S. & Ogawa, T. (1977). Assessment of growth yield of a blue-green alga: *Spirulina platensis*, in axenic and continuous culture. J. Gen. Microbiol. 1977, 102: 179-182.



References

- Andersen, R.A.; Jacobson, D.M. & Sexton, J.P. – Provasoli-Guillard Center for Culture of Marine Phytoplankton. Catalogue of Strains. 98pp. West Boothbay Harbor, Maine, USA, 1991.
- Castenholz, R.W. – Culturing methods for Cyanobacteria. In: L. Packer and A.N. Glazer, eds., Cyanobacteria. Methods of Enzymology 167 (1988), 68-93.
- Guillard, R.R.L. – Culture of Phytoplankton for feeding marine invertebrates. In: W.L. Smith and M. H. Chanley, eds., Culture of marine invertebrate animals. pp.29-60, Plenum Book Publ. Corp., New York, 1975.
- Kuhl, A. & Lorenzen, H. – Handling and culturing of *Chlorella*. In: D.M. Prescott, ed., Methods in cell physiology. Vol.1, pp. 152-187, Academic Press, New York and London, 1964.
- Rippka, R. & Herdman, M. – Pasteur Culture Collection of Cyanobacterial Strains in Axenic Culture. Vol.1, Catalogue of strains. 103pp., Institut Pasteur, Paris, France, 1992.
- Starr, R.C. – Algal Cultures – sources and methods of cultivation. In: A. San Pietro, ed., Photosynthesis. Part A, pp. 29-53, Methods in Enzymology vol. 23, Academic Press, New York, 1971.
- Starr, R.C. & Zeikus, J.A. – UTEX – The Culture Collection of Algae at the University of Texas at Austin. J. Phycol. Suppl. 29 (1993).
- Stein, J.R. ed. – Handbook of phycological methods. Culture Methods and growth measurements, pp. 448, Cambridge at the University Press, London, New York, 1973.
- Thompson, A.S.; Rhodes, J.C. & Pettman, I. – Culture Collection of Algae and Protozoa. Catalogue of strains. 164pp., Natural Environment Research and Council, England, 5th edit., 1988.
- Watanabe, M.M. & Nozaki, H. – NIES-Collection. List of strains, microalgae and protozoa. 4th edit., 127pp. The National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan, 1994.
- Werner, D. – Biologische Versuchsobjekte. Kultivierung und Wachstum ausgewählter Versuchsorganismen in definierten Medien. 432pp. Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, New York, 1982.

Further recommended literature about culturing algae:

- Andersen, R.A. (ed.) (2005) Algal Culturing Techniques. Elsevier Academic Press, Burlington.
ISBN 0-12-088426-7.**
- Belcher & Swale (1982) Culturing Algae - a guide for schools and colleges.
ISBN 1-871105-04-8 (ask for at ccap@sams.ac.uk). (Currently unavailable).
- Isaac & Jennings (1995) Microbial Culture. Bios Scientific Publ., Oxford.
ISBN 1-872748-92-9.**
- Richmond (ed.) (2004) Handbook of Microalgal Culture. Biotechnology and Applied Phycology. Blackwell Publ., London. ISBN 0-632-05953-2.**
- Streble & Krauter (2006) Das Leben im Wassertropfen. Kosmos (Franckh-Kosmos), Stuttgart.
ISBN 3-440-10807-4.
- Von Berg, Linne & Melkonian (2004) Der Kosmos-Algenführer. Kosmos (Franckh-Kosmos), Stuttgart.
ISBN 3-440-09719-6.