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1100 години успение на св. Климент Охридски

БИОЛОГИЧЕСКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ
МЛАДЕЖКА НАУЧНА КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ

„КЛИМЕНТОВИ ДНИ“

17–18 НОЕМВРИ 2016 год.

СБОРНИК С РЕЗЮМЕТА



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF PLANT GROWTH REGULATORS AND ACTIVATED CHARCOAL ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS OF *SIDERITIS SCARDICA* IN VITRO CULTURES

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Keywords: activated charcoal, growth and development, in vitro cultures, plant growth regulators, polyphenolics production, *Sideritis scardica* Griseb.

The Balkan endemic *Sideritis scardica* is traditionally utilized as a pulmonary treatment, as well as anti-flu and wound healing remedy. The low germination rate and collection pressure imposes significant risk on its natural populations. In a broader program for plant cell tissue and organ culture collection establishment at the Institute of Organic Chemistry with Centre of Phytochemistry, shoot cultures of the species were initiated from surface sterilization of seeds of the plant, collected at peak Shabran in Slavyanka mountain. Then, an array of plant growth regulators (PGRs) modifications, comprising of benzyl adenine (BA) and 1-naphthylacetic acid (NAA) treatments, as well as different activated charcoal (AC) concentrations were applied. Their impact on developmental patterns and polyphenolics production were studied *in vitro*. As a general observation all treatments increased significantly the survival rate of explants, as well as the multiplication index and polyphenolics productions as compared with the non-treated control. A significant rise of FW accumulation was also recorded (much higher in PGR treatments, as compared with AC). The AC treatment was also observed to stimulate polyphenolics production and increase sub-culture period, thus improving explant quality to a higher extent as compared with PGR. Further investigations are in process to study in details the phytochemical profiles of the different treatments and scale-up the obtained processes to higher volume bioreactor system.

Acknowledgment: This work was supported by grant of the Swiss National Science Foundation and Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, in the Framework in the Bulgarian-Swiss Research Program (BSRP, grant No. IZEBZO_142989; D02-1153); PK - World Federation of Sciences – Bulgarian National Scholarship Programme for young researchers